



Chichester City Council

## MEETING OF COUNCIL

### Minutes

**Date** 20 December 2023

**Time** 7.00pm – 8.41pm

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

**PRESENT:** The Mayor, Councillor C Gershater and Councillors Butler, Chant, J Gershater, Knight, Kondabeka, Loxton, McHale, Miall, Quail, Scicluna, Squire and Vivian

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Council Services and Support Manager, Communities Officer, Mayor's Chaplain, West Sussex County Councillor Simon Oakley, Chichester District Councillor Jonathan Brown

#### 59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to receive and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Corfield, and Councillors Apel, Moore and Pramas.

Councillor Hitchman was absent.

Members also noted apologies from West Sussex County Councillor Jeremy Hunt and Chichester District Councillor Bill Brisbane.

#### 60. DISPENSATION REQUESTS

No requests were received.

#### 61. 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.

#### 62. MINUTES OF COUNCIL

RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Meeting of the City Council held on 27 September 2023

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

**Committee Terms of Reference Working Group (27 September 2023, minute 52 refers)**

Members agreed that this was an important piece of work that would affect how the Council ran.

Council noted that the Working Group was due to meet on 11 January 2024 and that proposals from the Working Group would be presented to Full Council on 28 February 2024. They further noted that the Working Group would consist of the Mayor and the Chairs of the Committees and Sub-Committees with Officer support as appropriate.

#### 64. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reminded Members that the Council offices would close for Christmas at 12 noon on Friday 22 December 2023 and reopen on Tuesday 2 January 2024.

He reported that the previous quarter had been very busy with particular highlights being a concert held by a Ukrainian choir at St Pauls Church as well as a visit to meet the refugees at Chichester Park Hotel.

#### 65. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Town Clerk advised that one question had been received and invited Councillor Quail to make her representation.

The question was as follows:

*Mr Mayor, we need to write to WSCC about flooding in this city.*

*At the bottom of College Lane, there used to be a pond. It bore the splendid name of Dell Hole! Unfortunately, the pond was filled in and there are now tennis courts on the site of the pond. And this is why – after heavy rain - College Lane has to be closed regularly to traffic, as it is now.*

*It is a similar story in Neville Road on the Parklands Estate. A local resident first reported flooding to WSCC on 4 November. You will recall that WSCC is the Highways Authority. She was advised then that the drain is silted up at a point halfway down Neville Road as far as Oliver Whitby Road. The County Council has done absolutely nothing to sort out the silted-up drain and Neville Road is closed again owing to the deluge which fell on this city at the beginning of last week. You need to be aware too that the Neville Road accommodation is made up of maisonettes, and we have heard that the elderly and disabled residents in the ground floor maisonettes cannot use their lavatories.*

*I could go on. Are you aware that there is flooding too at the west end of Brandy Hole Lane?*

*Mr Mayor, you should write on our behalf to WSCC and point out these failings on their part. It really is not good enough!*

Members agreed with the points raised and the Mayor confirmed he would be writing to West Sussex County Council requesting that action be taken to address the issues.

#### 66. **DISCRETIONARY GRANTS**

Councillors noted the listed payments that had been made to the successful Discretionary Grant applications.

## 67. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

### a) Community Affairs Committee

In the absence of Councillor Apel, Councillor Loxton (Vice-Chairman of the Committee) moved that the minutes of the meetings held on 2 October 2023 (Grants) and 4 December 2023 be approved and adopted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 2 October 2023 (Grants) and 4 December 2023 be approved and adopted.

Councillor Chant reported the incorrect use of their personal pronouns in minute 40 of the 4 December 2023 meeting.

The error was noted for correction at the next meeting of the Committee.

### b) Planning and Conservation Committee

Councillor Butler, Chairman of the Committee, moved that the minutes of the Planning and Conservation Committee meetings held on 12 October 2023, 9 November 2023, with the exception of minute 81, and 7 December 2023 be approved and adopted.

Members discussed some of the issues raised in the minutes, including the city centre pavements and the resolution to write to the County Council; as well as the changes being made to the roads in Westgate and the effects this was having on traffic speeds.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning and Conservation Committee meetings held on 12 October 2023, 9 November 2023, with the exception of minute 81; and 7 December 2023 be approved and adopted.

Councillors were asked to consider the following recommendation:

#### i) ***Preserving Priory Park Motte (9 November 2023, minute 81 refers)***

*Committee RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 20 December 2023 that a working group be established comprised of City Councillors and representatives from Heritage England, Chichester District Council, Priory Park Society to look at the issues and prepare an options proposal for further consideration.*

RESOLVED to accept the recommendation to work towards forming a Working Group as stated to work on preserving the Priory Park Motte.

Councillors Chant and Squire abstained.

Councillors Butler, Scicluna and Vivian were appointed as City Council representatives on the Working Group. The Mayor expressed his interest but advised he might not be able to attend all meetings.

Councillor Chant reported the incorrect use of their personal pronouns in minute 77 of the 9 November 2023 meeting.

The error was noted for correction at the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Chant asked for an update on the work of the Traffic Working Group.

**Post meeting note:** The Town Clerk has advised that, further to an update on the Community Highways Scheme application for a city-wide 20MPH speed limit, an update would be brought to the Planning and Conservation Committee meeting being held on 1 February 2024.

c) **Finance Committee**

Councillor Scicluna, Chairman of the Committee, moved that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 24 October 2023 and 11 December 2023, with the exception of minutes 68, 69a, 69b, 69c and 71, be approved and adopted.

RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 24 October 2023 and 11 December 2023, with the exception of minutes 68, 69a, 69b, 69c and 71, be approved and adopted.

Councillors were asked to consider the following recommendations:

i) ***City Council Budget 2024/2025 (11 December 2023, minute 68 refers)***

*After a short further discussion, it was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 20 December 2023 that the City Council's budget for 2024/2025 be agreed providing the Tax Base remains unchanged from the draft figure of 12,036.40 provided by the District Council. The recommended budget to be £1,103,076 with a precept demand of £851,726 and a Band D Council Tax increase of 10.53% to £70.76.*

RESOLVED that the City Council's budget for 2024/2025 be agreed providing the Tax Base remains unchanged from the draft figure of 12,036.40 provided by the District Council. The recommended budget to be £1,103,076 with a precept demand of £851,726 and a Band D Council Tax increase of 10.53% to £70.76.

ii) ***Council House portico (11 December 2023, minute 69a refers)***

*After a short further discussion it was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 20 December 2023 that the project should continue with the Property Sub-Committee being tasked with developing the feasibility study, including the creation of a suitable Working Group if appropriate.*

Following confirmation of the budget allocated for the feasibility study being £20,000, it was RESOLVED that the project should continue with the Property Sub-Committee being tasked with developing the feasibility study, including the creation of a suitable Working Group if appropriate.

Councillor Squire voted against.

iii) ***Solar array and battery power (11 December 2023, minute 69b refers)***

RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 20 December 2023 that applications be made for Planning and Listed Buildings consents for the installation of solar panels on all remaining suitable roof areas with costings for the installation being obtained based on the outcomes of the applications and brought back to the Finance Committee for a decision.

RESOLVED that applications be made for Planning and Listed Buildings consents for the installation of solar panels on all remaining suitable roof areas with costings for the installation being obtained based on the outcomes of the applications and brought back to the Finance Committee for a decision.

Councillor Squire abstained.

iv) **Old Courtroom roof light (minute 69c refers)**

*RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 20 December 2023 that works proceed subject to the total cost being under £25,000 which would trigger the requirement to use the national Government's Contract Finder service.*

RESOLVED that works proceed subject to the total cost being under £25,000 which would trigger the requirement to use the national Government's Contract Finder service.

Councillor Squire abstained.

v) **Match funding for Shared Prosperity Fund projects being submitted by Chichester BID for city centre improvements (11 December 2023, minute 71 refers)**

*RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 20 December 2023 that up to £28,000 be allocated from the City Council's CIL funds to provide match funding for the Chichester BID's application for project funding to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Further RECOMMENDED that the release of the funds be contingent on the bid being successful.*

RESOLVED that up to £28,000 be allocated from the City Council's CIL funds to provide match funding for the Chichester BID's application for project funding to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Further RESOLVED that the release of the funds be contingent on the bid being successful.

Councillor Squire abstained.

Members noted the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 2 November 2023.

68. **PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP TO PUT TOGETHER A DETAILED PROJECT PLAN FOR EMPLOYING A COMMUNITY ADVICE WORKER**

Following the Voluntary Sector networking event held on 5th December 2023, Councillor Kondabeka proposed that a working group be established to investigate how the Council can best support the wider charity and voluntary sector including looking at the proposed new Community Advice worker post to finalise the job description, management, safeguarding and operational issues.

RESOLVED to establish a Working Group to look at the issues as proposed by Councillor Kondabeka.

AGREED that the Working Group should be made up of Councillors Chant, J Gershater, Knight, Kondabeka and Loxton as well as the Communities Officer.

69. **COUNCIL HOUSE ASSET AND CIVIC REGALIA AUDIT AND VALUATION**

The Deputy Clerk advised that the valuation report had now been received, with the overall value of assets largely unchanged, although there had been fluctuations up and down in value for some individual items.

70. **MOTION CALLING FOR THE CREATION OF AN OPT IN FOR THE PROVISION OF PRINTED COPIES OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE PAPERS TO MEMBERS**

Councillor Chant introduced their motion that had been circulated with the agenda.

Following a discussion around the issues raised and the importance of inclusivity, Members RESOLVED to accept the Officer recommendation to provide a dedicated laptop and printer in the Members' workroom where Members could visit the office and print off their own papers as required.

Councillor Squire abstained.

The Town Clerk confirmed that, as this would be available during office hours, there would be support available to assist with Members printing their own copies if needed.

**71. COUNCILLOR ACCESS TO CITY COUNCIL EMAILS AND DOCUMENTS ON PERSONAL DEVICES**

The Council Services and Support Manager summarised his report and explained why the item had been deferred by the Finance Committee at their October 2023 meeting.

In response to Member questions, he explained that, while the legislation surrounding Data Protection had not changed in recent years, it was the Council's responsibility to implement best practice, which is what his report had outlined; and that not doing so could risk reputational damage for the Council should any problems occur.

After further discussion, Council AGREED that they did not wish to consider the project any further at this time.

**72. REVIEW OF CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL COMPLAINTS POLICY**

The Town Clerk advised that, according to the City Council's Standing Orders, the Complaints Policy had to be reviewed annually in December. She further advised that there had been no substantive changes since the policy had been adopted in June 2023.

RESOLVED to adopt the City Council Complaints Policy.

Councillor Squire abstained.

**73. REVIEW OF CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO REQUESTS MADE UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 AND THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018**

The Clerk advised that, according to the City Council's Standing Orders, the procedure for responding to Freedom of Information requests had to be reviewed annually in December.

She also advised that there was no procedure currently in place and that the proposed Model Publication Scheme and List of Information Available under the Model Scheme, as circulated with the agenda; had been based on the Information Commission Office's recommended documents.

RESOLVED to adopt the Model Publication Scheme and the Information Available under the Model Publication scheme as circulated with the agenda.

Councillor Squire abstained.

**74. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members noted the report from Councillor Vivian as the City Council's representative at Chichester BID.

Councillor Scicluna gave Members an update on a recent trip to Valletta by the Friends of Valletta. She also reported that links between the cathedrals in both cities were currently being explored.

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

Members noted the reports that had been received from Councillor's Chant and Vivian.

Councillor Chant summarised their report and their recent activities in their ward and noted a couple of events they had attended as City Bailiff – the launch of the Enabled2Parent charity and a Christmas carol concert.

The Mayor advised that, if other Councillors wished to provide any ward reports they should submit them to the Council Services and Support Manager for circulation after the meeting. He also asked that reports should be limited to a single page of bulleted highlights.

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

Members noted the reports that had been received from Chichester District Councillors Brisbane, Brown and Vivian.

West Sussex County Councillor Simon Oakley advised that he had submitted a report and highlighted some of the points in his report, including the ongoing consultations on the sustainable transport policy and discussions regarding moving Jesse Younghusband school to a new site.

He reported that the booking system for attending household waste recycling sites in West Sussex would be extended to the Westhampnett site in January 2024.

Councillor Oakley also suggested that the City Council should investigate the County Council's Operation Watershed scheme which aimed to tackle flooding issues and might help resolve the issues raised earlier in the meeting.

**Post meeting note:** Councillor Oakley's report arrived after publication of the agenda and so was circulated to Councillors after the meeting, on 21 December 2023.

#### 77. **ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

- Business plan – review of consultation and next steps
- Report from the Terms of Reference Working Group
- Chichester Gala

#### 78. **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 28 February 2024 at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 8.41pm

#### **ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING**

<b>Minute ref.</b>	<b>Agreed action</b>	<b>Assigned for action to</b>
65	Mayor to write to West Sussex County Council in response to the public question about flooding in Chichester	The Mayor/Town Clerk

67a	Correction of personal pronouns in minute 40 of the 4 December 2023 meeting of the Community Affairs Committee.	Committee Chairman/Town Clerk
67b(i)	Establishment of a working group of interested parties to look at issues and options for preserving the Priory Park motte for presentation to a future Council meeting. City Council membership to be as minuted.	Councillors Vivian and Scicluna
67b	Correction of personal pronouns in minute 77 of the 9 November 2023 meeting of the Planning and Conservation Committee.	Committee Chairman/Town Clerk
67c(ii)	Develop feasibility study for the Council House portico project.	Property Sub-Committee
67c(iii)	Apply for Planning and Listed Building consent for expansion of the solar array on the Council House roof.	Property Sub-Committee/Town Clerk/Property Maintenance Manager/Planning Adviser
67c(iv)	Proceed with replacement of Old Courtroom roof light.	Property Sub-Committee/Town Clerk/Property Maintenance Manager/Planning Adviser
68	Call first meeting of the agreed working group, membership as minuted, to investigate how the City Council might support the wider charity and voluntary sector.	Town Clerk
70	Set up the agreed self-service printing station for Councillors to be able to print paperwork with Officer support if necessary.	Council Services Support Manager