



Chichester City Council

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

- Date** 2 April 2024
- Time** 5.30pm – 6.12pm
- Location** The Council Chamber - The Council House • North Street • CHICHESTER • West Sussex • PO19 1LQ
- PRESENT:** Councillors Scicluna (Chair), Miall (Vice-Chair), Kondabeka, and Loxton. Councillor Pramas joined the meeting at 5.35pm
- EX-OFFICIO:** The Mayor (Councillor C Gershater)
- ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Butler and Squire, Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk (Responsible Financial Officer), Council Services and Support Manager.

96. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from Councillors Quail and Vivian

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

No additional declarations were received.

98. **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2024**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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

a) **Update on costings for the City Centre floral planting scheme (minute 89 refers)**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the box hedging had now been removed and that the existing planting would be removed shortly with plants being redistributed to other locations where possible.

Members were advised that the total year one cost for the extended planting and maintenance of all six Cathedral beds would be £30,265, They were also informed that the works had been ordered, for payment from the City Council's CIL allocation; and that work would be commencing during the week beginning 15 April 2024.

b) **Update on response from the leaseholder to the Committee decision on the proposed unit lease changes at the Market House.**

Members were advised that this item would be discussed under agenda item 14.

100. **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO END JANUARY 2024**

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised her report that had been circulated with the agenda.

Members were advised that, as of the end of January 2024, the accounts were showing a surplus of approximately £81,000. She informed the Committee that, due to the income from interest on the City Council's deposit accounts, the surplus was anticipated to be in the region of £100,000 by the end of the financial year.

The Deputy Town Clerk expressed the opinion that it would be prudent to increase the allotment and Council House reserves by £20,000 and £60,000 respectively to cover the costs of anticipated future maintenance works.

Other items in the Deputy Town Clerk's report that were highlighted included the creation of a new reserve for the Council House lift, the underspend on the air conditioning system due to it being inoperative and the payment from the City Council's CIL allocation for the solar power system at St James.

In response to a question from Councillor Miall, the Committee was advised that the City Council's contribution to the running costs of Portfield Cemetery meant that residents of the city were entitled to a 50% reduction in the various fees charged for burials and memorials on the site.

101. **EARMARKED RESERVES**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained her report and summarised the projects that had been identified for future completion.

Members discussed the report and it was suggested that the Council House reserve could be split in the future with reserves being created for more specifically identified purposes.

Councillor Pramas expressed support for the spending on the maintenance of the Council House but also suggested it was important that the story of what was being spent and why was made clear so that the city's residents could gain a better understanding.

102. **PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that the current underspend on the Public Realm budget was largely due to the suspension of the City Rangers service and the gap of 8 months before the implementation of the new City Ambassadors scheme.

She informed that any underspend would be carried forward in to the 2024-2025 budget.

Members were also given a summary of the kinds of expenditure that the Public Realm budget could be used for.

103. **PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Committee **NOTED** the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 21 February 2024 and the ordinary meeting of the Property Sub-Committee held on 20 March 2024.

Members then considered the following recommendation:

a) Allotments – retesting of plots previously designated as contaminated (Property Sub-Committee, 20 March 2024, minute 37i refers)

It was RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 2 April 2024 that an order be placed with Impact Geotechnical in the sum of £2,912.15+VAT, in the 2024-2025 financial year, to be paid from the Allotment Reserve.

After a short discussion, it was RESOLVED to place an order with Impact Geotechnical in the sum of £2,912.15+VAT, in the 2024-2025 financial year, to be paid from the Allotment Reserve, for the retesting of the allotment plots previously designated as contaminated.

104. **ROLE OF INTERNAL AUDITOR**

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised her report.

She recommended to the Committee that three quotes should be sought from external companies for the provision of internal audit services.

The Town Clerk summarised her thoughts on the current arrangements and further explained the differences between internal and external auditors.

The Committee RESOLVED to accept the Officer recommendation and asked that an options report including the quotes received be brought to a future meeting.

105. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

a) MONTHLY RECONCILIATION WITH EVIDENCE OF BANK STATEMENTS TO END OF JANUARY 2024

RESOLVED to note the monthly reconciliations with evidence of bank statements until end of January 2024.

b) LIST OF PAYMENTS MADE FOR JANUARY 2024

RESOLVED to note the list of receipts and payments made for January 2024.

c) LIST OF BARCLAYCARD PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY 2024

RESOLVED to note the list of Barclaycard payments made for January 2024.

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

- CIL monitoring report to be made a standing agenda item and to include agreed and proposed spending.
- End of year accounts and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

107. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT) 1960

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for agenda item 14 due to the nature of the business to be transacted, namely confidential business matters.

108. CHANGES TO UNIT LEASE ARRANGEMENTS AT THE MARKET HOUSE

Members were informed that a revised proposal had been received from Orion Developments (Southern) Ltd regarding changes to the unit leases at the Market House.

After a short discussion, the Committee RESOLVED to accept the revised unit leases and associated actions proposed in the confidential report and further RESOLVED NOT to agree to the request for a contribution to the costs associated with the unit lease changes.

109. DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2024

The meeting closed at 6.12pm

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Minute ref.	Agreed action	Assigned for action to
103b	Order to be placed with Impact Geotechnical in the 2024-2025 financial year for the retesting of the allotment plots previously designated as contaminated.	Property Maintenance Manager
104	Quotes to be obtained for the provision of internal audit services by external companies and an options report to be presented at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.	Deputy Town Clerk