



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

Darren Tilley – Chief Executive & Town Clerk
Braunstone Civic Centre, Kingsway, Braunstone Town, Leicester, LE3 2PP
Telephone: 0116 2890045 Fax: 0116 2824785
Email: enquiries@braunstonetowncouncil.org.uk

www.braunstonetowncouncil.org.uk

13th March 2024

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend the **Meeting of the Braunstone Town Council** to be held in the Council Chamber at Braunstone Civic Centre on **Thursday 21st March 2024** commencing at **8.00pm** for the transaction of the business set out below.

Alternatively, members of the public may observe this meeting, and make contributions under the Public Session item, using Zoom video and web conferencing software (details below).

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88654763481?pwd=eU2pneElmzWPDkugropMRApXZDaajM.1>

Meeting ID: 886 5476 3481

Passcode: 115425

Yours sincerely,

Darren Tilley
Chief Executive & Town Clerk

To: The Town Mayor and Members of Braunstone Town Council.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence.
2. **Disclosures of Interest**
To receive disclosures of Interest in respect of items on this agenda:
 - a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests,
 - b) Other Interests (Non-Pecuniary).
3. **Public Session**
Members of the public may make representations, give evidence or answer questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda. At the discretion of the Chairperson the meeting may be adjourned to give members of the public present an opportunity to raise other matters of public interest.
4. **Minutes**
To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes of the Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 25th January 2024 to be signed by the Chairperson (**Enclosed**).
5. **Financial Position – Cashbook and Reserves**
To set out the context of the current cash flow position and the approved actions to ensure the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function (**Enclosed**).
6. **Review of Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning**
To undertake a mid year review of the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies (**Enclosed**).
7. **Announcements**
To receive announcements/reports (if any):
 - a) Town Mayor,
 - b) Leader of the Council,
 - c) Chief Executive and Town Clerk.
8. **County and District Councillor Reports**
To receive reports from the Town's elected representatives on:
 - a) Leicestershire County Council
 - b) Blaby District Council
9. **Questions from Councillors**
To answer questions from Councillors where notice has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.12 (If any).
10. **Reports of Standing Committees**
To receive reports and minutes of Standing Committees (**Enclosed**):
 - a) Community & Development Committee 01/02/2024 p7887

- b) Planning & Environment Committee
- c) Policy & Resources Committee

15/02/2024 p7893
07/03/2024 p7906

11. Motions on Notice

To receive and consider motions moved on notice in accordance with Standing Order 4.14 (if any).

12. Sealing of Documents

To authorise the sealing of documents (if any).

Next Scheduled Meeting: 8pm, Thursday 9th May 2024.

*Deadline for submission of Questions on Notice and Motions on Notice:
12noon, Tuesday 12th March 2024.*



NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime and Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.
EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- *eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;*
- *advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;*
- *foster good relations between different groups*

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

25th JANUARY 2024 at 8.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Tracey Shepherd (Town Mayor), Councillor Paul Kennedy (Deputy Town Mayor) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Shabbir Aslam, Sevim Aslan, Nick Brown, Andrew Evans, Richard Forrest, Sam Fox-Kennedy, Rebecca Lunn, Christiane Startin-Lorent, Marion Waterton, Robert Waterton and Mark Widdop.

Councillor Alex Dewinter observed the meeting remotely using Zoom video and audio.

Officers in Attendance: Darren Tilley, Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

Also in attendance was County Councillor Amanda Hack.

There were 42 members of the public present at the meeting.

COUNCILLOR TRACEY SHEPHERD, TOWN MAYOR, IN THE CHAIR

6182 Tribute to former Councillors Roger Berrington and Iris Whaling

The Town Mayor, Councillor Tracey Shepherd, opened the meeting and recalled that just before Christmas Councillors would have received the sad news that former Town Councillor and Town Mayor, Roger Berrington, had passed away on 17th December 2023 following illness at the age of 84.

Roger was first elected in 1991 and served as a Town Councillor until 2011. He returned to the Town Council following a by-election in 2013 and served until 2019. Roger served as Town Mayor twice in 1997/1998 and 2004/2005.

Roger served the Town by supporting community groups and organisations, including Braunstone West Social Centre, Braunstone Town Community Mini Bus and Braunstone Life. In addition, Roger served the Town as a Blaby District Councillor for a number of years.

The Town Mayor also recalled that earlier this week, Councillors also received the sad news of the recent passing of former Councillor and Town Mayor, Iris Whaling on Sunday 7th January 2024.

Iris was first elected in 1983 and served as a Town Councillor until 1995. She returned to the Town Council in 2011 and served until 2015. Iris served as Town Mayor in 1991/1992.

In addition, Iris also served the Town as a Blaby District Councillor for a number of years.

The Town Mayor invited those present to join in a minute's silence in remembering both Roger's and Iris' contribution to the Town's public life and by sending the Council's thoughts, best wishes and condolences to the families at this sad and difficult time as they came to terms with their loss.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nick Brown, recalled Iris Whailing as someone who was community minded and continued to support the community after her service on the Council had ended. Councillor Brown described Roger Berrington as a legend whose service to the Council and community went above and beyond, while not asking for anything in return.

6183 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leanne Lee, Sam Maxwell, Satindra Sangha and Darshan Singh.

6184 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of any Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

6185 Public Session

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may attend the meeting for the purpose of submitting a petition, making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

There were 42 members of the public present at the meeting, whose concern was recent flooding in the Amy Street, Cyril Street and Gwencole Avenue/Crescent areas of Braunstone Town.

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6a, the residents appointed one representative to make representations as follows:

- a) all attendees lived in the effected streets of Amy Street, Cyril Street and Gwencole Avenue/Crescent;
- b) many residents had lived in the area for decades and had never seen flooding at this level; residents were asking why, all of a sudden, this had happened?
- c) residents were concerned that flooding would reoccur and what would happen with regards to the insurance for their homes;
- d) the flooding had been devastating for residents;
- e) residents were asking what Braunstone Town Council could do to help them?
- f) it was important to involve Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council.

Further questions were raised by residents as follows:

- a) where could sandbags be obtained?

- b) the dyke had not been cleaned out or maintained, it needed to be to prevent future reoccurrences?
- c) Residents had contacted Leicester City Council concerning the dyke on Aylestone Meadows and had received no response;
- d) there had been no answer on 24 hour flood lines; and
- e) communications after the floods had been minimal, there was inconsistency of information, the forms for funding were not available and the information on the website had not been updated since 18th January.

Since Leicestershire County Council were the flood authority, the Town Mayor asked County Councillor Amanda Hack (Braunstone Division), who was in attendance, to respond and update residents on the situation.

County Councillor Amanda Hack reported:

- a) 550 homes had been flooded in Leicestershire County, which had never been affected by flooding before;
- b) following a period of flood, there was a legal process to follow and each flooded area had to be assessed independently;
- c) the County Council has submitted a request for emergency assistance for additional capacity in order to get the reviews completed as quickly as possible;
- d) Councillor Hack was a member of the Environment & Transport Scrutiny Committee and she had asked for an emergency report on prevention measures;
- e) prior to the storm key risk areas had been checked by Severn Trent Water and Leicestershire County Council;
- f) rain had landed on saturated ground; the equivalent of January's average rainfall had fallen in 24 hours, putting a lot of water into water courses which contained debris due to the wind;
- g) 8,000 gullies had to be cleansed across the County;
- h) Councillor Hack was picking up individual case work with constituents and she was happy to have separate conversations;
- i) Central Government support would be provided through local authorities for residents and businesses affected;
- j) Prevention of future occurrences was important given the changes in weather; there was a need to look at ways to manage water flows better and therefore, an assessment of how water travels was needed; and
- k) there were different arrangements for issuing sandbags across different areas and there needed to be a consistent approach;
- l) Councillor Hack had raised a question about Road Closures to try and get a process in place to close roads quicker; in order to avoid traffic travelling through floods and causing a wave effect into people's homes.

Responding on behalf of Braunstone Town Council, Councillor Nick Brown acknowledged there had been a change in the last 30 years and the risk of flooding was much higher due to climate change. Councillor Brown added that landowners needed to decide how to manage water more effectively. Braunstone Town Council did not own land in the area and did not have any statutory powers concerning management of water courses and land.

However, the Town Council could help by being an advocate for residents when dealing with the relevant authorities.

Therefore, it was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Imran Uddin and

RESOLVED that a report be submitted to Policy & Resources Committee setting out options for Braunstone Town Council to

- a) represent residents' concerns to the relevant authorities; and
- b) support and champion the need to take preventative action to avoid repeat occurrences.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Town Council could be a voice for residents affected by flooding and that action would be pursued to improve resilience and preparation.

6186 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 16th November 2023 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

It was proposed by the Town Mayor and seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor and was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 16th November 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

6187 Financial Position – Cashbook, Reserves and Short-term Borrowing

The Council received a summary of the Council's Cash and Reserves for the period 1st April to 31st December 2023; it noted actions taken by the Policy & Resources Committee and Responsible Financial Officer to ensure that the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function; and considered seeking approval from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for short-term borrowing of £50,000 for the purpose of meeting expenses at the end of the financial year (2023/2024) pending the receipt of revenues in the next financial year (2024/2025) (item 5 on the agenda).

A supplementary report was submitted (filed with these minutes) providing an update on the Council's Cash and Reserves, and the actions taken by Policy & Resources Committee and the Responsible Financial Officer to ensure that the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function.

It was noted that Blaby District Council's offer of a loan would need formal approval through Blaby District Council's internal decision making process.

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Anthea Ambrose and was

RESOLVED

1. that the eight *primary reasons* for the cash balances being low, as detailed in the *Cash Flow* section of the report, be noted; and be addressed in the forthcoming 2024/2025 budget and precept setting;
2. that it be noted that the *Options for Addressing the Cash Deficit*, as detailed in the relevant section of the report, had been approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 11th January 2024, with delegated authority to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to determine amounts, timings and arrangements, and were being pursued as follows:
 - a) Blaby District Council have agreed to release the balance of £27,920.44 in Section 106 funding for Thorpe Astley Park to the Town Council,
 - b) Blaby District Council requested to release the first tranche of the 2024/2025 precept, or any part thereof either on or before 20th March 2024 or if this was not possible, during April 2024, noting that this would be in the form of a loan to Braunstone Town Council (if agreed), and
 - c) an application made to the Cooperative Bank for a short-term overdraft facility on the General Operating Account, with a value of up to £150,000 had been declined;
3. that the following resolution be approved “to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a short term loan/overdraft facility of £50,000 in March 2024 for the purpose of meeting expenses in the 2023/2024 financial year pending the receipt of revenues receivable in the 2024/2025 financial year”;
4. that the *Budget and Cash Management and Monitoring* proposals, set out in the relevant section of the report, and approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 11th January 2024, be noted; and
5. that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Council, scheduled for 21st March 2024, setting out the context of the current cash flow position and the approved actions to ensure the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The position in respect of the Council’s Reserves and the commitments and overspends during 2023/2024, were all matters that the Council would be able to address.*
2. *To take immediate action to ensure the Council had sufficient cash in the short term to function.*
3. *Formal borrowing approval would be required from the Secretary of State for an overdraft facility or any other short term loan to meet expenditure in the current financial year (i.e. before 31st March 2024), pending the receipt of revenues in 2024/2025 (i.e. from 1st April 2024).*
4. *By placing the income and expenditure relating to major capital schemes into a dedicated Capital Projects Cost Centre, it would be easier to identify income and expenditure trends in the operational service budgets and flag issues and potential action to address these earlier in the financial year.*

When receiving the precept instalments, by placing the equivalent of the payroll commitment into an instant access savings account, it becomes easier to identify trends in cash balances in the general operating account and therefore, manage commitments, receipts and payments accordingly.

5. *To ensure that all members of the Council were fully informed of the cash flow situation and the short and long term proposals to address the issue and avoid a repeat occurrence. To enable Council to debate, discuss and question the context and actions accordingly.*

6188 Business Plan 2024/2025

The Council considered the Council's Strategic Aims and Delivery Objectives, along with Service Objectives, in order to determine whether they were relevant to address current and emerging issues faced by the Council and the community (item 6 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Anthea Ambrose and was

RESOLVED

1. that the Council's Mission Statement be updated as follows:
 - a) to include both Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley in paragraph 1, and
 - b) removing the word "unlawful" from paragraph 4;
2. that the progress with the 2023/2024 Delivery Objectives, including recommendations for 2024/2025, as set out in the report, be received, noted and endorsed;
3. that the Council's current Service Objectives be noted and endorsed, subject to Community Development Objectives 7 and 8, and Corporate Management & Capital Project Objective 13, being amended to include reference to Thorpe Astley as well as to Braunstone Town; and
4. that the proposed Business Plan for 2024/2025, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and adopted.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Mission Statement set out the Council's vision to provide high quality services and support the needs of the community, recognising that this would be within available resources:*
 - a) *following consideration of the outcome of Blaby District Council's Community Governance Review of Braunstone Parish in 2022, Braunstone Town Council recognised Thorpe Astley as a distinct community and settlement within the Parish of Braunstone, and*
 - b) *to clarify that all discrimination was unacceptable;*
2. *To note progress with the implementation of the 2023/2024 Delivery Objectives so far and set out proposals for 2024/2025.*
3. *To ensure that the Council's objectives were relevant and reflected changing issues within the community. The wording of Community Development Objectives 7 and 8 and Corporate Management & Capital*

Project Objective 13 being slightly amended in line with the Council's decision to recognise Thorpe Astley as a distinct community and settlement within the Parish of Braunstone.

4. *To focus the Council's resources on four main areas of activity in the medium term to ensure effective delivery of initiatives and projects given the limits on resources*

6189 Capital Plan 2024/2025

The Council considered priorities and projects for 2024/2025 Capital Plan (item 7 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Anthea Ambrose and was

RESOLVED

1. that the Completed Projects (section a), having now been completed, be removed from the rolling programme of Capital Projects;
2. that the Current Projects (section c) be rolled forward, as amended, on to the 2024/2025 Capital Plan (Appendix 1);
3. that the Proposed New Projects (section d) be added to the 2024/2025 Capital Plan (Appendix 1); and
4. that, subject to the above, the Proposed Capital Plan for 2024/2025 be approved, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report, including the timescales for delivery, estimated costs and potential funding sources.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To confirm that the projects had been completed and there was no further work outstanding.*
2. *To confirm that the projects were outstanding and were still required.*
3. *To recognise the need to undertake investment and improvement as identified.*
4. *To provide a realistic and deliverable plan for investment in and improvement to the Council's infrastructure.*

6190 Budget (including Fees & Charges) and Precept 2024/2025 and future estimates

The Council considered the budget and precept for 2024/2025, including the approach to raising fees and charges, along with proposed estimates for future years (item 8 on the agenda).

It was proposed by Councillor Nick Brown and seconded by Councillor Anthea Ambrose and was

RESOLVED

1. that a new Cost Centre for Capital Projects be created and all revenue funds

- for all major capital projects, grants, loans and the expenditure be included in this new cost centre;
2. that a budget of £1,000 be included as a one-off in the 2024/2025 budget for Grants for community events to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day;
 3. that the following budgets be created from 2024/2025, as detailed in the report and at Appendix 1:
 - (a) Electric Vehicle Chargers (expenditure & income), and
 - (b) Utilities (Solar Export) (income),
 4. that the following budgets be deleted from 2024/2025:
 - (a) Refundable Deposits (expenditure), and
 - (b) Signs (Community Development) (expenditure);
 5. that the "Seasonal Decorations" expenditure budget be set to zero in 2024/2025;
 6. that an approximate 5% (actual cash figures to be rounded) increase be applied to Community Centres, sports pitches and miscellaneous fees and charges from 2024/2025 and that a detailed report be submitted to the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee (scheduled for 7th March 2024) for consideration and approval;
 7. that £50,000 be raised on the precept to cover the predicted cash deficit on 31st March 2024 and £29,000 to replenish half the balance of funds drawn from the Council's savings account in 2023/2024;
 8. that the Estimates for 2024/2025, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved as the Council's Budget for 2024/2025;
 9. that a Net Precept Requirement for £981,884 for the financial year 2024/2025 be submitted to Blaby District Council; and
 10. that the projections for the next 5 years be subject to reassessment and presented to Policy & Resources Committee and Council during March 2024.

Reasons for Decision

1. *By placing the income and expenditure relating to major capital schemes into a dedicated Capital Projects Cost Centre, it would be easier for the Management Team and Committees to identify income and expenditure trends in the operational service budgets during the year and flag issues and potential action to address these earlier in the financial year.*
2. *To enable events commemorating the 80th Anniversary of D-Day to be organised and to ensure their success.*
3. *To create new budgets to clearly account for both the operational expenditure and the actual income.*
4. *To remove budgets no longer required:*
 - (a) *Refundable Deposits were offset against Room Hire income, and*
 - (b) *the Town Watchers Scheme no longer existed and traditional neighbourhood watch schemes have been superseded by the online Neighbourhood Link.*
5. *Due to the pressure on the precept in 2024/2025.*
6. *To avoid a huge jump in prices in subsequent years and given the pressure on the precept for 2024/2025.*
7. *In order to replenish reserves and address the predicted cash deficit in the*

- current financial year.*
8. *To meet the Town Council's operating budgets for 2024/2025 along with funding for the Capital Plan and service pressures as identified in the report.*
 9. *The precept requirement for the year being the difference between expenditure and income, calculated in accordance with Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.*
 10. *To ensure that the Council's medium term financial figures would be kept up to date and were robust.*

6191 Announcements

a) Town Mayor

The Town Mayor made the following announcements:

“Thank you to those of you who supported the Christmas Craft Fair on 18th November, particularly Anthea who assisted with my tombola raising funds for supporting Chatty Cafés”.

“On 29th November I had both the privilege and the honour of accepting the NALC Star Council, Council of the Year Award, at a ceremony at the House of Lords”.

“On 18th January, I hosted a Civic Reception to thank our community, our partners, our stakeholders, staff and councillors for their part in helping make Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley a vibrant community and for helping us achieve national recognition for our work and achievements”.

“Braunstone Town Council is the first local council in Blaby District, Leicestershire and in the East Midlands to be awarded Star Council of the Year!”

“On 5th December I formally opened the Civic Centre Changing Places toilet and Civic Community Lounge Café”.

“On 14th December I formally opened the refurbished Play Area at Shakespeare Park”.

b) Leader of the Council

Councillor Nick Brown reported that it had been a pleasant surprise to win the NALC Start Councils Council of the Year 2023 award. The Civic Reception had been an important occasion to thank staff for their hard work along with the community and partners for their contributions. Councillor Brown thanked everyone who had voted for the Town Council. Councillor Brown added that the Council would shortly host a visit by civil servants from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who were interested in the Council's work.

c) Chief Executive and Town Clerk

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk had no announcements.

6192 County and District Councillor Reports

a) Leicestershire County Council

Councillor Amanda Hack, as County Councillor for Braunstone Division, reported on the following matters:

1. Finance – the County Council was undertaking scrutiny of the budget proposals; this year will need £10 million of reserves to balance the books; the following year £7 million (reduced from previously predicted £12 million due to additional government funding); deficit by year 4 was predicted to be £85 million behind where the County Council needed to be;
2. Financial Pressures in Services included:
 - i. Children’s Special Education, children waiting to be placed, costs by private providers have increased by 25%, and
 - ii. Social Care for the elderly, residents waiting for care packages to be put in place; and
3. Highways Fund – saddened that a wall recently painted has been covered in graffiti, work was ongoing to install double yellow lines and review the location of bus stops, the Belton Road scheme was being modified and new places signs would soon be installed.

b) Blaby District Council

Councillor Nick Brown, as District Councillor for Braunstone Millfield Ward, reported on the scrutiny of the budget. No major cuts to services were planned and the short fall in funding would be made up from balances. However, there were concerns regarding sustainability in the medium term.

Councillor Robert Waterton, District Councillor for Braunstone Ravenhurst Ward, reported on the Planning Committee’s work. The bus, which members used for site visits crashed, fortunately no one was hurt and the site visit continued using officer’s cars.

6193 Questions from Councillors

No questions had been submitted.

6194 Reports of Standing Committees: Community Development Committee – 7th December 2023

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Community Development Committee held on the 7th December 2023 (p7837-7845).

It was moved by Councillor Anthea Ambrose and was

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6195 Reports of Standing Committees: Planning & Environment Committee – 14th December 2023

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 14th December 2023 (p7846 – p7859).

It was moved by Councillor Robert Waterton and was

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6196 Reports of Standing Committee: Employing Committee – 11th January 2024

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Employing Committee held on 11th January 2024 (p7860 – p7861).

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and was

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6197 Reports of Standing Committee: Policy & Resources Committee – 11th January 2024

Council received the Report of the meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 11th January 2024 (p7862– p7874).

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and was

RESOLVED that the report be adopted.

6198 Motions on Notice

No Motions on Notice had been submitted.

6199 Sealing of Documents

There were no documents for sealing.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime & Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;
- foster good relations between different groups

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

These issues were considered in connection with each of the above decisions. Unless otherwise stated under each item of this report, there were no implications.

DRAFT

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

21st MARCH 2024

Item 5 – Financial Position – Cashbook and Reserves

Purpose

To set out the context of the current cash flow position and the approved actions to ensure the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function.

Background

Policy & Resources Committee on 11th January 2024 received a summary of the Council's Cash, Reserves and Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April to 31st December 2023; and considered actions to ensure the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function (Policy & Resources Committee minute 69).

Council on 25th January 2024 received a summary of the Council's Cash and Reserves for the period 1st April to 31st December 2023; noted actions taken by the Policy & Resources Committee and Responsible Financial Officer to ensure that the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function; and resolved to seek approval from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for short-term borrowing of up to £50,000 for the purpose of meeting expenses at the end of the financial year (2023/2024) pending the receipt of revenues in the next financial year (2024/2025) (Minute 6187).

Policy & Resources Committee on 7th March 2024 received a summary of the Council's Cash and Reserves and an update on implementation of the actions to ensure that the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function. The Committee also determined an offer of a short-term loan from Blaby District Council (Policy & Resources Committee minute 91).

Cash Flow

A Cash Flow forecast for March 2024 to February 2025 is enclosed at Appendix 1.

On 1st March 2024, operating cash balances stood at **£76,415.57**:

- Operating Account: £26,525.75;
- Payroll Account: £17,280.04;
- Instant Access Savings: £32,609.78.

In addition the Council has Building Society Savings of £5,269.14 (a minimum of £5,000 is required to be held to maintain the account).

Prior to the first tranche of 2024/2025 precept being paid into the Council's Operational Bank Account on 26th April 2024, the Council will need to meet a £99,000 wage bill (includes on-costs from February but not April) and an

approximately £58,000 in operational costs. The total commitment for the period 1st March to 26th April 2024 being approximately **£157,000**.

The following income is due between 1st March 2024 and 31st March 2024:

- Pop Up Care: £2,011
- JaaaK Ltd: £1,416
- Hire Fees: £1,150 (estimated)
- EVCPs: £711
- **TOTAL INCOME: £5,288**

Between 1st and 31st March 2024, the Council will need to spend approximately £71,252, including salaries. It has access to £74,630 cash and £5,288 income; meaning there will be a predicted balance on 31st March of approximately £10,451. In addition, the Council will also have £5,269 in Building Society Savings (total cash £15,720).

The following income is due between 1st April and 25th April 2024 (the day prior to the first tranche of the 2024/2025 Precept being paid):

- Pop Up Care: £2,012
- JaaaK Ltd: £1,417
- Library: £2,628
- Hire Fees: £1,333 (estimated)
- Solar Export: £1,367
- EVCPs: £711
- **TOTAL INCOME: £9,468**

Between 1st April 2024 and 25th April 2024, the Council will need to spend approximately £78,950, including salaries. Available cash balances on 1st April predicted at £10,451; meaning there will be a predicted **cash deficit of -£59,031** on 25th April 2024.

Progress with addressing the Cash Deficit

Section 106 funds for Thorpe Astley Park

Blaby District Council agreed to release the balance of £27,920.44 in Section 106 funding for Thorpe Astley Park. This is payable to the Town Council for maintenance and on adoption. The funds were received in January 2024, leaving no further funds, which was taken into account in the approved budget for 2024/25.

Short Term Loan

Blaby District Council confirmed a short-term loan offer on 8th February 2024. The District Council are willing to lend the Town Council up to £50,000 prior to the 31st March 2024, subject to approval by the Secretary of State, and up to £100,000 between 1st and 26th April. The loan will be charged at 5.26% in accordance with the District Council's policies. Blaby District Council will then deduct the sums lent, plus the agreed interest, from the first precept payment due on 26th April 2024.

Blaby District Council have stated that they are prepared to offer Braunstone Town Council a loan on the understanding that no further requests for financial assistance will be considered and that the Council puts measures in place to ensure that the financial resilience of the Council is robust and circumstances such as this do not arise again. In addition, Blaby District Council have requested that the External Auditor is notified of the current financial situation, should approval from the Secretary of State be given.

Blaby District Council have asked that the measures the Town Council puts in place, to ensure that the financial resilience of the Council is robust and circumstances such as this do not arise again, includes:

- undertaking an urgent review of the Council's financial position by the middle of March which would deliver a savings plan to ensure the financial position is improved, and this be shared with Blaby District Council; and
- in the interests of openness and transparency the Council undertake, a customer engagement process to support the above point.

Blaby District Council's offer and the associated terms was considered and approved by the Town Council's Policy & Resources Committee on Thursday 7th March 2024 (Policy & Resources Committee Minute 91, resolution 2).

Council on 25th January resolved that the projections for the next 5 years be subject to reassessment and presented to Policy & Resources Committee and Council during March 2024. This report is included as a separate item on the agenda and sets out the proposals for ensuring the Council has sufficient cash and reserves to function in the future.

In addition, a separate item was approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 7th March 2024 (Policy & Resources Committee minute 93) setting out options for reducing revenue expenditure in 2024/2025 by approximately £30,990, and a process for identifying, consulting and approving ongoing savings in future years.

Borrowing Approval

Following the Council's resolution on 25th January 2024 (Council Minute 6187; resolution and reason 3) and having received a loan offer, the Responsible Financial Officer completed and submitted an application to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for borrowing approval. Approval needs to be obtained from the Secretary of State for sums borrowed prior to the end of a financial year (i.e. 31st March), for which the repayment is then made in the following financial year (i.e. from 1st April).

At the time of publication, a response had not been received. An update will be provided at the meeting.

No approval is needed for sums borrowed and repaid in the same financial year (i.e. in April).

Further Reserve Measures

The budget accounts for £79,000 to cover advance payments and replenish the reserves. However, the precept is paid in two tranches, which means £39,500 is received in April. While forecasts show the Council remaining in credit in September (prior to the second tranche of precept) and at 31st March 2025; it will take time for the Council to replenish its reserves to a comfortable position to cover both cash flows and unforeseen circumstances.

The current cash forecast at Appendix 1 shows bank balances go down to £56,518 prior to the second tranche of the precept being received in September 2024; while on 28th February 2025, bank balances are predicted at £89,259 (based on current projections). The Council is likely to need £140,000 during March and April 2025 with income only likely to be £10,000. Therefore, there is a potential cash deficit of approximately -£46,187 prior to receipt of the precept in April 2025, without any further measures.

Therefore, Policy & Resources Committee on 7th March 2024 considered a range of measures to ensure that the Council is able to deliver services and function over the next 12 to 18 months, particularly if unforeseen circumstances arise; including:

- a) a further application for a 12 month bank overdraft while balances remain low to cover cash flows in the event of unforeseen circumstances;
- b) a staff consultation to move the monthly pay date for 24th of each month to 28th of each month to ensure payrolls in each financial year are covered by the precept for the financial year;
- c) £30,990 in one-off savings during 2024/2025, with the funds being earmarked to contingency; and
- d) approved a process for identifying ongoing savings; the Management Team will develop proposals for Policy & Resources Committee to consider on 25th April, including approving public engagement in May and considering final proposals in June.

Recommendation

That the following action to ensure the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function, be received and noted:

- a) the *Progress with addressing the Cash Deficit*, as detailed in the relevant section of the report and in the cash flow forecast at Appendix 1;
- b) that the terms of a short-term loan from Blaby District Council, as detailed in the *Short Term Loan* part of the report section *Progress with addressing the Cash Deficit*, were approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 7th March 2024; and
- c) that *Further Reserve Measures* had been approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 7th March 2024, summarised in the relevant section of the report.

Reasons

- a) The position in respect of the Council's Reserves and the commitments and overspends during 2023/2024, were all matters that the Council could and was addressing.
- b) The terms of the short-term loan were both reasonable and balanced and would ensure the Council had sufficient cash in the short term to function.
- c) To provide a contingency while the Council replenished its reserves to a comfortable position to cover both cash flows and unforeseen circumstances.

APPENDIX 1 - UPDATED CASH FLOW 1st March 2024 to 28th February 2025											2024-2025	
	March 2024	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February 2025
Brought forward bank balance	£76,415	£10,451	£431,911	£317,106	£251,353	£181,163	£124,937	£547,460	£472,266	£298,706	£223,167	£162,913
Receipts												
Council Tax Precept	£0	£490,942	£0	£0	£0	£0	£490,942	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Fees & Charges	£4,577	£5,473	£4,678	£4,678	£6,840	£4,678	£4,678	£6,840	£5,806	£5,806	£7,968	£5,806
Other Income	£711	£3,995	£13,452	£3,603	£2,628	£12,963	£3,603	£1,983	£13,127	£823	£13,369	£1,983
TOTAL INCOME	£5,288	£500,410	£18,130	£8,281	£9,468	£17,641	£499,223	£8,823	£18,933	£6,629	£21,337	£7,789
Expenditure												
Salaries	£39,593	£39,593	£39,593	£39,593	£39,593	£39,593	£39,593	£39,593	£60,897	£42,256	£42,256	£42,256
PAYE	£9,426	£9,426	£9,426	£9,426	£9,426	£9,426	£9,426	£9,426	£18,530	£10,564	£10,546	£10,564
Capital Schemes	£0	£0	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,600	£18,500	£0	£0	£0
Administration	£153	£208	£208	£208	£208	£208	£208	£208	£208	£208	£208	£208
Loan or other debt repayments	£0	£0	£47,134	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£47,134	£0	£0	£0
Maintenance	£10,874	£10,066	£10,999	£10,333	£10,999	£10,066	£10,999	£10,333	£10,999	£10,066	£10,999	£10,333
Utilities	£5,126	£4,317	£4,317	£4,317	£4,317	£4,317	£4,317	£4,317	£4,317	£4,317	£4,317	£4,317
Telephone & Internet	£1,000	£1,633	£1,000	£1,000	£1,633	£1,000	£1,000	£1,633	£1,000	£1,000	£1,633	£1,633
Rates	£0	£3,206	£3,207	£3,206	£3,206	£3,206	£3,206	£3,206	£3,206	£3,206	£0	£0
Waste Services	£1,088	£4,058	£1,208	£1,208	£4,058	£1,208	£1,208	£4,058	£1,208	£1,208	£3,206	£3,206
Promotions & Events	£333	£375	£375	£275	£0	£375	£375	£375	£375	£375	£4,058	£4,058
Governance (Insurance, Audit, Legal)	£120	£920	£120	£120	£570	£120	£2,020	£120	£21,771	£120	£120	£120
Vehicles	£1,689	£2,298	£2,298	£2,298	£2,298	£2,298	£2,298	£2,298	£2,298	£2,298	£2,298	£2,298
Equipment	£1,700	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800
Community Grants & Initiatives	£0	£800	£1,000	£0	£1,300	£0	£0	£800	£0	£500	£0	£500
Other Expenditure	£150	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£4,250	£150	£150
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£71,252	£78,950	£132,935	£74,034	£79,658	£73,867	£76,700	£84,017	£192,493	£82,168	£81,591	£81,443
Closing bank balance	£10,451	£431,911	£317,106	£251,353	£181,163	£124,937	£547,460	£472,266	£298,706	£223,167	£162,913	£89,259

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

21st MARCH 2024

Item 6 – Review of Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning

Purpose

To undertake a mid-year review of the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, investment and Reserves Strategies.

Background

Braunstone Town Council first considered and published its Medium to Long Term Priorities and Financial Planning assessment in 2014, since then it has been revised at least on an annual basis in order that changed circumstances and revised predictions can be incorporated.

The annual review takes place in November each year, including an update to the five year forecast, which is also reported/adjusted and reported with the budget and Council Tax precept proposals in January each year.

In January 2024, Policy & Resources Committee and Council received a report on the Council's Financial Position in regard to its cashflow and reserves. Due to the need to urgently address the predicted deficit, Council set a precept for 2024/2025 which was an increase of 26.59% compared to 2023/2024.

To ensure that the Council's medium term financial figures were kept up to date and were robust, both Policy & Resources Committee and Council resolved that the projections for the next 5 years be subject to reassessment and presented to Policy & Resources Committee and Council during March 2024.

By identifying medium term priorities and financial planning, the Council aims to safeguard the delivery of important local services whilst ensuring appropriate future investment in the Town's services and infrastructure.

Global Economic Context

On 30th January 2024, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published its World Economic Outlook Update, which forecasts global growth to stay at 3.1% in 2024 and rise slightly to 3.2% in 2025. The IMF forecast that global inflation will decline from 5.8% in 2024 to 4.4% in 2025.

In short, while the global economy is forecast to grow, the rate at which it grows is forecast to steadily decline. Compared to the IMF report in 2022 and 2023, both the growth forecasts are slightly lower and the inflation forecasts are slightly higher.

UK Economic Context

In November 2023, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) downgraded their economic growth forecasts for 2024 to 2026, presenting a more challenging economic outlook than previously, with slower growth and inflation and interest rates expected to remain higher for longer.

UK GDP growth is expected to average 1.5% over the next 3 years. The OBR predicts inflation to average at 3.6% during 2024; returning to the Bank of England's 2% target during 2025.

On 31st January 2024, the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee voted by to maintain interest rates at 5.25%.

On 16th February 2024, the Office for National Statistics published GDP figures for the last quarter of 2023, when the economy shrank by 0.3%. It had already contracted in the period between July and September.

On 23rd February 2024, Ofgem announced that it would lower the price cap on UK electricity and gas bills from April 2024. Nevertheless, the governor of the Bank of England is cautious stating that while this is likely to bring overall inflation down to the Bank of England's 2% target during the spring, over the year it could rise again. CPI inflation is projected to be 2.3% in two years' time and 1.9% in three years.

In short, UK economic growth is predicted to be limited and while both inflation and interest rates are set to steadily fall, Councils are likely to continue to face higher costs and funding pressures for the foreseeable future.

Rolling Five Year Budget Plan

Attached as Appendix 1 are the updated financial projections for the period until 2028/2029, which is based on the following assumptions:

- staff salary costs increasing by 6% each year, the same as the increase in 2023/2024 (the previous two years averaged 7% to 8%);
- pension scheme costs, taking into account the 2022 valuation with a 6% pay increase each year;
- the amount approved (5%) to account for staff salary increases in 2024/2025 not being sufficient based on the salary settlements of the previous two financial years and therefore, the additional amount will need accounting for in the salary and pensions base budget for 2025/2026;
- ensuring the Council pays the foundation living wage, predicted to increase by 20% over the next 5 years;
- 3% inflation on operational costs during 2025/26 (CPI predicted to be between 2% and 3% during that period);
- savings from existing loans which mature during the period being reinvested in additional borrowing to finance projects included in the Capital Plan;
- funds being placed in the Revenue Contingency Fund from 2025/2026 gradually increasing to the equivalent of 5% of the annual staff salaries (and on-costs) by 2027/2028; and

- that the base budget predicted when setting the Council Tax equates to the actual income and expenditure.

The projections are based on the following being included in the base budget to replenish the Council's Reserves:

- £79,000 in 2024/2025 (included);
- a further £71,000 (totalling £150,000) in 2025/2026; and
- a reduction of £50,000 in 2026/2027 (totalling £100,000);

resulting in the Revenue (General Fund / Non-Earmarked) Reserve reaching the equivalent of three months net expenditure, as recommended by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance, during 2026.

These projections, using current tax base information, result in a 14.98% increase on the precept for 2025/26; a total for the year of:

- £23.33 on a typical band B property;
- £26.68 on a band C property; and
- £30.01 on a band D property.

Staff Salary and oncosts (including pensions) account for 66% of the Council's expenditure. In 2024/2025, the Council set salary and oncost budgets totalling £633,836, based on the pay settlement averaging 5%. If the pay settlement averaged 7%, this would cost an additional £12,073, the equivalent of 1.5% on the precept. Similarly, if the pay settlement averaged 3%, there would be a saving of £12,073 and a similar 1.5% reduction on the precept.

The impact however, goes beyond the financial year, since any overspend has to be plugged in the base budget the following year while also accounting for an increase in salaries. Similarly, a saving banked in one financial year reduces the predicted base budget the following financial year.

Town Council Business Plan

The Council's Mission Statement sets out the Council's vision to provide high quality services and support the needs of the community, while recognising that this is only sustained by ensuring that the resources to do it are available.

In addition to the Mission Statement, the Council has focused its resources on four main areas of activity (Strategic Aims) for the medium term to ensure effective delivery of initiatives and projects, given the limits on resources. The four Strategic Aims are supported by Delivery Objectives, which are reviewed annually. In addition the Council has key objectives relating to its Committees and Service Areas, which are also reviewed annually.

The Council's Mission Statement, Strategic Aims and Delivery Objectives, and the Service Objectives for 2024/2025 are set out in the Business Plan, attached at Appendix 2.

Capital Programme

The Council is responsible for a significant amount of physical assets and to assist with longer term financial planning, the Council approves, in consultation with the Citizens' Advisory Panel, a list of Capital Projects, which includes identified long term improvements to the Council's Assets. The Capital Plan approved with the 2024/2025 budget in January 2024, is attached as Appendix 3. The Plan identifies projects, which the Town Council will need to deliver to both ensure the long term sustainability and efficiency of its services as well as responding to Climate Change.

The Capital Plan is a rolling document, which is reviewed annually alongside the budget and identifies priority projects. Significant investment projects completed over in the last 3 years include:

- Shakespeare Park: site, new pavilion, tennis courts and play area;
- Braunstone Civic Centre: toilets, including installation of a Changing Places toilet, and kitchen facilities; and
- Climate Reduction initiatives: installation of solar PV panels, an air source heat pump and electric vehicle charging points.

Investment in the Council's infrastructure, measures to reduce the Council's Carbon footprint and in improvements to biodiversity and Council services will continue to present pressures over the forthcoming years and the Council needs to make financial provision for replenishing its reserves and financing public works loans in order to deliver its Capital Programme.

Financial Strategy

Given the Council's Financial Position in 2023/2024 and the level of risk this posed to the ability of the Town Council to function and deliver its services, the following financial strategy is proposed to ensure the Council's finances are resilient:

- balancing of annual operational income with annual operational expenditure;
- continued monitoring of the level of reserves and assessment of future investment needs;
- regular monitoring of reserves and general fund expenditure with proposed actions to address any issues prior to it becoming structural;
- forecast future year's expenditure on previous actual income and expenditure; and
- yearly assessment of the financial constraints.

Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks.

In March and April 2024, Braunstone Town Council sought a short-term loan to enable it to have the cash to function and meet its commitments. The Council took action to address the deficit through its 2024/2025 budget and council tax precept. However, the Council will gradually replenish its reserves, which won't reach recommended minimum levels until 2026. In the event of unforeseen

circumstances, loss of income or significant increased expenditure, there is a risk the Council will need to borrow funds in April 2025.

Where the Council undertakes any short-term borrowing to meet expenses pending future income; it will do so by either approaching one of its principal authorities or a UK Bank.

The proposed replenishment of reserves by 2026, will if approved, mean that going forward the Council will only borrow for projects identified in the Capital Plan. When borrowing for Capital Projects, the Council uses the UK Debt Management Office Public Works Loan Scheme, which provides funds for capital projects with fixed interest and capital repayments for the term of the loan. The Council provides for financing the capital and interest repayments on such loans through this annual Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning process.

Braunstone Town Council deposits its funds in UK Bank Accounts only. While the sums held in some bank accounts significantly exceeds the limit of protection (£85,000) afforded by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme; the risk of losing large sums of money is considered low since during the financial crises of 2008 the UK Government took steps to prevent UK Banks at risk from collapsing.

The Town Council will consider this risk level when reviewing Corporate Risks as part of the Annual Governance Review and will identify any mitigating actions necessary.

Reserves

Loss of funding, transfer of services, the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent economic pressures resulted in the Council using £117,000 from its reserves between 2018 and 2023 to offset significant increases in the Council Tax precept in one year; while each subsequent year it delayed replenishing the reserves.

As a result, the Internal Audit report of 2023, contained the following:

Reserves; the current guidance regarding the general reserve held is set out in The Practitioners' Guide (2023) paras 5.32 - 5.36. For authorities with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 the generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of general reserve is 3 months of net revenue expenditure. In discussion with Darren, we concluded that for the audit year 2022-23, that would suggest approximately £180,000 but the actual figure was considerably lower and less than 50% of the guideline figure. Whilst the Practitioners' Guide is just that ie guidance and whilst the calculation of reserves is not an exact science, it is appropriate and prudent that the council reviews its current position against the guidance to confirm or if necessary amend its plan in respect of the sums held.

The External Audit of 2023 also highlighted the position with the Council's Reserves:

Reserves are considered to be low and could pose a risk to the Town Council's

ability to function in the future. The Council has provided explanations for this and assurances that it is considered in their budgetary procedure, and we have reviewed your Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning document. The 2023 budget was for a small surplus but returned a more significant deficit which raises concerns in respect of the veracity of the budgeted future years figures which each provide for a small surplus. We would anticipate that following this outturn the Council will be reviewing its financial position and its future budgets.

Given the expenditure pressures this year and the critical position with the Council's reserves, the Reserves Policy has been revisited and contains arrangements for Monitoring, Managing and Maintaining the Council's Reserves (along with the Principles, previously adopted as part of this Strategy).

A copy of the proposed revised Reserves Policy is attached at Appendix 4. The intention is to review the Policy at least annually in November as part of this Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning Report.

The projections at Appendix 1 set out a plan to replenish reserves by 2026 and therefore, in accordance with the proposed Policy, do not include any proposals to utilise revenue reserves to balance revenue budgets or offset precept rises in the short to medium term.

In accordance with the proposed revised Policy, the Earmarked Reserves are subject to review and are set out at Appendix 5. In order to maximise the level of funds to replenish the revenue (general fund) reserve; it is recommended that reserves earmarked relate only to a commitment or a restricted use.

Current Financial Year (2023/2024)

When setting the budget for 2023/2024, it was predicted that the Solar Panels and Air Source Heat pump would be installed during April and May 2023 and therefore, would produce almost a full year of projected savings. However, the solar panels were installed during September and October and the Air Source Heat Pump was commissioned at the beginning of September. As a result, on 30th September 2023, there was a £24,782 overspend against the full year utility budgets, coupled with no export energy income. Furthermore, due to the scaling down of the solar installations at all three sites, the predicted annual saving and revenue from export will be reduced compared to the budgeted figure.

Vehicle costs amount to £10,063 on 30th September 2023 out of an £11,000 annual budget.

In addition to the above, the NJC employers pay settlement for 2023/24 was 6% overall for the Town Council's staff. The budget approved in January 2023 provided for 4%. This left a deficit of £13,184 in the salary and pensions budget.

Committee Consideration

Policy & Resources Committee on 7th March 2024 undertook a mid-year review of the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies (Policy & Resources Committee minute 92).

The Committee approved the recommendations (below), with an amendment to the Reserves Policy at paragraph 26 being amended to read "*Where the level of general fund reserve falls or is predicted to fall below the equivalent of three months net expenditure, then the Responsible Financial Officer as part of the Medium Term financial forecast and annual budget setting will put forward proposals to replenish the general fund reserve in the following financial year*".

However, this provision would result in a 25.06% increase in the precept for 2025/2026. This is compared to the proposed 14.98% increase for 2025/2026 set out in the 5 year forecast; which, since it is included in the base for 2026/2027, replenishes the revenue reserves to 26.72% of net expenditure without additional funding on the precept.

Therefore, to clarify the intention of Policy & Resources Committee, which was both to avoid delaying action to replenish reserves, while minimising significant increases in council tax precept; the following wording is proposed for paragraph 26 of the Reserves Policy (highlighted at Appendix 4):

*Where the level of general fund reserve falls or is predicted to fall below the equivalent of three months net expenditure, then the Responsible Financial Officer as part of the Medium Term financial forecast and annual budget setting will put forward proposals to replenish the general fund reserve **in the following financial year. Where the level of general fund reserve is exceptionally low, the measures may be spread across the following two financial years.***

Recommendations

1. That the current projections attached at Appendix 1, based on known financial pressures identified in the report, be approved;
2. that the Council's Strategic Aims, Delivery Objectives and Committee/Service Objectives, attached at Appendix 2, be used as the basis for calculating the annual budget and any external funding sought;
3. that once the revenue reserve reaches the equivalent of three months' net expenditure; the additional funds be earmarked to invest in infrastructure and assets, as identified in the Capital Plan at Appendix 3, and in the development and remodelling of services, including the Town Council's operations;
4. that the Financial, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies, as set out in the report, be adopted;
5. that the revised Reserves Policy, attached at Appendix 4, be approved; and
6. that the Earmarked Reserves be approved, as set out at Appendix 5.

Reasons

1. To provide a foundation for preparing budget estimates for 2025/2026 and beyond.
2. To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the current financial constraints and future financial uncertainties.
3. To maintain the standard of the council's facilities and open spaces and to ensure the highest possible standards within the resources available in the future.
4. To effectively manage the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, taking into account the associated risks.
5. To ensure the financial resilience of the Council, that it would be able to function, invest in its assets and deliver services to residents; while avoiding significant increases in council tax precept in future years.
6. To ensure that reserves earmarked relate only to a commitment or a restricted use; maximising the level of funds to replenish the revenue (general fund) reserve.

APPENDIX 1 – 5 YEAR INCOME / EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS

	Original 2023/24	Revised 2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Operational Requirement	£261,497	£261,497	£403,863	£390,096	£398,595	£415,224	£432,586
Plus Increase in costs	£41,727	£41,727	£12,116	£11,703	£19,930	£20,761	£12,978
Less Savings / Income Generation	£32,043	£11,340	£25,883	£3,204	£3,300	£3,399	£3,501
Total including Savings	£271,181	£291,884	£390,096	£398,595	£415,224	£432,586	£442,063
Pension Provision	£104,762	£107,136	£126,767	£136,373	£144,555	£153,229	£162,422
Staff Salaries	£477,251	£488,061	£507,069	£547,493	£580,343	£615,163	£652,073
TOTAL Staff Costs	£582,013	£595,197	£633,836	£683,866	£724,898	£768,392	£814,496
Existing Borrowing Repayments	£82,464	£83,025	£69,539	£64,953	£58,367	£48,889	£45,997
<i>Less Payments for Matured Loans</i>	<i>-£13,486</i>	<i>-£13,486</i>	<i>-£4,586</i>	<i>-£6,586</i>	<i>-£9,478</i>	<i>-£2,892</i>	<i>-£6,034</i>
Civic Centre Improvements Borrowing	£11,091	£9,043	£10,511	£10,511	£10,511	£10,511	£10,511
Climate Initiatives Borrowing	£9,064	£3,289	£18,804	£19,449	£19,449	£19,449	£19,449
Potential Borrowing: Mossdale	£0	£0	£0	£11,004	£11,004	£11,004	£11,004
Potential Borrowing: Capital Projects	£0	£0	£0	£0	£9,478	£22,370	£28,404
TOTAL Borrowing Costs	£89,133	£81,871	£94,268	£99,331	£99,331	£109,331	£109,331
Contingency	£0	£0	£0	£5,000	£30,000	£38,000	£40,000
Capital Projects	£13,000	£13,000	£17,500	£20,000	£40,000	£50,000	£60,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£955,327	£981,952	£1,135,700	£1,206,792	£1,309,454	£1,398,309	£1,465,890
INCOME from Hires/Fees/Contracts	£176,292	£176,292	£232,816	£232,816	£237,472	£242,221	£247,065
Non-Earmarked Reserves (To/From)	-£3,000	-£3,000	£54,000	£150,000	£100,000	£20,000	£0
Revenue Reserves Balance	£78,952	£10,451	£64,451	£214,451	£314,451	£334,451	£334,451
<i>Revenue Reserve % of Net Expenditure</i>	<i>10.17%</i>	<i>1.30%</i>	<i>6.56%</i>	<i>19.00%</i>	<i>26.72%</i>	<i>27.85%</i>	<i>27.28%</i>
Earmarked Reserves (To/From)	N/A	N/A	£25,000	£5,000	£5,000	£25,000	£7,000
Capital Reserves Expenditure	N/A	N/A	£21,616	£6,000	£4,000	£12,000	£16,000
Earmarked/Capital Reserves Balance	£32,385	£5,269	£8,653	£7,653	£8,653	£21,653	£12,653
Net Precept	£776,035	£802,660	£981,884	£1,128,976	£1,176,982	£1,201,088	£1,225,825
Band D (scaled Tax Base)	4,901.85	£158.24	£163.75	£200.31	£230.32	£240.11	£245.03
% Increase	7.37%	N/A	26.59%	14.98%	4.25%	2.05%	2.06%
Average % Increase	N/A	N/A	9.99%				



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

BUSINESS PLAN 2024/2025

Strategic Aims & Delivery Objectives

Town Council Mission

The Council's Mission Statement sets out its vision to provide high quality services and support the needs of the community, while recognising that this is only sustained by ensuring that the resources to do it are available.

Mission Statement - We exist:

1. *to ensure that local services and the environment reach the highest possible standards within the resources available for citizens, visitors and those who work in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley;*
2. *to provide a focus for civic pride;*
3. *to listen, identify and respond to agreed local needs; and*
4. *to help develop a strong, secure, self-reliant, self-confident community, free from discrimination.*

"Spectemur. Agendo" translates "Let us be Judged by Our Actions"

Strategic Aims and Delivery Objectives (2024/2025)

The Council has four Strategic Aims for the medium term, which are set out below. Each Aim is supported by specific delivery objectives for the year, which are reviewed and developed as part of the annual review of the Council's Business Plan and Capital Plan and the annual setting of the budget and Council Tax precept.

1. Protect and Enhance our Parks and Open Spaces

Aim: To invest in and maintain high quality urban green spaces for sport, recreation and play, while enriching the natural environment.

Delivery Objectives for 2024/2025:

- (a) Support existing Clubs at Shakespeare Park to grow while supporting new sporting activities, such as Tennis and Petanque;
- (b) deliver tennis initiatives to enhance participation;
- (c) continue to work with Blaby District Council and the developer to ensure improvements are made to the culvert at Thorpe Astley Park;
- (d) carry out Flood Alleviation and Drainage Improvements at Mossdale Meadows; and
- (e) refurbish and enhance Impey Close Play Area and surrounding open space.

2. Provide Vibrant Community Facilities

Aim: To provide vibrant, accessible and cost effective community facilities, which continue to be used by and respond to the needs of our community.

Delivery Objectives for 2024/2025:

- (a) Deliver essential works on the Civic Centre building fabric; and
- (b) support the expansion of the Civic Centre Café Service, including at Thorpe Astley on event days.

3. Support and Connect the Local Community

Aim: To both nurture and enhance the Town's community life and connect our communities to reduce isolation and build community cohesion.

Delivery Objectives for 2024/2025:

- (a) Support new and existing community activities and initiatives through our Community Grants Schemes and Programme of Events;
- (b) co-ordinate community events, such as Apple Day, 80th Anniversary of D-Day, Shakespeare Park Open Day, Thorpe Astley on the Beach;
- (c) develop outreach Children's reading and activities at Thorpe Astley Community Centre; and
- (d) support the Local Area Coordination Project.

4. Respond to Climate Change and champion sustainable development

Aim: To embed climate and environmental awareness in our decision making and actions and play our part in supporting the community to do the same.

Delivery Objectives for 2024/2025:

- (a) Deliver actions identified in the Carbon Audit with a view to the Council becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030;
- (b) undertake surveys and produce Management Plans to enhance the biodiversity of our parks and open spaces;
- (c) support and facilitate initiatives to improve cycling and walking routes within the Town and to the City Centre, Fosse Park and Meridian;
- (d) work to ensure that development meets present needs, minimises air pollution and car journeys, while protecting the needs of future generations; and
- (e) recommission a carbon audit of our activities to ensure that all possible actions are being taken and that new and emerging technologies and approaches are utilised to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Objectives

In addition to the Mission Statement and Strategic Aims and Delivery Objectives, the Council's Committees and Service Areas have operational objectives.

Planning and Environment Objectives

1. To ensure sustainable development, which meets the needs of the present generation without prejudicing the existing built environment and the needs of future generations.
2. To improve the environment, in pursuit of which, objectives 3 to 7 below are contributors.
3. To seek high standards of design and construction within planning applications and to ensure all developments are consistent with environmental objectives.
4. To inform and consult local residents about major planning proposals, Development Plans and other planning initiatives by central and local government.
5. To work with others to minimise the impact from:
 - (a) traffic; and
 - (b) air and light pollution.
6. To promote responsible dog ownership and waste disposal.
7. To provide and maintain street seats and notice boards at key locations.
8. To monitor the New Lubbethorpe development and to respond to any implications of that development for the environment of the Town.

Community Development Objectives

Nurturing and enhancing community life, equal opportunities and social inclusion.

Young people

1. To create opportunities for young people to have a voice
2. To identify young people's needs and give support to new local initiatives including summer holiday activities
3. To maintain positive relations with local school, pre-school and education providers

Crime reduction services

4. Working with the Police, reduce opportunities for crime, increase public safety and establish a community spirit.

Social inclusion, recreation & culture

5. To work with our partners to attract increased funding and the provision of a wider range of sporting and other services at local level
6. To provide support for the Office of Town Mayor and to promote Civic, Ceremonial and commemorative functions, including the flying of flags
7. To assist local clubs and societies to undertake their work for the benefit of the citizens of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley
8. To direct grants to organisations where this will be of greatest benefit to the citizens of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley
9. To organise arts events/ entertainment's/ Civic Occasions which bring people together

10. To encourage the formation of new community groups by promoting free/subsidised use of the Council's Community Facilities
11. To promote social inclusion

Corporate Management & Capital Project Objectives

1. To ensure effective management of the authority
2. To ensure effective implementation of the Council's policies and priorities
3. To ensure the Council's management arrangements, facilitate performance and efficient use of resources
4. To provide efficient and effective office services to support the Council's activities
5. To provide efficient and effective support to the democratically elected members to enable them to make policy decisions
6. To provide efficient and effective information to committees
7. To deal with telephone calls, and personal callers, promptly, courteously and efficiently
8. To ensure and arrange effective staff training
9. To develop a motivated workforce with the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to implement the Council's policies and services
10. To maintain adequate personal records, health and safety controls, and fire evacuation polices
11. To manage and control land and property belonging to the Council
12. To maintain an effective filing and retrieval system
13. To undertake capital projects for the benefit of the citizens of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley
14. To ensure that major repairs and renewals are satisfactory and undertaken on Council owned buildings
15. To provide office accommodation for the Council's administrative staff
16. To ensure the Council engages with the Community concerning its activities, including with consultative bodies, such as the Citizens' Advisory Panel.

Community Centres Objectives

1. To provide and maintain high quality function rooms for use by hirers
2. To provide and maintain quality meeting rooms for Council and local community groups at low cost
3. To provide a Licensed Bar/Catering service for use by hirers and community groups at prices that are comparable with other similar establishments in the area
4. To maintain usage of the Centres for the benefit of the community

Open Spaces & Parks Objectives

1. To provide and maintain parks and open spaces to a high standard
2. To provide quality sports facilities to meet identified needs
3. To provide and maintain play equipment to a high and safe standard
4. To help fight pollution and climate change by planting trees on our parks

Adopted by Council 25th January 2024 (Minute Reference 6188).



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

CAPITAL PLAN 2024/2025

The Council’s Capital Projects have been identified through emerging priorities, surveys and consultation, the Citizens’ Advisory Panel and the Council’s Committees. Each year Policy & Resources Committee, when considering the budget estimates and precept for the forthcoming financial year, reviews progress with Capital Projects and updates the list according to funding and priorities. The Capital Plan forms the foundation of the strategic investment and improvement works undertaken by the Town Council in the year ahead. The Capital Plan proposals are considered and approved at Full Council in January when the budget and precept is set.

Capital Projects for 2024/2025 – 2025/2026

Parks and Open Spaces Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Mosssdale Meadows & Merrileys	Replace culvert bridge at Mosssdale Meadows. <i>Existing culvert is not suitable for flow of water which causes flooding on the park on a regular basis</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £150k Borrowing
	Improve drainage on Lubbesthorpe Bridleway at Mosssdale Meadows <i>Length of concrete bridleway, which slopes down from Shakespeare Drive to Mosssdale Meadows floods and produces a heavy amount of surface water run off during heavy and prolonged rain causing flooding around the depot and football pitches, as well as on the bridleway.</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £50k Borrowing: Link to “Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mosssdale Meadows”.
	Drainage work to the entrance of Mosssdale Meadows car park to drain water from the car park into the brook. <i>The car park entrance was prone to frequent flooding which was raised during the Walking & Cycling route construction</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £50k Borrowing: Link to “Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mosssdale Meadows”.
	Resurfacing of Mosssdale Meadows car park with tarmac. <i>Currently the car park consists of hardcore and stone which frequently gets washed down towards the brook in heavy rain.</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £50k Borrowing: Link to “Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mosssdale Meadows”.

Parks and Open Spaces Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Mosssdale Meadows & Merrileys <i>Continued</i>	Replacement of Toddler swings (<i>estimated end of life – medium risk</i>)	Estimated: £10k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	New Roof and Roof Insulation at Mosssdale Depot and Sports Changing Rooms and installation of solar panels, new electric heating (explore air source heat pump) and LED Lighting. <i>A Structural Survey has identified that the roof is deteriorating and isn't strong enough to hold solar panels (as recommended by the Carbon Audit). There is currently no central heating at the premises, with electric heaters for the staff room at the Depot. The building is not energy efficient and needs to be both in the short and long term to reduce carbon, energy use and costs.</i>	Estimated: £100k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i>
	Refurbishment of Changing Rooms and Sports facilities at Mosssdale Pavilion. <i>The Changing Facilities and Social Facilities could make more effective use of the space and need improvement and modernisation.</i>	
Impey Close playground and Open Space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resurface playground with rubber mulch under play equipment and pathway. 2. Install new and replace vandalised equipment. 3. Improve paths, including gravel path "yellow brick road" and planting in surrounding open space. <i>Rubber tiles damaged and in places missing. Surfaces damaged/vandalised and pathways eroded.</i>	Estimated: £100k <i>External Grants, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i>

Community Centres Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre	Installation of Battery Storage for Solar PV Panels. <i>Both Community Centres are used in the evenings. Civic Centre has electric cookers. Millfield Hall includes electric heating and air conditioning. Thorpe Astley Community Centre contains an electric Air Source Heat Pump.</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £20k <i>Borrowing Underspend, Annual Capital Budget.</i>

Community Centres Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre Continued	Replacement of Civic Centre foyer skylight and corridor frame and windows. <i>Both the foyer skylight and the corridor and windows are over 25 years old and do not meet modern insulation standards.</i>	Priority Project for 2024/2025 Estimated: £50k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Installation of additional Solar Panels on Civic Centre Roofs – Council Chamber, Fosse Room, Ravenhurst Room and rear toilets. <i>New roof potentially allows for the installation of additional solar panels reducing the impact on climate change and making savings.</i>	Linked to Civic Centre Roof Refurbishment.
	Civic Centre Roof Refurbishment: Council Chamber, Fosse Room, Ravenhurst Room and rear toilets. <i>The roof on the Council Chamber and Fosse Room is leaking and has received several patches. Advice is that the roof has passed its life expectancy and will need refurbishing in the short term.</i>	Fundamental to building integrity Estimated: £100k <i>External Grants, Annual Capital Budget & Reserves</i>
	Replacement of Civic Centre Windows. <i>The windows are over 20 years old and do not meet modern insulation standards. Some are unsafe to open.</i>	Health & Safety Risk. Consider through next Carbon Audit Estimated: £50k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Civic Centre radiator replacement and review of location. <i>Some areas of the building are well provided for with radiators and are hot, while other areas of the building have limited radiators and are cold.</i>	Consider through next Carbon Audit Estimated: £25k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Millfield Hall – Creation of small external storage area next to the Millfield Hall and kitchen for furniture. <i>Providing space for hirers. This can be accommodated by relocating the bin store since the mini-bus compound is no longer in use.</i>	Estimated: £10k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>

Community Centres Projects 2024/2025 – 2025/2026		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre <i>Continued</i>	Council Chamber internal refurbishment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating/Air Conditioning • Mood Lighting <i>The facilities need modernisation for users and hirers: the room is used for meetings, consultations, seminars, training and social events.</i>	Consider once roof replaced and through next Carbon Audit Estimated: £25k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Refurbish/Replace Fire Doors in Fosse Room and Millfield Hall kitchen. <i>Doors and frames are rotten and doors stick when the frames swell in the damp. Potential to hinder exit in an emergency.</i>	Estimated: £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Millfield Hall and Council Chamber Floor stripping and revarnishing <i>Floors wearing and risk damage from use and liquid if not sealed and treated.</i>	Estimated: £10k <i>Maintenance Budget</i> See proposed replacement below (Medium to Long Term)
Both Centres	Installation of hearing loop systems in main rooms at both Community Centres. <i>Item already included where refurbishment of specific rooms has been identified.</i>	Rolling Programme from 2023/24. <i>Annual Budgets</i>

Short to Medium Term Projects (within the next 7 years)

Short to Medium Term Parks and Open Spaces Projects		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Thorpe Astley Park	Refurbishment of Thorpe Astley Park Tennis Courts <i>Tap4tennis installed and income being generated. Perimeter fencing regularly vandalised and playing surface improvements would enhance the facility for users.</i>	Estimated £30k. <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i>
Franklin Park	Widen and make improvements to path. <i>Path connects residential areas of the Town with local amenities and is well used. The path would benefit from being a shared use path to facilitate movements on foot and by cycling. The path was identified in the Blaby District Open Spaces Audit as substandard and in need of improvement.</i>	Estimated £75k. <i>Explore external funding working with Walk & Ride Blaby.</i>

Short to Medium Term Parks and Open Spaces Projects		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Mosssdale Meadows	Widen and make improvements to path through Mosssdale Meadows & Merrileys from Shakespeare Drive to Brockenhurst Drive, including installation of lighting and CCTV. <i>Path connects residential areas of the Town with new GCW Phase 2 Cycle Route between Braunstone Town and Meridian and Thorpe Astley. The path would benefit from being a shared use path to facilitate movements on foot and by cycling.</i>	<i>External funding working with Walk & Ride Blaby.</i>
	Gateway Fencing Mosssdale Meadows – Brockenhurst Drive entrance <i>Fencing in need of refurbishment.</i>	Estimated £10k - £20k. <i>Annual Capital Budgets</i>
	Electric Wiring and installation of electric vehicle charging point at Mosssdale Meadows Depot and Changing Rooms. Electricians have confirmed that wiring is out of date and complex. Items have been added and rewired and potential fire hazard. Work should include electric vehicle charging point ahead of any change of the vehicle fleet to electric.	Estimated £10k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i>
All Play Areas	Rolling programme of identifying and replacing play equipment and installing mulch safety surfaces where these are near end of life. <i>Most of the Council's play equipment and safety surfaces are over 10 years old, a significant amount of equipment is over 20 years old. Overall many Play areas risk deterioration and maintenance costs increasing if equipment and safety surfaces are not replaced on a rolling basis.</i>	Prioritise to ROSPA reports, funding streams and increases in maintenance costs. <i>Annual Budgets</i> Franklin Park – remaining surfaces during 2024/2025 – 2025/2026
All Parks	Rolling programme of tree surveys and works <i>Currently maintenance budgets are stretched and tree maintenance and works are reactionary.</i>	Over a 5/6 year period undertake a rolling programme. <i>Annual Budgets</i>

Short to Medium Term Community Centres Projects		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre	Civic Centre Ravenhurst Room & corridor – new floor <i>Consider replacing carpet with laminate floor or similar for multiple uses and users and for cleaning.</i>	Schedule following Building Improvements Estimated £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Fosse Room – Audio / Visual Equipment, including sound and loop system and fixed projector. <i>The facilities need modernisation for users and hirers: the room is used for meetings, consultations, seminars and training.</i>	Estimated: £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Installation of Air Source Heat Pump <i>Part of Building refurbishment, insulation improvements and commitment to become Carbon Neutral by 2030.</i>	Estimated: £45k <i>Borrowing</i>
Thorpe Astley Community Centre	Thorpe Astley main hall Mood Lights. <i>To make the facilities attractive for function hire. Hirers of the Millfield Hall provide positive feedback on the mood lighting.</i>	Estimated: £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Replacement of Carpet tiles in Foyer and Corridor <i>Carpet tiles wearing.</i>	Estimated: £2k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
Both Centres	Installation of Sound systems in the Millfield Hall, Council Chamber and Thorpe Astley Main Hall. <i>To make the facilities attractive for hire. Some regular hirers have commented that provision of a sound system means there is less need to move equipment or need storage.</i>	Estimated: £6-9k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>

Short to Medium Term Library Projects		
Project	Details	Notes
Installation of CCTV	<i>Only facility where there are no CCTV cameras. Have been a couple of recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour since the Town Council became the Service Operator.</i>	Estimated £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>

Short to Medium Term General Projects		
Project	Details	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre and Franklin Park Car Parks	Resurfacing/ Relining of Civic Centre, including exploring new handrails and lighting along footpath on entrance slope from Welcome Avenue, and Franklin Park Car Parks. <i>Poor quality of the surface, particularly near entrances and patching is costly and inefficient. Lines are currently fading and can be relined following resurfacing. The slope at the Civic Centre is not well lit and considered steep potentially presenting difficulties for wheel chair users and those who are less able.</i>	Estimated: £80k <i>Annual Capital Budget & Reserves</i> Refresh white lines at Civic Centre in 2024/2025
Gateway signage to the Town on the new road from Lubbesthorpe	The Town Council was responsible for the Town's place signs and would be responsible for installation of such signs at the new gateway and could explore incorporating speed reminders and/or safety messages.	Estimated: £3k <i>Annual Budgets</i>
Provide new, improved and enhanced notice boards at key locations	Over the past few years, many notice boards have fallen into disrepair and have been removed. Some existing notice boards need refurbishment and replacement. Some notice boards are located where there isn't a high level of footfall, while some key locations do not have notice boards.	Rolling programme over 5 years. <i>Annual Budgets</i>
Improved Signage in and around Community Buildings	Signage outdated, not dementia friendly. Sometimes signage not relevant, sometimes doesn't sign/advertise new services. Creation of Corporate Image.	Schedule after Civic Centre improvements. External signs may need planning permission. Estimated: £3-5k. <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
Improvements to Cycle Lock-Up facilities at Community Centres	Cycle lock-up rails are available at both Centres and will be available at the new Shakespeare Pavilion. To encourage cycling and to ensure parked cycles are safe – consider covers, lock ups, better signage and CCTV coverage	Estimated: £5k <i>Maintenance Budget</i>

Medium to Long Term Projects (within the next 12 years)

Medium to Long Term Parks and Open Spaces Projects		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Franklin Park	Improvement items identified by the Franklin Park Working Group: creation of path in orchard (to enable access to lower part when the ground is water logged)	Estimated: £10k <i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>
Mossdale Meadows & Merrileys	Bridle path resurfacing (from Kingsway entrance through to Jelson owned land)	Estimated: £10k <i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Possible resurfacing of footpaths	<i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>

Medium to Long Term Community Centres Projects		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre	Council Chamber internal refurbishment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio / Visual Equipment, including sound and loop system and fixed projector. <i>The facilities need modernisation for users and hirers: the room is used for meetings, consultations, seminars, training and social events.</i>	On-hold pending review and availability of resources and roof replacement Estimated: £10k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Civic Centre Kitchens refurbishment <i>Kitchens approximately 40 years old. Poor quality by modern standards and require extra cleaning and maintenance</i>	Estimated: £30k <i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Millfield Hall and Council Chamber Floor replacement <i>Wooden floors 40 years old and maintenance costs are high. Need to replace with modern low maintenance flooring.</i>	Estimated: £50k <i>External Grant & Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Refurbishment of Millfield Hall Stage Area. <i>Lighting Box, sound system and casing old and constantly needs adjusting, difficult for hirers to use. Stage lighting needs upgrading to LED – can't get replacement bulbs.</i>	Estimated: £30k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>

Medium to Long Term Community Centres Projects		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Thorpe Astley Community Centre	Additional Storage for Parks Service <i>Routine items need for maintaining the parks at Thorpe Astley needed. Currently stored at Mossdale. Option allows for reducing time and travel distances.</i>	Costs dependent upon solution. <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	Consider options for extending Thorpe Astley Community Centre, including the car park <i>With the success of the Nursery / Pre-School and with the Doctor's Surgery, there is both limited capacity for community meeting space during the weekdays and limited storage.</i>	Costs dependent upon solution. <i>Borrowing</i>

Adopted by Council 25th January 2024 (Minute Reference 6189).



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

RESERVES POLICY

Purpose

1. Braunstone Town Council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to ensure that the Council and its services are able to function.
2. The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council will determine and review the level of reserves.

Principles

3. Braunstone Town Council will only maintain reserves for the following reasons:
 - a capital receipt from the sale of land or assets to be invested in capital projects identified in the Capital Plan;
 - commuted sums for the transfer of Public Open Spaces to offset significant one-off increases in precept and/or to invest in capital projects identified in the Capital Plan;
 - grants and/or loans received for delivering capital projects identified in the Capital Plan;
 - earmarked funds to meet the Council's Medium Term Financial Forecasts or for unexpected capital expenditure or emergencies;
 - earmarked funds received which are designated for a specific purpose, e.g. donations to the Town Mayor's Charity;
 - a sum approximately equal to 3-6 months of Net Revenue Expenditure should be maintained as the General (non-earmarked) Reserve, in accordance with good practice; and
 - other reserves which are earmarked for special purposes or future development, or to meet commitments, will be maintained as necessary.
4. Where, during and at the end of a financial year, an underspend occurs then the priority is to rebuild balances to ensure a there is at least 3 months rather than find alternative spending. Therefore, except where there is a requirement or in exceptional circumstances, the underspend against the annual budget will be used to increase the level of the Council's general fund balances at the end of the financial year.

Scope

5. The Responsible Financial Officer will apply this policy when advising and reporting to Policy & Resources Committee and Council on using, maintaining monitoring and replenishing reserves.
6. Notwithstanding Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; in adopting this Policy, it is the Council's intention that both Policy & Resources

Committee and Council will operate with the framework and comply with the provisions of this policy when making decisions concerning the use, maintenance, monitoring and replenishing of reserves.

Types of Reserve

7. There are two types of reserve:
 - **General (Fund) Reserves** can be used as and when required for purposes determined and approved by the Council; and
 - **Earmarked Reserves** are funds 'ring fenced' for a specific purpose or project; this can either be allocated by the Council or restricted by law or some other conditions (e.g. grant award or donations to the Town Mayor's Charity).

General Fund Reserves

8. The general reserve comprises the Council's cash flow and contingency funds to cover unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances.
9. The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide advises that authorities with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should maintain a minimum level of general reserve at three months of net revenue expenditure. The maximum maintained should not exceed twelve months of net revenue expenditure.
10. The Council should review the level general reserve to ensure it is appropriate to the size of operation, situation and risks and should plan the budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained.
11. The minimum level of reserves requires not only consideration of level of income and expenditure but also the risks to that income. Where there is significant self-generated income (other than the precept), the Council should take into account situations that may lead to a loss in revenue as well as increased costs and adapt the general reserve accordingly.

Earmarked Reserves

12. Earmarked Reserves must be held for genuine and identifiable purposes and must be separately identified on the accounts.
13. An "identifiable purpose" includes funds towards delivering the Capital Plan, whether individual identifiable projects or for capital projects generally. However, the amounts earmarked must be justifiable and proportionate.
14. The level of Earmarked Reserves will be subject to review and justification as part of the Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning Process and when setting the annual budget and precept.
15. Subject to the above; there is, in practice, no upper or lower limit to the number or amounts held in Earmarked Reserves.

Monitoring Reserves

16. A summary financial report will be submitted to Policy & Resources Committee, at least quarterly, to include details of reserves and cash held at the bank.
17. The level of general reserve should be reviewed against the budget outturn figure during the financial year and measures identified to ensure that expenditure and income is both monitored and managed where the general reserve falls below the equivalent of three months net expenditure.

Managing Reserves

18. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Policy & Resources Committee as part of the budgetary control process. The exception is where a matter is reserved to Council to determine, in which case Policy & Resources Committee will recommend changes to earmarked reserves for the Council to approve.
19. Earmarked Reserves restricted by law or some other conditions (e.g. grant award or donations to the Town Mayor's Charity) cannot be transferred to the General Fund or Earmarked for another purpose.
20. Earmarked Reserves can be transferred to the General Fund or Earmarked for another purpose where:
 - a) the funds were allocated by Policy & Resources Committee/Council; and
 - b) the funds are not committed (e.g. a completed project which has underspent).
21. During the budget year, unspent amounts in revenue budgets can be moved to an earmarked reserve with the approval of the Policy & Resources Committee, having considered fully forthcoming and ongoing commitments and the implications for public services.

Maintaining Reserves

22. Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require local authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
23. While there is no specified minimum level of general reserves; Braunstone Town Council will hold a minimum level of general reserve equivalent to three months of net revenue expenditure.
24. Therefore, the Responsible Financial Officer, when preparing both the Medium Term financial forecast and annual budget estimates, will not propose the use of reserves to meet general expenditure where to do so would result in the level of general fund reserves falling below the equivalent of three months net expenditure.

25. Notwithstanding Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, in adopting this Policy, it is the Council's intention that both Policy & Resources Committee and Council, in determining both the Medium Term financial forecast and setting the budget and precept, will not approve the use of reserves to meet general expenditure where to do so would result in the level of general fund reserves falling below the equivalent of three months net expenditure.

26. Where the level of general fund reserve falls or is predicted to fall below the equivalent of three months net expenditure, then the Responsible Financial Officer as part of the Medium Term financial forecast and annual budget setting will put forward proposals to replenish the general fund reserve **in the following financial year. Where the level of general fund reserve is exceptionally low, the measures may be spread across the following two financial years.**

Review of the Policy

27. This Policy will be reviewed at least annually by Policy & Resources Committee and Council as part of the Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning Report.

DATE ADOPTED	21st March 2024	REVIEW DATE	November 2024
REVISED DATE/S			

APPENDIX 5 – RESERVES

The table below summarises the current reserves, intended uses and review recommendation:

Reserves 2024/2025				
		Start of Year	Current*	Review Recommendation
Earmarked Reserves	<i>Shakespeare Pavilion Works</i>	£19,888.81	£0.00	Delete – Completed
	<i>Shakespeare Playground</i>	£6,678.00	£0.00	Delete – Completed
	<i>Carbon Reduction Initiatives</i>	£0.00	£18,789.00	Retain – Restricted Borrowing
	<i>Civic Centre Capital Projects</i>	£95,910.91	£2,055.02	Retain – Committed by Contract
	<i>Shakespeare Park Sports Clubs</i>	£1,692.51	£219.94	Retain – Offered to Clubs
	<i>Community / Social Inclusion Projects Grant</i>	£9,500.00	£8,820.98	Retain – Restricted Use
	<i>Balance Budget 2023/24</i>	£3,000.00	£0.00	Delete - Subsumed
	<i>Gateway Signage</i>	£2,500.00	£2,500.00	Delete - Uncommitted
	<i>Defibrillators</i>	£500.00	£0.00	Delete - Completed
	<i>Town Mayor’s Charity</i>	£3,939.42	£0.00	Retain – Restricted Use
		Total Earmarked Reserves	£143,609.65	£32,384.94
Non-Earmarked Reserves	<i>Commuted Sums</i>	£47,375.12	£47,375.12	Merge into General Fund
	<i>General Fund</i>	£23,455.45	-£15,232.65	N/A
		Total Balances	£70,830.57	£32,142.47
Balance of Reserves		£214,440.22	£64,527.41	

* Dated 23rd February 2024.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 1st FEBRUARY 2024 AT 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor Anthea Ambrose (Chair), Councillor Rebecca Lunn (Vice-chair) and Councillors Sevim Aslan, Nick Brown, Alex DeWinter, Andy Evans, Richard Forrest, Sam Fox-Kennedy, Christiane Startin-Lorent, Marion Waterton and Mark Widdop.

Officers in attendance: Darren Tilley, Chief Executive & Town Clerk and Pauline Snow, Deputy Chief Executive & Community Services Manager.

There were no members of the public present.

72. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paul Kennedy.

73. Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of any Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

74. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may attend the meeting for the purpose of submitting a petition and/or making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

There were no members of the public present.

75. Minutes of the Meeting held 7th December 2023

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th December 2023 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

76. Town Mayor's Report

The Committee received a report on the activities of the Town Mayor and any proposals for initiatives during the Civic Year (Item 5 on the agenda).

It was noted that a provisional date of Thursday 11th April 2024 had been agreed for the Town Mayor's Awards Evening.

The Deputy Town Mayor had expressed his pleasure in attending the Pantomime and Band Concert in December 2023 on behalf of the Town Mayor.

RESOLVED that the update on the Town Mayor's Engagements be noted.

Reason for Decision

To monitor and review the effectiveness of the Town Council's community engagement activities.

77. Leicestershire Police Local Independent Advisory Group

The Committee received details of the proposed Leicestershire Police Local Independent Advisory Group (LIAG) and considered whether to nominate a Councillor for consideration as a member (item 6 on the agenda).

The Chairperson welcomed Inspector Matthew Allingham, (Leicestershire Police Blaby Neighbourhood Policing Area Commander) to the meeting.

Inspector Allingham gave a brief outline of the Policing area for Blaby District and Hinckley & Bosworth. Copy of the presentation attached at Appendix 1, with these minutes. It was noted that there were now two inspectors for the area, one to cover Hinckley & Bosworth and one to cover Blaby District.

The Town Council had been invited to nominate a representative to serve on the Leicestershire Police Local Independent Advisory Group which would meet quarterly and provide a cross section of people from Blaby District to raise issues of concern with the Police.

RESOLVED

1. that the report be noted;
2. that members be invited to submit an expression of interest if they wished to become a member of the Leicestershire Police Local Independent Advisory group; and
3. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to appoint a representative to the Leicestershire Police Local Independent Advisory Group.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that current community safety and policing updates were received.*
2. *To offer members the opportunity to express an interest in becoming a member of the Police Advisory Group.*
3. *To appoint a suitable representative for the Police Advisory Group.*

78. Community Safety and Neighbourhood Policing Update

The Committee received an update from Inspector Allingham on local community safety and policing initiatives.

Inspector Allingham commented on recent crime trends in the Town including incidents of violence in local children's homes and drug manufacture in Thorpe Astley.

Members noted that any unusual activities, smell of drugs etc. should be reported to the Police in order for evidence to be gathered and action taken. Problems with drug manufacture were not a specific issue with Thorpe Astley but a nationwide issue. It was noted that drug dealing was unlikely to be taking place at properties where drugs were being manufactured.

It was commented that since the departure of Sergeant Goldsmith, a number of sergeants had been recruited for the Beat Team but none had attended a Committee meeting to introduce themselves. Inspector Allingham agreed to look into this and encourage the current sergeant to attend a meeting of the Committee.

79. Speed Sign Data

The Committee received recent speed sign data for:

- a) Murby Way
- b) Turnbull Drive
- c) Approved Lamp posts
- d) Recent locations

(Item 8 on the agenda)

Members noted that incidents of speeding on Murby Way had decreased but incidents of speeding on Turnbull Drive was slightly higher.

It was suggested that details of average speed data 30 – 35mph, on Murby Way, be compiled into a graph to assess if there had been a decrease in incidents of speeding over time.

RESOLVED

1. that the speed activation signs be re-installed on Turnbull Drive and Murby Way;
2. that the speed activation reports for Murby Way and Turnbull Drive be forwarded to the Police Beat Team; and
3. that a graph detailing average speeds on Murby Way collected over recent years, be compiled.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that any concerns of speeding on roads within the Town would*

be monitored and data collected.

2. *To assist the Police with identifying where speeding was a concern in order to consider enforcements and identify particular areas of concern.*
3. *To assess if there had been an actual decrease in incidents of speeding on Murby Way due to the installation of the Speed Activation sign.*

80. Outside Body Report

Councillor Rebecca Lunn reported that there was no further update on the activities at Braunstone West Social Centre.

81. Thorpe Astley on the Beach

The Committee approved initial arrangements for the Thorpe Astley on the Beach 2024.

It was proposed that the event be organised in the same format as the previous year's event. Activities to be arranged included the sandpit, deckchairs, donkey rides, Punch & Judy, balloon modelling, children's rides, food outlets, hook a duck etc.

Members suggested a colouring competition for children and provision of music at the forthcoming event.

RESOLVED that the proposed arrangements for the Thorpe Astley on the Beach event be approved.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that suitable activities be provided for this community event for residents to enjoy.

82. Apple Day

The Committee considered rearranging the 2024 date for Apple Day.

The committee had been asked to consider moving the date of Apple Day from 28th September 2024 that had previously been agreed at the meeting of 7th December 2023, to Saturday 5th October 2024 due to operational capacity.

RESOLVED that Apple Day be moved from 28th September 2024 to 5th October 2024.

Reason for Decision

To ensure sufficient staff cover for the event to go ahead successfully.

83. Summary of Grant Applications

The Committee received a list of grants paid to date and applied for from external sources, along with acknowledgements for Town Council Grants (Item 12 on the agenda).

Members queried the recent drop in community grant applications received. It was noted that many community groups applied for funding at the beginning of the financial year and there was a general reduction in applications at the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

To monitor progress with supporting community groups with identifying sources of funding and with the award of grants under the Council's Community Grants scheme.

84. Community Grant Applications

The Committee noted that no Community Grant Applications had been received.

85. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st December 2023 (Item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

There were no issues identified with income and expenditure to date.

86. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 29th November 2023 until 23rd January 2024 (Item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions, for the periods 29th November 2023 until 23rd January 2024, be approved.

Reason for Decision

To authorise payments in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Meeting closed at 9.05pm

NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime and Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010
Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;*
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;*
- foster good relations between different groups*

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

These minutes are a draft and are subject to consideration for approval at the next meeting scheduled for 28th March 2024.

DRAFT

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 15th FEBRUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Robert Waterton (Chair) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Gary Sanders, and Marion Waterton.

Officers in attendance: Darren Tilley, Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

There were two members of the public present at the meeting.

63. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Richard Forrest, Sam Maxwell, Satindra Sangha, Darshan Singh, Imran Uddin and Mark Widdop.

64. Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of any Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members.

65. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may submit a petition and/or attend the meeting for the purpose of making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

There were two members of the public present, both of whom were interested in progress with the Braunstone Village Conservation Area (item 10 on the agenda). Questions concerned the process, including when the public would be involved and would have access to papers, and the potential scenarios.

66. Minutes of the Meeting held 14th December 2023

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th December 2023 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

67. Planning and Licensing Applications dealt with under Delegated Authority

The Committee received and noted responses to planning and licensing applications taken under Delegated Authority (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the action taken by the Chief Executive & Town Clerk under delegated authority in forwarding the following observations to Blaby District Council be noted:

Planning Applications

- 1. Application No:** 23/1041/FUL

Description: Single storey rear extension and new pitched roof Change of Use of the ground floor from Use Class E (g) Offices to Use Class E (e) Provision of Medical Services and Offices to allow occupation for an eye clinic.

Location: 6 Dominus Way Meridian Business Park Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Thorpe Astley Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the proposed change of use of the ground floor from Class E(g), Offices, to Class E(e), provision of medical services and offices.*

Reason: *The location contained a variety of commercial uses and sufficient on-site parking was provided for the proposed use as set out in the covering letter.*
- 2. Application No:** 23/1024/HH

Description: Two storey side extension, first floor side and rear extension (P&E Committee submitted response 18th December 2023)

Amendments received 20th December 2023

Location: 132 Kingsway Braunstone Town Leicestershire LE3 2TU (Millfield Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to:*

 - 1. three off street car parking spaces being provided within the curtilage of the property, be available for use, and retained in perpetuity; and*
 - 2. no windows, vents or openings in the side elevation of the extended property without the prior consent of the local planning authority.*

Reasons:

 - 1. To avoid additional parking on a narrow highway (including the footway) or any overhang onto the footway; both of which would impact on the safety of highway users (including users of the footway).*

- To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.*

3. Application No: 23/0991/HH

Description: External wall cladding to front, rear and side of existing dwelling

Location: 9 Monica Road Braunstone Town Leicestershire LE3 2PR (Millfield Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the proposal.*

Reason: *While neighbouring properties were similar, there was a variety of feature designs and other neighbouring properties had render and external wall cladding; therefore, the proposals were unlikely to have an adverse impact on the character and visual appearance of the street scene.*

4. Application No: 24/0003/FUL

Description: Change of use from Dwelling (C3) to Children's Care Home (C2): for two children aged between 5 and 17

Location: 46 Darien Way Thorpe Astley Braunstone Town Leicester (Thorpe Astley Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the change of use; subject to:*

- no more than two children aged between 5 and 17 (inclusive) at any one time;*
- prior to first use, on-site parking on the front curtilage of the property being provided for at least three vehicles, which must be hard bound and either permeable or with appropriate drainage; and*
- the garage not being converted or put to any alternative use that would prevent it being available as a garage for the parking of a motor vehicle.*

- Reasons:**
- 1. To avoid undue noise, disturbance and cramped living conditions.*
 - 2. To provide parking for two on-site staff along with parking for deliveries or visitors.*
 - 3. To ensure that an adequate level of off street car parking would be available and retained to serve the property and its use.*

5. Application No: 23/0189/HH

Description: First floor side extension and single storey rear extension

Location: 286 Braunstone Lane Braunstone Town Leicestershire LE3 2GA (Ravenhurst Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to:*

- 1. the materials to be used in the construction matching those of the existing dwelling; and*
- 2. on-site parking, within the curtilage of the property, being provided for at least three vehicles and being permanently available by use.*

Reasons:

- 1. To retain the character and appearance of the property and the street scene.*
- 2. To avoid additional parking on the highway, including the footway, which was a busy route and, due to the width of the road and the footway and with the bends in the carriageway, would result in compromising the safety of highway users.*

6. Application No: 24/0036/FUL

Description: Change of use from restaurant (coffee shop) to hot food takeaway (Sui Generis) and café/restaurant

Location: 9 Sun Way Braunstone Town Leicestershire LE3 3DS (St Mary's Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the proposals; subject to:*

- a) before the change of use commences, a litter bin shall be provided on the forecourt of the property and shall be serviced, maintained and retained by the occupier of the premises; and*
- b) no additional external fans, ventilation or extraction equipment to be installed without the prior agreement of the local planning authority.*

Reasons: *Expanding the use from restaurant (coffee shop) to hot food takeaway (Sui Generis) and café/restaurant, supported the sustainability of the business and the neighbourhood parade and therefore supported the objectives of Development Management Policy 6; however, it was important to:*

- a) maintain the cleanliness of the area in the interests of the amenity of the neighbourhood parade and the nearby domestic dwellings; and*
- b) protect the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties in terms of noise, vibration and disturbance.*

7. Application No: 24/0053/FUL

Description: Installation of two rapid electric vehicle charging stations

Location: McDonalds Restaurant Meridian East Business Park Braunstone Town (Thorpe Astley Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application.*

Reason: *The provision of electric vehicle charging points expanded the network of chargers and therefore, supported the use of electric vehicles.*

8. Application No: 24/0063/HH

Description: Single storey side and rear extension

Location: 136 Edward Avenue Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Millfield Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to at least three off street parking spaces being provided within the curtilage of the property.*

Reason: *The property was on a established plot and the proposed extensions covered part of the existing outbuilding footprint and were single storey. However, the number of bedrooms at the property would be increased to four and it was important to avoid additional parking on a narrow highway (including the footway) close to a road junction, which could present safety issues.*

9. Application No: 24/0029/HH

Description: Proposed single storey side extension, front porch, removal of hedgerow and erection of 1.9m high timber fencing

Location: 36 Rosamund Avenue Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Ravenhurst Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application.*

Reason: *The proposed extension was adjacent to a highway rather than a neighbouring property and was single storey. Sufficient on-site parking was available for the number of bedrooms.*

10. Application No: 24/0054/HH

Description: Two storey and single storey extension to the side and rear, external rendering and single storey outbuilding

Location: 18 Stonehurst Road Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Ravenhurst Road)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the proposals; subject to:*

- 1. before the proposed extension was brought into use; the three on-site parking spaces, shown in the plans must be available for use;*
- 2. the on-site parking spaces provided must have a hard bound, permeable surface or have adequate drainage; which must be maintained and permanently available for use as parking;*
- 3. the windows in the side elevation of the proposed extension must be of opaque glass and top opening only and must remain so in perpetuity; and*
- 4. no additional windows, openings or vents in the side elevation of the extension without the explicit consent of the local planning authority.*

- Reasons:**
- 1. To ensure sufficient on-site parking was available, avoiding additional parking on a narrow highway at a bend, which could present safety issues.*
 - 2. To ensure the surface was suitable for permanent use for parking and to reduce water run-off onto the highway during periods of heavy rain.*
 - 3. To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy.*

4. *To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.*

Licensing Applications

There were no licensing applications to consider.

68. Planning Applications and Licensing Applications

The Committee received details of a planning applications to be considered by Blaby District Council (item 6 on the agenda). The Committee noted that there were no licensing applications.

In respect of the application on land to the West of St Johns (B4114), Enderby, Councillor Robert Waterton advised that he was a member of the Planning Committee at Blaby District Council and that application 19/0164/OUT had been turned down by the Committee. In respect of application 23/1006/OUT, this was likely to be considered by the Planning Committee at Blaby District Council. Councillor Waterton advised that he would be considering the presentation, officer advise and points of discussion in the meeting when determining how to vote. Similarly at Blaby District Council's Planning Committee, Councillor Waterton stated that he would have an open mind and would be considering the officer report, presentation and advice, along with the points of discussion in the meeting, when determining how to vote.

RESOLVED that the following responses be forwarded to Blaby District Council:

1. Application No: 23/1066/OUT

Description: Outline application for a commercial development consisting of the erection of x4 warehouse buildings with ancillary officer and gatehouses (Use Class B8) and 3x general industrial buildings (Use Class B2) including associated access off Leicester Lane (revised application following refusal 19/0164/OUT)

Location: Land to the West of St Johns (B4114) Enderby Leicestershire LE19 2AB

Response: *Braunstone Town Council recommends that any approval be subject to the following conditions:*

- a) *a connecting cycle / footpath be provided by the developer, adjacent and parallel to the northbound carriageway of St Johns (B4114) which connects the cycle/footpath by Barr Close, to the development via the 2019 proposed route of the vehicular access from St Johns (now removed), to the entrance of the Park & Ride, with associated improvements to the crossing points, and*

connecting to the cycle/footpath by Leicester Lane;

- b) prior to commencement of any work, a detailed construction plan must to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority setting out the method of construction and including details of a construction traffic route, an environmental and noise impact assessment, mitigating measures and measures to protect wildlife habitats, trees and water courses;*
- c) no construction work to be undertaken on the site until the proposed new road (application 19/0179/FUL & 19/0180/RM) and junction improvements (application 19/0178/FUL) had been approved, constructed and completed and confirmation received from the Local Highways Authority that the junction and new road met the relevant standards for a “B” road set out in the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide;*
- d) no construction work to be undertaken until an application had been submitted to and discharged by the Local Planning Authority setting out how the development would meet the requirements a – n set out in the Site Allocations Policy SA3 of the Blaby District Local Plan (Delivery) Development Plan Document, adopted February 2019; and*
- e) the proposed units on the site must not be operational until the improvements to the junction on Leicester Lane, the cycle/footpath on St Johns (including site access and crossings) and the site road layout, as set out in the submitted plans, had been approved, constructed and completed, with confirmation received from the Local Highways Authority that these met the relevant standards set out in the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide.*

Reasons:

The site had been identified as new allocation for Employment in the Blaby District Local Plan (Delivery) Development Plan Document, adopted February 2019.

- a) To provide infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling to the site, avoiding obstructions and having to cross the main road multiple times. The enhancement adjacent to the site would connect two existing sections providing a link to Fosse Park/Grove Park and Enderby (albeit cyclists would have to cross the road at the crossing point by Barr Close). This would provide a balanced contribution to enhancing sustainable transport infrastructure and connections in line with growth.*
- b) To ensure that any adverse impact upon the amenity enjoyed by local residents and upon the*

local environment would be mitigated and controlled.

- c) To mitigate the adverse impact on the capacity of the local highway network, reduction in air quality and the impact on the amenity enjoyed by residents in the surrounding residential areas.*
- d) To ensure that the development provided for a mix of uses, provided transport infrastructure improvements, highway improvements, included sustainable transport measures, protected the environment, heritage, biodiversity and landscape and addressed surface water run off mitigating potential flooding.*
- e) To mitigate the adverse impact on the capacity of the local highway network and reduction in air quality.*

2. Application No:	24/0060/HH
Description:	Part garage conversion (extension)
Location:	5 Tillett Road Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Thorpe Astley Ward)
Response:	<i>Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; subject to the provision of on-site parking for at least three vehicles within the curtilage of the property, which should be hardbound and contain drainage/or be of a permeable material, and such parking permanently remaining available for use.</i>
Reason:	<i>A four-bedroom dwelling should have parking provision for three off-road spaces to be in accordance with Part 3, Paragraph 3.151 of the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide. There was limited available parking on highway due to the narrow road and the need to access residential properties; additional highway parking could cause obstruction and present highway safety issues.</i>

69. Additional Planning and Licensing Applications

The Committee noted that no planning or licensing applications had been received since the publication of the agenda.

70. Planning Decisions

The Committee received and noted planning decisions made by Blaby District Council (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that a member of the Committee for Millfield Ward be asked to pursue the following planning decisions with the relevant Planning Case Officer at Blaby District Council:

- 23/1006/HH; two storey side extension and two single storey rear extension including demolition of existing outbuilding (revised scheme to 22/1006/HH) at 31 Headley Road; and
- 23/1024/HH; two storey side extension, first floor side and rear extension; at 132 Kingsway.

Reason for Decision

To understand why the Parking Standards in the Leicestershire Local Highway Design Guide had not been applied in these cases and whether Leicestershire County Council had been made aware of the Town Council's comments in relation to its local knowledge and the potential impact on highway safety.

71. Feedback on Planning Application Decisions

The Committee noted that there was no feedback outstanding concerning planning application decisions by Blaby District Council where the Committee had queried the decision.

72. Braunstone Village Conservation Area Extension

The Committee received an update on the process to consider whether there would be a case to designate an area of Braunstone Village to the South of Braunstone Lane as a Conservation Area (item 10 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk undertook to clarify whether Blaby District Council, scheduled for 16th April 2024, would receive a report concerning the proposed conservation area regardless of whether there was a recommendation to approve a consultation.

RESOLVED

1. that the approach to the *Review Process*, as set out in the report, be endorsed;
2. that an additional meeting of the Committee be scheduled for Thursday 11th April 2024 to consider the published report and recommendations being submitted to a meeting of Blaby District Council on 16th April 2024 on whether to undertake a public consultation;
3. that the *Outline Work Programme*, as set out in the report, be endorsed; and
4. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Planning & Environment Committee, to:
 - (a) approve specific dates and milestones, including consultations and review, within the framework set out in the *Outline Work Programme* section of the report,
 - (b) approve revised milestones and timescales, subject to consideration by the Planning & Environment Committee at the next scheduled meeting,

- (c) to call additional meetings and/or reschedule meetings of Planning & Environment Committee to facilitate the *Review Process* and *Outline Work Programme*,
- (d) support the process using the Council's existing resources, including communications channels and premises, and
- (e) engage residents, stakeholders, partners and professional advisers, as appropriate.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To progress the proposals for considering the area of Braunstone Village to the south of Main Street/Braunstone Lane for designation as a Conservation Area.*
2. *To consider and comment on whether the evidence presented supported the recommendations to either proceed or not proceed to the statutory public consultation stage of the process.*
3. *To confirm the stages of the review, along with the anticipated dates upon which the detailed milestones and work would be programmed.*
4. *To progress the review process and work programme avoiding any further delay.*

73. Care Homes

The Committee received an update on number and location of Care Homes in former domestic dwellings in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the report be noted; and
2. that a report be submitted to the meeting of the Committee, scheduled for February 2025, providing an update on the number and location of approved Care Homes in former domestic dwellings in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To note the number and location of change of use applications from a domestic dwelling to a residential care home since 2016.*
2. *To monitor the expansion of residential care homes in residential areas in order to protect amenity and ensure provision was in the most appropriate location and to an appropriate standard.*

74. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st January 2024 (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

There were no issues of concern with the income and expenditure against the budget for 2023/2024.

75. Approval of Accounts

The Committee received payments from 6th December 2023 until 6th February 2024 (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the Period 6th December 2023 until 6th February 2024 be approved.

Reason for Decision

To authorise payments in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations.

76. Houses in Multiple Occupation

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reason for exception – Personal Information and Information provided in confidence.*

The Committee received a report providing an update on known and potential Houses in Multiple Occupation in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley; and setting out feedback and issues which had been identified (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the report be noted;
2. that an article be placed in the Council pages of the Braunstone Life inviting residents to notify the Council if they suspected any Houses in Multiple Occupation in their neighbourhood;
3. that Blaby District Council's Licensing Department be approached concerning the status of the existing suspected Houses in Multiple Occupation (identified in red at Appendix 2 of the confidential report); and
4. that a report be submitted to the meeting of the Committee, scheduled for February 2025, providing an update on known and potential Houses in Multiple Occupation in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley and setting out feedback and any issues which had been identified.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To monitor the growth in Houses in Multiple Occupation in order to protect amenity and ensure provision was in the most appropriate location and to an appropriate standard.*
2. *To ensure that all properties operating as Houses in Multiple Occupation were registered and complied with the regulations, including the safety*

standards.

3. *To determine whether the properties suspected of operating as a House in Multiple Occupation were being investigated or whether it had been confirmed that the properties were not operating as a House in Multiple Occupation.*
4. *To monitor the expansion of Houses in Multiple Occupation, to ensure that such properties were properly regulated and to ensure that communities were not adversely affected.*

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime & Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;
- foster good relations between different groups

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

These issues were considered in connection with each of the above decisions. Unless otherwise stated under each item of this report, there were no implications.

These minutes are a draft and are subject to consideration for approval at the next meeting scheduled 18th April 2024.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 7th MARCH 2024 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Councillor Anthea Ambrose (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Andy Evans, Rebecca Lunn, Sam Maxwell, Gary Sanders, Christiane Startin-Lorent and Robert Waterton.

Officers in Attendance: Darren Tilley, Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

86. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Imran Uddin.

87. Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of any Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by members.

88. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may attend the meeting for the purpose of submitting a petition and/or making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

There were no members of the public at the meeting.

89. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2024 (item 4 on the agenda) were circulated.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

90. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2023 to 27th February 2024 (item 5 on the agenda).

It was noted that the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, would review the comparison reports that could be generated by the Accounts Software with a view to presenting these in a format that would be clearer to understand.

RESOLVED that when reporting the End of Quarter Financial Position, the Income and Expenditure Report be included with the Balance Sheet and Financial Summary.

Reason for Decision

To enable Councillors to have a clearer overview of the main areas of expenditure.

91. Financial Position – Cashbook and Reserves

The Committee received a summary of the Council's Cash and Reserves and received an update on implementation of the actions to ensure that the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function; along with determining an offer of a short-term loan from Blaby District Council (item 6 on the agenda).

The Responsible Financial Officer provided the following update on the situation with the Council's Cash Flow:

- i. On 1st March 2024 actual cash balances at the bank were £4,785 higher than predicted when the report was published and approximately £20,000 more than predicted at the beginning of February;
- ii. projecting cash flows forward, using the same income and expenditure predictions; a closing balance on 31st March of £10,451 (with all salaries paid) was predicted and a deficit on 25th April of -£59,031;
- iii. projecting income and expenditure in the 2024/2025 financial year on the same basis, the Council would be in credit on both 30th September 2024 and 31st March 2025, the Council risks being in deficit by the end of April 2025 without any action, by approximately -£50k.

The Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities have been in touch to ask for more information to consider whether to approve the Council's short-term borrowing request up to 31st March. They have asked for:

1. Evidence of current levels of reserves (e.g. a bank statement).
2. What mitigating action would need to be taken if the parish council were to face any future financial difficulty in the next 3-5 years?

Items 6, 7 and 8 on the Policy & Resources Committee agenda (7th March) set out the proposals to address point 2 above and have been provided.

RESOLVED

1. that *Progress with addressing the Cash Deficit*, as detailed in the relevant section of the report and in the cash flow forecast at Appendix 1, be noted;
2. that the terms of a short-term loan from Blaby District Council, as detailed in the *Short Term Loan* part of the report section *Progress with addressing*

- the Cash Deficit*, be approved;
3. that a further application be made to the Cooperative Bank for a 12 month overdraft facility of no more than £100,000 covering September 2024 and April 2025;
 4. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to develop proposals, timescales and undertake a consultation with staff to adjust the monthly pay date;
 5. that delegated authority be given to the Responsible Financial Officer, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to negotiate and make arrangements with Blaby District Council and the Cooperative Bank to facilitate the arrangements set out in 2 and 3 above, including determining:
 - a) cash amounts to be arranged, within the limits set out in 2 and 3 above,
 - b) timescales, and
 - c) entering into the appropriate legal and contractual arrangements and undertaking the associated administration; and
 6. that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Council setting out the context of the current cash flow position and the approved actions to ensure the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The position in respect of the Council's Reserves and the commitments and overspends during 2023/2024, were all matters that the Council could and was addressing.*
2. *The terms of the short-term loan were both reasonable and balanced and would ensure the Council had sufficient cash in the short term to function.*
3. *To provide a contingency while the Council replenishes its reserves to a comfortable position to cover both cash flows and unforeseen circumstances.*
4. *To ease cash flow pressures in April and September each financial year, particularly in April 2025.*
5. *To ensure that mutually agreed arrangements could be negotiated and made with both Blaby District Council and the Cooperative Bank, within the general principles and proposals set out, avoiding the need to call additional meetings of the Policy & Resources Committee to approve minor or technical differences in approach.*
6. *To ensure that all members of the Council were fully informed of the cash flow situation and the short and long term proposals to address the issue and avoid a repeat occurrence. To enable Council to debate, discuss and question the context and actions accordingly.*

92. Review of Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning

The Committee undertook a mid-year review of the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies (item 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. that the current projections attached at Appendix 1, based on known financial pressures identified in the report, be approved;
2. that the Council's Strategic Aims, Delivery Objectives and Committee/Service Objectives, attached at Appendix 2, be used as the basis for calculating the annual budget and any external funding sought;
3. that once the revenue reserve reaches the equivalent of three months' net expenditure; the additional funds be earmarked to invest in infrastructure and assets, as identified in the Capital Plan at Appendix 3, and in the development and remodelling of services, including the Town Council's operations
4. that the Financial, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies, as set out in the report, be adopted;
5. that the revised Reserves Policy, attached at Appendix 4, be approved; subject to paragraph 26 being amended to read ".....put forward proposals to replenish the general fund reserve in the following financial year"; and
6. that the Earmarked Reserves be approved, as set out at Appendix 5.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To provide a foundation for preparing budget estimates for 2025/2026 and beyond.*
2. *To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the current financial constraints and future financial uncertainties.*
3. *To maintain the standard of the council's facilities and open spaces and to ensure the highest possible standards within the resources available in the future.*
4. *To effectively manage the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, taking into account the associated risks.*
5. *To ensure the financial resilience of the Council, that it would be able to function, invest in its assets and deliver services to residents; while avoiding significant increases in council tax precept in future years.*
6. *To ensure that reserves earmarked relate only to a commitment or a restricted use; maximising the level of funds to replenish the revenue (general fund) reserve.*

93. Revenue Savings Projects 2024/2025 and future years

The Committee considered options for reducing expenditure in 2024/2025, and future years, in order to replenish the Council's reserves quicker and reduce the future impact on taxpayers (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the *One-off Revenue Savings for 2024/2025*, estimated to total £30,990, as identified in the relevant section of the report, be approved;
2. that the associated budget for the *One-off Revenue Savings for 2024/2025* be vired to the Contingency Fund; and

3. that the proposed arrangements to bring forward potential *Ongoing Revenue Savings for Future Years*, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To manage cash flow during 2024/2025 to ensure the Council's financial position and resilience would be improved in the short term.*
2. *To adjust budgets accordingly to ensure funds would not be spent elsewhere and to provide a contingency fund for 2024/2025.*
3. *To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the current financial constraints and future financial uncertainties.*

94. Climate Change & Environmental Action Plan

The Committee considered, for approval, an action plan to deliver the Climate Change and Environmental Strategy's Objectives (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the updated Climate Change & Environmental Action Plan, as amended and attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for April 2024 to March 2025; subject to the *Reason for Inclusion* of the *Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points at Shakespeare Park and parks depot* including residents and visitors.

Reason for Decision

To set out proposals to deliver the objectives set out in the Climate Change & Environmental Strategy and the Environment & Biodiversity Strategy, along with the recommendations of the Carbon Audit in order to deliver the Council's commitment to make its activities carbon neutral and embed climate and environmental awareness in its decision making. The reason for rolling out electric vehicle charging points should also be to provide fast charging for residents and visitors as well as service users, hirers and staff.

95. Review of Fees and Charges

The Committee considered increasing Community Centre, sports pitches and miscellaneous fees and charges by approximately 5% for implementation from 1st April 2024 (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the Casual Indoor Bowls facility at the Civic Centre, and the facility for sending and receiving faxes, be removed;
2. that the proposed fees and charges, highlighted in red, be approved as follows:
 - a) Appendix 1 – Civic Centre & Thorpe Astley Hire Charges,
 - b) Appendix 2 – Tennis Court Hire Fees,
 - c) Appendix 3 – Miscellaneous Charges, and

- d) Appendix 4 – documents available under Publication Scheme;
3. that the above be implemented for all new hires/purchases from Monday 1st April 2024; and
4. that an assessment of the impact of the price increases be undertaken following the end of the first quarter.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The casual indoor bowls and fax facilities had not been used for several years.*
2. *To avoid a huge jump in prices in subsequent years given the pressure on the precept for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026.*
3. *To set a specific date for timely implementation, allowing time for systems and publicity to be updated, while avoiding undue delay.*
4. *To assess the Price Elasticity of Demand and if there was a fall in income, to determine whether any action should be taken.*

96. Pitch Allocations 2024/2025

The Committee considered pitch capacity, fees and the process for allocating sports pitches for the 2024/2025 season (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the pitch type and capacity, as set out in Table 1 of the Pitch Capacity section of the report, be approved; and
2. that the pitch fees be confirmed and the availability of pitches be advertised, as set out at Appendix 1, with a closing date for applications on Monday 15th April 2024.

Reasons for Decisions

1. *To ensure a balance between quality of playing surface, the needs of local clubs for provision and the needs of park users.*
2. *To allow suitable time for applications while acknowledging clubs need the certainty by April of a home playing ground in order to participate in the league.*

97. Flooding Support

The Committee considered how the Town Council could be both a voice for residents affected by flooding and support action being taken to improve resilience and preparation (item 12 on the agenda).

It was noted that the drop-in information session held at Blaby District Council's offices on 6th March 2024 had been well attended by residents and Leicester City Council officers were also in attendance. Severn Trent would be using cameras to look at the sewage system on Friday and local councillors had been invited to view their work.

RESOLVED that Braunstone Town Council, including through Town Ward Councillors, work with the community, other partners and stakeholders and use its offices, powers and influence to:

- a) represent residents' concerns about flooding, including as follows:
 - signposting to support (including financial) provided by other authorities and agencies,
 - supporting Town Ward Councillors to hold meetings and engagement sessions with residents and communities affected by or at risk of flooding, and
 - supporting the community to express its concerns and have a strong voice, including facilitating the establishment of a Residents' Association where support for one existed; and
- b) Support and champion action to prevent flooding, including as follows:
 - signposting and promoting schemes, funding and information relating to flood prevention measures,
 - supporting agencies to hold meetings and engagement sessions with residents and communities affected by or at risk of flooding,
 - supporting communities to take action, including the formation of a Group (e.g. Residents' Association) and taking on volunteer roles (e.g. Community Flood Warden), and
 - action ancillary to the above, e.g. supporting the community/group to develop a Community Flood Plan, hold open meetings and publicise its work and events to residents.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Town Council could be a voice for residents affected by flooding and that action would be pursued to improve resilience and preparation.

98. Improvements to Walking and Cycling Routes

The Committee received an update on the timescales for delivery of proposals for improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes (item 13 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk reported that the proposed start date of January 2025 for improvement works on Kingsway and Meridian Way was down to the contractor taking on other work in the meantime. Leicestershire County Council were exploring capacity in their in-house highways team to see if there was scope to deliver some of the works in 2024.

RESOLVED

1. that progress on the delivery of proposals for improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes, as shown on the programme enclosed with the agenda, be received and noted; and
2. that publicity be undertaken to explain the stages of the project and the connecting works, particularly at Aylestone Meadows.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The scheme would provide improvements for pedestrians and cyclists connecting facilities, amenities and communities across Braunstone Town, Meridian and Thorpe Astley.*
2. *Residents had raised questions, following the improvements on Aylestone Meadows, concerning improvements to the links and boardwalk.*

99. Improvements to Impey Close Play Area and Open Space

The Committee finalised proposals for the refurbishment and enhancement of Impey Close Play Area and surrounding Open Space; and considered the procurement process (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the *Proposals*, set out in the relevant section of the report, be endorsed;
2. that the amended *Timescales*, set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved;
3. that the *Update* on the drawings for the proposed work to the footpaths, set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved;
4. that the tender document for the proposed work to the Impey Close Playground, enclosed at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved; and
5. that funding sources be investigated to help towards the cost of the proposed work.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To provide a framework of the proposals for the tender process.*
2. *To confirm milestones for the delivery of the project.*
3. *To ensure that any proposed works to the footpath was suitably undertaken to prevent any issues with flooding in other areas.*
4. *To invite appropriate contractors to provide plans and quotations for the improvement to the playground at Impey Close.*
5. *To ensure that all sources of funding towards the cost of the project were considered.*

100. Thorpe Astley Park Culvert

The Committee received an update on works to replace the culvert and pedestrian bridge over Lubbesthorpe Brook at Thorpe Astley Park (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the update report on progress with Thorpe Astley Culvert be noted;
2. that investigations be undertaken by Blaby District Council to confirm ownership and if there were any planning obligations in place that required

that the culvert bridge was completed and maintained to an agreed standard.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the Town Council's desire to complete the transfer of Thorpe Astley Park, a significant asset that should be owned by the Town Council, was progressed without further delay and additional cost.*
2. *To ensure that all options for ensuring that the work to the culvert bridge would be undertaken as soon as possible had been investigated.*

101. Open Spaces & Parks Winter Works Programme – Progress Report

The Committee received a progress report on the Winter Works Programme 2023/2024 (item 16 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the progress of the Winter Works Programme for 2023/2024 be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that, where possible, the winter works tasks were on schedule to be completed before the end of the winter works period.

102. Working Time Policy & Procedure

The Committee considered, following consultation, adopting a proposed Working Time Policy & Procedure (item 17 on the agenda).

It was noted that new legislation surrounding flexible working was due to be implemented in April. The Council's HR Advisor was working through the detail. It may be that minor amendments/adjustments would need to be made to the adopted Policy & Procedure to comply with legislative changes. If these were required a further report would be submitted to Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED that the proposed Working Time Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and implemented on 11th March 2024.

Reason for Decision

To set out details of how flexible working (including homeworking) requests, working time and annualised hours would be managed to ensure fairness and maintain a work-life balance.

103. Leave Entitlement Policy & Procedure

The Committee considered, following consultation, adopting a proposed Leave Entitlement Policy & Procedure (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the proposed Leave Entitlement Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and implemented on 11th March 2024.

Reasons for Decision

To ensure that the Council had a policy in place setting out details of holiday and other types of leave that staff were entitled to, and how leave requests would be managed, to ensure fairness and maintain a work-life balance.

104. Local Government Pension Scheme: Review of Employer Discretions

The Committee reviewed the Council's Pensions Discretions Policy, which sets out how the Council would apply certain discretions that exist within the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the current Local Government Pension Scheme Discretionary policies, attached at Appendix 1, having been restructured and modified as detailed in the report, be approved and adopted; and
2. that as part of the annual update to the Scheme of Delegation, the following delegation be considered to Employing Committee: "To determine whether to waive the provisions set out in the discretionary pensions policies in exceptional circumstances, having considered the business case and foreseeable costs to the Council".

Reasons for Decision

1. *To review and publish a statement of policy explaining how the Council would apply certain discretions that exist within the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations.*
2. *Advice from the Local Pensions Administrator was that it was good practice not to rule out in exceptional circumstances waiving a decision not to apply a policy discretion but to consider the specific circumstances and costs.*

105. Review of Disciplinary Policy & Procedure

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure and to approve these for consultation (item 20 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposed revisions to the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for consultation with staff, Councillors and the Council's HR Advisor, as detailed in the *Timescales and Implementation* section of the report; and
2. that any proposed amendments be presented to the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee, proposed for 25th April 2024, for consideration

and approval.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that staff, Councillors and the Council's HR Advisor could input into the proposed changes to the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure to ensure that it would be practical and fit for purpose.*
2. *To ensure that issues relating to an employee's attendance, behaviour, conduct and performance were raised and dealt with promptly and that meetings, decisions and confirmation of those decisions were undertaken in a timely manner.*

106. Outside Bodies Report

The Committee received reports from members of Outside Bodies:

a) Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils

No Report.

b) Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion Management Association

Councillor Maxwell reported on the recent meeting of the Committee of the Shakespeare Park Management Association, held on 8th February 2024. The Committee had discussed the number of bookings and the need to try and increase these. Concerns had been expressed with the amount of block bookings for the Bowls Club. Options had been considered to review block bookings and charge for certain uses by the clubs and potentially at peak times.

Discussion had also taken place concerning registration as a charity and more work would be undertaken on this.

Councillor Sam Maxwell expressed the Council's continuing support to the Management Association to make a success of the Pavilion facilities at Shakespeare Park.

RESOLVED that the Outside Bodies reports be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To keep up to date with the discussions and work of both Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils and Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion Managements Association.

107. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 1st January 2024 until 27th February 2024 (item 22 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 1st January 2024 until 27th February 2024 be approved.

Reason for Decision

To authorise payments in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations.

108. Shakespeare Park Management Association

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reason for exception – Commercial Interest.*

The Committee considered the current position with the Shakespeare Park Management Association, their plans, and support the Council could provide (item 23 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to offer support and enter into discussion with the Shakespeare Park Management Association based on points 1 to 3 set out in the *Potential Support* section of the report and conditioned on suggestions 1, 5 & 6 set out in the *Current Position* section of the report being met;
2. that the Council offers to cover the NNDR Bill, as detailed in the *Charitable Status* section of the report;
3. that approval be given to the Shakespeare Park Management Association to hire out the Clubroom and kitchen to provide a Café Service, subject to the proposed Café vendor registering with Environmental Health and meeting the regulations and that a planning variation was approved by the Local Planning Authority;
4. that in support of 3 above, delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk:
 - a) to give the necessary approvals;
 - b) to approve and submit a planning application;
 - c) meet any other regulatory requirements; and
 - d) recharge the costs to the Shakespeare Park Pavilion Management Association as appropriate.

Reasons for Decision

1. *As the owner, the Town Council would be left to pick up the building running costs, debt, and could only hire the facility by charging VAT.*
2. *In the event that the Council took over direct Management, it would be liable for the full National Non-Domestic Rates for the Pavilion.*
3. *To enable the Management Association to generate income and become sustainable; provided all necessary regulations were met and approvals*

given.

- 4. To enable detailed arrangements to be put in place to progress the Café proposals and obtain necessary approvals.*

109. Mosssdale Meadows Flood Alleviation and Drainage Improvements

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reason for exception – Commercial Interest.*

The Committee considered the tender process, timescales and proposed financing for rebuilding the Culvert and carrying out flood alleviation and drainage improvements at Mosssdale Meadows (item 24 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that revised designs and plans be commissioned to include the updated proposed work to Mosssdale Meadows for consideration at the next meeting; and
2. that the updated draft timeline for required work be approved.

Reasons for Decision

- 1. To provide updated plans to include additional works to Mosssdale Meadows to alleviate ongoing flooding issues in all areas of the park.*
- 2. To provide a plan of works to be carried out and target dates to work towards.*

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

NOTE:

CRIME & DISORDER ACT 1998 (SECTION 17) – The Council has an obligation to consider Crime & Disorder implications of all its activities and to do all that it can to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area.

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Braunstone Town Council has a duty in carrying out its functions to have due regard to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and;
- foster good relations between different groups

To ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

These issues were considered in connection with each of the above decisions. Unless otherwise stated under each item of this report, there were no implications.

These minutes are a draft and are subject to consideration for approval at the next meeting scheduled on 25th April 2024.