



Chichester City Council

## MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes

**Date** 10 December 2025

**Time** 17:30 – 18:50

**Location** Chichester City Council Chamber

**PRESENT:** Councillors Miall (RM), Loxton (SL), Pramas (LP)

**EX-OFFICIO:** The Mayor, Councillor McHale (SMc)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Quail (SQ) and Apel (CA), Town Clerk (TC), Deputy Town Clerk (DTC), Council Services and Support Manager (CSSM)

#### **FIN2025/50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were noted from Councillor Scicluna

#### **FIN2025/51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

#### **FIN2025/52 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions were received.

#### **FIN2025/53 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Decision:** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 November 2025 were APPROVED and signed as a correct record.

#### **FIN2025/54 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following tasks had been completed:

- The surveyors letter had been provided to the Property Sub-Committee, and following the meeting held on 25 November 2025, a further independent third party opinion was currently being sought.
- The IT equipment and Systems Acceptable Use Policy and Social Media Policy were being included on the Full Council agenda for the meeting being held on 17 December 2025.
- Open Design Studio had been appointed to progress the Community Centre project.

- Arrangements for the Christmas closure period had been made.

## FIN2025/55 MINUTES FROM SUB COMMITTEES

### FIN2025/55.1 Property Sub-Committee

The Committee NOTED receipt of the minutes from the Property Sub Committee.

TC advised that intention was to ask West Dean College to advise on the proposed schedule of works.

Chichester Conservation Area Committee (CCAC) were also recommended as a possible source of independent verification of the required scope of works.

Committee also suggested that advice be sought from Owen Broadway (Conservation Officer at Chichester District Council (CDC) and Chichester Cathedral be approached to ask which contractors they used.

Committee **REQUESTED** that additional quotes be sought for the Council House roof work.

Members NOTED that the condition survey on the Market Cross had been completed and identified repair and remedial works that needed to be completed. The cost estimate for the works was in the region of £80k-£100k.

**AGREED** that further discussion of the matter would be brought to the budget workshops in the new year.

**Decision:** The Committee approved seeking independent verification from West Dean College for the proposed roof work schedule.

**Task:** Explore alternative contractors and consult organisations such as English Heritage or the Cathedral for expertise and potential funding for Market Cross repairs @Town Clerk and @Property Maintenance Manager.

### FIN2025/55.2 Business Plan Sub-Committee

The Committee NOTED receipt of the minutes from the Business Plan Sub-Committee and considered the Sub-committee Recommendations.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to schedule monthly meetings for the first six months of 2026 with a single item agenda to consider matters related to the management of the Community Centre project, on the understanding that if no decisions were required, the meetings would be cancelled.

The committee **RESOLVED** to co-opt Cllr Sarah Quail on to the committee to fill the vacancy arising from the resignation Kenneth Squire from the council.

**Decision:** The Committee approved scheduling monthly Finance Committee meetings in the first half of 2026 to manage the Community Centre project.

**Decision:** Councillor Quail was co-opted to the Finance Committee to ensure quoracy for the additional meetings.

## **FIN2025/56 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 OCTOBER 2025**

Committee noted the report. DTC highlighted that the budget is currently tight - interest received on investments has helped us to remain within budget.

Significant areas of expenditure have been IT, council house maintenance, ill health insurance policy (this has increased significantly this year).

**Decision:** The Committee decided to revisit CIL cash flow projections urgently to ensure financial stability and avoid over-commitment.

**Task:** Revisit cash flow projections to ensure financial stability and avoid over-commitment. *@Deputy Town Clerk*

## **FIN2025/57 EAR MARKED RESERVES**

Committee noted the ear marked reserves position.

## **FIN2025/58 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR)**

The TC provided an update on the government consultation which was open until 11 January 2026.

She reported that the consultation was a single form, covering the whole of East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Respondents were invited to respond to the four options that had been submitted:

- Option 1: reorganisation of East Sussex into a single unitary authority, with Brighton and Hove remaining a separate unitary at its current size.
- Option 2: creation of five new unitary authorities across the entire East & West Sussex and Brighton and Hove areas, with some changes to existing boundaries required.
- Option 3: creation of a single unitary authority covering all of West Sussex with Brighton and Hove remaining a separate unitary at its current size.
- Option 4: creation of two unitary authorities covering West Sussex with Brighton and Hove remaining a separate unitary at its current size.

Members were informed that respondents could choose to respond to all of the options, or just to selected options.

They were advised that a full report would be published with the Full Council agenda for the meeting being held on 17 December 2025, but the recommendation would be that City Council should respond to options 2, 3 & 4.

Members noted that the consultation consisted of 8-10 closed questions and one free text box and gave very little scope to express nuances or concerns.

The TC reported that it had been a struggle to make progress with Community Asset Transfers (CATs) with CDC, who had requested that the City Council should identify a single proposal as a priority to progress.

The TC advised that she had highlighted the difficulty with this demand, as the City Council had been forced to act with regards to some CATs (e.g. Oaklands Park and Priory Park) where there were other interested parties, whilst still requiring the land for the Sea Cadet hut at Florence Park.

Members were informed that checks with other parishes that had submitted multiple Expressions of Interest (EOI) confirmed that they had not been required to select a single project to progress.

Committee was informed that CDC had additionally requested that where more than one EOI had been submitted it was incumbent upon the City Council to secure agreement from the multiple parties in supporting a single bid.

They were also informed that, at the same time, CDC would not directly share details with the City Council of all the competing bidders, so Officers were still slightly in the dark about all of the other interested parties and did not yet believe they had made contact with all of the relevant groups.

The TC reported that CDC had initially imposed a deadline of 19 December 2025 for producing single bids for the affected sites, although following representations that this was unreasonable they had now extended this to 30 January 2026.

It was further reported that meetings had been held with a number of groups, namely the Rugby Club, Chichester Festival Theatre (CFT), Pistol and Rifle Club, Archery Club and Bowls Club. A meeting was still outstanding with the Football Club and confirmation that the Racquets Club were the bidders for their facility plus the public tennis course at Oaklands Park, was still being awaited.

The TC advised that she had sought a quote from a legal specialist in Community Asset Transfers as there were a number of concerns about the soundness of the process that had been followed by CDC to date and that formal advice was needed. The TC requested approval for expenditure of up to £5,000 on legal fees in order to be confident in the process and next steps.

**Decision:** The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve expenditure of up to £5,000 on the Community Asset Transfers process, to be taken from the General Reserve.

**Task:** TC to prepare a briefing paper for Council on current status of CAT EOI's.

## **FIN2025/59 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) UPDATE**

Committee noted the report from the DTC and agreed to **APPROVE** the suggested changes to the CIL projects listed on the CDC infrastructure business plan.

**Decision:** The Finance Committee **APPROVED** the submission of the revised list of schemes to the District Council for amendments to the Infrastructure Business Plan.

**Task:** Submit the revised list of schemes to the District Council for amendments to the Infrastructure Business Plan. *@Deputy Town Clerk*

*Councillor Apel left the meeting at 6.35pm*

## **FIN2025/60 FLORENCE PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE**

The Chair provided an update.

Members noted that:

1. Architects have been appointed.
2. Officers were still trying to progress the CAT for the land to build on
3. Setting up had commenced on the governance structure for the community organisation that would run the centre.

The committee considered the Project Managers report and **RESOLVED** to approve expenditure of up to £15,000 to be taken from CIL funding to cover legal services for establishing the governance arrangements for the new community organisation that would be responsible for the delivery and ongoing management of the new facility.

**Decision: APPROVED** up to £15,000 for legal advice to establish a suitable governance structure, specifically forming a Community Interest Organisation (CIO) for the Florence Park Community Centre project, to be funded from the City Council's CIL allocation.

**Task:** Seek legal advice to establish a suitable governance structure, focusing on forming a Community Interest Organisation (CIO) for the Florence Park Community Centre project. *@Project Manager*

**FIN2025/61 TO NOTE AND RATIFY THE FOLLOWING RECONCILIATIONS AND TRANSACTIONS**

The Committee **NOTED** receipt the bank reconciliations for August-October

The committee **RATIFIED** the following items:

- List of payments for August - October 2025
- List of Barclaycard payment for August-October 2025

**FIN2025/62 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Next ordinary meeting: 4 February 2026 – budget setting and CIL cashflow

**Task:** Include a review of cash flow related to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in the agenda for the 4 February 2026 meeting. *@Council Services and Support Manager*

**FIN2025/63 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Finance Committee confirmed the dates for upcoming meetings as follows:

Community Centre Oversight Meetings:

- Wednesday, 14 January 2026 at 4:00pm
- Wednesday, 11 February 2026 at 4:00pm
- Wednesday, 11 March 2026 at 4:00pm

Ordinary Finance Committee Meeting:

- Wednesday, 18 March 2026 at 5:30pm

