



Chichester City Council

PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date 17 April 2024

Time 3.30pm –5.24pm

Location The Council Chamber, The Council House, North Street, Chichester. PO19 1LQ

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Deputy Town Clerk, Council Services and Support Manager, Property Maintenance Manager (PMM)

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from Councillor Scicluna.

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

Councillors Miall, Quail and Squire declared an interest as City Council allotment holders.

46. MINUTES OF THE PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 20 March 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

47. UPDATES ON ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The PMM explained the items in his report that had been marked as “On hold”. He informed Members that this meant that the works marked like this had been rescheduled as Property Team resources had not been available due to urgent works, training courses and illness.

Members were given a draft schedule indicating when the “On hold” projects were expected to be completed.

The PMM advised that a lot of his time was also being taken up with establishing and formalising the administrative processes necessary for the correct management of the City Council’s physical assets. He informed the Sub-Committee that he was working to add all the inspection and other requirements to an online app. This would then schedule works as required and would be available to the Property Team and Facilities Officers through a tablet.

Members discussed the issues raised at length and expressed concerns that ongoing completion and recording of some fundamental inspections and other requirements had not been taking place.

The PMM assured Members that the work was in hand and, going forward, this would no longer be the case.

In response to the concerns raised and questions about overall responsibility, the Council Services and Support Manager suggested that a similar reporting mechanism to other statutory Council policy reviews be implemented whereby a summary of processes completed would be presented to Councillors annually to provide an audit trail and ensure Member awareness that the Council's obligations were being met.

The Sub-Committee AGREED that this would be a positive way forward.

a) **Completed projects**

Members noted the projects listed as completed on the Property Maintenance Manager's (PMM) report.

b) **No updates**

Members noted the projects listed as having no update at this time on the PMM's report.

Where appropriate, Members further noted the scheduled dates from the PMM's draft schedule.

The Council House

- i) Mayor's Parlour redecoration – April-May 2024
- ii) Mayor's Car Park – June-August 2024
- iii) Council Chamber refurbishment – March 2025

Litten Gardens

- i) *Replacement of dying tree* – Members were informed that there had been no update from the Royal Naval Association (RNA) but that there would be some spare trees left over from the re-wilding of Brewery Field and it was hoped that one of these could be offered to the RNA if they were of a suitable variety.
- ii) *Path surface replacement* – the PMM reported that alternatives to a new hard surface path being installed were being investigated. He also advised that if the hard surface option were to be chosen then the national Contract Finder service would need to be used due to the estimated cost of the project.

Public Realm

- i) *Whyke Road Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)* – the Council Services Support Manager advised that the local Residents Association had submitted a list of proposed locations for additional SID posts which had been passed to West Sussex County Highways. He also advised that County Highways were experiencing exceptional workloads and that processing the proposals was likely to be delayed.

Members were also given an outline of the licensing process that would need to be followed if County Highways accepted the initial proposals as viable.

- ii) *Bus Shelters – RTPI* – Members noted the update given in the Property Report.

c) **Updates**

The Council House

- i) *Assembly Room – Air conditioning* – The PMM advised that the remaining commissioning of the new air conditioning unit would take place on 19 April 2024.
- ii) *Assembly Room – Lighting System* – Members noted the update.

Post meeting note: the installation of the upgraded lighting system is due to commence on Tuesday 7 May 2024 and the contractor has been advised that the system must be operable for events taking place in the Assembly Room the following weekend.

- iii) *Solar Power array and battery storage* – Members noted the update.
- iv) *Old Courtroom Replacement Roof Light* – the PMM advised that he had discussed the project with Tom Hayes from Meynell-Hayes Architects and that he was in the process of drawing up a specification for commissioning the additional drawings requested for the Planning application.

He also advised that he would report to the Sub-Committee once he had had a response from the Architect.

- v) *Damp issues* – Members noted the update.
- vi) *Hanging baskets* – Members noted the update and were advised that the Deputy Town Clerk would be ordering the additional baskets from the City Council's contractor.
- vii) *Workshop power* – Members noted the update.
- viii) *Repairs to back office heating and air conditioning* – Members noted the update.
- ix) *Loan of “Still life of joint of beef on a pewter dish”* – The PMM reported that the loan agreement had been confirmed and that the confirmation of insurance was awaited.
- x) *Foyer improvements* – Members noted that the new noticeboard had been installed and the leaflet stands repurposed for wall mounting.
- xi) *Rear yard gate replacement* – Members noted the update. The PMM advised that Listed Building Consent had now been applied for.
- xii) *Roof space insulation* – Members noted this work had been scheduled for May 2024

Litten Gardens

- i) *Correction of misspelt name on Memorial* – Members noted the update. The PMM advised that the second stonemason that had been identified had declined the work due to concerns about the viability of repairing the correction rather than replacing the tablet.

Members discussed the issue and the two proposed methods. Concerns were raised about the longevity of the minor repair and also the costs involved with replacing the tablet in its entirety.

RESOLVED to proceed with the original stonemason. The PMM was asked to confirm the method that would be used to effect the correction and also the date the work was scheduled to take place.

Public Realm

- i) *Cathedral Beds* – Members noted the update and also that the contractor had added the backbone planting. The Sub-Committee was informed that the summer planting would be added in late May and that compliments had already been received about the new planting scheme.
- ii) *Brewery Field* – Members noted the update. The PMM advised that the signage mentioned in his report would cost £1,090 +VAT and that the gate was on order.

AGREED to order the new signage at a cost of £1,090+VAT, payable from the Public Realm budget.

The PMM informed Members that the City Council had been approached by Transition Chichester about using Brewery Field for a community event later in the year.

In response to questions from Councillors, the PMM advised that a deposit against damages would be charged and the Transition Chichester would be responsible for obtaining the necessary licences and indemnity insurance.

- iii) *Cycle racks* – Members noted the update and were advised that the racks that had previously been damaged had now been converted for root fixing ready for installation once a contractor could be identified and a schedule drawn up.
- iv) *Stonepillow* - Members noted the update.

Allotments

- i) *Blackberry Lane – Vehicle Access Issues* – the PMM reported that a petition had been sent by the allotment holders but that the document had been severely damaged by snails while it had been on display and was illegible.

He reported that only 11 out of 57 plot holders had signed the petition. He also reported that he was creating an online version to help the allotment holders re-run the petition.

Members agreed that the PMM had provided sufficient support and it was now up to allotment holders to gather the necessary evidence for their request.

- ii) *Retesting of plots previously designated as contaminated* – Members noted the update and also that this affected the Florence Road and Blackberry Lane sites.

The PMM advised that the testing was due to take place on 22 April 2024 and that he would circulate the executive summary of the results once it was available.

Market Cross

- i) *Replacement of stolen pennants* – Members noted the report.

d) **Additional updates**

Litten Gardens

- i) *Vandalised CCTV camera* – Members noted that this had now been replaced.
- ii) *Graffiti removal* – the PMM informed Members that graffiti had been spray painted on one of the benches adjacent to the chainsaw sculpture. He advised that CCTV footage had been found of the incident taking place and that the culprit had been identified as attending a local school. He further advised that the school had been informed and that the Police would be making enquiries about the incident.

Members were also informed that a separate incident of vandalism of the flower beds and plants had taken place and that footage of this incident was also being passed to the Police.

The Council Services and Support Manager updated Members on a vandalism incident that had happened in February 2023 which had caused damage to the chainsaw sculpture. He reported that the suspect had pleaded guilty to the charges and would be sentenced in early May.

48. **NEW PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS**

a) **St Pauls Allotment – replacement of fence (west side)**

The PMM summarised the information that he had given in his report and added that replacing the fence line would also involve the removal of a tree stump to allow the installation of a new fence.

Members noted that more information would be forthcoming at the next meeting.

b) **Sign for the fascia of the Council House**

Members noted that the PMM was awaiting further advice from Chichester District Council.

AGREED that the discussion regarding the installation of signage on the front of the Council House would be deferred to the Foyer Working Group.

c) **Fire alarm system risks**

The PMM summarised his report that had been circulated with the agenda.

He explained that his concerns related to the fire detection system in the Assembly Room during some of the concerts that were held in there, as well as concerns about caterers' use of equipment in the Crush Bar area.

A lengthy debate took place with Members sharing the PMM's concerns and options being discussed about the current uses of the two areas and how the matters raised might be addressed.

The PMM also clarified that the proposal was to install radiant heat detectors to supplement the existing smoke (particulate) detectors in the event that the smoke detectors needed to be deactivated due to the activity taking place in the space.

The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to discuss the matter with the City Council's insurance company and it was RESOLVED that, subject to the outcome of the enquiry to the

insurance company, the fire detection systems in the Assembly Room and Crush Bar areas be upgraded at a cost of £2,161.82+VAT for the Assembly Room and not more than £2,500+VAT for the Crush Bar.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Council Services Support Manager advised that, while the Sub-Committee could continue to discuss the wider issues of the usage types of the two spaces, any formal assessment of and decisions on these matters would need to be addressed under a separate agenda item at the next meeting due to the subject being substantively different from the current agenda item.

The Sub-Committee AGREED that, due to the importance of the issue, a further meeting of the Sub-Committee should be called at the earliest opportunity.

49. ALLOTMENTS UPDATE

Members noted the update that had been included in the Property Report.

The Sub-Committee asked for clarification about the requests for leniency from allotment holders mentioned in the report.

The PMM reported that some tenants had been asking for personal circumstances to be taken in to account when allotment plot condition inspections took place as some had been suffering from health problems or were caring for others who were or had not been able to tend to their allotments as much as they had liked.

The Council Services and Support Manager read out part of the existing allotment terms and conditions that highlighted that allotment tenants should contact the Property Maintenance Team if they were experiencing difficulties and that approaches of this type would be taken in to consideration when plot inspections took place.

Councillor Miall suggested that indicative time scales for any requested leniency could be included in the terms and conditions.

50. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA

- Crush Bar kitchen facilities proposals and costings for interim works
- Formation of the Foyer Working Group
- Property related administration and process issues and resourcing

51. DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 5.24pm

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Minute ref.	Agreed action	Assigned for action to
47(c)(Council House)iv	Provide the Sub-Committee with quote for architectural drawings to accompany the Old Courtroom rooflight planning application	Property Maintenance Manager
47(c)(Public Realm)ii	Place order for new noticeboard for Brewery Field	Property Maintenance Manager
47(c)(Allotments)ii	Distribute executive summary from Allotment retesting report	Property Maintenance Manager
48a	Obtain three quotes for replacement fenceline along west side of St Pauls allotments	Property Maintenance Manager
	Prepare an options report, with indicative costs, for the Crush Bar project as discussed	Property Maintenance Manager