

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Councillor Anthea Ambrose (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Andy Evans, Becca Lunn Scoppie, Sam Maxwell, Christiane Startin-Lorent, Imran Uddin and Robert Waterton.

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

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

21. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Leanne Lee.

22. Disclosures of Interest

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

23. 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.

24. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2023 (item 4 on the agenda) were circulated.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record; subject to the Reason for Decision under Minute 12, "Thorpe Astley Park Culvert", reading *"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, should proceed without further delays and additional cost"*.

25. **Shakespeare Park – Improvement & Development**

The Committee received an update on project timescales and financing for phase 3 to improve the play facilities; determined use of earmarked reserves; and received an update on arrangements for future management of the pavilion and site (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the balance of £10,737 in the “Shakespeare Park Pavilion & Site Capital Works” earmarked reserve be returned to General Fund balances;
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) determine the detailed arrangements, timings and work schedules for the playground improvements, and
 - b) make minor modifications to the design and installation proposals, including requesting additional supplies and options within the delegated spending limits allowed under paragraph 11.1i of the Financial Regulations;
3. that progress with the *Future Management Arrangements*, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be noted and endorsed; and
4. that the revised *Timescales*, set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The funding was in place for the final phase of the Shakespeare Park refurbishment, therefore the remaining balance from the phase 1 (Shakespeare Park Pavilion & Site Capital Works) underspend no longer needed to be earmarked.*
2. *To make detailed arrangements for the work to be negotiated, practical modifications to be made and additional miscellaneous items to be incorporated where necessary, while avoiding further delays.*
3. *To ensure that the Pavilion facility would be operated in the interests of the community and provide for an increase in sport participation.*
4. *To provide a guide for the progression of the remaining stages of the project, which could be amended accordingly as appropriate.*

26. **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 6 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;
2. that the proposed destination signage post locations, attached at Appendix 3 of the report, be endorsed; and
3. that the proposed final and interim destinations, as amended by the Chief Executive & Town Clerk (highlighted red), attached at Appendix 4, be supported.

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. *Given the route utilised various highways, footways and parks, it was important to provide adequate signage.*
3. *To ensure that the destinations used on the signs catered for by both longer distance and local pedestrians and cyclists.*

27. 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 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that progress with the refurbishment, *Changing Places Toilet* and *Café Kitchen*, as detailed in the relevant sections of the report, be received and noted;
2. that the Operator, JAAAK Limited, restore their monthly service payments to £1,700 either when the Café Service commences or by 1st October 2023, whichever is the earliest; and
3. that, in addition to the legislative, contractual and service requirements, the operator of the Café Service meet the following:
 - a) all persons preparing food must have the required training and provide evidence of this;
 - b) all persons preparing food must attend a suitable Allergens course and provide evidence of this;
 - c) suitable cover arrangements should be in place to ensure that the minimum service period, as set out in Clause 3, "Minimum Service Periods", in the Specification of the Operational Service Level Agreement, were always met; and
 - d) all statutory records and checks should be undertaken and available to the Council's Representative(s) at all times; and
4. 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 formal request made by JAAAK Limited to sub-contract the operation of the Café Service.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The building works and toilet installations were now complete, with the Changing Places toilet registered and the Café Kitchen confirmed as fit for purpose and functional.*
2. *To recognise that suitable kitchen facilities had now been provided and to allow reasonable time for the Operator to arrange for the Café service to commence.*
3. *To recognise that the Civic Community Lounge was a Council Service operated on its behalf by a private contractor and that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure regulatory compliance, while recognising the day to day operation was outsourced.*
4. *To avoid undue delays with approvals and to enable the Café service to commence.*

28. Update on Climate Initiatives

The Committee received an update on Climate Initiative Projects: installation of Solar PV Panels, Electric Vehicle Charging Points and an air source heat pump (item 8 on the agenda).

The Committee also received a Supplementary Report, detailing changes to the specification for the Solar PV Panel installations; and providing an update on the installation of the air source heat pump and use of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points (filed with these minutes).

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, and Supplementary Report, be received and noted;
2. that Chief Executive & Town Clerk challenge the updated figures for the Solar PV Panels (as set out in Table 1 of the Supplementary Report) with the contractor; and
3. 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 for the installation of an *Air Source Heat Pump*,
 - b) make minor modifications to the design and installation proposals, including requesting additional supplies and options within the delegated spending limits allowed under paragraph 11.1i of the Financial Regulations,
 - c) determine the detailed arrangements, timings and work schedules, and
 - d) select a utility provider and set up an electricity smart export tariff.

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. *The comparison of impact of the Solar PV installation modifications (as set out in Table 1 of the Supplementary Report); for example:*
 - a) *at Thorpe Astley Community Centre the number of Solar PV Panels had been reduced (albeit by a small amount) but the predicted Annual Bill Savings had increased; and*
 - b) *at the Library the number of Solar PV Panels had been reduced by 15% yet the savings had reduced by 76%.*
 3. *To allow detailed arrangements for the work and commissioning to be negotiated, practical modifications to be made and additional miscellaneous items to be incorporated where necessary.*

29. Improvements to Impey Close Play Area and Open Space

The Committee considered outline proposals for the refurbishment and enhancement of Impey Close Play Area and surrounding Open Space; potential funding options and timescales for the project (item 9 on the agenda).

Citizens' Advisory Panel had received the outline proposals for the refurbishment and enhancement of Impey Close Play Area and surrounding Open Space at its meeting on 31st August 2023.

A member of the Panel suggested that lighting could be installed in the area as the path was not lit. The Committee, however, noted that this was likely to add considerable cost to the project. Overall, the Citizens' Advisory Panel agreed that the proposals for the alternative equipment and revised layout of the play area be supported.

RESOLVED

1. that the *Outline Proposals*, set out in the relevant sections of the report, be endorsed;
2. that the *Consultation Process*, set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved;
3. that the *Funding* options be noted and further investigations into outline costs and potential funding sources be undertaken;
4. that the *Timescales/Next Stages*, set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved;
5. that the tender documents be prepared for suitable contractors to provide and install appropriate play equipment at Impey Close play area;
6. that tender documents be prepared for suitable contractors to repair the path from Darien Way to Sculpture (top section down towards Brook) and consider installation of drainage and extend tarmac path from end of path from Impey Close to path from Darien Way to Sculpture; and
7. that quotations be obtained for installation of a suitable bench.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To provide a concept and vision for proposals to refurbish Impey Close*

- playground and adjacent open space.*
2. *To engage residents with the plans and seek their views on options.*
 3. *To ascertain financial viability.*
 4. *To confirm milestones for the delivery of the project.*
 5. *To invite appropriate contractors to provide plans and quotations for the proposed work to improve the playground at Impey Close.*
 6. *To invite appropriate contractors to provide plans and quotations for repair and refurbishment of footpaths from Darien Way to the Sculpture and for the installation of appropriate drainage works.*
 7. *To invite appropriate contractors to provide quotations for the supply and installation of a bench adjacent to the sculpture at the end of the footpath from Darien Way.*

30. 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 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the update report on progress with Thorpe Astley Culvert be noted; and
2. that the agreed plans for the new culvert and bridge be obtained from Persimmon and circulated to Councillors.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the Town Council's desire to complete the transfer of Thorpe Astley Park, a significant asset that should be owned by the Town Council, without further delays and additional cost.*
2. *While the original plans had been seen by the Town Council, these may have been revisited and modified. Upon completion, both the Park and culvert structure would be transferred to the Town Council's ownership.*

31. Health & Safety Policy

The Committee considered, following consultation, a revised and updated Health & Safety Policy for adoption (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the revised Health & Safety Policy Statement, attached at Annex 1 of the report, be approved and implemented on Monday 11th September 2023; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to update Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the Health & Safety Policy Statement accordingly.

Reasons for Decision

1. To adopt a policy compliant with statutory guidance and good practice issued by the Health & Safety Executive and the Council's Insurers; and to ensure that the policy statement reflected the nature and scale of activities undertaken by the Town Council.
2. To ensure that the list of Council operational risk assessments, the service areas to which they apply and the date they were last reviewed, along with key contacts, would be kept updated.

32. Review of Data Protection Policy

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Council's Data Protection Policy and approved these for consultation (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposed revisions to the Data Protection Policy, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for consultation with residents, customers, users, staff, Councillors, volunteers, partners and the Council's HR Advisor, as detailed in the *Timescales and Implementation* section of the report; and
2. that any proposed amendments be presented to the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee, proposed for 2nd November 2023, for consideration and approval.

Reasons for Decision

1. To ensure that residents, customers, users, staff, Councillors, volunteers, partners and the Council's HR Advisor could input into the proposed changes to the Data Protection Policy to ensure that it would be practical and fit for purpose.
2. To ensure that the Policy reflected the nature and scale of activities undertaken by the Town Council.

33. 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 was nothing to report; the Annual General Meeting was scheduled for November.

b) Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion Managements Association

Councillor Sam Maxwell stated no meetings had taken place. A meeting had been scheduled at short notice and then cancelled at short notice. Councillor Maxwell added that there needed to be some structure to the

meetings in terms of a schedule of dates and agendas provided in advance.

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.

34. Blaby District Parish Councils Group

The Committee received feedback from the Blaby District Parish Council's Group and the Blaby District Council Parish Liaison Group and considered issues for future discussion.

Councillor Robert Waterton advised that the Blaby District Parish Council's Group may have met on Wednesday 6th September 2023, Councillor Waterton was unable to attend, but that the Group was struggling to continue with only a handful of parishes supporting it.

The next meeting of the Blaby District Council Parish Liaison Group was scheduled for 12th September 2023.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To keep up to date with the discussions and work of these liaison groups and to provide input into the discussion.

35. External Audit 2022/2023

The Committee noted that the External Audit was completed on 14th August 2023 and confirmed that for the year ended 31st March 2023, the Town Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return was in accordance with the Proper practices and that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been met (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that it be noted that the External Audit 2022/2023 was completed on 14th August 2023 and that no matters were raised concerning the Town Council's accounts and governance arrangements for the year ended 31st March 2023; and
2. that the comments of the External Auditor in respect of the Reserves be received and considered as part of the Council's annual review of its Medium Term Financial Planning.

Reasons for Decision

1. *An unqualified opinion was given by the External Auditor, Moore East Midlands, on the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/2023.*
2. *The Council had noted that its reserves were getting lower and had identified this as a potential risk to the Town Council's ability to maintain its current level of operations and services; therefore, the position with the reserves would be fully reviewed in the Medium Term Priorities and Financial Strategy.*

36. 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 June 2023 (item 16 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the end of quarter financial position be noted.

Reason for Decision

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

37. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2023 to 29th August 2023 (item 17 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.

38. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 7th June 2023 until 29th August 2023 (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 7th June 2023 until 29th August 2023 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

39. Biodiversity Study of the Council's Parks & Open Spaces

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

The Committee considered quotations received for a Parks & Open Spaces Biodiversity Study (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that Contractor 4, as detailed in the Table in the report, be asked to undertake a Biodiversity study of all the Town Council's Parks and Open Spaces, in order for a Biodiversity Management Plan to be developed.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that a professional assessment of the Biodiversity of the Council's Parks and Open Spaces would be undertaken and contractor 4 provided the required level of expertise.

40. Renewal of Parks Tractor Lease

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

The Committee considered specification, lease arrangements and tenders for the renewal of the Parks Tractor Lease in 2024 (item 20 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that subject to the date in clause 7 of the Conditions of Contract being updated, the tender document and lease arrangements for the renewal of the Parks Tractor Lease from 2024 for a period of 5 years, attached at Appendix 1, be approved; 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 make minor amendments to the documentation and make the final decision on which tender and contract was accepted.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the tractor and hedge cutter equipment met the specifications required for the parks and open spaces service and would be adequate. A five-year lease was adequate given the equipment would not be extensively used to the point that a replacement would be required by the fourth year.*

2. *To ensure that the documents were accurate. To ensure that all considerations with regard to specification and costs had been met and to appoint a contractor without undue delay.*

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

NOTE:

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

EQUALITIES ACT 2010

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

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

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

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

These minutes are a draft and are subject to consideration for approval at the next meeting scheduled on 2nd November 2023.

SIGNED:

DATE: