



Chichester City Council

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes

**Date** 6 November 2024

**Time** 5.30pm – 7.25pm

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

**PRESENT:** Councillors Miall (Chair), Loxton (SL), Scicluna (AS) and Squire (KS)

**EX-OFFICIO:**

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor McHale (SM), Town Clerk (TC), Deputy Town Clerk (DTC) (Responsible Finance Officer), Council Services and Support Manager (CSSM), Property Maintenance Manager (PMM) - for agenda items 1 to 4 and the supplementary agenda item, Project Manager (PM), West Sussex County Councillor Simon Oakley

49. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were noted from the Mayor, Councillor Quail and Councillor Pramas.

Councillor Corfield was absent from the meeting.

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

None.

51. **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2024 AND THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2024**

RESOLVED to approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 4 September 2024 and the Special Meeting of the Finance Committee held on 16 October 2024.

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

- a) **Minute 31a – to produce a report outlining the costs and benefits/income relating to the upgraded Council House solar array.**

The PMM gave a short presentation to explain the figures he had included in his report to the Committee.

RESOLVED to place an order with CRG in the sum of £4,964+VAT for two additional solar energy storage batteries, to be paid from the Energy Efficiency allocation from the City Council's CIL funds.

- b) **Minute 31b – to produce a revised report supporting the business case for the Council House kitchen upgrades.**

Members noted that this report had been discussed and the recommendations approved at the Special Meeting of the Finance Committee held on 16 October 2024.

- c) **Minute 32 - reformat CIL update to distinguish between formally agreed project costs and estimates of planned project costs.**

The Chair advised that this had been completed and it would be discussed under agenda item 5.

- d) **Minute 32 – circulate CIL expenditure to date to next meetings of Business Plan Sub-Committee and Full Council.**

The Committee noted that this had been completed.

- e) **Minute 33 – Mayor to write to Chichester District Council expressing the City Council's concern with cemetery provision within Chichester.**

The Committee were advised that the Mayor had written to Chichester District Council and that a response was being awaited.

- f) **Minute 48 – invite interested parties to join the Community Facility (City South) Working Group**

The PM advised that he had approached West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Councillors and that Councillor Sarah Sharp (West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council) had agreed to join the Working Group.

He also reported that a community engagement exercise was being planned to start to identify the community's needs, possible locations and types of facilities.

*At this point, the Chairman took the supplementary agenda item.*

#### **53. SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA – STAIR CLIMBER PURCHASE**

The PM summarised his report that had been circulated prior to the meeting and answered questions from Members about access issues and, in particular, escape routes in the event of a fire in the building.

RESOLVED to place an order with Baronmead International Ltd in the sum of £5,895+VAT for the recommended stair climber and associated training, to be funded from the Council House Reserve.

*At this point the meeting returned to the published main agenda order.*

#### **54. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) UPDATE**

The Committee noted the DTC's report and thanked her for preparing the information. It was agreed that the new format helped to understand the current situation regarding the City Council's CIL allocations.

#### **55. INVESTMENTS POLICY AND REPORT**

The Committee noted the DTC's report and RESOLVED to adopt the investment policy subject to amending paragraph 5.1 to delegate authority to determining liquidity requirements to the TC and DTC in consultation with the Finance Committee and a correction to paragraph 5.2 to change Town Council to City Council.

56. **REVIEW OF INVENTORY OF PROPERTY AND OTHER ASSETS INCLUDING BUILDINGS**

After a short explanation of the asset inventories that had been circulated prior to the meeting, Members noted receipt of the documents.

57. **CONCLUSION OF THE EXTERNAL AUDIT 2023-2024**

The Committee noted the receipt of the external auditor's report and their comments.

The DTC explained that some of the conclusions had been challenged as being factually incorrect and that a response was being awaited.

The Committee asked the TC to raise the DTC's concerns with West Sussex Association of Local Councils (WSALC) for further action.

*Councillor Apel left the meeting*

58. **DRAFT CITY COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2025-2026**

**NOTE:** Agenda item 10 contained a typing error and the heading should have read – **Draft City Council Budget for 2025-2026**

The DTC presented the draft City Council budget for 2025-2026 and highlighted some of the changes to budget headings that were being proposed.

Members were reminded that this was a draft and that the final budget would be presented to the Finance Committee at the December meeting and, subject to their approval, to Full Council on 20 December 2024.

Members were further reminded that, as it was a draft, they could suggest changes to the budget before it was presented for approval at the next meeting.

The Committee RESOLVED to increase the large grants budget by £10,000.

The Committee also requested that it be noted at Full Council that the vote had been split and the proposal had been carried by the Chair's casting vote.

59. **INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024-2025**

The DTC advised the Committee that the Internal Auditor was due to make their first visit on 22 November 2024 and that they would be following the audit plan that had been circulated with the agenda.

60. **TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM THE PUBLIC REALM BUDGET TO LARGE GRANTS RESERVE**

The Committee noted the virement of £10,000 from the Public Realm budget to a new Large Grants Earmarked Reserve to fund years two and three of the Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester core funding grant.

AS expressed concerns that the virement was not within authority of the Committee and asked that this disagreement with the virement be noted in the minutes.

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

- Review of earmarked reserves.
- Outcome of interim Internal Audit.
- Approval of City Council budget for 2025-2026

**62. DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING – Wednesday 4 December 2024 at 5.30pm

**63. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from this meeting for agenda item 15 due to the nature of the business to be transacted, namely confidential personnel matters.

**64. PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2024**

SM, as Chair, summarised the recommendations made at the recent meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee which were then considered by the Finance Committee.

**a) Staff gradings – minute 12 refers**

*The Sub-Committee considered the report on staff gradings that had been circulated prior to the meeting and RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND to the Finance Committee on 6 November 2024 that the gradings be implemented as proposed in the document.*

The Committee RESOLVED to accept the recommendation from the Personnel Sub-Committee.

**b) Staff resources – minute 14 refers**

*The Sub-Committee considered the current staffing levels and RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND to the Finance Committee on 6 November 2024 that the changes outlined in the Property Maintenance Manager’s report be implemented.*

The Committee RESOLVED to accept the recommendations from the Personnel Sub-Committee

The meeting closed at 7.25pm

**ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING**

<b>Minute ref.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Assigned to:</b>
57	Contact WSALC regarding City Council concerns with comments received from the External Audit following the conclusion of the External Audit 2023-2024	Town Clerk
58	Advise Full Council that the vote to increase the large grants budget had been split and subsequently carried on the Chair’s casting vote	Town Clerk