

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

16th NOVEMBER 2023 at 8.00PM

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

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

Also in attendance were County Councillors Amanda Hack and Louise Richardson.

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

COUNCILLOR TRACEY SHEPHERD, TOWN MAYOR, IN THE CHAIR

6169 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sevim Aslan, Leanne Lee, Sam Maxwell, Satindra Sangha, Imran Uddin and Marion Waterton.

6170 Disclosures of Interest

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

6171 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 no members of the public present at the meeting.

6172 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 21st September 2023 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Braunstone Town Council held on 21st September 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

6173 Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning

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

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

RESOLVED

1. that the current projections attached at Appendix 1 of the report, 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 of the report, 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 Reserve Strategies, as set out in the report, be adopted.

Reasons for Decision

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.*

6174 Announcements

a) Town Mayor

The Town Mayor thanked Councillors for their love, support, messages and hugs following the passing of her Mum. She added that it had been a difficult time for all the family and she appreciated the support.

The Town Mayor also thanked Councillors for attending and supporting her Chatty Café at Apple Day. A lady called Margaret had attended the Apple Day Chatty Café on her own. A family sitting on the next table heard this and invited her to go round the stalls and activities at the event with them. They swapped phone numbers. The Town Mayor stated that she had subsequently seen Margaret out shopping. Margaret thanked her for making her day and stated she attends Bingo with the family every Friday.

The Town Mayor also made the following announcements:

"I attended our first Jobs Fair at Braunstone Civic Centre on Thursday 12th October. Organised by the Department of Work and Pensions and hosted by ourselves, over 150 residents attended the event and positive feedback was received from the exhibitors. Coupled with the one to one weekly outreach services to residents, I'm delighted that our partnership work with the Department of Work and Pensions is making a real difference locally supporting our residents finding work which suits their circumstances".

"I have also had the privilege of supporting the following community activities:

- Opening of a Community Garden at Ravenhurst School on 25th October;
- Thanksgiving Event at St Crispin's Church on 28th October;
- Children's Halloween Disco at Thorpe Astley Community Centre on 29th October;
- Social Warm Space at St Crispin's Church on 3rd November;
- Armistice Commemorations at the Civic Memorial Garden on 11th November; and
- Remembrance Sunday Service at St Crispin's Church on 12th November".

"Coming up is the Christmas Craft Fair at the Civic Centre on Saturday between 11am and 3pm".

"Also on Wednesday 29th, I will be traveling to London to represent the Town as a finalist at the Star Council Awards Ceremony at the House of Lords. Fingers crossed that we win!"

b) Leader of the Council

Councillor Nick Brown reported on the following items:

1. Star Council Awards – it had been a pleasant surprise to be short-listed as a finalist and a well-deserved honour; and
2. Carbon Reduction Initiatives – all solar PV was now installed and operational, completing the priorities in the Climate Action Plan; next stages will be decarbonising the heating at Braunstone Civic Centre and the Council's parks vehicles fleet, the later being reliant on availability and cost.

c) Chief Executive and Town Clerk

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk advised Councillors that if they considered their home address to be sensitive and wanted it removed from the public version of their register of interests; then they would need to complete a new Register of Interests Form, list their home address, tick the sensitive interests' box and provide an explanation as to why it was sensitive in a covering letter. Forms were available for collection.

6175 County and District Councillor Reports

a) Leicestershire County Council

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

1. Finance – the County Council was currently £10 million overspent on the budget to date and was looking at savings, the County Council wanted to avoid a Section 114 notice since it involved Government Appointed Consultants and having to pay for these;
2. Financial Pressures included:
 - i. Children’s Placements (statutory service), increased by 20%,
 - ii. cost of School Transport, and
 - iii. Street Lighting – proposals to turn off and dim earlier;
3. Public Transport – there was additional funding available for one year;
4. Flood Strategy – a lot of good work ongoing; alleviation works had been completed which seemed to have solved the flooding issues in Amy Street;
5. Highway Waste – a new initiative saw dirt from drains being pumped into specially created ponds and once the water exited the ponds it was clean; this reduced the ratio of waste from 16 to 2.

In response to questions from Councillors, Councillor Hack responded:

1. Councillor Hack had plotted on a map the locations where lighting shouldn’t be dimmed or turned off and these were primarily on footpaths;
2. bus company apps needed to be aligned to enhance and encourage bus travel; currently, different bus companies were using different apps;
3. Councillor Hack was frustrated with the lack of engagement from bus companies when routes were changed or cut; she stated that the additional funds should only be available to bus companies provided they engaged with the County Council; and
4. Councillor Hack’s Members’ Highways Fund had been used towards the following schemes:
 - a. double yellow lines and repainting of the bus stop, near to the Audi garage, Narborough Road South East Service Road,
 - b. Belton Road – traffic calming scheme,
 - c. drop kerb for cyclists to leave Lubbethorpe Way southbound prior to the Meridian Way exit,
 - d. various lining works,
 - e. three new planters at two gateways,
 - f. replace most of the “Welcome to Braunstone Town” signs, and
 - g. structural testing of 19 lamp posts.

Councillor Louise Richardson, as County Councillor for Enderby & Lubbethorpe Division, reported on the following matters:

1. Rail Freight Terminal – the County Council had objected, there was gaps in the evidence submitted by the applicant;
2. Medium Term Financial Strategy – there was a gap in the current budget due to increases in salaries and the County Council was looking at how it could deliver services differently and avoid bankruptcy;

3. Homelessness Consultation – proposed to bring service back in house and deal with health & wellbeing and crisis support;
4. Physical Activity – looking at ways to reinvest in and transform the service;
5. Smoking cessation – the money available for initiatives had been doubled, the County Council was focussing on preventing children taking up vaping, which would include work with Trading Standards and schools; and
6. Cabinet – forthcoming items included:
 - a. Annual Performance Report,
 - b. Homelessness Report,
 - c. Annual Report from the Director of Public Health,
 - d. Living Well with Dementia Strategy, and
 - e. Local Cycling / Walking Strategy.

In response to questions from Councillors, Councillor Richardson responded:

1. concerning a grit bin on Tuffleys Way, Councillor Richardson requested further information be sent to her and she would investigate the request further;
2. in terms of street and footpath lighting, the County Council worked with the Police closely to identify locations where lights should be left on;
3. concerning parked cars on the road down to Aldi, the County Council had confirmed it did not qualify for double yellow lines and there was a concern that parking restrictions at this location may lead to further on street parking on nearby residential streets; and
4. Councillor Richardson updated Council on progress with the Thorpe Astley schemes under the Members' Highways Fund:
 - a. Highways had rejected a vehicle activated speed sign (VAS) on the Meridian Way extension, due to the downward slope, despite Councillor Richardson pointing out two other locations she was aware of that had a VAS on a downward slope,
 - b. Councillor Richardson had asked for a VAS on Murby Way as an alternative,
 - c. Slow markings had been installed on the downward slope on Meridian Way extension,
 - d. vegetation to be tidied up on the roundabouts (some items completed under operational expenditure), and
 - e. asked for signs to be cleaned on Lubbesthorpe Way and Lubbesthorpe Way slip roads.

b) Blaby District Council

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

1. Geoff Welsh had resigned as a District Councillor due to ill health; Councillor Brown wished him well with his retirement and health;
2. scrutiny would be looking at the Corporate Plan and how it was being delivered;

3. ICT problems had resulted in most of the Planning Department being unable to access IT for around a month; emails had also been lost, this had adversely affected the smooth running of services and staff morale and needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency;
4. Strategic Asset Review needed to look at getting Council Housing back in house in order to tackle homelessness; and
5. Scrutiny was looking at Graffiti, including the powers of the authority in relation to enforcement and planning; there was a need to avoid blank white canvases.

Councillor Robert Waterton, District Councillor for Braunstone Ravenhurst Ward, reported on the following matters:

1. IT problems were of considerable concern;
2. on Tuesday Councillor Waterton had attended a first 6 months review meeting for new Councillors, where new Councillors had shared their experiences, including some of the barriers they had faced; and
3. Planning Committee had rejected the Enderby Hub proposals and the Little Masons Close change of use application.

6176 Questions from Councillors

No questions had been submitted.

6177 Reports of Standing Committees: Community Development Committee – 5th October 2023

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Community Development Committee held on the 5th October 2023 (p7797-7804).

Page 7798, Minute 39 – Crime Statistics

Councillor Anthea Ambrose referred to resolution 1 and that the Police had confirmed there had not been any change to the methodology for recording crimes. Councillor Ambrose added that this was positive news since there had been a decrease in the number of crimes reported compared to the previous year.

It was moved by Councillor Anthea Ambrose and was

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6178 Reports of Standing Committees: Planning & Environment Committee – 26th October 2023

Council received the Report of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 26th October 2023 (p7805 – p7818).

It was moved by Councillor Robert Waterton and was

RESOLVED that the Report be adopted.

6179 Reports of Standing Committee: Policy & Resources Committee – 2nd November 2023

Council received the Report of the meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 2nd November 2023 (p7819– p7829).

It was moved by Councillor Nick Brown and was

RESOLVED that the report be adopted.

6180 Motions on Notice

No Motions on Notice had been submitted.

6181 Sealing of Documents

There were no documents for sealing.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

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.

SIGNED:

DATE: