

**BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE**

**THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2023 AT 7.30PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Councillor Anthea Ambrose (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Andy Evans, Gary Sanders, 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.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Becca Lunn Scoppie and Sam Maxwell.

**2. Disclosures of Interest**

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

**3. 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.

**4. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (item 4 on the agenda) were circulated.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

**5. 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 5 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk provided the following update:

- a) Work on the pathway through Mosssdale Meadows was now complete, subject to a list of snagging works. Outstanding work included delivery of a lighting column for the entrance, connection of the electricity supply and the installation of CCTV. The earliest National Grid could attend site for the electricity connection was 25th and 26th July. Therefore, the CCTV would not be installed and commissioned until the end of July / beginning of August.
- b) Savills had completed the pathway at the back of the Cinema to connect to Mosssdale Meadows. Unfortunately, in the process of installing the bollard and connecting the path they cut down the fence and opened the route without the Town Council's consent or the consent of the Partners involved in the Project. Members of the public have discovered the route open and were using it. This presented problems since the infrastructure was not complete through Mosssdale Meadows. With the route open and no lighting or CCTV there was a risk that motorcycles and mopeds would get away with using the route and that people may gather and cause anti-social behaviour. Equally it would be difficult to close the gap and enforce its closure for another six weeks, especially with the summer holidays about to begin. Options and the associated risks had been discussed with Blaby District Council and an option for the Police and Savills Security to jointly patrol the path to Kingsway on a regular basis in the interim was being explored.

Given the lighter evenings, members of the Committee felt that on balance, trying to close the gap would present greater risks from members of the public either trying to break through and/or use alternative routes, which were not any safer.

## **RESOLVED**

1. that the 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, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to determine the most appropriate arrangements for opening of the Mosssdale Meadows/Meridian Leisure link.

### *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. *The fence had been removed by Savills' contractors and the link between Mosssdale Meadows and Meridian Leisure was now being used by Members of the public. Given the timescales for completion of the infrastructure on Mosssdale Meadows; the risks needed to be assessed and an arrangement that best mitigated these needed to be put in place in the interim.*

**6. Internal Audit Report 2022/2023 and Internal Audit arrangements 2023/2024**

The Committee received the Internal Auditor's Report in respect of compliance with relevant procedures and controls in operation during the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and to appoint an Internal Auditor for 2023/2024 (item 6 on the agenda).

It was noted that Corporate Governance Sub-Committee has discussed the following points:

- a) Land Valuation – rather than arrange for land to be valued; it would be more appropriate to seek advice on how land could be revalued as a desktop exercise; given the Council's land was either public open space or a community facility; and
- b) Reserves – consideration should be given to placing a note in the accounts identifying which earmarked reserves were committed.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the recommendations for improvement, along with the proposed response, as set out in the Internal Audit Improvement Action Plan (attached at Appendix 3 of the report), be amended as follows:
  - a) response no. 2 to the observation on "Land and buildings with a commercial value" being amended to read "review the process for land valuation", and
  - b) the response to the observation on "Guidance regarding the general reserve" include placing a note in the accounts identifying which earmarked reserves were committed;

**THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

2. that the observations of the Internal Audit (attached at Appendix 1 of the report) and confirmation of compliance with the internal control objectives (attached at Appendix 2 of the report) be received and noted;
3. that the recommendations for improvement, along with the proposed responses, as set out in the Internal Audit Improvement Action Plan (attached at Appendix 3 of the report) and as amended by 1 above, be adopted; and
4. that the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils Internal Audit Service be appointed to undertake the Town Council's Internal Audit for the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *To make proportionate arrangements for the review of assets and to clearly set out which earmarked reserves were committed and which were uncommitted and could therefore be used in unforeseen circumstances.*
2. *The Internal Auditor, having tested all the aspects of the Council's internal controls, was satisfied that in all significant respects the internal control objectives were achieved throughout the financial year to a standard*

- adequate to meet the Council's needs.*
3. *To ensure that the observations of the Internal Audit would be addressed with appropriate and balanced measures.*
  4. *To ensure arrangements were in place for compliance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.*

## **7. Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023**

The Committee received a report to enable it to review and ensure sound systems of internal control, including the management of risk and the preparation of accounting statements during the financial year ended 31st March 2023 and to recommend to Council adoption of the Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023 (item 7 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the systems of internal control and management of risk, as set out in the report and in the updated Corporate Risk Register at Appendix 1, be approved and confirmed as sound; and that Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2022/23, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/2023, attached at Appendix 2 of the report, be completed, signed and submitted accordingly

### *Reason for Decision*

*Having reviewed the control measures for each of the areas listed on the Annual Governance Statement and also the assessment of risks facing the Council and associated mitigating measures, the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee were confident that to the best of their knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023, there were sound systems of internal control and management of risk.*

## **8. Accounting Statements 2022/2023**

The Committee received the End of Year Accounts for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and to recommend to Council adoption of the Accounting Statements 2022/2023 (item 8 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that Section 2, Accounting statements 2022/23, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2023, attached at Appendix 9 of the report, be completed, signed and submitted accordingly.

### *Reason for Decision*

*The Corporate Governance Sub-Committee, having carried out an assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's financial arrangements, concluded that there were sound systems of internal control. The Internal Auditor, having reviewed the annual accounts, found the Accounting Statements to have been prepared on the correct basis and were supported by adequate audit trails to underlying records.*

## 9. Shakespeare Park – Improvement and Development

The Committee received an update on project timescales and financing for phase 3 to improve the play facilities, review use of Earmarked Reserves, and to receive an update on arrangements for future management of the pavilion and site (item 9 on the agenda).

### RESOLVED

1. that the proposed improvements to the Shakespeare Park Play Area, as shown at Appendix 1, including the alternative proposed equipment for the Sensory Garden, as shown at Appendix 2, be approved;
2. that the funding shortfall be met by earmarking £9,152 (instead of £8,072) from the “Shakespeare Park Pavilion & Site Capital Works” reserve;
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) make amendments to the proposal agreed at 1 above, if necessary, to satisfy the planning authority;
  - b) reconsult with the public on the proposals,
  - c) determine the detailed arrangements, timings and work schedules,
  - d) 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, and
  - e) award the contract;
4. that progress with the *Future Management Arrangements*, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be noted and endorsed; and
5. that the revised timescales for the remaining stages of the project, attached at Appendix 3, be approved.

### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *The proposed alternative sensory play equipment was considered to be of a similar specification and within the original concept.*
2. *Given most of the funding was in place, the remaining balance could be funded utilising part of the underspend from phase 1 (Shakespeare Park Pavilion & Site Capital Works Reserve) along with the underspend from phase 2 (Shakespeare Playground & Tennis Courts Reserve).*
3. *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.*
4. *To ensure that the Pavilion facility would be operated in the interests of the community and provide for an increase in sport participation.*
5. *To provide a guide for the progression of the remaining stages of the project, which could be amended accordingly as appropriate.*

## 10. Civic Centre Facilities Improvements

The Committee received an update on the works to refurbish the Civic Centre Toilets and Civic Centre Bar/Café kitchen (item 10 on the agenda).

## RESOLVED

1. that the *Progress* of the refurbishment, as detailed in the relevant section of the report, be received and noted; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to liaise with the contractor to 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.

### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *The building works and toilet installations were now complete, with the Café Kitchen due to be fitted and the Changing Places toilet registered by the end of the month.*
2. *To allow for practical modifications to be made and additional miscellaneous items to be incorporated where necessary.*

## 11. 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 11 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 endorsed;
2. that the packages to use Fuuse for the operation and servicing of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points, as set out in the respective section of the report and at Appendices 1 and 2, be approved;
3. that the Electric Vehicle Charging Point Charges, as set out in Table 1 of the report, be approved;
4. 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,
  - d) award contracts and commission work,
  - e) select a suitable utility provider and set up an electricity smart export tariff, and
  - f) determine any other charges for use of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points as required on an interim bases (subject to consideration at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee); and

5. that the *Next Steps and Timescales*, as set out in the report, and at Appendix 3, be approved.

*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 enable use of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points to be maximised.*
3. *To set charges, which would be competitive, balancing the cost of electricity consumption from the National Grid with that generated from solar PV; while providing incentives to disconnect vehicles from the charge point once fully charged.*
4. *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.*
5. *To provide a timescales for delivering and commissioning the installations.*

**12. Thorpe Astley Park Culvert**

The Committee received an update on proposals and timescales 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.*

**13. ROSPA Reports**

The Committee received a report concerning the Annual ROSPA reports on Parks and Open Spaces and to determine any action to be taken (item 13 on the agenda).

It was noted that there were five High Risk items on three of the Council's play equipment (three high risk items on Mosssdale Meadows MUGA, plus two other high risk items on separate equipment).

**RESOLVED** that it be noted that repairs to the High-Risk items listed in the report be under taken as soon as possible and a work programme for other medium priority items with a risk factor of 9 in Braunstone Town (Appendix 1) and Thorpe Astley (Appendix 2) be approved for completion during the Summer; with medium priority items with a risk factor of 8 and below to be included in the Winter Works Programme 2023/2024.

*Reason for Decision*

*To ensure that all Braunstone Town Council's play areas and parks equipment were maintained to a safe standard.*

**14. Review of Health & Safety Policy**

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Council's Health & Safety Policy and approved these for consultation (item 14 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that the proposed revisions to the Health & Safety Policy Statement, attached at Annex 1 of the report, be approved for consultation with the Council's Health & Safety Consultative Group, 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 7th September 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 Health & Safety Policy Statement to ensure that it would be practical and fit for purpose.*
2. *To ensure that the policy would be compliant with statutory guidance and good practice issued by the Health & Safety Executive and the Council's Insurers; and that the policy statement reflected the nature and scale of activities undertaken by the Town Council.*

**15. NALC's Council of the Year**

The Committee considered whether the Council should submit an entry to NALC's Council of the Year Award Scheme (item 15 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that Braunstone Town Council submit a nomination for NALC's Star Council Awards 2023 - Council of the Year; 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 prepare and submit a nomination on behalf of the Town Council.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *The Council has invested in local infrastructure and services, responded to community need, protected and enhanced services and worked with a*



*range of partners at different levels to provide/support local services and deliver quality of life improvements.*

2. *To enable a detailed and focussed nomination to be submitted by the deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023.*

**16. Blaby District Parish Councils Group**

The Committee considered appointing the Council's representative for the Blaby District Parish Council's Group and the Blaby District Council Parish Liaison Group and noted there had been no recent meetings and, therefore, there was no feedback.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Robert Waterton be appointed as the Council's representative for the Blaby District Parish Council's Group and the Blaby District Council Parish Liaison Group.

*Reason for Decision*

*To ensure the Council continued to be represented at these liaison groups at member level.*

**17. Bank Account Signatories**

The Committee considered revisions and updates to the Bank Account Signatories list (item 17 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the individual named Councillors and role holders, as detailed in the relevant section of the report:

- i. Co-operative Bank Accounts (linked),
  - ii. Cambridge Building Society,
- be authorised as Bank Account Signatories.

*Reason for Decision*

*To update the account signatories following changes in the Council's membership and staffing. To identify role holders as account signatories, following an update to the Council's Financial Regulations.*

**18. Financial Comparisons**

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 (item 18 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.*

## 19. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 until 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 (item 19 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 until 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved.

*Reason for Decision*

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

## 20. Mossdale Meadows Culvert

**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 received an update on the process for appointing a contractor and financing to undertake the rebuilding Mossdale Meadows Culvert and associated works (item 20 on the agenda).

### **RESOLVED**

1. that revised designs and plans be commissioned to include the updated proposed work to Mossdale Meadows for consideration at the next meeting;
2. that the draft timeline for required work be approved;
3. that the recommendation to Council to approve borrowing for the original planned work, be rescinded, and
4. THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the following items be included in the short to medium term Capital Plan 2023/2024:
  - i. Drainage work to the entrance of Mossdale Meadows car park to drain water from the car park into the brook as the car park entrance was prone to frequent flooding which was raised during the Walking & Cycling route construction; and
  - ii. Resurfacing of Mossdale Meadows car park with tarmac; currently the car park consists of hardcore and stone which frequently gets washed down towards the brook in heavy rain.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *To provide updated plans to include additional works to Mossdale Meadows to alleviate ongoing flooding issues in all areas of the park.*
2. *To provide plan of works to be carried out and target dates to work towards.*
3. *The amount initially calculated had been incorrect and therefore the project scope and costs would need to be reassessed.*

4. *To recognise that problems with flooding at various locations on Mossdale Meadows had been reported on several occasions and it made sense to include these items on the Capital Plan so they could be included as part of the same Capital works.*

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

**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 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023.*

Signed: .....

Date: .....