



Chichester City Council

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date 4 December 2024

Time 5.30pm – 7.00pm

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

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

EX-OFFICIO:

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk (TC), Deputy Town Clerk (DTC) (Responsible Finance Officer), Council Services and Support Manager (CSSM)

65. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

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

None.

67. **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2024**

RESOLVED to approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 6 November 2024.

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

- a) **Minute 57 - Contact WSALC regarding City Council concerns with comments received from the External Auditor following the conclusion of the 2023-2024 external audit**

TC advised that the letter had been sent to West Sussex Association of Local Councils but that no response had yet been received. She also advised that no response had been received from the External Auditors regarding the same concerns.

- b) **Minute 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.**

Members noted that would be brought to the meeting of the City Council on 18 December 2024.

69. **PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee noted that the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 26 November 2024 had not yet been circulated. RM advised that there had been no recommendations for the Finance Committee.

70. **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO END SEPTEMBER 2024**

DTC summarised her report that had been included with the agenda and clarified some of the individual variances against the annual budget that had been highlighted.

She reported that the accounts were currently showing an overall surplus of £84,219 against the projected annual budget but that this included pay award back pay and unspent Community Grant and Public Realm balances.

71. **EARMARKED RESERVES**

The Committee noted receipt of the report.

72. **PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS**

The Committee noted receipt of the report.

73. **INTERNAL AUDITOR INTERIM REPORT**

The Committee noted the report and recommendations.

The DTC advised that the recommendation regarding draft minutes had been implemented and that the fidelity insurance had been increased at a cost of £412 for the remainder of the year.

The recommendation regarding verification of the bank reconciliation was noted and RM confirmed that he would complete this task ahead of the next quarterly Finance Committee meeting.

The committee discussed the Internal Auditor's comments regarding the Town Clerk's delegating spending authority.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 18 December 2024 that the Town Clerk's designated spending authority for commitments within agreed budgets be increased to £5,000.

74. **CITY COUNCIL BUDGET 2025-2026**

a) To review and approve the final City Council budget for 2025/2026

The DTC advised that the draft budget had been updated with the revised tax base figure for the city for the next year. She informed the Committee that this had allowed the costs of the Project Manager's post to be brought back into core revenue funding as well as to increase the budget for community events throughout the year by an additional £10,000.

The Committee discussed the request from CDC to consider taking on the graffiti removal service for 2025-26, but **AGREED** that the short notice given, as well as the lack of time to undertake due diligence, meant that it was not possible for the City Council to make any commitment from the 2025-2026 budget.

The Committee then considered the request from CDC to provide ongoing annual maintenance contributions as well as contributions for equipment replacement

costs at the end of their life in addition to the £400K already pledged towards the upgrading of the playgrounds in Chichester. The Committee **AGREED** that the current offer of £400K was the only commitment that the City Council would make and it would not be prepared to accept any ongoing maintenance or replacement liabilities.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council on 18 December 2024 that the City Council's budget for 2025/2026 be agreed providing the Tax Base remains unchanged from the draft figure of 12,517.40 supplied by the District Council. The recommended budget to be £1,211,683 with a precept demand of £970,760 and a Band D Council Tax increase of £6.79 to £77.55.

- b) To review and approve the proposed fees and charges for 2025/2026

The Committee **RESOLVED** to adopt the proposed fees and charges as distributed with the agenda, subject to the addition of the kitchen hire charge of £250 and rounding of charges to the nearest pound.

75. **COMMUNITY SPACE (CITY SOUTH) WORKING GROUP**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Business Plan Sub-Committee would be the responsible committee for the Community Space (City South) Working Group.

76. **TO NOTE AND RATIFY THE FOLLOWING RECONCILIATIONS AND TRANSACTIONS**

The Committee noted the reports as presented and **RATIFIED** the following reconciliations and payments:

- a) Monthly reconciliation with evidence of bank statements for August and September 2024
- b) List of payments made for August and September 2024
- c) List of Barclaycard payments for August and September 2024

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

- Review of Standing Orders and Finance Regulations
- Review budget preparation and approval meetings process

78. **DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING – Wednesday 5 February 2025 at 5.30pm

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

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from this meeting for agenda item 16 due to the nature of the business to be transacted, namely confidential personnel matters.

80. **MATTERS ARISING REGARDING THE MARKET HOUSE**

The DTC advised that the lease assignment was due to complete on 17th December 2024.

The meeting closed at 7.00pm