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Minutes of the meeting of the **Council** held in the Committee Rooms - East Pallant House on Tuesday 26 September 2023 at 2.00 pm

**Members Present:** Mr J Cross (Vice-Chairman), Mr I Ballantyne, Mrs T Bangert, Mr D Betts, Mr S Boulcott, Mr B Brisbane, Mr R Briscoe, Mr J Brookes-Harmer, Mr J Brown, Ms J Brown-Fuller, Mrs H Burton, Mx R Chant, Mr M Chilton, Ms M Corfield, Ms H Desai, Mr G Evans, Mrs E Hamilton, Ms O Hickson, Mr F Hobbs, Mr S Johnson, Mr T Johnson, Ms E Newbery, Mr T O'Kelly, Mr H Potter, Ms S Quail, Mr C Todhunter, Mr J Vivian, Ms V Weller and Mr T Young

**Members not present:** Mrs C Apel, Mr R Bates, Ms B Burkhart, Mr C Hastain, Mrs D Johnson, Mr A Moss and Mrs S Sharp

**Officers present all items:** Mrs L Baines (Democratic Services Manager), Mr N Bennett (Divisional Manager for Democratic Services), Mr A Frost (Director of Planning and Environment), Mrs J Hotchkiss (Director of Growth and Place), Mrs L Rudziak (Director of Housing and Communities), Mrs D Shepherd (Chief Executive) and Mr J Ward (Director of Corporate Services)

## 33 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

## 34 **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 35 **Chair's Announcements**

Apologies of absence were received from Cllrs, Apel, Bates, Burkhart, Hastain, Johnson, Moss and Sharp.

The Vice-Chair paid tribute to Nicola Simpson and Stephanie Thorndyke. A minutes silence was held.

## 36 **Public Question Time**

### **Question from Simon Lloyd-Williams:**

1. The pedestrian areas of North and East Streets will reach their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this decade. Does the Council intend to throw them a birthday party or come forward with a comprehensive plan for their renewal?

2. Once again, the district has suffered multiple incursions on CDC land by travellers this month. It is no coincidence that these incursions coincide with events at Goodwood. In this most recent case, the Revival. Would the Council agree with me, that instead of the CDC spending tens of thousands of pounds of council taxpayers' money on earth works and trenches to stop these incursions, the Duke of Richmond is asked to provide a couple of acres on a temporary basis for the travellers whenever there is an event at Goodwood. After all, I believe he has 12,000 acres at his disposal.

Answer for question 1 from Cllr Brown:

Thank you, Simon, for your question. A 50th birthday party sounds like a great idea and an opportunity for residents to highlight the dangers of the pavements in North and East Street. Of course, as you know, this question really needs to be put to West Sussex County Council, who are responsible for the maintenance of the roads and pavements. I encourage you to raise this at a meeting of the County Council.

Nevertheless, this administration has highlighted this both internally and with the County Council as a priority to be resolved and is able and willing to help. Indeed, this was raised by the leader, Adrian Moss, in the first meeting between the leaders of the Districts and the County Council after the May elections.

We all recognise that the state of the pavements are a health and safety risk, with many falls being recorded, including those which have required hospitalisation. Improving the public realm in central Chichester is a major item on the Chichester Vision project and you will be aware that this was subject to a grant request for Levelling Up Funding – which was, unfortunately, not successful.

The County Council will be considering the business case for a big bang improvement rather than piecemeal repairs very shortly – I believe later this week. We have been urging them to go ahead. At the next Cabinet meeting of the District Council, we will be considering a proposal to contribute financially to the options consultation which will be required to get this moving – finally. And without wishing to predetermine anything, I am confident that the proposal will be listened to very sympathetically!

I very much hope that the County Council will choose to proceed. I think we all feel that this can has been kicked down the road quite often enough. This work is urgent and really must be included in the County Council's programme of work.

In answer to Simon's follow-up question I said that we would urge WSCC to proceed (and that I didn't realise WSCC didn't allow questions from the public).

Answer for question 2 from Cllr Bangert:

Many thanks for your question, whilst the most recent incursions have occurred around the time of events at Goodwood this is not true of all and from the engagement, we have with them the reasons why Gypsies and Travellers visit Chichester are varied. It can include medical appointments but more often than not they are "just passing through" on their way to other events elsewhere in the country. There is lots of land around Goodwood as you have stated and if they wished Gypsy Traveller groups could set up on this land, however they choose to be close to the city centre to access the amenities. Therefore, it would be

unlikely, even if such an offer was made by the Duke of Richmond, that it would be taken up and they would continue to access sites within the city.

For this reason, it is prudent of the Council to look at preventative measures in the most vulnerable locations.

### **37 Project Extension - Trees Outside Woodlands**

The Vice-Chair invited the Cabinet member for Environmental Strategy to present the report.

Members stated they supported the project and praised the work of officers involved in getting the project up and running.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. The acceptance of funding from Defra for the extension of the Trees Outside Woodlands Project of £120,000 for 2023/2024 and £120,000 for 2024/2025.
2. That a budget of £120,000 is set for 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, to cover staff costs and expenditure on tree planting pilot projects.
3. That authority is delegated to the Director of Planning and Environment to accept any additional funding offered by Defra, should such funding be offered as part of the project, and to increase budgets accordingly.
4. That authority is delegated to the Divisional Manager for Environment and Health Protection, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Strategy, to award funding to tree planting pilot participants in the district.

### **38 Housing Covenants Report**

The Vice-Chair invited Nicholas Bennet Divisional Manager of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Director of Housing and Communities be authorised to consider and determine applications for release of s37 and s157 covenants in respect of previous Right to Buy properties and the conditions of any release.
2. That officers develop a policy on the matter to be brought forward in due course.

### **39 Committee Membership**

The Chair invited Nicholas Bennet, Divisional Manager of Legal and Democratic Services to present a verbal report.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That Cllr Todhunter be appointed as Chair of the Planning Committee with immediate effect.

#### 40 **Motion from Cllr Vivian**

The Vice-Chair invited Cllr Vivian to present his motion to the Council.

Members stated that they wholeheartedly supported the motion and cited the 680,000 opposition responses to the closure of the ticket offices. Members stated that it was important for residents to interact with people whilst purchasing their tickets.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Council request:

1. The Leader to write to Mark Harper MP (Secretary of State for Transport), and the Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group as well as Southern Railway to express this Council's opposition to the possible closure of staffed rail ticket offices – and in particular the offices at Chichester, Bosham, and Southbourne stations.
2. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee to invite representatives from Southern Railway to attend a meeting (as soon as possible) to discuss future plans for ticket offices and staffing at the above Railway stations.

#### 41 **Questions to the Executive**

The following Questions to the Executive were asked with responses that followed:

Cllr Chant asked what impact the use of the Chichester Park Hotel to accommodate refugees and asylum seekers would have on CDC resources as one of the local authorities. Cllr Brown explained that the decision to use the Chichester Park Hotel to house asylum seekers is a private and direct arrangement between the Home Office and a privately owned business. The council were not consulted and were not given any input into the decision made.

Cllr Johnson stated that the Guardian Newspaper revealed that in some parts of England, nearly a third of category one life or death 999 calls are not attended by a fully qualified paramedic. Therefore, Cllr Johnson asked the deputy leader if he agrees with his party's health spokesperson that this is deeply worrying and asked if the deputy leader on behalf of the council undertake to find out the situation in Chichester District. Cllr Brown responded by stating that he was very happy to find out this information if the council didn't already have the figures.

#### 42 **Late Items**

There were no late items.

#### 43 **Exclusion of the press and public**

Cllr Cross then read the Part II resolution which was duly proposed and seconded.

The Council then voted to go into part II.

## **RESOLVED**

That with regard to the exempt Urgent Decision Notice the public including the press should be excluded from the meeting on the grounds of exemption in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 namely Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) and because, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption of that information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **44 Urgent Decision Notice**

The Urgent Decision Notice was duly noted.

The meeting ended at 2.53 pm

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CHAIRMAN

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Date:

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