

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 25th APRIL 2024 AT 7.30PM

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

110. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Gary Sanders.

111. Disclosures of Interest

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

112. 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.

113. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024 (item 4 on the agenda) were circulated.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

114. End of Financial Year – Income, Expenditure, Cash and Balances

The Committee received an interim summary report of the Council's spending against budgets, cash at the bank and status of reserves for the financial year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the interim end of year financial position be noted.

Reason for Decision

The closure of the accounts at 31st March 2024 was complete and they would be subject to Internal Audit ahead of the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee assessing the effectiveness of the Council's systems of internal control.

115. Financial Position – Cashbook and Reserves

The Committee received a summary of the Council's Cash and Reserves and received an update on implementation of the actions taken by the Policy and Resources Committee and Responsible Financial Officer to ensure that the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function (item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the position with *Cash Flow*, as detailed in the relevant section of the report and in the cash flow forecast at Appendix 1, be noted;
2. that the *Progress with addressing the Cash Deficit*, including the terms of a short-term loan from Blaby District Council, as detailed in the relevant section of the report, be endorsed; and
3. that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee setting out the context of the current cash flow position and the approved actions to ensure the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The position in respect of the Council's cash reserves and overspends during 2023/2024, were all matters that the Council had addressed.*
2. *The Council had a plan for ensuring it had cash reserves during 2024/2025 and beyond; and the terms of the short-term loan from Blaby District Council were both reasonable and balanced and would ensure the Council had sufficient cash during April to function.*
3. *To review the cash flow position following repayment of the loan to ensure that short and long term proposals would resolve the issue and avoid a repeat occurrence.*

116. Options for Ongoing Revenue Savings for Future Years

The Committee considered options for reducing expenditure in future years, to ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the current financial constraints and future financial uncertainties (item 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the public be engaged, as proposed in the *Public Engagement* section of the report, concerning one-off and ongoing annual revenue savings, set out in Tables 1 and 2 respectively; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to add further proposals for consultation/engagement and update both the Details and Delivery and Savings information accordingly.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the current financial constraints and future financial uncertainties and to allow the public to comment on any impact.*
2. *To ensure that any other potential areas for savings could be identified and included in the public engagement; and to update the delivery and savings information as proposals were progressed.*

117. Annual Report 2024

The Committee received the draft Annual Report 2024 for recommending to the Annual Meeting of the Full Council for adoption (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Town Clerk to include final data and information and to finalise the presentation and formatting to the proposed Annual Report 2024 (Appendix 1); and
2. that subject to 1 above, THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO ANNUAL COUNCIL that the Annual Report 2024, attached as Appendix 1, be received and adopted.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To enable the inclusion of the provisional year end accounts and ensure that the document would be finalised and presented for public consumption.*
2. *To report on the Town Council's achievements and to set out its priorities for the forthcoming year.*

118. 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 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that progress on the delivery of proposals for improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes, as shown on the programme enclosed with the agenda, be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

The scheme would provide improvements for pedestrians and cyclists connecting facilities, amenities and communities across Braunstone Town, Meridian and Thorpe Astley.

119. Improvements to Impey Close Play Area and Open Space

The Committee finalised proposals for the refurbishment and enhancement of Impey Close Play Area and surrounding Open Space; and approved the procurement process (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the amended *Timescales*, set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved;
2. that the *Update* on the Impey Close playground tender document be noted;
3. that the *Update* on the civil engineering plans for the footpaths, as shown at appendix 1, be approved;
4. that the tender document for the proposed work to the footpaths, as shown at appendix 2, be approved; and
5. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to approve minor and technical amendments, where necessary, to the plans (appendix 1) and tender documentation (appendix 2), and to determine timescales and deadlines for the tender process.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To confirm milestones for the delivery of the project.*
2. *To note that appropriate contractors had been approached to provide plans and quotations for the improvement to the playground at Impey Close*
3. *To ensure that any proposed works to the footpath would be suitably undertaken to prevent any issues with flooding in other areas.*
4. *To invite suitably qualified contractors to submit tenders for the refurbishment work to the footpaths.*
5. *To ensure that minor and technical changes could be made if necessary, and to set timescales and deadlines to progress the project.*

120. Mossdale Meadows Flood Alleviation and Drainage Improvements

The Committee considered the tender process, timescales and proposed financing for rebuilding the Culvert and carrying out flood alleviation and drainage improvements at Mossdale Meadows (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that plans for the Culvert Bridge, Car Park and Lubbesthorpe Bridle path as shown as appendices 1 - 5, be approved;

2. that draft Tender document as shown at appendix 6 be approved;
3. that the updated draft timeline for the required work, as shown in the relevant section of the report, be approved; and
4. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to finalise the tender documentation, including minor and technical amendments to the documentation and drawings, determine timescales and invite tenders.

Reasons for Decisions

1. *To implement construction work to reduce the level of flooding issues on Mossdale Meadows to protect the brook, banks and surrounding land.*
2. *To provide a plan of works to be carried out and target dates to work towards.*
3. *To comply with financial regulations and relevant procurement legislation.*
4. *To enable minor modifications to be made if necessary and to provide flexibility.*

121. Employment Contract Updates

The Committee considered updating the Terms and Conditions of employment, to ensure they would be up to date and complied with all recent legal developments; and to consider, following consultation, amending the monthly pay date (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposed amendments to the Council's Model Employment Contract, to include Holiday Pay Option 1, as highlighted in yellow at Appendix 1, be approved;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to propose consequential changes to the Working Time Policy & Procedure and Leave Entitlement Policy & Procedure, if necessary, and consult with staff prior to submission to the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee (proposed for 13th June 2024);
3. that the monthly pay date be amended from September 2024 to "paid on 28th of the month or last working day prior; except in December, paid on 24th or last working day prior"; and
4. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to include the pay day information (approved in 3 above) in the Model Employment Contract, to notify staff and to make arrangements to implement 1 and 2 above.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To update staff terms and conditions to comply with all recent legal developments. The Council currently made holiday payments as detailed in option 1, which was both accepted by staff and simple to administer.*
2. *To enable the recently adopted Working Time Policy & Procedure and Leave Entitlement Policy & Procedure to be reviewed to ensure that the*

- provisions would be aligned to those in the Model Employment Contract.*
3. *To ease cash flow pressures in April and September each financial year, particularly in April 2025.*
 4. *To provide sufficient notice, update employment contracts, and to undertake the necessary administrative arrangements to implement the decisions.*

122. Sports Pitch Allocations 2024-2025

The Committee received applications for sports pitches for 2024/2025 season and determined their allocation (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the football pitch application requests received, as set out at Appendix 1, for the 2024/2025 season be approved and allocated as submitted;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to:
 - a) reach an agreement between the football clubs (ref 15 and 17) which submitted pitch application requests for the Sunday 10.30am slot on the senior pitch at Mossdale Meadows 2024/2025 season being able to share the pitches and/or be flexible with the day and times;
 - b) reach an agreement between the football clubs (ref 14 and 16) which submitted pitch application requests for the Sunday 2.00pm slot on the senior pitch at Mossdale Meadows 2024/2025 season being able to share the pitches and/or be flexible with the day and times;in the absence of such agreement, the allocations be determined at the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee; and
3. that football pitches allocated matches in excess of the approved capacity (Junior Pitches at Mossdale Meadows) be closed to ad-hoc booking requests until after Christmas and only opened to ad-hoc bookings should the Chief Executive & Town Clerk deem that each individual pitch quality was suitable.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To enable the clubs to have security of a home ground for the season.*
2. *To enable the clubs, who have a local connection and have had regular allocations to pitches in Braunstone Town to have security of a home ground for the season, recognising that in order to achieve this, the clubs would need to agree to a shift pattern or to rescheduling of their day and time in order to be accommodated.*
3. *To avoid further overuse of the pitches, which had been allocated above the approved capacity.*

123. Draft Schedule of Meetings

The Committee received a draft schedule of meetings for 2024/2025 for recommendation to Annual Council for adoption (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO ANNUAL COUNCIL that the proposed schedule of Council and Committee Meetings for 2024/2025 be approved.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Town Council to undertake its business and meet its statutory obligations.

124. Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and Councillor Code of Conduct

The Committee reviewed the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and Councillor Code of Conduct, in order to recommend adoption at the Annual Council Meeting (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposed Standing Order 4.12, County and District Council Reports (Appendix 1), include a 30 minute time limit for consideration of the item;

THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO ANNUAL COUNCIL

2. that the proposed amendments to the Council's Standing Orders, as highlighted at Appendix 1 (and updated according to 1 above), be approved;
3. that that the proposed amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations, as set out at Appendix 2, be approved;
4. that that the proposed amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegation, as set out at Appendix 3, be approved; and
5. that, as a result of 2 to 4 above, delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to renumber paragraphs and update cross-references accordingly.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To provide structure to the item and to assist the chair with managing time.*
2. *To give clarity to intended meaning and to provide for better discussion and engagement with the business of the Council and its Committees.*
3. *To accommodate provisions relating to the use of reserves in annual budgets, as set out in the Reserves Policy.*
4. *To give clarity to intended meaning, deal with matters at the most appropriate level and provide for routine and operational decisions to be made.*
5. *To enable the administrative changes resulting from the agreed additions and amendments to be applied to ensure consistency and accuracy.*

125. Disciplinary Policy & Procedure

The Committee considered, following consultation, a revised and updated Disciplinary Policy & Procedure for adoption (item 16 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the proposed Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and implemented on 29th April 2024.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that issues relating to an employee's attendance, behaviour, conduct and performance were raised and dealt with promptly and that meetings, decisions and confirmation of those decisions were undertaken in a timely manner..

126. Review of Grievance Policy & Procedure

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Grievance Policy & Procedure and approved these for consultation (item 17 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the Grievance Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for consultation with staff, Councillors and the Council's HR Advisor, as detailed in the *Review of Grievance Policy & Procedure* section of the report; and
2. that the post-consultation version of the Grievance Policy & Procedure be presented to the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee, proposed for 13th June 2024 for consideration and approval.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that staff, Councillors and the Council's HR Advisor could make comments or suggested amendments to the Grievance Policy & Procedure to ensure that it would be practical and fit for purpose.*
2. *To provide a framework to assist employees to raise individual complaints and to have those complaints resolved quickly and fairly, and to guide managers through the process.*

127. Electric Vehicle Charging Points – Pre-authorisation Fee

The Committee considered increasing the pre-authorisation fee for card payments (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the pre-authorisation charge for pay and charge card payments be increased (from £25) to £50.

Reason for Decision

To strike a balance between flexibility of pay and charge and ensuring the Council could collect the payment.

128. Outside Bodies Report

The Committee received reports from members of Outside Bodies:

a) Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils

No Report.

b) Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion Management Association

Councillor Maxwell reported on the recent meeting of the Committee of the Shakespeare Park Management Association, held on 8th April 2024, as follows:

- a) pursuing charitable status was delayed while Councillor Uddin recovered from his recent surgery;
- b) the Committee had discussed the number of bookings and the need to try and increase these, there was interest from two hirers in regular bookings;
- c) the decision to ban bouncy castles had been reviewed since most children's parties included these; it was agreed to allow bouncy castles but with a height restriction, due to the low hanging lights;
- d) there was a request for an advertising banner to notify passers-by and users of the park that the Clubroom was available for hire;
- e) the Management Association and the Clubs were considering grant schemes available to them; and
- f) a tennis coach had expressed an interest in giving coaching sessions on the tennis courts during the summer.

Committee members agreed it was important to raise the profile of the Clubroom and ensure that advertising on social media was regularly repeated.

RESOLVED that the Outside Bodies report 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.

129. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 28th February until 31st March 2024; and from 1st April until 16th April 2024 (item 20 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 28th February until 31st March 2024; and from 1st April until 16th April 2024 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

130. Replacement of Braunstone Civic Centre foyer skylight

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 the options for repair/replacement of the glass skylight roof in the foyer of Braunstone Civic Centre (item 21 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the quotation from Company A, detailed at Appendix 2, be accepted; and
2. that the quotation from Company B, detailed at Appendix 2, be accepted as the reserve contractor if the preferred contractor was not able to undertake the contract or the Council, for some reason, decided not to proceed with the preferred contractor.

Reasons for Decision

1. *Company A provided a detailed quote for replacing skylights, fixing them, and removing debris that was within the budget without having to source external funding.*
2. *Company B provided a detailed quote for supplying and installing a polycarbonate glazing system, fittings, and removal of old debris; however, the quote was considerably higher, and external funding would need to be sourced.*

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

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 proposed meeting scheduled on 13th June 2024.

DRAFT