



Chichester City Council

PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE

Held via Zoom due to weather warnings being in place

Minutes

Date 2 November 2023

Time 2.00pm – 4.42pm

Location Held via Zoom due to weather warnings in place.

PRESENT: Councillors Miall (Chairman), Butler, McHale, Quail, Scicluna and Squire

ALSO IN Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Council Services and Support Manager,

ATTENDANCE: Allotments and Maintenance Officer, Tom Hayes from Meynell-Hayes Architects

The Council Services and Support Manager advised those present that, as the meeting was being held by Zoom, any decisions being made by the Sub-Committee for actioning would have to be in the form of recommendations to the Finance Committee meeting being held on 21 November 2023.

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from the Mayor, Councillor C Gershter.

16. 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.

Councillors Miall and Quail declared an interest as allotment holders on the St Pauls allotment site.

17. MINUTES OF THE PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 JULY 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 4 July 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

The Council Services and Support Manager then summarised the items that were included in his report and that had been circulated with the agenda.

18. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

i) Council House

a. *Artefacts and records*

Members were advised that Officers from the Novium had recently started looking through City Council materials for possible loan to their collections.

Members were further advised that it was hoped that the Records Office would also visit shortly.

The Sub-Committee was informed that, once this had been completed, the Town Clerk and Council Services Support Manager would review the remaining documents with a view to disposal of unnecessary records.

Councillor Quail offered to assist with the project.

The Chair then took agenda item 1(e).

b. *Portico enclosure*

Initial concepts were presented by Tom Hayes from Meynell-Hayes Architects.

He advised that they were proposing a low-impact solution that would utilise frameless glass to minimise visual impact and forced air or panel heaters to keep the space warm.

He informed Members that the space would still retain a number of doorways to provide good public access and that the glass panels would require manifestations/etchings to ensure that people did not walk in to them.

Mr Hayes advised that the Council needed to focus on the business case and evidence of need for the proposals if they were to be looked upon favourably by the planning authority.

He reported that if the initial response from District Council Planning was favourable, a full planning application could be submitted and approved within 3-6 months while the tender process would then require another 3-6 months.

It was noted that building works would probably take longer with a projected completion in 2024-2025 if the project were to go ahead.

Members discussed the issues around the project including the possibility of alternative schemes being provided, with Brackley Town Hall being mentioned as a good example of a similar proposal.

Further to a question from the Town Clerk, Mr Hayes reported that it would be possible to calculate the thermal insulation improvements from the project for inclusion as part of the business case, even though the gains would likely be minimal.

In response to a question from the Deputy Town Clerk in reference to a previous version of the project which had experienced adverse publicity, Mr Hayes expressed the opinion that public consultation and developing the statement of need could be used to flush out any issues or objections and with these being address in any final design.

He also recommended early engagement with the District Council's Historic Buildings Officer, emphasising the benefits of the scheme and hopefully enhancing its chances of success.

The Council Services and Support Manager reported that the proposal had not been formally approved by Council as it was in its early stages and that the outcome of the meeting today would be whether to recommend that the project was progressed for presentation to the Finance Committee and then to a meeting of the full Council.

After further comments from the Town Clerk, it was RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023 that a decision on whether to proceed with the project be made for taking to the meeting of Council on 20 December 2023 for a formal decision.

The meeting returned to the published agenda order.

c. *Council Chamber redecoration works and carpet replacement*

Members were advised that this had not been progressed at this time but that the District Council's Historic Buildings Officer had indicated that no consent would be required for repairs to the cracks in the ceiling on condition that the materials, colours and techniques were in keeping with the current scheme.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the building survey had been completed and that the surveyor was confident that the cracks were not structural.

It was AGREED that quotes should be obtained for the necessary works with the results being reported back to a future meeting.

d. *Solar array and battery storage*

The Council Services and Support Manager summarised his report that had been circulated with the agenda.

Members were advised that a potential issue had been identified during the last inspection of the existing solar arrays whereby birds were roosting under the panels, posing a potential fire hazard.

The Sub-Committee discussed the project and it was clarified that, if fewer than three quotes were received due to contractor reluctance, it was acceptable to proceed with an order provided evidence could be shown that additional quotes had been sought.

It was RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023 that permission be given for an application for planning permission be submitted for the additional solar panels as suggested by the Historic Buildings Officer so that the project could proceed immediately.

The Sub-Committee then AGREED that, due to the serious nature of the fire hazard previously identified, Officers should proceed immediately with the necessary safety works to remove any debris from under the existing solar array and install preventative measures to stop this happening in the future; using discretionary powers.

e. *CCTV upgrade*

Members noted the contents of the Property Report that had been circulated with the agenda.

Referring to agenda item 5(i)g, the Council Services and Support Manager informed Members that, further to the CCTV upgrade, steps to deter roof running on the building were proposed. He advised that an additional CCTV camera was being installed on the roof and that the Police had agreed that adding anti-climb paint, plastic anti-bird spikes and warning signs were acceptable measures to try to prevent the ongoing problem.

f. *Old Courtroom roof light*

After a short discussion about the Property Report, it was AGREED that Officers should 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 Finance on November 21 2023 for up to £25,000 for the replacement of the roof light, to be funded from the City Council's CIL allocation.

It was further AGREED that the existing framework should be reused if possible but if this was not practical the a new frame to be installed with electrically operated vents for an estimated additional £3,000.

g. *Murray cabinet*

Noted that the repairs had been completed and artefacts put on display.

h. *Council Chamber acoustics*

The Council Services and Support Manager summarised his report and outlined his proposal for the purchase of additional hearing loop receivers for loaning to hirers struggling with the hearing loop and their personal hearing aids.

AGREED not to proceed with the purchase as proposed. Officers were asked to advise hirers to seat hearing aid users to towards the edges of the room where the hearing loop signal was strongest.

i. *Paintings*

Members were advised that the Painting Conservation Working Group would be meeting the following week to continue their assessment of the City Council's paintings and artefacts.

The Town Clerk agreed to look in to the creation of a retention and suitability policy for the City Council's paintings and artefacts to ensure that those items retained at the Council House were appropriate and could be correctly looked after.

j. *Secondary glazing*

Members noted the information given in the Property Report.

AGREED that the contractor suggested by the Historic Building Officer be invited to submit a proposal based on a site visit with the outcomes being reported to the next meeting of the Property Sub-Committee.

ii) **Litten Gardens**

Members noted that the repairs to the kerbstones surrounding the War Memorial had been completed.

iii) **Allotments**

a. *Update*

Members noted the update included in the Property Report.

In response to a question from Members, the Allotments and Maintenance Officer confirmed that, of the people on the waiting list, only nine were existing plot holders seeking additional plots while 142 were new applicants.

Councillor Quail asked whether the current allotment sites were sufficient for demand and was advised that not all people on the waiting list wanted plots immediately due to personal circumstances while others declined plots when they were finally offered.

The Allotments and Maintenance Officer further advised that most people were on the list for a maximum of 12-18 months with the earliest applicant on the list having joined it in 2021.

He also advised that the longest waits were for people requesting specific sites (usually St Pauls) with the other sites having shorter waits due to the unwillingness of applicants to travel to plots.

Members were informed that the waiting list had benefited from the introduction of smaller plots created from larger plots that had been surrendered or where existing tenants had agreed to split their plots because they could not manage the larger area.

b. *Allotment water supply*

The Allotments and Maintenance Officer summarised the information in the report and his reasons for asking for the delay.

AGREED to accept the Officer recommendation and defer the works until winter 2024.

c. *St James compound solar array*

Noted that the solar array upgrade had been completed and the new system was performing well.

It was confirmed that the upgrade meant that a connection to the mains electric supply was no longer required.

iv) **Bus shelters**

a. *Swanfield Drive*

Noted that the bus shelter installation had now been completed.

b. *RTPI displays*

Members noted the update.

v) **Public Realm projects**

a. *Murray-Nelson sculpture*

The Council Services and Support Manager summarised the information in his report and explained the reasons for the difference between the figures he had quoted and the previously supplied figure.

Councillors AGREED to leave the statue as is with the swords removed to prevent further damage and preserve them in case they were required for

casting the sculpture in bronze with no further recommendation to the Finance Committee.

b. *Cycle racks*

Members noted the contents of the report and discussed the issues of bicycle security and vandalism.

AGREED to continue with the test design with no further recommendation to the Finance Committee at this time.

c. *Speed Indicator Devices (SID)*

Noted that the additional sockets had been installed in Westgate and the SID added to the schedule.

d. *Parish boundary sign*

Noted that the additional parish boundary sign had been installed at the junction of Terminus Road and the Fishbourne roundabout.

e. *Brewery Field*

Comments noted.

f. *West's memorial garden*

Members noted an update from the Town Clerk that lease negotiations for the transfer of responsibility for the garden to the City Council were taking longer than expected.

g. *Cathedral beds and neighbouring areas*

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that she was awaiting confirmation from West Sussex County Council regarding a proposal that they would undertake works on this area as part of a social value project.

The Sub-Committee discussed the issue and particularly the importance of this area for creating a good first impression for visitors to the city.

Officers were asked to prepare a fall-back plan in the event that funding from the County Council was not forthcoming.

The Sub-Committee further AGREED that, if a decision had not been made by the end of December 2023, the City Council should look to implement alternative plans to undertake the necessary works.

19. **NEW PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS**

i) **Council House**

a. *Mayor's Parlour facilities*

Members discussed the issues raised in the Property Report.

AGREED that three quotes should be obtained for the replacement of the sanitaryware and redecoration of the space, including any necessary

repairs/improvements to the plumbing in order to ensure compliance with building regulations.

Post meeting note: The new Property Maintenance Manager has agreed that works can be carried out in house and is working on a costed proposal to present to Members. It is proposed to take this item to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023 so that works can be undertaken as soon as possible.

b. *“Property Office” furniture*

Members noted the report and the disparity between the insurance valuations and projected sale prices.

It was RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023 that the two items of furniture be sold with any monies raised being used to fund any setup costs for any change of use of the room.

c. *Installation of a flagpole and hanging baskets on the front of the Council House*

The Council Services and Support Manager outlined his proposal and the reasons for suggesting the installations, including helping residents and visitors better identify the building and its occupant.

AGREED that drawings should be prepared for final approval by the Planning and Conservation Committee prior to Planning and Listed Building Consent applications being submitted for the installation of a single flagpole and three hanging basket brackets in suitable locations on the front of the Council House.

Further AGREED that installation be completed subject to receipt of the necessary consents.

d. *Assembly Room projector screen*

Members noted the report and the reasons for the proposal to install a ceiling mounted screen in the Assembly Room.

AGREED the installation of the screen in principle with Officers asked to proceed to obtain quotes for the installation costs. Further AGREED that the project costs should be taken to the next meeting of the Finance Committee for approval.

e. *Painting of East Street (att. Charles Collins) – currently displayed in the main corridor*

Members discussed the matter and the significant and open ended costs mentioned in the report.

AGREED that no further action be taken at this time.

f. *Mayor’s carpark*

The Council Services and Support Manager explained the reasons for the proposal included in his report.

AGREED to proceed with the addition of measures to improve the stability of the surface of the rear of the carpark using either binding agents or laying large stone chip on top of the smaller grit.

g. *Rooftop security*

Noted that this had been discussed under agenda item 4(i)d – minute 18(i)e above.

h. *Introduction of automatic timers to control the water heaters*

Members noted the proposal and the energy efficiency and cost reduction reasons for it.

RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023 that authority is delegated 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. The project to be funded from the City Council's CIL allocation.

i. *Air conditioning system*

Members noted that the current chiller system was out of action and beyond economic repair.

RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023 that the Town Clerk and Officers be authorised to obtain an updated quote from the existing contractor and proceed to obtain two further quotes for comparison. Further RECOMMENDED to authorise the Town Clerk to proceed to a full tender process through the Government's contract finder service if the value of the project was found to be over the threshold requiring this to happen. The results of the process to be reported to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

ii) **Litten Gardens**

a. *War Memorial*

Members noted the report and agreed that it was important that the works be undertaken as soon as possible.

AGREED to proceed with the works under the Town Clerk's delegated spending authority.

Post meeting note: An order has been placed with Traditional Stone and we are currently awaiting a date for the works to take place.

b. *Footpath*

The Council Services and Support Manager outlined the information given in his report.

AGREED to delegate an action to investigate alternative surfaces for the paths and areas around the sculptures in Litten Gardens with the resulting proposals and costs being reported back to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

c. *Interpretation board*

AGREED that the Town Clerk should seek a replacement board for installation up to a maximum of £1,000 under delegated spending powers.

Post meeting note: The new Property Maintenance Officer has indicated that he will be able to build a suitable replacement board in house and at reduced cost.

d. *Memorial plaques*

Members noted the report and the quality and durability issues being experienced with the memorial plaques.

AGREED to delegate to the Town Clerk authority to investigate more robust, long-lasting alternatives to replace the plaques, possibly investigating stone alternatives.

e. *External corner wall*

It was noted that, while the wall did not present an immediate safety hazard, it was unsightly and the damaged section should be removed.

AGREED to accept the Officer recommendation with authority delegated to the Town Clerk to proceed with the proposed works with the removed bricks being recycled if possible.

Post meeting note: The Property Maintenance Manager has agreed that this work can be undertaken in house to minimise the cost to the City Council.

f. *Dead or dying trees*

AGREED that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk as follows:

- T37 be replaced with suitable tree or the space left open for a future memorial tree.
- Contact is made with the Royal Naval Association (RNA) to discuss how they would like to proceed in the matter of their memorial tree.

iii) **Allotments**

a. *Allotment holder seminar*

Members noted the report and agreed that this was a positive development to encourage greater interaction with tenants and help encourage their development as allotment holders.

b. *Allotment fencing*

Members AGREED that it was important to undertake ongoing maintenance of the allotment sites, particularly where site security was involved, and delegated authority to the Town Clerk regarding decisions on allotment fencing repairs, subject to a per-site cost limit.

c. *Blackberry Lane vehicle access issues*

The Council Services and Support Manager explained the background to the issues being experienced at the Blackberry Lane allotment site.

AGREED that Chichester District and West Sussex County Councils be approached for advice on adding statutory no parking limitations/double yellow lines across the Blackberry Lane allotment site entrance to prevent unsociable parking in the area.

d. *St Pauls allotments – northern tree line reduction/removal*

Members discussed the report and the Allotments and Maintenance Officer gave additional background information for Members to consider.

The Sub-Committee expressed particular concern about the safety issues raised in light of the proximity of school playing fields and City Council allotments to the trees in question.

RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023 to proceed with the full quote of £5,000 for the reduction of the tree line and taking down of the trees found to be suffering from Ash die-back.

iv) **Public realm projects**

a. *Bus stops and shelters*

The Council Services and Support Manager summarised the proposal for installing noticeboards in the City Council’s bus shelters.

Members noted that this should form part of a wider City Council communications policy and it was AGREED that no further action be taken until the communications strategy had been developed.

b. *Madge Turner maquette*

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised the item and explained what had happened at a recent meeting to view the maquette currently in production.

Members discussed the matter and expressed concerns about the circumstances of the request.

The Sub-Committee AGREED TO RECOMMEND to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023 that the payment be made to the sculptor for the maquette but that it was to be made clear that the City Council was under no obligation to provide further funding or to commission a full bronze statue in the future.

Councillors Butler and Scicluna did not support the proposal.

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

No items were proposed.

21. **DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

Dates of 23 January 2024 or 30 January 2024 were proposed – to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 4.42pm

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Minute ref.	Agreed action	Assigned for action to
18(i)c	Obtain quotes for repairs to the cracks in the Council Chamber ceiling.	Property Maintenance Manager
18(i)d	Remove debris from under solar panels and install measures to prevent further bird nesting.	Property Maintenance Manager
18(i)e	Add anti-climb paint, warning signs and other deterrent measures to the party wall with the White Company to deter roof running.	Property Maintenance Team
18(i)f	Obtain quotes and proposals for the replacement of the Old Courtroom rooflight to take to the November 2023 Finance Committee.	Property Maintenance Manager

18(i)i	Creation of a retention and suitability policy for the City Council's paintings and artefacts.	Town Clerk
18(i)j	Invite a contractor to submit an initial proposal for the installation of secondary glazing in the Council Chamber and Assembly Room for presentation to the next meeting of the Property Sub-Committee.	Property Maintenance Manager
18(v)a	Contact the sculptor of the Murray-Nelson sculpture, Vincent Gray, to advise him of the City Council's decision regarding the damaged swords.	Town Clerk/Property Maintenance Manager
18(v)g	Officers to prepare a fallback plan for works on the cathedral beds and surrounding areas in the event of no funding being made available by the County Council.	Deputy Town Clerk and Property Maintenance Manager
19(i)a	Prepare a costed proposal for refurbishment of the Mayor's Parlour kitchen and toilet facilities for presentation at the Finance Committee meeting on 21 November 2023	Property Maintenance Manager
19(i)c	Prepare a proposal and supporting diagrams for the installation of a single flagpole and three hanging basket brackets on the front of the Council House for approval by the Planning and Conservation Committee.	Property Maintenance Manager/Planning Adviser
19(i)d	Obtain quotes for the installation of a ceiling mounted, electrically operated, projector screen in the Assembly Room for presentation to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023.	Property Maintenance Manager
19(i)f	Implement measures to improve the surface stability of the rear portion of the Mayor's carpark.	Property Maintenance Team
19(i)h	Indicative costs for installation of automatic timer switches on all water heaters in the Council House to be submitted to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2023.	Property Maintenance Manager
19(ii)b	Investigate alternative surfaces for the paths and areas around the sculptures in Litten Gardens and provide proposals and costs to the next meeting of the Property Sub-Committee.	Property Maintenance Manager
19(ii)c	Installation of a new interpretation board in Litten Gardens to replace the current, rotten board.	Property Maintenance Team
19(ii)d	Investigate more durable alternatives for replacement of some of the memorial plaques in Litten Gardens with a proposal to go to the next Property Sub-Committee meeting.	Property Maintenance Manager
19(ii)e	Removal of damaged external corner wall with St Pancras wall being suitably terminated with a small pillar and waste bricks recycled where possible.	Property Maintenance Team
19(ii)f	Remove/replant tree T37 Contact RNA to discuss possible replacement of memorial tree	Property Maintenance Team Town Clerk/Property Maintenance Manager
19(iii)b	Complete repairs to allotment site fence lines as outlined in the Property Report.	Property Maintenance Team

19(iii)c	Contact Chichester District and West Sussex County Councils regarding possible implementation of enforceable parking restrictions across the vehicle entrance to the Blackberry Lane allotment site.	Property Maintenance Manager
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