

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT OF CITIZENS' ADVISORY PANEL

THURSDAY 4TH DECEMBER 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Mr N Brown (in the Chair), Councillor Mr T Chapman, Mr J Dodd, Local Resident, Councillor Mrs J Fox, Councillor Mrs A Hack, Mrs B Haselgrove, Local Resident, Mr J Haselgrove, Local Resident, Mr J Jameson, Local Resident, Mrs A Smith, Local Resident, Mr T Smith, Local Resident

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Tilley, Executive Officer & Town Clerk, Miss J Leech, Assistant Executive Officer – Admin.

APOLOGIES: Mr J Johnson, Local Resident.

1. Disclosure of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest

2. Report of the Meeting held on 9th October 2014

The Report of the Meeting held on 9th October 2014 was received and noted.

3. Holmfield Park Improvement Project

a) Background and Progress Report on Project

The Panel was reminded that a consultation exercise was carried out with local residents with regard to preferred improvements to Holmfield Park in 2012. The feedback received had helped form the list of capital projects for the park which had been included in the Council's 'Proposals & Priorities for Improvements to Our Parks' document. Arrangements had been made with the football teams to relocate to the Thorpe Astley facilities and the Holmfield Park Changing Rooms had been demolished in October 2014.

b) Tender Process for Improvement Works

It was noted that tenders had been invited from play equipment suppliers for the provision of equipment and associated works as per the capital projects' list. The deadline for submissions had been 1st December 2014 and five tenders had been received. The Panel received details of the tenders specification and considered the options available.

The Executive Officer & Town Clerk provided background to the issues around safety surfacing on the Council's parks. It was noted that repair works were required on the existing wetpour surfacing on an annual basis. There was also significant maintenance required on the treebark safety surfaces. A specification requirement of the tender had therefore been for the provision of 'rubber mulch' surface which required less repair and maintenance.

It was noted that there was currently no provision of play equipment within the Council's play areas for children with special needs. It was noted that Blaby Parish Council had been successful in obtaining funding for installing this type of equipment and further details would be obtained.

It was noted that the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 15th January 2015 would make the decision on the choice of supplier and equipment. Therefore it was the Panel's remit to make recommendations to that Committee.

RECOMMENDED

That the Panel's preference for the installation of 'rubber mulch' surfacing be highlighted to the Policy & Resources Committee. Also that in principle, the Panel would recommend equipment that was durable and vandal resistant.

- c) Further consultation

RESOLVED

That further consultation be carried out with relevant groups such as Kidaroo, Parents and Toddlers, etc, with feedback to the Policy & Resources Committee.

4. Future of Braunstone Town Library

Members received an update report from the Executive Officer & Town Clerk along with a copy of the Citizens Advisory Panel's Terms of Reference for the provision of library services as adopted at the last meeting of the Panel.

It was noted that Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet had made its decision to pursue with the recommendations to retain 16 main libraries and transfer to invite communities to take over the running of the remaining 36 libraries. Braunstone Town library would be one of the 36 to be transferred.

It was noted that the Councillor Mr N Brown and the Executive Officer & Town Clerk had attended a Scrutiny meeting at the County Council to express a need for a more flexible support package and the County Council had appeared to have taken this request on board. The Town Council's preference was for the support package to be in monetary value rather than support with maintenance and running costs, etc.

Braunstone Town Council has always made clear its intentions to ensure a continued library service. Now that the County Council had made its decision to transfer the Braunstone Town Library to community use, the Council was at a stage to consider the options for the provision of the library service.

The report by the Executive Officer & Town Clerk therefore included options for the Panel to consider for recommendation to the Council's Policy & Resources Committee, however, it was the purpose of the Advisory Panel to be open to other recommendations. The initial two options were; to locate the existing Connect Service Shop into the Library; or, to re-engineer the exterior of the Civic Centre to create a single reception and access point to both buildings. It was noted that Blaby District Council wished to continue to support the existing Connect Service Shop, however, it was looking towards making savings, which could be made by combining to services with the Library.

It was noted that it would cost more money in capital to carry out a re-structuring of the buildings. However, it was hoped that this option would allow the Town Council to work in partnership with both the County and District Council, and potentially other key partners, in providing services from the facility, which would result in reduced running costs to the Town Council.

It was discussed the benefits of the facility being used by a wider sector of community groups, rather than limited to library services. There were also additional services that could be provided, particularly for the younger users of the service and also options for an outreach service to Thorpe Astley. There was discussion regarding the involvement of volunteers in assisting in the running of services.

5. Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Citizens Advisory Panel was 5th March 2014. It was noted that the decision making process for the County Council's to enter into agreements with interested community groups had been delegated to officers. However, it was considered that submissions of interest would not be expected to be submitted to the County Council until around April 2015. A decision would be made as to whether to proceed with the March meeting of the panel dependant on progress.

6. Termination of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.45pm