



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

8th November 2023

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 16th November 2023** 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/83072332215?pwd=6zEjYPbZ71Rao11pRSCzzfw4ofkJzs.1>

Meeting ID: 830 7233 2215

Passcode: 151198

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 21st September 2023 to be signed by the Chairperson (**Enclosed**).
5. **Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning**
To set out the context for the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies (**Enclosed**).
6. **Announcements**
To receive announcements/reports (if any):
 - a) Town Mayor,
 - b) Leader of the Council,
 - c) Chief Executive and Town Clerk.
7. **County and District Councillor Reports**
To receive reports from the Town's elected representatives on:
 - a) Leicestershire County Council
 - b) Blaby District Council
8. **Questions from Councillors**
To answer questions from Councillors where notice has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.12 (If any).
9. **Reports of Standing Committees**
To receive reports and minutes of Standing Committees (**Enclosed**):
 - a) Community & Development Committee 05/10/2023 p7797
 - b) Planning & Environment Committee 26/10/2023 p7805
 - c) Policy & Resources Committee 02/11/2023 p7819

10. Motions on Notice

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

11. Sealing of Documents

To authorise the sealing of documents (if any).

Next Scheduled Meeting: 8pm, Thursday 25th January 2024.

*Deadline for submission of Questions on Notice and Motions on Notice:
12noon, Tuesday 16th January 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

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2023 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, Satindra Sangha, Darshan Singh, Christiane Startin-Lorent, Imran Uddin, Marion Waterton, Robert Waterton and Mark Widdop.

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

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

COUNCILLOR TRACEY SHEPHERD, TOWN MAYOR, IN THE CHAIR

6155 Tribute to Town Mayor's Consort

The Town Mayor opened the meeting by paying tribute to her mum and Consort, Pauline Shepherd who had sadly passed away.

"I wish to open the meeting reflecting on the life and service of my dear Mum and my Consort as Town Mayor".

"Mum tragically passed away last week on Wednesday 13th September having received a bladder cancer diagnosis not long after I became Town Mayor".

"It was one of her proudest days seeing me elected to represent you all, become Town Mayor and be my consort. I will never let her down nor yourselves and will continue to try and make a positive difference to Braunstone Town. She was simply a magnificent lady! I would always say, *"Love you" and she would always say, "More!" I so wish there could be more!!*"

The Town Mayor invited the Council to stand and observe a minute's silence in memory of Pauline Shepherd.

Councillor Nick Brown, Leader of the Council, paid tribute to Pauline Shepherd and spoke of the support that she gave the Town Mayor in her work as a councillor and Town Mayor for Braunstone Town.

Councillor Paul Kennedy, Deputy Town Mayor, offered the Town Mayor sincere condolences on behalf of the Councillors and officers on the loss of her mum and Consort and presented the Town Mayor with a condolence card from members and officers of the Council.

6156 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rebecca Lunn-Scoppie, Sam Maxwell and Gary Sanders.

6157 Disclosures of Interest

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

6158 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 four members of the public present at the meeting.

6159 Minutes

The Minutes of the Council Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 29th June 2023 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

It was proposed by the Town Mayor and seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor that the Minutes of the Council Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 29th June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

Councillor Robert Waterton proposed the following amendments to the minutes as follows:

- a) Page 7746, item 6147 (b) - Councillor Nick Brown, District Councillor ward be amended from Ravenhurst & Fosse Ward to Braunstone Millfield Ward; and
- b) Page 7747, item 6147 (b) - Sam Maxwell reference to Blaby District Council to read Planning Committee not Planning & Environment Committee.

As the mover and seconder of the original motion, both the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor accepted the proposed amendments, which became the substantive motion and it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 29th June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- a) Page 7746, item 6147 (b) - Councillor Nick Brown, District Councillor ward be amended from Ravenhurst & Fosse Ward to Braunstone Millfield Ward; and
- b) Page 7747, item 6147 (b) - Sam Maxwell reference to Blaby District Council to read Planning Committee not Planning & Environment Committee.

6160 Announcements

a) Town Mayor

The Town Mayor announced that she had recently attended the following events:

“On 1st July, I opened the first Thorpe Astley On the Beach at Thorpe Astley Park and Community Centre. The weather was just right and that brought people out from the community and from further afield. It was great to see the children having so much fun and I very much hope the Council can organise similar successful events at Thorpe Astley Park in the coming years”.

“The annual Summer Fete was due to take place on 5th August at Mossdale Meadows; however, unfortunately this was cancelled due to the adverse weather”.

“Nevertheless, we have Apple Day coming up on Saturday at Franklin Park Community Orchard between 11am and 2pm. I will be hosting a Chatty Café on the day. Please come along and join me at the event. We need helpers at the Chatty Café and also to set up and pack away at the event. If you can help at the event, even for a short period, please let the officers know after the meeting. All we now need is some good weather”.

b) Leader of the Council

Councillor Nick Brown reported on the following items:

Events

The Apple Day event would be held on Saturday 23rd September on Franklin Park and all councillors were invited to attend this popular event.

Planning Application – Avon Road

Councillor Brown referred to a planning application submitted some time ago for building of new homes on a development adjacent to Avon Road. Braunstone Town Council had objected to the development but Blaby District Council had approved the planning application. A local resident had progressed a Judicial Review of the district council's decision and the Judge in the case had found in favour of the resident. The planning application may be resubmitted and would then be forwarded to Braunstone Town Council for consultation.

Update on Town Council Projects

Solar Panels had now been installed on the Braunstone Community Library building and Thorpe Astley Community Centre. The Air Source Heat pump at Thorpe Astley Community Centre had also recently been installed.

Solar panel installation on Braunstone Civic Centre was due to take place in mid-October 2023 which would see the first phase of the Town Council's Climate Change Action Plan completed.

The next stage of works would be more difficult to complete due to more technical issues to overcome within the buildings.

c) Chief Executive and Town Clerk

No announcements were made by the Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

6161 County and District Councillor Reports

a) Leicestershire County Council

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

1. Highways – consultation on cycling routes to be undertaken over next 18 months. There is a good network of cycling routes but maintenance of the routes was poor.
2. Quality of School Buildings – Ravenhurst School had now been moved to Academy status from a maintained school but Councillor Hack had received no information regarding this. The school had raised concerns over the condition of the roof.

It was noted that only one Leicestershire County Council school had reported buildings with RAAC concrete which was in Market Harborough.

It was noted that 38 Academy's had applied for funding but only one third of schools had been successful in obtaining funding.

A report on the investment and assets of school buildings showed a zero value on building leased to Academy's.

No funding had been received from Central Government to help with investment in public buildings.

3. It was noted that the County Council had a deficit of £46million but had not been issued with a Section 114 Notice. Derbyshire County Council had advised that it was not in a financially good position and worse than Leicestershire County Council but had not yet been issued a Section 114 Notice.

Councillor Richard Forrest sought clarification on the one school in Leicestershire reporting RAAC concrete used in construction. Councillor Amanda Hack confirmed that this was a County Council school.

It was noted that results from 98% of Academy reports had now been received but concern was raised at other issues affecting school buildings including leaking roofs that worsen the issues with RAAC and asbestos.

b) Blaby District Council

Councillor Nick Brown, as District Councillor for Braunstone Millfield Ward, reported on the following matters:

Councillor Brown reported that he was now the Chairperson for the Scrutiny Commission and had included the following items on the agenda for consideration.

1. Graffiti and District Cleansing throughout the District
2. Retail Strategy – to consider Blaby District allocation of land for commercial use. There was a need for more affordable housing and many more people now in temporary accommodation.

Councillor Robert Waterton advised that the Strategic Director, John Richardson, had secured another post and would be leaving Blaby District Council in the near future.

6162 Questions from Councillors

No questions had been submitted.

6163 Reports of Standing Committees: Community Development Committee – 6th July 2023

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Community Development Committee held on the 6th July 2023 (p7750-7758).

Page 7753 – Minute 23 Summer Fete 2023

Councillor Anthea Ambrose advised that due to poor weather, the annual Summer Fete on Mossdale Meadows had to be cancelled. It was asked if contingency plans for future events be considered.

It was moved by Councillor Anthea Ambrose and was

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6164 Reports of Standing Committees: Planning & Environment Committee – 24th August 2023

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 24th August 2023 (p7759 – p7774).

Page 7763 – Minute 19 (4) Planning & Licensing Applications dealt with under Delegated Authority – Application 23/0514/FUL – Little Masons Close

Councillor Robert Waterton advised that the planning application submitted for 1 Little Masons Close had not been objected to Braunstone Town Council but Blaby District Council had rejected the planning application. Considerable opposition to the planning application had been received from local residents. Councillor Waterton suggested that location of houses to be changed to Children's Homes needed more consideration regarding the areas they are situated in.

Page 7766 – Minute 19 (10) Planning & Licensing Applications dealt with under Delegated Authority – Application 23/0444/TEL – Lubbethorpe Way Thorpe Astley

Councillor Andy Evans requested clarification if Braunstone Town Council had agreed to or objected this planning application. It was confirmed that the Town Council had not objected and this word was missing from the minutes. The Chief Executive & Town Clerk undertook to update the draft version.

Page 7772 – Item 24 – Notice Board Renewal

Councillor Anthea Ambrose requested that the notice board on Kingsway at Braunstone Civic Centre be repaired and repainted in the interim due to complaints received about the poor condition of the board. Councillor Ambrose requested that the notice board be included in the rolling programme of notice board repair for next financial year.

It was moved by Councillor Anthea Ambrose and was

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6165 Reports of Standing Committees: Employing Committee – 31st August 2023

Council received the Report of the meeting of Employing Committee held on 31st August 2023 (p7775-7777).

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and was

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6166 Reports of Standing Committee: Policy & Resources Committee – 7th September 2023

Council received the Report of the meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 7th September 2023 (p7778– p7788).

Councillor Nick Brown advised that no further progress had been made to the works on the Thorpe Astley Park Culvert. Blaby District Council had recently contacted the contractor to receive an update on the timescales for the proposed work.

Councillor Christiane Startin-Lorent advised that the culvert bridge wall panels and hedges posed a health & safety issue as users of the culvert bridge footpath did not have a clear view of oncoming cyclists etc.

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and was

RESOLVED that the report be adopted.

6167 Motions on Notice

The Council received and considered motions moved on notice in accordance with Standing Order 4.14, as set out below:

Woodland off Brockenhurst drive, Braunstone Town

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

RESOLVED that the following Motion on Notice be approved:

1. that this Council notes:
 - a) that 4.6 acres of amenity woodland situated between the western end of Brockenhurst Drive and Lubbesthorpe Way, known locally as the 'Ransom Field' has been placed up for sale and advertised under the heading of 'Commercial Development';
 - b) that on Blaby District Council's constraints map, the eastern part of the site is located within flood zone 3 which means it is land at the highest risk of flooding. The land to the south of the site is a local wildlife site;
 - c) the land to the north of the site is Mosssdale Meadows park and is owned by Braunstone Town Council;
 - d) that this is now one of the few remaining wildlife habitats within the parish of Braunstone Town and there was local public concern over the proposed sale and potential loss of such habitat should any development occur on the site;
 - e) the Town Council's stated aims to protect and enhance natural habitats and biodiversity as set out in its Environment and Biodiversity Strategy adopted in April 2022; and
 - f) the site is part of an area of undeveloped land which spans from Kingsway North to Fosse Park. This is a significant wildlife corridor in what is otherwise a suburban landscape.

2. that Planning & Environment Committee:
 - a) support adoption of policies and actions to protect said site from development;
 - b) support the inclusion of the site as designated as a natural wildlife site and be designated as such within the new Blaby District Local Development Plan; and
 - c) write to Blaby District Council and Leicestershire County Council to request them to support the above aims; and
3. that Policy & Resources Committee write to the landowners or their agents to request consideration of transfer of the land to public ownership.

6168 Sealing of Documents

There were no documents for sealing.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

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.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

16th NOVEMBER 2023

Item 5 – Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning

Purpose

To set out the context for 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.

By 2018, the economic and political climate made it difficult to predict the medium term and therefore the exercise in predicting the long term was merely projecting over ten years the impact of existing and known pressures and this has limited value. Therefore, on 25th January 2018, the Council agreed *“that the Priorities and Financial Planning process be revised to medium term, updated at least on an annual basis, and covering a rolling 5 year period”*.

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 10th October 2023, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published its World Economic Outlook Report, which forecasts global growth at 3% in 2023 and 2.9% in 2024 (global growth was 3.5% in 2022). The report predicts that advanced economies are expected to grow by 1.5% in 2023 and 1.4% in 2024 (compared to 2.6% in 2022). The IMF forecast that global inflation will decline from 8.7% in 2022 to 6.9% in 2023 and 5.8% in 2024.

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, both the growth forecasts are slightly lower and the inflation forecasts are slightly higher

UK Economic and Political Context

In June 2023, the OECD forecast UK GDP growth to be 0.3% in 2023 and 1.0% in 2024. The OECD predicts that “Government consumption and investment will continue to prop up the economy, before a gradual strengthening of private expenditure due to falling wholesale gas prices and improved global conditions”.

The Bank of England estimates that UK GDP declined by 0.5% in July and predicts that underlying growth in the second half of 2023 will be weaker than expected.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 6.7% in the 12 months to September 2023, the same rate as in August. On a monthly basis, CPI rose by 0.5% in September 2023, the same rate as in September 2022. Rising prices for motor fuel made the largest upward contribution to the change in the annual rates.

The Monetary Policy Committee on 20th September 2023 maintained interest rates at 5.25%. Headline inflation is projected to slow on the back of declining energy prices and to come down close to the Bank of England's 2% target by the second quarter of 2025.

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 financial projections for the period until 2028/2029, which is based on the following assumptions:

- pension scheme costs, taking into account the 2022 valuation with a 6% pay increase this year (4% budgeted last year) and a 5% pay increase in 2024/2025 and 2025/2026, then 4% in the two subsequent years (2026/2027 & 2027/2028) and then 3% in 2028/2029;
- ensuring the Council pays the foundation living wage, predicted to be 20% over the next 5 years;
- 3% inflation on operational costs during 2024/25;
- savings from existing loans which mature during the period; and
- that the base budget predicted when setting the Council Tax equates to the actual income and expenditure.

The projections are based on there being no contingency in the revenue budget of 2024/2025 and a reduction on the annual Capitals Projects budget of £10,000 (compared to 2016/17 levels) to offset larger percentage increases in the precept in the forthcoming financial years when the costs identified above need to be met.

These projections, using current tax base information, result in a 10.97% increase on the precept for 2024/25; a total for the year of:

- £13.50 on a typical band B property;
- £15.43 on a band C property; and
- £17.37 on a band D property.

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 2023/2024 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 2023/2024 budget in January 2023, which was updated by Council in June 2023, 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.

The current Capital Plan (Appendix 3) contains 46 items; 10 of which are likely to be completed this year. Of the remaining 31 items, 24 are located at two locations as follows:

- Braunstone Civic Centre: 10 capital projects in the coming years; and a further 5 in the medium to long term; and
- Mossdale Meadows: 7 capital projects in the coming years; and a further 2 in the medium to long terms.

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. The current position with the reserves is attached at Appendix 4.

Financial Strategy

Since 2014, the Town Council has adopted the following financial strategy:

- 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.

When Braunstone Town Council borrows, it does so only for projects identified in the Capital Plan and 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 Strategy

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.

Where, during and at the end of a financial year, an underspend occurs then the priority is to rebuild balances 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.

Income Pressures

1. Reduction in the Council Tax Base

As the cost of meeting Council Tax Benefit payments is a charged against billing authorities Collection Fund, any significant increase in the number of benefit claimants as a result of a recession and the rising cost of living will result in a reduction in the Council Tax Base figures; which means the Council Tax charge would have to increase to set the same budget as the previous year.

Coupled with the impact on the Council's finances resulting from the loss of the Council Tax Support Grant, a significant reduction in the Council Tax Base will have a severe impact upon the Council's ability to deliver Capital Projects, protect its services and recover its reserves, without a significant percentage increase on the precept.

2. Pressure on income from Facility Hires

There was an uptake in one-off bookings (e.g. party/functions) when re-opening the Council's Community Facilities following the Covid-19 restrictions. Civic Centre hire income between 1st April 2022 and 30th September 2022 was £40,000.71 (60% of the 2022/2023 budget of £67,384). At the 31st March 2023, Civic Centre hire income was £87,504.44 (23% over the budgeted income for the year). Thorpe Astley Community Centre hire income to 30th September 2022 was £7,293.84 (75% of the 2022/2023 budget of £9,632.35). At 31st March 2023, Thorpe Astley Community Centre hire income totalled £11,319.90 (15% over the budgeted income for the year).

In the period 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023, Civic Centre hire income was £36,287.02 (54% of the 2023/2024 budget of £67,384). Thorpe Astley Community Centre hire income was £4,504.83 (42% of the 2023/2024 budget of £10,670).

The above figures indicate that there was a backlog of function hires due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions and that hires are returning to their pre-pandemic levels. It is also possible that the squeeze on household incomes, which is likely to continue in the 2024/25 financial year, is also beginning to have

an impact. Most of the regular hirers have returned, along with new hirers joining the regular hirer's scheme.

Given the economic pressures many are facing, to increase hire charges in line with inflation or the projected increase in precept over the next 2 years is likely to have an additional negative impact on the net income from room hire and more widely on the offer and appeal the centres have in the community.

In the case of the Civic Centre, the facility will be more attractive with the delivery of the priority Capital Project to improve the toilet facilities and the kitchen facilities of the Civic Community Lounge to enable it to operate a Café service.

The projections at Appendix 1 assume that the income from facilities hires will remain steady; the figures do include the cost of a full staff establishment. There are currently some Duty Officer vacancies and this post has a regular turnover of personnel; therefore, in the short term there is potential to manage vacancies, staff recruitment and contracted hours to balance budgets in the event of a downturn in facilities income. Equally if hires/bookings and the associated income starts to climb, resources will be available to pay staff additional hours to avoid large accumulations of hours.

3. Pressure on Facility Operators

In addition to income from facility bookings; the Council receives income from partners and private operators who provide services from our facilities. This includes the Operator of the Civic Community Lounge, the provider of the Nursery/Pre-School at Thorpe Astley Community Centre, and Kingsway Surgery who provide the branch service at Thorpe Astley.

Both the operator of the Civic Community Lounge and the provider of the Nursery/Pre-School have faced a difficult business environment following the Covid-19 pandemic. Both have worked with the Council, which approved a reduction in their respective contract payments in order that their operations continue to be viable. These have now returned to normal. In the case of the Civic Community Lounge, trading going forward will be supported with the completion of the kitchen facilities, which will enable it to operate a café service in addition to the bar service.

Continued pressure on household incomes could exacerbate pressures on these operators and the Council will similarly need to weigh up the economic value against the social value of these contracts if trading becomes difficult.

Expenditure Pressures

1. Inflation

While inflation has reduced to 6.7% in the year to September 2023; compared to 10.1% in the year to March 2023; the increases in utility and fuel costs and in the cost of goods generally continues to put pressure on the Council's finances.

With energy and fuel costs remaining high compared to 2021 levels, it continues to be a priority to invest in carbon reduction initiatives in accordance with the Climate Change & Environmental Strategy and Action Plan. While such initiatives will reduce pressure on operational budgets, there are significant upfront costs to deliver the investment along with project management and delivery costs.

2. Cost of Borrowing

Public Works Board lending is offered at a fixed margin above the Government's cost of borrowing, as measured by gilt yields. The cost of this borrowing was between 1.7% and 1.9% (depending on the term of the loan) in January 2021; by October 2022, the interest repayments had increased to between 5.9% and 6.2%. Current interest rates (October 2023) have stabilised between 5.5% and 5.8%.

Two of the Council's loans matured in 2022; therefore, the annual repayment cost has been saved this financial year. Once loan matures this year, meaning the annual repayment is saved from 2024/2025. In addition, another four loans mature over the period of this plan and have been included in the projections at Appendix 1.

As things stand, Public Works Loans are the most attractive way to deliver many of the objectives set out in the Council's Capital Plan and including the actions resulting from the Carbon Audit under the Climate Change and Environmental Strategy.

However, given the current position with Government finances and the ongoing inflation pressures in the economy, there is a limit to the amount of borrowing the Council can fund, which potentially restricts or reduces the Council's ability to deliver capital and infrastructure improvement projects.

3. Staff Salaries

National Joint Council (NJC) has yet to commence pay negotiations for 2024/2025, given there is currently no agreement between the employers and unions in respect of the pay deal for 2023/2024.

On 23rd February 2023, and reaffirmed on 17th August 2023, the National Employers agreed unanimously to make the following one-year (1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024), full and final offer to the unions representing the main local government NJC workforce:

- an increase of £1,925 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive;
- an increase of 3.88% on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer; and
- an increase of 3.88% on all allowances.

This offer would achieve £12.18 hourly rate on the Council's lowest scale point 5, an 8.92% increase.

Overall, if implemented, this offer amounts to a 6% increase in salaries for the current financial year. The adjustment is included in the Revised 2023/24 figures at Appendix 1.

The NJC trade unions have rejected the offer. The GMB have already organised some local industrial action. Unison have written to their members to state that they will not be taking industrial action at this time and will be working with the other NJC unions to resolve this year's pay dispute. Unite have subsequently issued a statement that there will be strikes this autumn in a number of councils.

Once a pay deal is agreed, payment will be backdated to 1st April 2023.

To meet the ongoing annual pay increases and ensure that the Town Council continues to meet the Living Wage Foundation rates; as 5% pay increase is estimated for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026, then 4% pay increase in the two subsequent years (2026/2027 & 2027/2028) and then 3% in 2028/2029. These increases are based on predicted CPI inflation for the respective financial year previous, with an additional percentage in subsequent years, and have been built into the income/expenditure projections at Appendix 1.

4. Pension Costs

All eligible staff have been auto-enrolled in the pension scheme and no eligible staff have opted out.

The actuarial valuation of the Leicestershire County Council Pension Fund is undertaken every three years, with that last valuation based on the position of each employing body at 31st March 2022.

Braunstone Town Council's employers' contribution rates for the three year period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026 will be 21.4%. This is reduced from 22.1% in the previous period 2019/20 to 2022/23. However, remains up on the 19.79% contribution rate prior to 2019/20.

However, the increase in salaries of 7% last year and potentially 6% this year, with the likelihood of slightly above inflation increases in the coming years, will put ongoing pressure on the Council's overall pension costs, which have been included in the revised and subsequent year projections at Appendix 1.

5. Rises in the Foundation Living Wage

In February 2015, the Town Council decided to pay the Living Wage, according to the criteria used by the Living Wage Foundation – which is based on the cost of living linked to a basket of household goods and services.

On 22nd September 2022, the Living Wage Foundation announced that the rate

increased by 10.1% in the UK, more than ever in the Living Wage Foundation's 11-year history reflecting sharp increases in living costs.

The Living Wage rates for 2023/2024 were announced on the 24th October 2023. The rate increases from £10.90 to £12 an hour (9.6%). Participating employers have 6 months until May 1st 2024 to implement it. The lowest NJC pay scale on Braunstone Town Council's establishment is scale point 5, which is paid £11.18 per hour. Scale point 5 to 8 are currently paid an hourly rate below £12. There are currently 3 members of staff who are paid on scale point 6 at £11.39 per hour, which will become £12.38 if the NJC employers offer (above) is accepted by the trade unions.

However, further increases in the cost of living may result in a widening of the gap between the National Living Wage and the Living Wage Foundation rate, which could require the Town Council to review salary scales for some posts in the coming years.

6. Other Public Service Providers

Increasing costs and a squeeze on public spending has put significant pressures on the revenue budgets of Principal Authorities, the NHS and the Police. While the Town Council doesn't receive funding directly from Central Government, cuts to public services in the community provided by other bodies will continue to put pressure on the Town Council to either take on services directly or provide an alternative. Picking up principal authority services which have been either devolved or taken over by the Town Council will put further strain on the Council's revenue budgets and reserves and either lead to further rises in the parish precept and/or significantly restrict the delivery of the Council's Capital Plan.

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 is 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 is 6% overall for the Town Council's staff. The budget approved in January 2023 provided for 4%. This will leave a deficit of £13,184 in the salary and pensions budget.

The actual position in the revenue budget for the current financial year (2023/2024) for 1st April 2023 until 30th September 2023 is as follows:

	Budget (Half Year)	Actual (Half Year)
Income	£687,045	£486,122
Expenditure	£688,545	£542,541
Difference	-£1,500	-£56,419

With the number of ongoing capital projects being delivered and reserved funds (e.g. income received in the last financial year for expenditure this financial year; it is difficult to quantify the year outturn figure. Once all the major projects are completed, income drawn down and payments made, estimated to be by the end of November 2023, then it will be possible to ascertain the predicted ongoing expenditure and identify an outturn figure for 31st March 2024. This figure can be used as part of the budget setting process for 2024/2025.

Reserves

Following the loss of the Council Tax Support Grant in 2018, the transfer of the Library Service in 2019, and income and expenditure following the Covid-19 pandemic and increases in the cost of living (including a £40,000 overspend on 2022/23 salaries); the Council has used £117,000 from its reserves over the past five years to offset significant increases in the Council Tax precept in one year.

The position with the reserves on 31st March 2023 and 30th September 2023 is enclosed at Appendix 4.

In 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.

For the first year since 2018, the projections at Appendix 1 do not include any proposals to utilise reserves to balance revenue budgets and offset precept rises. In addition, the projections set out a plan to replenish these reserves annually from 2026.

Committee Consideration

Policy & Resources Committee on 2nd November 2023 received an assessment setting out the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies (Policy & Resources Committee minute 45).

Where an underspend occurred, the Committee considered it a priority to rebuild balances rather than find alternative spending. Therefore, the Committee resolved "*that the Reserves Strategy contain a commitment for net underspends against the annual budget to be placed into balances*". A paragraph has been included at the end of the *Reserves Strategy* section of the report above.

Subject to the above, Policy & Resources Committee recommends to Council that it adopts the recommendations, for the reasons set out, below.

Recommendations

1. That the current projections attached at Appendix 1, based on known financial pressures identified in the report, be noted;
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 the Council's Reserves be used to invest in infrastructure and assets and in the development and remodelling of services, including the Town Council's operations; and
4. that the Financial, Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies, as set out in the report, be adopted.

Reasons

1. To provide a foundation for preparing budget estimates for 2024/2025 and beyond.
2. To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the future financial uncertainties.
3. 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.

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	£291,884	£274,758	£285,291	£290,550	£295,867	
Plus Increase in costs	£41,727	£41,727	£8,757	£13,738	£8,559	£8,717	£8,876	
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	£274,758	£285,291	£290,550	£295,867	£301,242	
Pension Provision	£104,762	£107,136	£126,767	£133,105	£138,430	£143,967	£148,286	
Staff Salaries	£477,251	£488,061	£507,069	£532,422	£553,719	£575,868	£593,144	
TOTAL Staff Costs	£582,013	£595,197	£633,836	£665,528	£692,149	£719,835	£741,430	
Existing Borrowing Repayments	£82,464	£82,339	£68,853	£64,267	£57,681	£48,203	£45,311	
<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	£19,449	£19,449	£19,449	£19,449	£13,415	
Potential Borrowing: Mossdale	£0	£0	£0	£11,649	£11,649	£11,649	£11,649	
TOTAL Borrowing Costs	£89,133	£81,185	£94,227	£99,290	£89,812	£86,920	£74,852	
Contingency	£0	£0	£0	£5,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	
Capital Projects	£13,000	£13,000	£17,500	£25,700	£25,700	£30,700	£42,000	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£955,327	£981,266	£1,020,321	£1,080,809	£1,118,211	£1,153,322	£1,179,524	
Income from Hires/Fees	£176,292	£176,292	£159,146	£138,146	£135,243	£135,243	£135,243	
Non-Earmarked Reserves	-£3,000	-£3,000	£0	£0	£13,000	£30,000	£40,000	
(Balance of Reserves)	£78,952	£78,952	£78,952	£78,952	£91,952	£121,952	£161,952	
Net Precept	£776,035	£801,974	£861,175	£942,663	£995,968	£1,048,079	£1,084,281	
Band D (scaled Tax Base)	4,904.03	£158.24	£163.53	£175.61	£192.22	£203.09	£213.72	£221.10
% Increase	7.37%	N/A	10.97%	9.46%	5.65%	5.23%	3.45%	
Average % Increase	N/A	N/A	6.95%					
£5 Increase on Band D (% increase)	N/A	N/A	£163.24 3.16%	£168.24 3.06%	£173.24 2.97%	£178.24 2.89%	£183.24 2.81%	
Receipt			£800,555	£825,075	£849,595	£874,116	£898,636	



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

BUSINESS PLAN 2023/2024

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;*
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 unlawful discrimination.*

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

Strategic Aims and Delivery Objectives (2023/2024)

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 2023/2024:

- (a) Complete Phase 3 of the Shakespeare Park refurbishment: Playground;
- (b) open the New Shakespeare Pavilion building for use by the community;
- (c) support existing Clubs at Shakespeare Park to grow while supporting new sporting activities, such as Tennis and Petanque;
- (d) invest in Thorpe Astley Park Tennis Courts and deliver tennis initiatives to enhance participation;
- (e) continue to work with Blaby District Council and the developer to ensure improvements are made to the culvert at Thorpe Astley Park;
- (f) carry out repairs to the Culvert and Bridge at Mossdale Meadows; and
- (g) 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 2023/2024:

- (a) Deliver essential works on the Civic Centre building fabric; and
- (b) expand the Bar Service to include a weekday Civic Centre café service along with outreach services at Thorpe Astley Community Centre.

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 2023/2024:

- (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, Coronation of King Charles III, and a Thorpe Astley Summer Event – Thorpe Astley by the Sea;
- (c) develop Library events, initiatives and continue community engagement; including children's reading, heritage displays and arts & craft events; 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 2023/2024:

- (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; and
- (d) work to ensure that development meets present needs, minimises air pollution and car journeys, while protecting the needs of future generations.

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 Lubbesthorpe 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

Crime reduction services

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

Social inclusion, recreation & culture

4. To work with our partners to attract increased funding and the provision of a wider range of sporting and other services at local level
5. To provide support for the Office of Town Mayor
6. To assist local clubs and societies to undertake their work for the benefit of the citizens of Braunstone Town
7. To direct grants to organisations where this will be of greatest benefit to the citizens of Braunstone Town
8. To organise arts events/ entertainment's/ Civic Occasions which bring people together
9. To encourage the formation of new community groups by promoting free/subsidised use of the Council's Community Facilities
10. 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
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



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Serving the communities of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley

CAPITAL PLAN 2023/2024

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.

Priority Projects for 2023/2024

Parks and Open Spaces Projects 2023/2024		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Shakespeare Park	Additional balance in play area (2-5 or 5 – 12 age group)	Part of Shakespeare Park Improvement and Development Project. Cost: £57,231 <i>External Grants, Annual Capital Budget, Section 106 & Earmarked Reserves.</i>
	Additional Spinning Equipment in play area (2-5 year or 5 – 12 year age group) including installation	
	Safety Surface installed at toddler area	
	Additional seat in play area	
	Improvements to the entrance to the park area (access from the car park to the park)	
	Safety Surface in play area	
Mossdale Meadows & Merrileys	Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mossdale Meadows. <i>Existing culverts are not suitable for flow of water which causes flooding on the park on a regular basis</i>	Estimated: £150k <i>Borrowing</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: £50k <i>External Grants, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i>

Community Centres Projects 2023/2024		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre	Civic Centre Roof Refurbishment; Council Chamber side. <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: £50k <i>External Grants, Annual Capital Budget & Reserves</i>
	Refurbish/Replace Fire Doors in Council Chamber, 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>
	Kitchens – replacement of Gas Cookers with Electric Cookers <i>CO2 monitor and annual inspection identifies them as not being to standard. When Gas safety due for renewal, advised likely to be condemned. Replacing with electric in context of solar PV installation will contribute towards carbon reduction.</i>	Estimated: £5k <i>Annual Capital and Maintenance Budgets</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: £5k <i>Maintenance Budget</i> See proposed replacement below (Medium to Long Term)
Thorpe Astley Community Centre	Install a hybrid air source heat pump. <i>To decarbonise Community Centre heating; 10% reduction of total Council emissions.</i>	Cost: £33k <i>External Grant & Borrowing (part)</i>

General Projects 2023/2024		
Project	Details	Notes/Finance
Installation of Solar Panels at both Community Centres	The Town Council has undertaken energy saving projects such as LED Lighting and installation of new heating and air conditioning systems. Shakespeare Park Pavilion will be built to current efficiency standards. The next stage for both reducing the impact on climate change and making savings is generation of some of the Council's electricity from renewable sources.	Scheduled to Complete May 2023 <i>External Grant & Borrowing (part)</i>

General Projects 2023/2024		
Project	Details	Notes/Finance
Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging points at community facilities	To provide fast charging for service users, hirers and staff who use an electric vehicle.	Scheduled to Complete May 2023 <i>Borrowing (part)</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>

Short to Medium Term Projects (within the next 5 years)

Short to Medium Term Parks and Open Spaces Projects		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Mossdale Meadows & Merrileys	Replacement of Toddler swings (estimated end of life – medium risk)	Estimated: £10k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i>
	New Roof and Roof Insulation at Mossdale Depot and Sports Changing Rooms and installation of new electric heating 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 Mossdale Pavilion. <i>The Changing Facilities and Social Facilities could make more effective use of the space and are in need of improvement and modernisation.</i>	

Short to Medium Term Parks and Open Spaces Projects		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
Mossdale Meadows & Merrileys <i>Continued</i>	<p>Improve drainage on Lubbesthorpe Bridleway at Mossdale Meadows <i>Length of concrete bridleway, which slopes down from Shakespeare Drive to Mossdale 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></p>	<p>Schedule once Cycle Route open and Culvert replaced.</p> <p>Estimated: £50k <i>Borrowing: Link to item "Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mossdale Meadows".</i></p>
	<p>Drainage work to the entrance of Mossdale 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></p>	<p>Estimated: £50k <i>Borrowing: Link to item "Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mossdale Meadows".</i></p>
	<p>Resurfacing of Mossdale 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></p>	<p>Estimated: £50k <i>Borrowing: Link to item "Replace vehicle and pedestrian culvert bridges at Mossdale Meadows".</i></p>
Thorpe Astley Park	<p>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></p>	<p>Estimated £30k. <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget & Section 106</i></p>
Franklin Park	<p>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></p>	<p>Once GCW Phase 2 Cycle Route open. Estimated £75k. <i>Explore external funding working with Walk & Ride Blaby.</i></p>

Short to Medium Term Parks and Open Spaces Projects		
Park	Project	Notes/Finance
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 according to ROSPA reports, funding streams and increases in maintenance costs. <i>Annual Budgets</i>
All Parks	Rolling programme of tree surveys and works <i>Currently maintenance budgets are stretched and tree maintenance and works is 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>
	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>
	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>	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>

Short to Medium Term Community Centres Projects		
Building	Project	Notes/Finance
	<p>Council Chamber internal refurbishment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating/Air Conditioning • Mood Lighting <p><i>The facilities are in need of modernisation for users and hirers: the room is used for meetings, consultations, seminars, training and social events.</i></p>	<p>Consider once roof replaced and through next Carbon Audit Estimated: £25k <i>External Grant, Annual Capital Budget</i></p>
	<p>Fosse Room – Audio / Visual Equipment, including sound and loop system and fixed projector.</p> <p><i>The facilities are in need of modernisation for users and hirers: the room is used for meetings, consultations, seminars and training.</i></p>	<p>Estimated: £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i></p>
Thorpe Astley Community Centre	<p>Thorpe Astley main hall Mood Lights.</p> <p><i>To make the facilities attractive for function hire. Hirers of the Millfield Hall provide positive feedback on the mood lighting.</i></p>	<p>Estimated: £5k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i></p>
Both Centres	<p>Installation of hearing loop systems in main rooms at both Community Centres.</p> <p><i>Item already included where refurbishment of specific rooms has been identified.</i></p>	<p>Rolling Programme from 2023/24. <i>Annual Budgets</i></p>
	<p>Installation of Sound systems in the Millfield Hall, Council Chamber and Thorpe Astley Main Hall.</p> <p><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></p>	<p>Estimated: £6-9k <i>Annual Capital Budget</i></p>

Short to Medium Term General Projects		
Project	Details	Notes/Finance
Civic Centre and Franklin Park Car Parks	<p>Resurfacing/ Relining of Civic Centre, including exploring new handrails and lighting along footpath on entrance slope from Welcome Avenue, and Franklin Park Car Parks.</p> <p><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></p>	<p>Estimated: £80k <i>Annual Capital Budget & Reserves</i></p>

Short to Medium Term General Projects		
Project	Details	Notes/Finance
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 are in need of 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. Focus on Notice Boards on Council land in 2022/2023 <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>

Medium to Long Term Projects (within the next 10 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 are in need of 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>
Civic Centre <i>Continued</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>
	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>
	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>

*Adopted by Council 26th January 2023 (Minute Reference 6093).
Updated by Council 29th June 2023 (Minute Reference 6145).*

APPENDIX 4 – RESERVES

The table below summarises the balances at the beginning and end of the 2022/23 financial year:

Table A – Balances 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023	
1. Balances brought forward	£286,317.22
2. (+) Annual precept	£720,356.00
3. (+) Total other receipts	£338,512.47
4. (-) Staff costs	£544,101.77
5. (-) Loan interest / capital repayments	£82,433.06
6. (-) Total other payments	£504,210.64
7. (=) Balances carried forward	£214,440.22

The table below summarises the current reserves and intended uses:

Table B – Reserves 2023/2024			
		Start of Year	Current*
Earmarked Reserves	<i>Shakespeare Pavilion Works</i>	£19,888.81	£0.00
	<i>Shakespeare Playground</i>	£6,678.00	£15,830.00
	<i>Carbon Reduction Initiatives</i>	£0.00	-£20,853.13
	<i>Civic Centre Capital Projects</i>	£95,910.91	£39,693.59
	<i>Shakespeare Park Sports Clubs</i>	£1,692.51	£1,107.51
	<i>Community / Social Inclusion Projects Grant</i>	£9,500.00	£10,248.50
	<i>Balance Budget 2023/24</i>	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
	<i>Gateway Signage</i>	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
	<i>Defibrillators</i>	£500.00	£500.00
	<i>Town Mayor's Charity</i>	£3,939.42	£361.64
	Total Earmarked Reserves	£143,609.65	£52,388.11
Non-Earmarked Reserves	<i>Commutated Sums</i>	£47,375.12	£47,375.12
	<i>General Fund</i>	£23,455.45	£317,910.17
	Total Balances	£70,830.57	£365,285.29
Balance of Reserves		£214,440.22	£417,673.40

* Dated 30th September 2023.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 5th OCTOBER 2023 AT 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor Anthea Ambrose (Chair), Councillor Becca Lunn Scoppie (Vice-chair) and Councillors Nick Brown, Andy Evans, Richard Forrest, Paul Kennedy, 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.

33. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sevim Aslan, Alex DeWinter, Sam Fox-Kennedy and Christiane Startin-Lorent.

34. Disclosures of Interest

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

35. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may 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 no members of the public present.

36. Minutes of the Meeting held 6th July 2023

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th July 2023 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

37. 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 the Braunstone Life Quiz Night due to be held on Friday 6th October had been cancelled due to low tickets sales.

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.

38. Community Safety and Neighbourhood Policing Update

Apologies had been received from the Police Beat Team as none of the team members were available to attend the meeting.

It was noted that a meeting had been held on 15th September 2023 with the Police, Chair of Community Development Committee, Chief Executive & Town Clerk and Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Community Services Manager to discuss current crime issues in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley. A report was enclosed (Item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that current community safety and policing updates were received.

39. Crime Statistics

The Committee received the latest crime statistics, including comparative figures (Item 7 on the agenda).

It was noted that figures for all crimes had shown a decrease compared to the previous year's figures.

It was suggested that the latest crime statistics be made available on the Town Council website and social media to reassure local residents that crime levels were relatively low in the Town and had decreased compared with the same time last year.

RESOLVED

1. that enquiries be made as to whether there had been any change to the methodology in recording crimes;
2. that the latest crime statistics be made available on the Town Council website and social media platforms; and
3. that the full list of recorded crimes in the Town be forwarded to members.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the reduction in crime throughout Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley was not a result of a change in the way the Police recorded crime statistics.*
2. *To reassure local residents of the actual level of crime taking place in the Town.*
3. *To ensure that members were fully aware of all the crimes recorded as taking place in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley.*

40. Speed Sign Data

The Committee received recent speed sign data for:

- a) Murby Way
- b) Turnbull Drive

(Item 8 on the agenda)

RESOLVED

1. that the speed activation signs be re-installed on Turnbull Drive and Murby Way; and
2. that the speed activation reports for Murby Way and Turnbull Drive be forwarded to the Police Beat Team.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that any concerns of speeding on roads within the Town would be monitored and data collected; and*
2. *To assist the Police with identifying where speeding was a concern in order to consider enforcements.*

41. Local Area Co-ordination

The Committee received a progress report concerning the priorities and achievements of the Local Area Co-ordination Project in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley (Item 9 on the agenda).

It was noted that Katie Barradell would shortly be leaving her role as the Local Area Co-ordinator for Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley.

RESOLVED

1. that a letter of thanks be sent to Katie Barradell for her hard work on supporting the vulnerable residents of Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley during her time as the Local Area Co-ordinator; and
2. that local services set up and supported by the Local Area Co-ordinator be supported during the transition and recruitment of a new Local Area Co-ordinator.

Reasons for Decision

- 1. To acknowledge the support given to local residents.*
- 2. To ensure that vital services continue to receive help and support in the interim period of recruitment for a new Local Area Co-ordinator.*

42. Library – Delivering Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Initiatives

The Committee considered the criteria and principles for using the Library space for community engagement and social inclusion activities while ensuring that the Library remained available for library users (Item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the criteria, set out in Appendix 2, include an additional item that any new activities proposed for the library did not adversely impact on peak library use at school leaving time and early evening;
2. that the criteria for the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to determine all future applications for use of the library be relocated to the bottom of the Criteria and Guidelines document;
3. that the criteria for considering new activities and initiatives in the library as set out in Appendix 2, including the amendments noted above, be adopted; and
4. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to
 - a) approve an application form for new proposed activities and initiatives in the library to be completed by third party organisations; and
 - b) determine applications received in consultation with the Officer Management Team and Chair of Community Development Committee (including, where possible, the Library Consultation Group).

Reasons for Decision

- 1. To ensure that the library remains a suitable place for study and research for children and other users.*
- 2. To ensure all new activities and initiative proposals for the library would be considered against a formal criteria.*
- 3. To acknowledge this was a procedural guideline and not a criteria for activities.*
- 4. To ensure that full details of proposed activities be provided in order to ensure that the proposal matches the criteria for use of the library and to authorise applications avoiding any delay.*

43. Outside Body Report

The Committee noted that there was no further update on the activities at Braunstone West Social Centre.

RESOLVED that contact be made by telephone to ascertain the situation concerning attendance by the Council's representative at meetings.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that links could be maintained and the facility supported.

44. Arrangements for Commemorating 80th Anniversary of D-Day in June 2024

The Committee considered whether to hold a mini programme of events and a small grants scheme to help community groups organise events to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day in June 2024 (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that adaption of existing lights in Memorial Garden be undertaken;
2. that Poppy seeds be sown in suitable locations to commemorate the Anniversary;
3. that plans for the commemoration be focused on the connection with Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley with the 82nd Airbourne Division that was stationed on Braunstone Park and took part in the D-Day landing exercise;
4. that local history and veterans' groups be contacted to invite them to work with the Town Council on commemorative ideas and activities;
5. that a mini programme of events, based on the same criteria as the main Programme of Events, be made available for local community groups to arrange suitable events;
6. that a budget £1000 be considered in the annual budget 2024/2025 for a small grant scheme to be made available for community groups to apply to for funding events; and
7. that a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Community Development Committee to agree details of a potential programme and the support offered to the groups.

Reasons for Decisions

1. *To provide a suitable commemoration in lieu of lighting a beacon for the anniversary and for other appropriate events in the future.*
2. *To provide an ecological and long-lasting commemoration of the anniversary on the Council's Parks and Open Spaces and/or in other locations.*
3. *To acknowledge the importance and strong connection that Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley had to the D-Day landing operation.*
4. *To utilise local experience and knowledge of historical events and enhance any proposals undertaken by the Town Council to commemorate the Anniversary.*
5. *To promote and support events organised by community groups to*

- commemorate the Anniversary.*
6. *To provide financial support to community groups wishing to organise events.*
 7. *To ensure that a co-ordinated and focussed programme of events are undertaken by the Council and the community.*

45. New Year's Eve Event Applications

The Committee determined whether free use of rooms should continue for community New Year's Eve events (Item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the use of free rooms to local community groups for New Year's Eve events be offered on the same criteria as part of the Community Centres offers and booked on a first come first served basis, if the group and event met the criteria set out for use of free rooms for New Year's Eve events; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to determine the administrative and application of the criteria.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the offer of the use of free rooms for New Year's Eve events for community group fundraising be available, if required.*
2. *To ensure that the process was integrated with the Community Centres booking procedures.*

46. Initial Arrangements for Summer Fete 2024

The Committee considered initial arrangements for the Summer Fete 2024.

RESOLVED that the Summer Fete 2024 held on Mossdale Meadows be arranged for Saturday 10th August 2024.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that arrangements for the Summer Fete to be made in a timely manner.

47. Grant Applications Procedure

The Committee considered updating the criteria for Community Grants and Individual Grants to enable the Committee to make informed and transparent decisions on all grant applications (Item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the amendments to the Community Group and Individual community grant criteria as outlined in red on the attached Appendices, be approved

- subject to inclusion of Customer Services contact details; and
2. that any incomplete community grant applications or missing documentation be rejected if not received by the deadline date for each Committee meeting.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that only fully completed Community Grant and Individual Community grant applications would be submitted to Committee in order for informed and transparent decisions to be made on the applications.*
2. *To ensure that incomplete application forms were dealt with in a timely manner and remove potential burdensome responsibility on the Town Council for chasing incomplete applications. Community Groups and Individuals were ultimately responsible for ensuring that any application for a grant was complete.*

48. 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 16 on the agenda).

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.

49. Community Grant Applications

The Committee considered Community Grant Applications which had been received (Item 17 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the following grant application be approved

- | | |
|-----------------|------|
| a) Swagat Group | £300 |
|-----------------|------|

Reason for Decision

The grant application met the scheme criteria

50. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2023 to 26th September 2023 (Item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

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

51. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 28th June 2023 until 26th September 2023 (Item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions, for the periods 28th June 2023 until 26th September 2023, 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 9.00pm

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 7th December 2023.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 26th OCTOBER 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Robert Waterton (Chair), Councillor Sam Maxwell (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Richard Forrest, Leanne Lee, Gary Sanders, Darshan Singh and Marion Waterton.

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

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

28. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Satindra Sangha, Mark Widdop and Imran Uddin.

29. Disclosures of Interest

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

30. 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 no members of the public present.

31. Minutes of the Meeting held 24th August 2023

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th August 2023 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

32. 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:** 23/0403/FUL
- Description:** Alterations to detached garage to provide ancillary accommodation to existing hotel/boarding/guest house
- Location:** 518 Braunstone Lane Braunstone Town Leicestershire LE3 3DH (Ravenhurst Ward)
- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council objects; due to the proposed development:*
- a) *being significantly out of keeping with the character and appearance of the scene;*
 - b) *having an unsatisfactory relationship with nearby uses that would be significantly detrimental to the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of the proposed and existing dwelling.*
- Reasons:**
- a) *The proposed dwelling would be a converted single storey garage; the design of which would be out of keeping with the bay fronted traditional styled surrounding properties.*
 - b) *Both the neighbouring properties and the properties opposite were two storey houses and would have an overbearing effect on the proposed single storey one-roomed property. The lack of curtilage around the proposed property mean the properties would be in close proximity and with no opportunity to landscape, there could be an adverse impact on the existing and proposed dwelling in terms of disturbance, noise, and privacy.*
2. **Application No:** 23/0716/FUL
- Description:** Installation of sectional shutter door to south side elevation of ancillary office building
- Location:** Clifton Packaging Meridian West Thorpe Astley Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Thorpe Astley Ward)
- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the proposed installation of a shutter door; subject to:*
- a) *vehicular access details, which must be located off the existing goods vehicles entrance (not*

directly onto the highway) being submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to any work commencing; and

b) the ancillary office building remaining ancillary to the existing unit and not separately sold, let or otherwise disposed of.

Reason:

a) To ensure that delivery vehicles could safely access the area, including the new shutter door entrance, while maintaining pedestrian safety, the safety of other users and ensuring that there would be no adverse impact on highway safety.

b) To avoid over intensification of the use of the site, which could impact on safe pedestrian and vehicular access and create potential conflicts of use.

3. Application No: 23/0771/HH

Description: Single storey side and rear extension and associated alterations

Location: 44 Farmway Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Millfield Ward)

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

a) no side windows, openings or mechanical vents in the side elevation of the side extension, without the prior permission of the local planning authority;

b) the existing parking, including the proposed garage space, remaining available for parking in perpetuity.

Reasons:

a) To avoid an adverse impact on the neighbouring property in terms of privacy and noise.

b) To avoid additional parking on the highway, which is narrow and has limited parking available due to the number of accesses to the front curtilages.

4. Application No: 23/0715/HH

Description: Application of tender to front, side and first floor rear elevations

Location: 29 Turnbull Drive Braunstone Town Leicestershire LE3 2JT (Millfield Ward)

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

Reason: *While most of the houses in the street were not rendered, other than the bays, a couple of houses were already fully rendered. In addition, the features of many of the neighbouring properties had been changed with front and side extensions. Therefore, on balance it was considered that there would not be an adverse impact on the street scene nor the upon the character or appearance of the area.*

5. Application No: 23/0636/FUL

Description: Amended Plans Received: External alterations to store and alterations to car park and associated alterations

Location: Aldi Meridian Way Braunstone Leicestershire (Thorpe Astley Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the proposals, as amended by the plans published between 15th and 19th September 2023; subject to the approval superseding the previous planning application, 18/1041/FUL, approved in April 2019.*

Reasons: *The revised proposals retained the footpath to the front (south) elevation linking Thorpe Astley footpaths to the store. Proposals for a zebra crossing, EV Charging Points, cycle shelter and a heat pump were welcomed as both safety and sustainability improvements.*

6. Application No: 23/0787/FUL

Description: Proposed 2-storey extension to provide residential dwelling. Proposed single storey extension to provide new retail unit. Demolition of existing lean-to (Original Application and Amended Plan).

Location: 2 Ayston Road Braunstone Town Leicestershire LE3 2GA (Ravenhurst Ward)

Response: To both the original application and the amended plan: *Braunstone Town Council requests that further information be submitted by the applicant, prior to determination, as follows:*

- *Parking and Access Plan – detailing on-site parking arrangements for both the existing and proposed residential units and retail units (both workers and customers), including access arrangements from the highway.*

Reasons: *Braunstone Town Council supported provision of different types of appropriate residential units and retail units to enhance the sustainability of the neighbourhood shopping area. However, there was limited parking provision in the area and the highway and footway suffered from overparking causing obstruction and safety concerns for highway users, including pedestrians. In addition, the additional units would be close to a road junction.*

7. **Application No:** 23/0783/HH

Description: First Floor Extension to Front Elevation

Location: 8 Beechcroft Avenue Braunstone Town
Leicestershire LE3 2GB (Ravenhurst Ward)

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

- a) onsite parking (including the Garage space) being retained in perpetuity for at least three vehicles; and*
- b) no windows in the side elevation of the proposed first floor extension without the prior consent of the local planning authority.*

Reasons:

- a) To avoid overparking on a narrow highway, which could cause obstruction, including for pedestrians.*
- b) To protect the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring property, no. 6, in terms of privacy and noise.*

8. **Application No:** 23/0792/HH

Description: Single storey rear extension, new porch and car port

Location: 53 Woodland Drive Braunstone Town Leicestershire
LE3 3EB (St. Mary's Ward)

- Response:** *Braunstone Town Council:*
- 1. does not object to the Single storey rear extension;*
 - 2. does not object to a new porch; subject to the proposed porch not protruding forward of the main dwelling further than the existing concrete rain cover or that of the front porches on the opposite side of the street (whichever is the largest); and*
 - 3. objects to the proposed new (front) car port.*

- Reasons:**
- 1. The property was in an established location on a large landscaped plot; therefore, there was unlikely to be a significant impact upon neighbouring properties.*
 - 2. To ensure that the porch would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the street scene.*
 - 3. The proposed car port would protrude forward of the existing building line adding a discordant element to the street scene, which was of similar design and appearance. Any such development permitted could result in further applications from other neighbouring properties, such sporadic development would degrade the symmetry, character and appearance of the area over time.*

Licensing Applications

There were no licensing applications to consider.

33. 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.

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

1. Application No: 23/0799/FUL

Description: Porch extension
Three-meter Rear Extension: Additionally, we propose extending the rear of the property by approximately three meters to create more living space, improving the overall functionality of the home.

Location: 52 Edward Avenue Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Millfield Ward)

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

Reason: *The proposal for the front porch appeared to make it wider rather than deeper, which was unlikely to adversely impact on parking on the front curtilage and there were similar porch designs among the neighbouring properties. The rear extension was single storey, partly on an existing footprint, on a large plot; neighbouring properties had similar rear extensions. Therefore, there was unlikely to be an adverse impact on the amenity enjoyed by the neighbouring properties.*

2. Application No: 23/0824/FUL

Description: Alterations to car park and construction of 12 EV charging spaces to include EV charging posts together with electrical infrastructure, sub-station, lighting, HP/LV cabinets, enclosure, additional 15 car parking spaces, access and associated works.

Location: Hilton Hotel Junction 21 Approach Braunstone Town Leicestershire (Millfield Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council does not object to the application; however, it wishes to make the following comment to the applicant: it seems a pity that the garden area with the fountain and landscaping would be removed for parking when there appeared to be a large grassed area around it where extended parking could be located or a new garden created.*

Reason: *The proposal provided for electric vehicle charging points and additional on-site parking, which would reduce the likelihood of parking on the entrance highway. It was observed that there were areas of the site, which weren't landscaped, that the applicant could consider for additional parking rather than removing a garden and the surrounding landscaping.*

34. Additional Planning and Licensing Applications

The Committee received details of additional planning applications to be considered by Blaby District Council (item 7 on the agenda). The Committee noted that there were no licensing applications.

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

3. Application No: 23/0792/HH

Description: Amended plans received removing car port from scheme (DWG NO 53TW /2023 2/3 Rev A - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations and DWG NO 53TW /2023 3/3 Rev A - Site Plan and Location Plan).

Location: 53 Woodland Drive Braunstone Town Leicestershire (St. Mary's Ward)

Response: *Braunstone Town Council:*

- 1. does not object to the Single storey rear extension; and*
- 2. does not object to a new porch; subject to the proposed porch not protruding forward of the main dwelling further than the existing concrete rain cover or that of the front porches on the opposite side of the street (whichever is the largest).*

Reasons:

- 1. The property was in an established location on a large landscaped plot; therefore, there was unlikely to be a significant impact upon neighbouring properties.*
- 2. To ensure that the porch would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the street scene.*

35. Planning Decisions

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

In respect of application 23/0428/FUL, 396 Braunstone Lane, a copy of the Highway Site Plan, which was referred to in the decision, was shown to the Committee. The Highways Site Plan confirmed two on-site parking spaces for the new dwelling.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To keep a watching brief on the decisions and to review the impact of Town Council comments upon the decision making process.

36. Feedback on Planning Application Decisions

The Committee received feedback concerning planning application decisions by Blaby District Council where the Committee had queried the decision as follows:

- a) Councillor Robert Waterton raised concerns with the Group Manager for Planning at Blaby District Council concerning ensuring consistency of approach when applying conditions relating to off-road parking. Two planning applications, which would result in the properties concerned having four bedrooms, had been determined:
- Application 22/1006/HH; 31 Headley Road, had been approved with 2 on-site parking spaces; while
 - Application 23/00871/HH; 8 Cranberry Close, had been rejected for not providing 3 on-site parking spaces but 2 and therefore not complying with the Parking Policy.

Councillor Waterton stated that the National Planning Policy Framework stated that the impact on highway safety had to be severe in order to be considered material and in the case of 31 Headley Road, the Highways Authority had advised that the impact would not be severe.

Furthermore, in respect of application 23/0427/HH; single storey side and rear extensions, at 3 Crowhurst Drive, the Town Council had objected to the proposal due to insufficient parking and the local planning authority had given approval. In this case the Highways Authority had assessed that the impact on highway safety would not be severe. In addition, had the applicant chooses to demolish the garage and put up a single storey side extension within the permitted development limits, then there would similarly be a loss of parking provision.

- b) Councillor Mark Widdop had given his apologies but had advised that he was still waiting for a response from the Planning Case Officer for more information behind the planning decision 23/0236/HH, Single storey front extension, at 57 St. Mary's Avenue.
- c) Councillor Gary Sanders advised that he was still waiting for a response from the Planning Case Officer for more information behind the planning decision 23/0224/HH, Single storey front extension, at 45 Bolus Road.

RESOLVED that the feedback provided be noted in respect of (a) above; and that in respect of (b) and (c) above, feedback be provided at the next meeting of the Committee, scheduled for 14th December 2023.

Reason for Decision

To ensure consistency of approach when applying conditions relating to off-road parking.

37. Braunstone Village Conservation Area Extension

The Committee received an update on the arrangements and timescales for the process to consider whether to extend the Braunstone Village Conservation Area to the South of Braunstone Lane (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning & Environment Committee, to approve revised milestones and timescales; subject to consideration by the Planning & Environment Committee at the next scheduled meeting.

Reason for Decision

To progress the proposals for the extension to the Braunstone Village Conservation Area, avoiding any further delay.

38. Neighbourhood Planning

The Committee reviewed the position concerning whether the Town should be designated as a Neighbourhood for the purposes of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan (item 11 on the agenda).

In November each year, Planning & Environment Committee undertake a review of the position concerning whether Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley should be designated as a Neighbourhood for the purposes of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED that Braunstone Town Council does not undertake a Neighbourhood Plan or any of the Neighbourhood Planning Tools at the present time.

Reason for Decision

Successful Neighbourhood Planning required the leadership and involvement of the Town Council and Town Councillors and an indication of a wider community desire to undertake neighbourhood planning. While there was some evidence of support, this was not sufficiently widespread to justify the resources to facilitate the process, including engaging the community and making the necessary applications and applying for funding. Key areas such as Open Spaces and Neighbourhood Shopping Areas are protected by existing policies. Areas of historic or special character, such as Braunstone Village, could be protected and enhanced by designating as a conservation area.

39. Signage to Braunstone Town from Citizen's Advisory Panel

The Committee received a suggestion, made by residents attending Citizens' Advisory Panel on 31st August 2023, that directional signage to Braunstone Town approaching Fosse Park island from the M1 and M69 needed to be improved; and to determine the Town Council's response (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that Leicestershire County Council be contacted to request that directional signage to Braunstone Town (exit Narborough Road South, West Service Road) be improved on the approach to Fosse Park island from the M1 and M69; and
2. that the County Councillor for the Division be asked to support and pursue the principle.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To address the point that the “Welcome to Braunstone Town” sign on the slip road off Fosse Park island was too far back for drivers approaching from the M1 and M69 to see before passing the junction; and, that to address this, additional signage or markings should be installed.*
2. *To seek the support of the local county councillor given the matter falls within the remit of the local highways’ authority.*

40. Request from County Councillor to replace Gateway Signs to Braunstone Town

The Committee considered a request from the County Councillor for Braunstone Division for the County Council to fund and replace some of the Gateway signs to Braunstone Town (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the principle of replacing “Welcome to Braunstone Town” gateway signs under the County Council Members’ Highway Fund be approved;
2. that the signs should accommodate the wording “Welcome to” if permitted by the Highways Authority; and that option 2, full colour crest, attached at Appendix 1, be approved;
3. that where a gateway sign was replaced at the same location as the start of the 30mph speed limit, then the speed limit be incorporated into the sign in a similar way to the gateway on the Narborough Road South West Service Road at Fosse Park;
4. that the preferred priority order for replacement of the “Welcome to Braunstone Town” gateway signs, located in the Leicestershire County Council Braunstone Division, be expressed as follows:
 - a) Braunstone Lane after Narborough Road South junction,
 - b) A5460, Narborough Road South main road, southbound after Braunstone Lane junction,
 - c) Braunstone Lane: A47, Hinckley Road, junction,
 - d) Braunstone Lane: Braunstone Avenue/Shakespeare Drive junction,
 - e) Narborough Road South East Service Road entering from Fosse Park,
 - f) A563, Lubbethorpe Way, southbound after Braunstone Lane bridge, and
 - g) 2 signs at Narborough Road South West Service Road entry from Fosse Park roundabout; and

5. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning & Environment Committee to:
 - a) agree with Leicestershire County Council, including the County Councillor for Braunstone Division, the “Welcome to Braunstone Town” gateway signs that should be replaced and in which order,
 - b) to determine whether to retain any removed signs or dispose of them,
 - c) to approve the necessary legal agreements, licences and detailed terms and conditions, and
 - d) to adopt the newly installed gateway signs.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To improve the visual amenity of gateways to Braunstone Town.*
2. *The existing signs included the wording “Welcome to”. The full colour Parish Crest was the official crest of the Parish, would be easier to distinguish by people who were colour blind, and should be used to welcome travellers to the Town. Whereas the green logo was the corporate colours of Braunstone Town Council.*
3. *To incorporate the speed limit into the wider message about entering a residential area and driving safely.*
4. *To give priority to the replacement of the residential gateway signs originally installed in 1995 in locations with the highest traffic/footfall.*
5. *To ensure that the new signs could be installed avoiding any delays, while ensuring the detailed arrangements and legal terms would be fully considered.*

41. Air Quality Monitoring Annual Status Report 2023

The Committee received the Blaby District Air Quality Monitoring Annual Status Report for consideration (item 14 on the agenda).

There were no issues for further clarification identified from the 2023 Report; however, the Committee reviewed Blaby District Council’s responses to the Committee’s questions concerning the 2022 Report and felt some of these should be followed up.

RESOLVED that Blaby District Council be asked to provide an update on the following items which had been raised by the Committee concerning the 2022 Air Quality Monitoring Annual Status Report and the responses given:

- a) Had the film been produced and if not, when was it scheduled to be produced?
- b) The Communications Plan had been confirmed as an internal resource; was there material partners could use to assist with key messages?
- c) request that behaviour change work be arranged with schools in Braunstone Town?
- d) request that Withers Way be monitored again?

Reasons for Decision

- a) *Actions to Improve Air Quality included a Short Film, which may be produced early in 2023.*

- b) *To support actions to reduce transport emissions and improve air quality.*
- c) *To support local engagement with the community through schools.*
- d) *The traffic build up in the area at rush hour was significant compared to prior to and during Covid-19 and therefore monitoring would identify if the pollution levels were significant.*

42. Motion on Notice from Council: Woodland off Brockenhurst Drive, Braunstone Town

The Committee considered a Motion on Notice referred from Council on 21st September 2023 relating to the protection of woodland off Brockenhurst Drive, Braunstone Town (item 15 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk updated the Committee on the status of the trees on the site. Notification had been received from Blaby District Council on 24th October 2023 that a 6 month Tree Preservation Order had been made for the whole site. The effect would be that no one is allowed to cut down, lop or top trees without permission. During this period, the District Council would be determining whether the order should be given permanent status. The Town Council had been given until 21st November 2023 to submit comments.

RESOLVED

1. that Blaby District Council be:
 - a) asked to consider, as part of its review of the Local Plan, the Woodland off Brockenhurst Drive along with the area of undeveloped land which spans from Kingsway North to Fosse Park, and includes Mossdale Meadows, Merrileys and the Osiers, for designation as either “Green Wedge” or an “Area of Separation” in the new Local Plan, and
 - b) notified that the 6 month Tree Preservation Order that had been made on 24th October 2023 for the Woodland site off Brockenhurst Drive was supported and that the established/mature trees on the site should be considered for a permanent Tree Preservation Order;
2. that the local County Councillor for Braunstone Division be asked to seek support from the relevant County Council Services for the natural environment, nature and biodiversity, for the proposals in 1 above; and
3. that Braunstone Town Council reinforce the proposals in 1 above when further consulted by the local planning authority at the next stages of the Local Plan Review.

Reasons for Decisions

1. *The woodland off Brockenhurst Drive and the area of undeveloped land surrounding it was a significant wildlife corridor in a suburban landscape and needed to be protected to preserve species and wildlife habitats, landscape and geology and to improve bio-diversity.*
2. *To obtain the professional support of the relevant County Council services for nature and the environment to protect the area now and in the future.*
3. *To ensure that Braunstone Town Council, having identified the importance of the site and the surrounding landscape, pursue its protection when consulted on the review of relevant policies.*

43. Lubbesthorpe Impacts Group

The Chair advised the Committee that the next scheduled meeting of the Lubbesthorpe Impacts Group would be on Wednesday 15th November 2023.

44. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2023 to 17th October 2023 (item 17 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 2022/2023.

45. Approval of Accounts

The Committee received payments from 16th August 2023 until 17th October 2023 (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the Period 16th August 2023 until 17th October 2023 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 9.10pm.

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 14th December 2023.

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Councillor Anthea Ambrose (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Andy Evans, Leanne Lee, 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.

41. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Becca Lunn Scoppie and Imran Uddin.

42. Disclosures of Interest

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

43. 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.

44. Minutes

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

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

45. Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning

The Committee received an assessment setting out the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the Reserves Strategy contain a commitment for net underspends against the annual budget to be placed into balances;

THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

2. that the current projections attached at Appendix 1, based on known financial pressures identified in the report, be noted;
3. 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;
4. that the Council's Reserves be used to invest in infrastructure and assets and in the development and remodelling of services, including the Town Council's operations; and
5. that the Financial, Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies, as set out in the report (and amended at 1 above), be adopted.

Reasons for Decisions

1. *Where an underspend occurred, it was a priority to rebuild balances rather than find alternative spending.*
2. *To provide a foundation for preparing budget estimates for 2024/2025 and beyond.*
3. *To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the future financial uncertainties.*
4. *To ensure the highest possible standards within the resources available in the future.*
5. *To effectively manage the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, taking into account the associated risks.*

46. Motion on Notice from Council: Woodland off Brockenhurst Drive, Braunstone Town

The Committee considered a Motion on Notice referred from Council on 21st September 2023 relating to the potential transfer of Woodland off Brockenhurst Drive, Braunstone Town to public ownership (item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the landowners, or their agents, be approached to request that they consider transferring the woodland off Brockenhurst Drive to Braunstone Town Council; and if so, under what condition;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to enter into discussions with the landowner, including on how the issues identified in the *Assessment* section of report should be addressed; and
3. that any proposal to transfer the land off Brockenhurst Drive to Braunstone Town Council be submitted to Policy & Resources Committee for consideration and approval.

Reasons for Decisions

1. *The woodland off Brockenhurst Drive and the area of undeveloped land surrounding it was a significant wildlife corridor in a suburban landscape and needed to be protected to preserve species and wildlife habitats, landscape and geology and to improve bio-diversity.*
2. *There would be costs associated with taking over responsibility for the land in its current state and these needed to be fully explored.*
3. *To ensure that Braunstone Town Council, having identified the importance of the site and the surrounding landscape, could maintain, enhance and protect the site for the benefit of wildlife and the community.*

47. Shakespeare Park – Improvement & Development

The Committee received an update on project timescales to improve the play facilities; along with an update on arrangements with the management of the pavilion and site (item 7 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 make minor modifications to the design and installation proposals for the play area, including requesting additional supplies and options within the delegated spending limits allowed under paragraph 11.1i of the Financial Regulations; and
2. that progress with the *Future Management Arrangements*, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be noted and endorsed.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To allow practical modifications to be made and additional miscellaneous items to be incorporated where necessary, while avoiding further delays.*
2. *To ensure that the Pavilion facility would be operated in the interests of the community and provide for an increase in sport participation.*

48. Improvements to Walking and Cycling Routes

The Committee received an update on the delivery of proposals for improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that progress on the delivery of proposals for improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes (as shown at Appendix 1), and detailed in the report and schedule (attached at Appendix 2), be endorsed; and

2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to act on behalf of Braunstone Town Council in respect of inputting into and agreeing to route signage proposals and post locations.

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. *To ensure that the destinations used on the signs catered for by both longer distance and local pedestrians and cyclists.*

49. Civic Centre Facilities Improvements

The Committee received a completion report on the works to refurbish the Civic Centre Toilets and Civic Centre Bar/Café kitchen (item 9 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk advised that the contractor the Operator was planning to use to deliver the Café Services had pulled out and the Operator was currently looking at alternative options.

RESOLVED

1. that the *Works Contract Costs and Funding*, as detailed in the relevant section of the report, including as set out at *Table 1, Table 2*, and at *Appendix 1*, be received and noted; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to determine any further requests made by JAAAK Limited to either amend the approved sub-contract arrangements, or make alternative arrangements, to deliver the operation of the Café Service.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The building works were now complete, subject to a 12 month snagging period, with the variations, the contract costs and funding used was now confirmed.*
2. *To avoid undue delays with approvals and to enable the Café service to commence.*

50. Update on Climate Initiatives

The Committee received a completion report on Climate Initiative Projects: installation of Solar PV Panels, Electric Vehicle Charging Points and an air source heat pump (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the update on the *Solar PV Panels and associated Battery Storage, Electric Vehicle Charging points (EVCPs)*, and *Air Source Heat Pump*, as

- set out in the respective sections of the report, be received and noted; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to:
 - a) liaise with the selected contractors for the installation of *Solar PV Panels and associated Battery Storage* to make arrangements for the installation of battery storage connected to the Solar PV Panels, where it would be advantageous to do so, and
 - b) to submit a formal request to extend the borrowing period for any unused approved borrowing for a period of up to 12 months, if necessary.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To deliver the Council's Climate Change & Environmental Objectives, reduce the Council's Carbon footprint, make savings and generate revenue.*
2. *To ensure that all of the approved borrowing was utilised towards reducing the Council's Carbon footprint, making savings and generating revenue.*

51. Improvements to Impey Close Play Area and Open Space

The Committee received an update on proposals for the refurbishment and enhancements of Impey Close Play Area and surrounding Open Space; and determined timescales (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposal to extend the closing date for the consultation process to 1st December 2023 be approved; and
2. that the amended *Timescales/Next Stages*, set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To engage all residents with the plans and seek their views on options.*
2. *To confirm amended milestones for the delivery of the project.*

52. 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 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the update report on progress with Thorpe Astley Culvert be noted.

Reason for Decision

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,

without further delays and additional cost.

53. Parks & Open Spaces Winter Works Programme 2023/2024

The Committee considered items for inclusion on the Winter Works Programme for 2023/2024 for the Council's Parks, Open Spaces and Grounds (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Winter Works Programme 2023/2024, attached at Appendix 1, be approved; subject to the following inclusions:

- a) topping up the "Gravel Path by Impey Close" including the section immediately following on from the end of the tarmac path; and
- b) reseeding of muddy areas around benches at Thorpe Astley.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that parks and open spaces in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley were maintained to a high level.

54. Licensed Bar and Café Contract

The Committee considered a request from the Operator, JAAAK Ltd, to extend the contract to operate the Licensed Bar and Café (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader & Deputy Leader of the Council, to determine whether to offer the current Licensed Bar & Café Contractor, JAAAK Ltd, a one-year extension of the current Licensed Bar & Café contract, made on 27th June 2019, until 10th July 2025, subject to the Café Service in the Civic Community Lounge commencing.

Reason for Decision

To provide for the opportunity to establish the Café Service from the Civic Community Lounge.

55. Data Protection Policy

The Committee considered, following consultation, a revised and updated Data Protection Policy for adoption (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the revised Data Protection Policy, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and implemented on 6th November 2023.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Data Protection Policy reflected the nature and scale of activities undertaken by the Town Council.

56. Review of Customer Service Standards

The Committee considered the proposed amendments to the Council's Customer Service Standards in order to approve these for consultation (item 16 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposed revisions to the Customer Service Standards, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for consultation with residents, customers, users, hirers, staff, Councillors, volunteers and partners, 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 11th January 2024 for consideration and approval.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To allow for wider input into the proposed revisions to the Customer Service Standards to ensure that they would be customer focussed and relevant.*
2. *To adopt Customer Service Standards for the Council which were based on customer needs and expectations, were relevant, maintained high standards and were deliverable.*

57. Review of revised Library Opening Hours

The Committee reviewed the position and received feedback from customers and users on whether the revised Library opening times met their needs (item 17 on the agenda)

RESOLVED that the revised opening hours for the Braunstone Community Library be adopted as permanent opening hours.

Reason for Decision

Users of the library and local residents were happy with the new opening hours and no complaints or concerns had been raised.

58. Complaints Monitoring

The Committee received details of formal complaints dealt with in order to determine whether policy or procedural changes were required to ensure that future reoccurrence was minimised (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

The Procedure by including all complaints, whether minor or major, simple or complex, and providing for the informal stage and formal stage, to deal with these as appropriate, results in complaints being resolved and/or closed effectively.

59. Review of Polling District, Polling Place & Polling Stations

The Committee considered a review of Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Stations and determined how to respond to the Consultation (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the following be submitted to Blaby District Council in response to the Returning Officer's Review of Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Stations:

Braunstone Millfield Ward

Observations:

1. The boundary between Polling District G and H2 where it runs along Brockenhurst Drive was confusing.
2. There were odd split roads within the same ward.
3. A tidier geographical arrangement needed to be made on the ground where polling district boundaries would be set along main roads.
4. Use of St. Crispin's Church polling station by Polling district E2 makes sense due to the position of the Narborough Road South subways relative to the distance to each of the two polling stations.
5. Combining Polling Districts E2, F2 and H2 into a single polling district made sense.

Recommendations:

1. All of Brockenhurst Drive should be included in the G polling district along with Fieldhurst Avenue.
2. Kingsway G polling district households should end at number 126 where Kingsway met Brockenhurst Drive. This would then mean that all of Chislehurst Avenue and Ashurst Road would be in H2 polling district.
3. All of the properties on Narborough Road South (179 to 193) to the south of Kingsway should be transferred from F2 polling district to G polling district.

Braunstone Ravenhurst Ward

Observations:

1. Electors within the E1 polling district should be able to poll at a location on the eastern side of Narborough Road South. While Polling stations outside the administrative area should be avoided, where possible, the Town Council supported these arrangements if there was no other alternative on the eastern side of Narborough Road South.
2. Electors from Polling districts I and F1 do not need to poll on the eastern

side of Narborough Road South. In most cases these residents had easier access to Braunstone Civic Centre. There was easy foot access via Franklin Park and car travel would be harder crossing the main Narborough Road South junction.

3. Braunstone Civic Centre had the space and parking to accommodate a large number of voters, especially now many previous voters in the old H district would now be polling at St. Crispin's.
4. There were odd split roads within the same ward.

Recommendations:

1. Polling districts I and F1 should be combined with H1 into a single polling district voting at Braunstone Civic Centre.
2. The Boundary between H1 and L polling districts should be tidied up with all of Shakespeare Drive transferred to H1 along with properties on Shottery Avenue, Arden Avenue and Hathaway Avenue and the part of Braunstone Lane up to Shakespeare Drive.

Thorpe Astley & St. Mary's Ward

Observation: Braunstone Town Council supported the proposals since they were both sensible and tidy.

60. Outside Bodies Report

The Committee received reports from members of Outside Bodies:

a) Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils

Councillor Robert Waterton advised that there were proposals to amend the Articles of Association of the Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils. The Chief Executive & Town Clerk advised that the voting had closed on 30th October and the new articles (enclosed as item 20a on the agenda) had been adopted.

Councillor Waterton advised that he would be resigning as the Council's representative and therefore, Council would need to make an appointment.

b) Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion Management Association

Councillor Sam Maxwell advised that a recent meeting of the Committee of the Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion Management Association had taken place on 18th September 2023.

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

The Committee had raised some concerns about promotion of the facility, damage caused by a hirer, the export arrangements for the solar panels and the alarm system.

Discussion had taken place at the meeting concerning registration as a charity; however, the Committee felt they would need more help with the process.

It was suggested that further support could be obtained from Voluntary Action Leicestershire and the Chief Executive & Town Clerk offered to attend forthcoming meetings to assist with outstanding matters.

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.

61. Blaby District Parish Councils Group

There was no feedback from the Blaby District Parish Council's Group and the Blaby District Council Parish Liaison Group.

62. End of Quarter Financial Position – Cashbook and Reserves

The Committee received a summary of the Council's Cash and Reserves for the period 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023 (item 22 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the end of quarter financial position be noted.

Reasons for Decision

There were no issues of concern with management of the Council's Finances.

63. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023 (item 23 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

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

64. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 30th August 2023 until 24th October 2023 (item 24 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 30th August 2023 until 24th October 2023 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 9.45pm.

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 11th January 2024.