

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE
TUESDAY 27th SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 7.30PM

This meeting had originally been scheduled for 8th September 2022 when it was postponed, as a mark of respect, due to the announcement of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair) and Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Sohan Johal, Leanne Lee, Tracey Shepherd and Robert Waterton.

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

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

20. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Amanda Hack and Sam Maxwell.

21. Disclosures of Interest

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

22. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may attend the meeting for the purpose of 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.

23. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2022 (item 4 on the agenda) were circulated.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

24. Shakespeare Park – Improvement & Development

The Committee received a progress report on the improvement project and financing for phase 2; and received an update on arrangements for future management of the pavilion and site (item 5 on the agenda).

The Committee received a supplementary report in order to consider the arrangements for the initial informal meeting of the Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion Management Committee and to consider options for interim support for the Shakespeare Park Bowls Club (filed with these minutes).

In the report circulated with the agenda, it was noted that the final sentence of the paragraph under the section “Pavilion and Site Works” should read “Trees will be planted over the winter months”.

RESOLVED

1. that progress with the Project: *Pavilion and Site Works, Tennis Courts improvements, Playground Improvements and Future Management Arrangements*, as set out in the relevant section of the report and at Appendices 1 and 2, be noted;
2. that the revised timescales for the project, attached at Appendix 3, be approved;
3. that an interim Management Committee to oversee the day to day operations of Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion be established as set out in the *Establishment of Management Committee* section of the report;
4. that the membership of the interim Management Committee be:
 - a) Councillor Nick Brown (Chair for the interim period),
 - b) one other Councillor, with delegated authority being given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make the appointment,
 - c) two representatives appointed by Shakespeare Park Bowls Club, and
 - d) two representatives appointed by Braunstone Athletic Football Club;
5. that the principle of providing *Interim Support for the Bowls Club*, to maintain the bowling green, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved; and
6. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine whether to implement the *Interim Support for the Bowls Club*, and if so, how the arrangements would be implemented, including required information and evidence for the assertions made by the Club.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the project, which would enable an increase in sport participation and improve recreation and play facilities in a Ward which had high rankings of multiple deprivation across a range of domains, including income, employment and education and had the worst proportion of overweight or obese children in the County of Leicestershire,*

- was delivered efficiently and effectively.*
2. *To provide a guide for the progression of the project, which could be amended accordingly as appropriate.*
 3. *To maintain dialogue with and between the clubs and oversee the day to day operation of the Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion.*
 4. *To enable each of the existing Clubs to be represented along with the Town Council and to ensure that administrative support would be provided to ensure the smooth running of the Committee and implementation of its decisions.*
 5. *To enable the Club to re-establish itself following Covid, increase its membership and be in a better financial shape to take on a 10 year occupation licence for the bowling green.*
 6. *To undertake due diligence prior to committing the Council's support and ensure that the resources would be committed in accordance with the Financial Regulations.*

25. Community Governance Review – Outcome and Review of Comments

The Committee reviewed the comments received during the consultation for the Community Governance Review of the Parish of Braunstone and determined whether the Town Council could take any additional actions to address these (item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that Braunstone Town Council recognise Thorpe Astley as a distinct community and settlement within the Parish of Braunstone;
2. that Blaby District Council be asked to acknowledge and recognise Thorpe Astley as a distinct community and settlement within the Parish of Braunstone;
3. that the Council's corporate logo include the names of both communities, Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley, alongside the name "Braunstone Town Council" (example letterhead at Appendix 2); and that this change in branding be made, as determined by the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, including on the Council's website, social media, signage, stationary, notices (including agendas) and on the side of the parks fleet vehicles;
4. that the Town Council promote the opportunity for residents to be elected as Town Councillors at the Parish elections;
5. that Community Development Committee be asked to consider and assess whether a Town Council organised annual gala event should be held in Thorpe Astley and if so, when and in what form;
6. that no change to the name of the Parish be pursued at the current time; however, the Council should reconsider the question when invited to submit comments to the next ten year District wide Community Governance Review; and
7. that Blaby District Council be asked to adopt a policy/procedure concerning Community Governance Reviews and setting out how the District Council should exercise its broad power in the following circumstances:
 - a) responding to comments in the 10 year review,

- b) major governance issues at a parish, or
- c) a major change, such as a large scale housing development, particularly where that was detached from the existing settlement(s).

Reasons for Decision

1. *Thorpe Astley was not just a Town Ward but a distinct community and that should be acknowledged in the Council's documents, publicity and communications.*
2. *Blaby District Council has responsibility for place and street naming and has the power to redesignate the streets in Thorpe Astley as being in Thorpe Astley (as opposed to Braunstone Town).*
3. *It would be a disproportionate use of resources to initiate a formal name change of the Parish; however, amending the Council's branding and publicity to include reference to both Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley would potentially have a similar impact and could be delivered gradually within operational resources, avoiding diverting resources away from delivering high quality, cost effective improvements and investment to services in both Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley.*
4. *To address the perception about representation and accountability, particularly in Thorpe Astley.*
5. *Recognising Thorpe Astley as a distinct community has practical implications, for example, the community holding a regular Town Council organised annual gala event.*
6. *Given that only 11 of the 42 responses received to the consultation supported the creation of a separate Parish for Thorpe Astley; it seemed disproportionate to use resources to initiate a formal name change of the Parish at the current time. However, the District Council undertakes a ten year District wide Community Governance Review and the question could be revisited as part of that process having assessed the impact of the initiatives in resolutions 1 – 5.*
7. *To provide a structure for assessing the need for undertaking community governance reviews where this was necessary and would further local democracy, while providing certainty to parishes to enable them to focus of delivering high quality services and improvements to their local communities.*

26. ROSPA Reports

The Committee received a report concerning the annual ROSPA reports on Parks and Open Spaces and the action needed (item 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that it be noted that repairs to the High-Risk items listed in the report had been undertaken 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 2022/2023.

Reason for Decision

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

27. Candidates Information Pack and Session

The Committee considered the merits of producing a candidates information pack and holding an information session for individuals considering seeking election or co-option to Braunstone Town Council (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the principle of providing a *Candidates Information Pack*, based on the contents set out in the relevant section of the report, and the draft document attached at Appendix 1, be approved;
2. that a *Candidates Information Session*, as outlined in the relevant section of the report, be held prior to each ordinary elections;
3. that the Town Council publicise each ordinary election and make residents aware of the *Candidates Information Pack*, the *Candidates Information Session*, and how to put themselves forward as a candidate; and
4. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to implement 1 – 3 above, including:
 - a) finalising the documentation and information to be included in the *Candidates Information Pack*;
 - b) determining the content and making arrangements for the *Candidates Information Session*; and
 - c) arranging publicity

Reasons for Decision

1. *To bring together in one place all the relevant information for those considering putting themselves forward for election or co-option as a Town Councillor.*
2. *To enable potential candidates in an ordinary election to find out more about the Town Council and the role of Town Councillor before putting themselves forward as a candidate for election.*
3. *To raise awareness among residents of the opportunity to stand for election as a Town Councillor and to encourage candidacy regardless of background, age or disability.*
4. *To finalise the detailed information, to ensure that it would be timely, relevant and accurate.*

28. Equality & Diversity Policy & Procedure

The Committee received the consultation results and a proposed revised Equality & Diversity Policy & Procedure for adoption (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that paragraph 48, Sexual Orientation, of the proposed Equality & Diversity Policy & Procedure (Appendix 1) reference lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI); and
2. that, subject to 1 above, the Equality & Diversity Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and adopted with effect from Monday 3rd October 2022.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To recognise a broader range of identities.*
2. *To ensure that the Council had a policy and procedure in place to meet its commitment to providing equal opportunities in the provision of its services and as an employer and was also committed to avoiding acts of unlawful discrimination.*

29. Civility & Respect Commitment and draft Dignity at Work Policy

The Committee considered making a commitment to “Civility & Respect” and received, for consultation, a proposed policy setting out principles and standards of acceptable behaviour, relevant processes for raising complaints and for a register of complaints and incidents (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposed draft Dignity at Work Policy, attached at Appendix 2 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;
2. that any proposed amendments be presented to the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee, proposed for 3rd November 2022, for consideration and approval; and
3. THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that Braunstone Town Council sign up to the “Civility and Respect Pledge” developed by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

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 Dignity at Work Policy to ensure that it would be practical and fit for purpose.*
2. *To ensure that the Council had a policy in place to meet its commitment to create workplaces that allow people to maintain their dignity at all times.*
3. *To demonstrate the Council’s commitment to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles.*

30. **Insurance Renewal**

The Committee considered the options for renewing the Council's Corporate Insurance from 1st November 2022 (item 11 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk reported that a renewal quote had been received from the Council's Insurance Broker, which was approximately double the current annual premium.

RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to:

- a) obtain quotes and enter into an agreement to renew the Council's Insurance for 1st November 2022 to 31st October 2023;
- b) enter into a longer term agreement in the event one was offered and it would be advantageous to the Council; and
- c) determine whether to accept quotes for an additional Public Liability Insurance cover, which would maintain cover at £15 million.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that arrangements were in place to receive and adopt a competitive insurance quote and to ensure that the Council's assets would be protected from underinsurance.

31. **Community Centres Christmas Lights**

The Committee considered proposals to replace and expand the provision of Christmas lights and decorations at Braunstone Civic Centre and Thorpe Astley Community Centre (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the proposals for improving Christmas Decorations at the Community Centres and Library, as set out in the report, be endorsed.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Community Facilities in Braunstone Town and Thorpe Astley would be appropriately decorated for the Christmas period.

32. **Amendment to Licence Agreement – Thorpe Astley GP Branch Surgery**

The Committee considered proposals to amend the Licence Arrangements to Kingsway Surgery to provide flexibility to operate out of hours on an ad-hoc basis (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the request by Kingsway Surgery to operate the branch surgery at Thorpe Astley Community Centre out of hours on an ad-hoc basis, as set out in the *Request to Amend Operating Hours* section of the report, be approved; and

2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to make amendments to the Occupational Licence Agreement to accommodate an Out of Hours Operating Service Charge, as set out in the *Request to Amend Operating Hours* section of the report, along with the payment arrangements, and to reissue and approve the revised Occupational Licence Agreement.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To enable Kingsway Surgery to respond flexibly to changes in NHS service provision and patient demand.*
2. *To ensure that a charge was levied to contribute to the Council's additional building and operational costs, while ensuring that the cost would be proportionate to the number of occasions Kingsway Surgery was likely to be operating out of hours.*

33. Interim Review of Polling Places

The Committee received a review of polling places being undertaken by Blaby District Council and considered whether to respond to the consultation (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the following response be submitted to the consultation:

- a) under the proposed arrangements for polling districts E, F and H, the Parish Ward appeared to be inconsistent with the District Ward; E1, F1 & H1 should reference Ravenhurst only; while E2, F2 & H2 should reference Millfield (note Ravenhurst & Fosse), and
- b) subject to (a) above, Braunstone Town Council supported the proposals as an interim measure; however, recommends that the arrangements be reviewed as a result of any changes to County Divisions and Parliamentary Constituencies.

Reasons for Decision

- a) *To provide clarity and avoid doubt.*
- b) *To ensure that the voting arrangements were practical and accessible for voters, while avoiding any unnecessary complication or administration.*

34. External Audit Arrangements

The Committee determined the External Audit Arrangements from 2022/2023 to 2027/2028 (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that Braunstone Town Council be part of the sector led body of The National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Association of Drainage Authorities, "Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd" (SAAA), for appointment of external auditors for a five year period from 2022/2023 to 2026/2027.

Reason for Decision

The estimated external audit fee negotiated by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd was affordable and represented best value for the Council, since if the Council was to participate in its own or another arrangement it was unlikely to achieve the same economies of scale while incurring the governance and administration costs of managing the arrangements.

35. Blaby District Parish Councils Group

The Committee received a copy of a report submitted by Councillor Robert Waterton to a recent meeting of the Blaby District Parish Councils Group held on 31st August 2022 (item 16 on the agenda).

Councillor Waterton had submitted his apologies to the meeting but would feed back to the Committee once he had received a copy of the minutes.

RESOLVED that the report submitted to the meeting of the Blaby District Parish Councils Group, held on 31st August 2022, be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To keep up to date with the discussions and work of the Liaison Group and to provide an opportunity to raise any relevant issues.

36. End of Quarter Financial Positions – Cashbook and reserves

The Committee received a summary of the Council's Cash and reserves for the period 1st April 2022 to 30th June 2022 (item 17 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 2022 to 30th August 2022 (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 2022/2023.

38. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 8th June 2022 until 30th August 2022 (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 8th June 2022 until 30th August 2022 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

39. Procurement of Items identified in the Climate Audit

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 a report setting out a process for considering tenders and purchasing Solar PV Panels, Electric Vehicle Charging Points and a hybrid air source heat pump (item 20 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the tenders received, including the summary information and tender price, for the installation of *Solar PV Panels and associated Battery Storage, Hybrid air source heat pump (Thorpe Astley Community Centre) and Electric Vehicle Charging points (EVCPs)*, as detailed in the relevant section of the report, be received and noted;
2. that further examination of the tenders received be undertaken, including clarification and obtaining omitted/missing information where appropriate;
3. that a Panel be established, consisting of Councillors Nick Brown, Amanda Hack and Robert Waterton, to consider:
 - a) the assessment of the tenders received and shortlist/make recommendations on the most advantageous tender(s), and
 - b) to assess and make recommendations on the financing options;
4. that qualifying and advantageous Solar PV tenders be assessed by the structural loading engineer; and qualifying and advantageous Hybrid Air Source Heat Pump tenders be assessed by the consultant that provided the heat loss assessment;
5. that the *Next Steps and Timescales*, as set out in the report, be approved; and
6. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Panel (established in 3 above), to shortlist tenders received, and prepare and submit grant and funding applications.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To note the options and costs associated with reducing the Council's carbon footprint.*
2. *To ensure that a detailed assessment of the tenders (as updated as appropriate) would be undertaken in order to consider overall value, quality and deliverability.*
3. *To ensure that tenders were properly assessed and scrutinised in order to determine which offered the best value in terms of cost/savings/income, quality, deliverability and achievement of the Council's Carbon reduction commitment.*
4. *To provide an assessment and technical advice on the quality and deliverability of the tenders.*
5. *To provide an outline plan for the procurement and assessment process and for delivering the installations.*
6. *To focus detailed work and assessment on the most realistic tenders and financing options, avoiding unnecessary work or any delays to the projects.*

40. Civic Centre Facilities Improvements

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 a proposed schedule of works, determined financing and the process to appoint a contractor to undertake the refurbishment of the Civic Centre Toilets and Civic Centre Bar/Café kitchen (item 21 on the agenda).

It was noted that the second sentence in the third paragraph of the "Next Stages and Timescales" section of the report should read "In the event that the SUEZ grant funding is unsuccessful".

An update was received on Public Works Loans borrowing rates which had increased from 3.73% on 31st August 2022 (the day of the original publication of the report) to 5.3% on 26th September 2022. The annual borrowing repayments on a loan of £114,297 over 15 years at 5.3% would be £10,905.04.

RESOLVED

1. that the *Finance* position, as set out in the relevant section of the report, including the preferred option to borrow the balance of funding, be approved;
2. that the current position with *Re-evaluating the Project*, be noted;
3. that the *Next Stages and Timescales* for the project, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be endorsed;

4. THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the following resolution be approved “to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a PWLB loan of £114,297 over the borrowing term of 15 years for the cost of the refurbishment of Braunstone Civic Centre toilets and Bar/Café kitchen; the annual loan repayments will come to around £10,905.04”; and
1. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, to put together a borrowing application, with supporting evidence, including a financial appraisal, for submission to Council.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To enable appropriate funding options to be assessed and sought to ensure the long term financial stability and sustainability of the project.*
2. *To enable options to be discussed with the architect and surveyor, in the event that grant applications were unsuccessful.*
3. *To provide a guide for the progression of the project, which could be amended accordingly as appropriate.*
4. *To enable the application assessment to be progressed and submitted for consideration by the Assessor on behalf of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.*
5. *To enable the detailed supporting evidence to be gathered and submitted with the Council’s application without undue delay. To ensure best financial management to meet the Project’s costs.*

41. Improvements to Walking and Cycle Routes

RESOLVED: - That in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is recommended that 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 delivering the proposals for improving connections between walking and cycling routes and to approve the detailed scheme for Mossdale Meadows (item 22 on the agenda).

An update was given to the Committee on the proposed designs at the junction of Meridian Way and Murby Way. Following a site visit it was anticipated that the pathway could be widened into the highway rather than into the adjacent open space, thereby retaining the existing trees and most of the existing hedgerow. The proposal would be subject to satisfactory designs and approval by Leicestershire County Council highways.

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 general arrangement, layout and designs for the Mossdale Meadows section of the scheme, as set out in Appendices 3 to 7, be approved; subject to satisfactory resolution of the outstanding matters listed (1 – 8) in the Mossdale Meadows section of the report; and
3. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader & Deputy Leader of the Council, to approve the final designs and work schedules for Mossdale Meadows and to determine the arrangements and timescales for the works to be undertaken at Mossdale Meadows.

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 proposals would improve the standard of the pathway for pedestrians and cyclists, both users of Mossdale Meadows and those travelling through.
3. To find a balance between ensuring that the outstanding matters identified would be included in the approved designs and schedules, while avoiding delays to the timescales for the delivery of the works at Mossdale Meadows.

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:

Dated: