

# BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

*Ian Laughton - Executive Officer & Town Clerk*

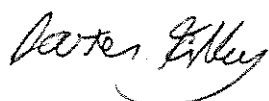
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PR Notice

## NOTICE OF MEETING

10<sup>th</sup> December 2014

An Extraordinary Meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES** Committee will be held at Braunstone Civic Centre on **Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014** commencing at **7.30pm**, for the transaction of the business as set out below.

Yours sincerely,



Executive Officer & Town Clerk

1. **Apologies**
2. **Disclosures of Interests**  
To receive Disclosures of Interest (not previously disclosed) in respect of items on this Agenda:- i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, ii) Other Interests (Non-Pecuniary)
3. **Public Participation**  
Members of the public may make representations, give evidence or answer questions in connection with items included on the agenda (Standing Order 13f and 75). At the discretion of the Chairperson the meeting may be adjourned to give members of the public present an opportunity to raise other matters of public interest.  
  
The time allowed for each member of the public to make representation, give evidence, or ask questions will be restricted to 3 minutes. Where there is a group of members of public wishing to make the same representations, present the same evidence or ask the same questions, the group must appoint one representative to speak on their behalf and he/she will be restricted to within 3 minutes.  
  
Public participation sessions will be ordered by the Chairperson as part of his/her role in presiding over the meeting and conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
4. **Report of the Meeting held 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014**  
To receive the Report of the last Meetings held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014
5. **Braunstone Town Library Service**  
To receive a report from the Executive Officer & Town Clerk on the Braunstone Town Library Service (**Enclosed**)
6. **Tractor and Side-arm hedgecutter**  
***RECOMMENDED:-*** *That in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press/public be temporary excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 79 and 84 apply). Reasons for exception – Commercial Interests and Information provided in Confidence)*

*To consider tenders received for the provision of a four year lease of one 4 wheeled-drive tractor and sidearm hedgecutter, to include annual servicing and maintenance.*



QUALITY  
TOWN  
COUNCIL

7. **Signatories List**

**RECOMMENDED**

*That the Co-operative Bank No.1 Account Signatories List be updated as follows:-*

- a) *That the following former Members of the Council be removed from the signatory list for the Co-operative Bank No.1 Account.  
Mr I Laughton  
Mr R Ward  
Mrs C Crowther  
Mrs L Martin*
- b) *That the following additional names be added to the signatory list for the Co-operative Bank No.1 Account  
Mr D Tilley*
- c) *That the following amendment be made to the Co-operative Fixed Rate Deposit Account: Deletion of Mr I Laughton, Addition of Mr D Tilley.*

8. **Termination of the Meeting**

**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 favorable treatment on the basis of race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

## BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

### FUTURE OF BRAUNSTONE TOWN LIBRARY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE SHOP

#### POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE, 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2014

##### Context

Following a consultation period between April and July 2014, Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet met on Wednesday 19th November 2014 to make a final decision on the Future of Leicestershire Libraries. The Cabinet approved recommendations which included the County Council fully funding 16 main and shopping centre Libraries and for the remaining 36 Libraries, including Braunstone Town Library, inviting communities to take over the running of these facilities.

##### Braunstone Town Council Response

On 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014, at Braunstone's Annual Towns Meeting, the following resolution was passed by 38 votes (0 against and 0 abstentions):

*"We, the residents of Braunstone Town, hereby express our dismay and regret at the decision of Leicestershire County Council to withdraw financial support for the operation of our library and to threaten Braunstone Town's library with closure. We ask that the County Council review this decision and withdraw the closure threat".*

*"We request that Braunstone Town Council work with the community, other partners and stakeholders and uses its offices, powers and influence to keep the Braunstone Town Library open and also provide a better service that is more responsive to the needs of local residents".*

This resolution directed the Town Council's response to the County Council consultation and the Town Council's position in relation to its involvement in the Library Service of Braunstone Town:

- community groups may not have the capacity to ensure a sustainable service;
- Community Libraries are often less sustainable in less affluent areas;
- the proposals for Community Partnerships are not an efficient use of local resources ;
- loss of staff results in a loss of expertise, impacting upon quality of service; and
- opposition to double taxation.

##### Citizens Advisory Panel Response

On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2014, the Town's Citizens Advisory Panel met to discuss options for the Town's Library as a Community Partnership Library. The outline options presented for consideration were the same as those outlined to Policy and Resources Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014:

1. Combining the Customer Service Shop with the Library Service either by relocating the Customer Service Shop in the Library or by combining the Civic Centre and Library buildings to create a single access point via one reception; or
2. Running the Library as a separate Service, with paid Library staff or staffed using volunteers, or a combination of both.

Citizens' Advisory Panel agreed to support the model of combining the Customer Service Shop with the Library Service.

## Background

### *Customer Service Shop*

In partnership with Blaby District Council, the Town Council provides a Customer Service Shop at Braunstone Civic Centre, which provides local residents with access to Council Services.

The current cost of operating this service is approximately £60,000 per annum, which includes staffing, resources and until 2017 a capital loan repayment, after which the cost will fall to approximately £50,000. Hours of operation are Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm (40 hours per week).

Blaby District Council are currently undertaking a Customer Channel Shift programme, which involves eventually discontinuing cash payments.

### *Library*

Braunstone Town Library is currently operated by Leicestershire County Council. The current cost of operating this service is approximately £50,000 (including property £16,000, staff and other overheads £36,000). Hours of operation vary and include late night opening and Saturday mornings, total opening hours are 24 per week.

## Summary of Proposals – Combined Public Services Facility

The Town Council believes there is an overwhelming case to work closely with local partners in order to improve and expand the public services provided on the Braunstone Civic Centre site and at Thorpe Astley Community Centre. By combining the Customer Service Shop with the Library it is possible to use the same staff to act as Customer Service Advisors as well as operate the Library's issuing, returns and reservations, however, the exact staffing resource required to run the Library service will need to be fully assessed in negotiations with Leicestershire County Council.

There are a couple of ways in which the service could be potentially combined:

- a) Locating the Customer Service Shop within the current Library building would result in the Library being open for an additional 16 hours per week, 21 hours per week if the late night and Saturday opening was retained. There would be no need to make physical changes to the exterior of the Civic Centre. There would be set up costs associated with ICT provision and new signage. Additionally consideration would need to be given to building break out rooms either in the Library or Civic Centre if existing and new community initiatives were to continue in the Library, since these may interrupt Customer Service Shop provision.
- b) Re-engineering the exterior of the Civic Centre to create a single reception and access point to both buildings would result in flexibility of Library opening hours and enable the space to be used for hire and other events outside

Library opening times. Architects have been commissioned to draw up outline options and provide estimates of the cost. Should the Town Council pursue this option, such works are likely to be costly and both services would be disrupted during the works. Although, integrating both buildings into one in the long term would allow more flexible space and the potential to raise the revenue income of the Civic Centre.

## Business Case

### *Staffing*

The Customer Service Shop model requires at least two members of staff to be on duty due to processing of cash payments, should Blaby District Council choose to discontinue this service there will be more flexibility around staffing arrangements. The Library Service requires two members of staff on duty at any one time. Library Staff overheads is currently around £24,000, Customer Service Staff overheads is currently around £42,000 (total £66,000). Combining both services allows for reducing the number staff by combining the roles, although to ensure the success of the facility it will be important to ensure professional input to oversee the development of the facility and ensure high service standards. Staffing costs could therefore be reduced by at least £12,000 to £54,000.

### *Library Building*

The Library building is owned by the Town Council and leased to Leicestershire County Council on a 99 year lease in July 2007, meaning in 2015 there will be 91 years of the lease remaining. Under the terms of the lease Leicestershire County Council is required to meet the following:

- all rates, taxes and duties;
- gas and electricity costs
- keeping the premises in good repair and condition
- to decorate the premises at least every 5 years
- provide fire-fighting equipment
- insure the premises and hold public liability insurance

These obligations currently cost the County Council £17,356 per annum.

In addition the premises can only be used for the purposes of a Library and cannot be sub-let.

Combining Premises costs with that of the Civic Centre is likely to save costs.

## Capital Investment

Combining the Library and Civic Centre buildings to control access through a single point will require significant investment. Service capital investment could include the provision of a cash payment machine for Council services such as paypoint.

There will also be future capital investments to consider, e.g. painting and decorating, roofing repairs etc. Depending on whether these are shared equally with the partners or whether they are solely attributed to the Town Council will impact upon service recharges. If costs are to be shared equally, income should also be shared equally. However, if the Town Council bears significant capital

responsibilities there will be a case to say that all income should be for the Town Council.

### Next Stages

Exploratory meetings have been held with officers from both the County and District Councils. Whilst not guaranteeing any commitment to the proposed Combined Public Services Facility, officers from both Councils have indicated that the proposed model is something they would be keen to explore further.

Leicestershire Police are currently undertaking a Change Programme, which includes looking for opportunities to locate Neighbourhood Officers in communities. A local College has also expressed an interest in undertaking extra-curricular activities at the Library. A local community group has expressed a wish to support the Facility by providing exhibitions of historical artefacts. Therefore it is important for the Council to explore further additional partners who could contribute in some form towards the long term sustainability of the Facility.

Attached at Appendix 1 are estimated costs of a Combined Public Services Facility. These costs are based on the initial assumptions set out in this report. However, it is likely that should our expression of interest be acceptable to our partners that negotiations will need to take place on the practical arrangements for the operation of the service and the resource requirements, which is likely to alter the initial estimates.

### Recommendations

1. that the Combined Public Services Facility model outlined in the report along with the estimated costs in Appendix 1 be approved as the Town Council's model for delivering both the Library Service and the Customer Service Shop in Braunstone Town and that this model be the basis upon which the Council negotiates with its partners;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer and Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader, to:
  - a) submit a formal expression of interest to Leicestershire County Council, in accordance with their procedure for registering an interest in running a Community Partnership Library, to run Braunstone Town Library based on the Combined Public Services Facility model,
  - b) liaise with Leicestershire County Council and Blaby District Council on detailed arrangements for the model, including service levels and standards, resource requirements, the mechanism for identifying and reviewing the costs of the service and the contributions made by each organisation,
  - c) identify new initiatives and potential partnership arrangements, including alternative sources of funding,
  - d) liaise with other organisations, including public, educational, voluntary and community, to fully explore the potential of a shared Public Services Facility and the role that other organisations could play, and
  - e) issue briefings, publicity and statements to keep the public informed of developments; and
3. that any final proposals be submitted to a future meeting of Policy and Resources Committee for recommendation to Council for approval.

## APPENDIX 1 – Estimated Costs of a Combined Public Services Facility

### Initial Assumptions:

- Combined Customer Service Shop and Library facility;
- overlay the current opening hours of both services, i.e. the facility is open for 45 hours per week;
- staffing based on current staffing level for Customer Service Advisors and a part-time Library professional for 24 hours per week based on half the current Library staffing.
- there being three partners to the agreement, Leicestershire County Council, Blaby District Council and Braunstone Town Council.
- Braunstone Town Council manage the operation of the service based on each partner contributing one-third of the overall cost.

### STAFFING (including on-costs)

<i>Customer Service Advisors (82 hrs per week):</i>	£42,295
<i>Library/Management Professional (24 hrs per week):</i>	£11,739
<i>Corporate Management &amp; Administration Recharge:</i>	£ 5,802
<b>Total Staff:</b>	<b>£59,836</b>

### PREMISES COSTS

The Premises costs have been assessed on the Town Council combining all service charges (electricity, gas, and water), Insurances, Maintenance, Cleaning and Rates with the Civic Centre. The costs are then attributed based on the Library space accounting for one-quarter of the floor space of the combined Civic Centre and Library floor space and that the service is open for 45 hours per week compared to opening hours of the Civic Centre of 97.5 hours per week. The figure is worked out based on the current Library and Civic Centre Premises costs combined.

<i>Current Civic Centre Premises:</i>	£72,762
<i>Current Library Premises:</i>	£17,356
<i>Total Premises divided by 97.5 hours x 45 hours divided by one-quarter.</i>	

<b>Total Premises:</b>	<b>£10,398</b>
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### SUPPLIES

The Supplies costs have been assessed on the Town Council combining all costs for supplies (Printing, Postal, Stationary, Copying, ICT) with the Town Council's Community Development and Social Inclusion Service. The costs are then worked out based on the Library and Service Shop being one-quarter of the overall service.

<i>Community Development and Social Inclusion Supplies:</i>	£5,520 (1/4 = £1,380)
<i>Library Supplies:</i>	£1,457 (1/4 = £364)
<i>Books:</i>	£4,833
<b>Total Supplies:</b>	<b>£6,577</b>

**TOTAL COST OF COMBINED SERVICE: £76,811. Divided between three partners equally: £25,604 each.**