

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.

SIGNED:

DATE: