

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

3TH APRIL 2014 AT 7.30PM

Present: Mr N Brown (In the Chair), Miss A Ambrose, Miss S Betts, Mrs J Fox, Mrs S Maxwell, Mr G Sanders, Mr W Wright.

Officers in Attendance: Mr I Laughton, Executive Officer & Town Clerk, Miss J Leech, Assistant Executive Officer – Admin.

Apologies: Miss A Hack, Mr S Maxwell.

1. Disclosures of Interest from Members or Officers

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

2. Report of the Meeting held 13th February 2014

The report of the meeting held on 13th February 2014 was taken as read and signed by the Chairperson.

3. Publications

DIS 827, 828. LRALC January and February 2014 newsletter. LCC Pension Fund Annual Report 2012 – 2013, Tree News Spring Summer 14, The Clerk March 14, Local Council Review Spring 14, NHS England Statement – Healthcare Facilities at Thorpe Astley Community Centre

4. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Orders 16f and 70 the meeting was adjourned to give an opportunity for members of the public present to raise matters of public interest for the purpose of making representations, giving evidence or answering questions.

There was one member of the public present at the meeting.

5. Parks and Open Spaces

a) Pitch Allocations 2014/2015

The draft Pitch Allocations for 2014/2015 were received and noted. It was noted that the number of teams allocated for Mossdale Meadows was equivalent to the 2013/2014 season. There was one extra girls' team allocated to Shakespeare Park, and an additional team to play on Saturdays at Thorpe Astley. Three teams had moved to a later time schedule on the Sunday. It was noted that there had been no complaints regarding parking problems around the Kingsway during the past season.

RESOLVED

That the Pitch Allocations for the 2014/2015 season be approved.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

That the pitch allocations for the 2014/2015 generated income of £4,033 for the Town Council.

- b) Winter Works Programme 2013/2014
A progress report on the Winter Works Programme for 2013/2014 was received. It was noted that the Balance Trail at Franklin Park had been identified as Medium Risk by RoSPA and that it would need to be replaced in the near future.
- c) Bridge over the culvert – Thorpe Astley Park Area
The Executive Officer & Town Clerk provided an update on the bridge over the culvert at the Thorpe Astley park area. The report of a meeting held 28th March 2014 which the Executive Officer & Town Clerk had attended with representatives of Blaby District Council and Leicestershire County Council was circulated. The Executive Officer & Town Clerk reminded Members that Leicestershire County Council's original intention had been to adopt the footpath, bridge and lighting columns through the park area, however it had not proceeded due to the bridge installed by the developers not meeting the County Council's required specifications. Blaby District Council therefore proceeded with adopting the land with the bridge. Braunstone Town Council would not proceed to adopt the land from the District Council until the matter of the bridge was resolved, and there was currently a Licence Agreement in place for the Town Council to maintain the land.

At the meeting on 28th March 2014, Leicestershire County Council provided details of costs for different specifications of bridges. There had been general consensus at the meeting that the most suitable bridge would be a Steel Beam Footbridge at a cost of £36,600 which included the substructure and demolition of existing bridge. It was noted that the developer had no legal obligation to make a financial contribution towards the bridge. However, as an incentive, Leicestershire County Council would not require them to provide a commuted sum of around £11k towards the County Council adopting the bridge itself. Should they not cooperate, the District Council would need to, as landowner, find funding towards the cost of the replacement. The Executive Officer & Town Clerk had asked for reassurances that the monies would not come from the Commuted Sums allocated to the maintenance of the park area.

Leicestershire County Council indicated that, once the bridge was in place, it would adopt the pathway through the park area across the bridge, including the lighting columns. It was indicated that, subject to a satisfactory bridge being in place, the Town Council would proceed to adopt the open spaces from the District Council.

RESOLVED

That whilst the Town Council is minded to assist the project by considering the adoption of the footbridge (without further commuted sums for maintenance costs) there are still serious concerns regarding ongoing vandalism and maintenance costs. Before agreeing to proceed the Town Council would like to see detailed plans of the proposals and receive further professional advice regarding the robustness of the design and its suitability for the location. Details of the manufacturers/contractors' written guarantees would also be required.

Before proceeding to adopt, the Town Council would also seek professional advice from a structural engineer regarding the lifespan of the structure and whether the bridge and its supports had been satisfactorily completed.

Leicestershire County Council to provide a fence/motorcycle restriction barrier at the southern end of the footpath onto the Meridian Way island.

- d) **Legal Transfer of the Open Spaces at Thorpe Astley**
The Executive Officer & Town Clerk provided an update on the legal transfer of the land at Thorpe Astley. He had contacted the Town Council Solicitor that week who had indicated that it was expected for Persimmon Homes to legally transfer the land shortly. The Executive Officer & Town Clerk reminded Members that, because of the level of complaints regarding the open spaces from residents at Thorpe Astley, the Town Council had proceeded to agree to maintain the open spaces at Thorpe Astley subject to receipt of the commuted sums prior to the completion of the legal transfer of the land. It was therefore noted that the Commuted Sums had been received from Barratt Homes, David Wilson Homes and Persimmon Homes. The remaining due monies were held by Blaby District Council in respect of the park area.

6. Thorpe Astley Community Centre – Consultation Rooms

A copy of the Statement published by NHS England with regard to the future of the healthcare facilities at the Thorpe Astley Community Centre. The Executive Officer & Town Clerk had sought an update from NHS England on the procurement process. They had responded that they were continuing to work on this and would provide a firm timescale in due course.

RESOLVED

To continue to monitor the progress of the procurement process and if necessary the Town Council publish and public statement concerning the lack of progress with the procurement process.

7. Library Services

- a) Leicestershire County Council had held a briefing meeting with Parish Councils on 31st March 2014 regarding the future of the community Libraries, and it was noted that Councillors Mr N Brown and A Hack attended. A copy of information from the briefing session was circulated for Members information. Leicestershire County Council was intending to retain 16 main Libraries, however, it proposed to support the establishment of a partnership body to take over the running of the community libraries, which included Braunstone Town Library. It was presumed that the Partnership body would comprise volunteers or parish/town councils. Leicestershire County Council indicated that it would be passing over the existing stock, fittings and IT systems to the Partnership Body, and it would retain the ownership of the buildings, with the Partnership Body leasing the building. Members noted that the Town Council already owns the Braunstone Town Library Building.

The key saving that Leicestershire County Council was planning to make through the transfer of the Library services was staffing costs. Members expressed their concern at the loss of expertise in running the services resulting from the loss of existing staff.

It was noted that the County Council was organising a public consultation event on 11th June 2014 at the Braunstone Town Library.

- b) Advice received from the LRALC with regard to Parish and Town Councils taking over the responsibility of Library Services was received. It was noted that unless a Parish Council had not adopted the General Power of Competence then it did not have specific powers to enable it to provide Library Services. It was noted from an extract of guidance received from Wellesbourne Parish Council which had taken over museum services that 'the most watertight course of action which would protect the Council in the long term would be for the County Council to delegate under s101 LGA1972 their power to manage the service.'

RESOLVED

- i) *To call a meeting with representatives of Enderby, Narborough, LFE and Kirby Muxloe Parish Councils to consider options for joint working. Conditional meeting dates of 28th April or 1st May 2014 were proposed.*
- ii) *To investigate how other areas are dealing with transfer of libraries to community groups (Warwickshire was mentioned) and report back to the Policy & Resources Committee.*
- iii) *To draw up a list of options for the council to consider to enable the Braunstone Town library to continue to function. This would need to include legal advice on the building lease, transfer of staffing costs (TUPE), the legality of the County Council transferring its Library Services.*
- iv) *Once further information had been received, to consult an architect on possible options to change the entrance to the Civic Centre so as to enable access to the Civic Centre and Library to be controlled via a single point.*
- v) *To give publicity to any public consultation events held by the County Council regarding the Braunstone Town library service.*

8. Draft Schedule of Meetings

The draft Schedule of Meetings for 2014/2015 was received and noted.

RECOMMENDED

That the draft Schedule of Meetings for 2014/2015 be forwarded to Full Council meeting on 15th May 2014 for adoption.

9. Standing Orders / Financial Regulations

It was noted that the Council had previously resolved to review its Standing Orders following NALC's publication of the new 'Model' Standing Orders. New legislation regarding cheque signing came into effect on 12th March 2014. NALC was drafting new Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be reviewed as one once the 'model' Financial Regulations were published and the draft recommendations be forwarded to the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee meeting.

10. Annual Report 2013/104

The draft Annual Report for 2013/2014 was received. It was noted that this year a £50 prize draw was being carried out for the return on the questionnaires.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Report for 2013/2014 be forwarded to the Full Council meeting on 15th May 2014 for approval.

11. Management & Administrative Staff Structure

RESOLVED*- 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 –Personal Information.)*

It was noted that Mr D Tilley had been appointed as Executive Officer & Town Clerk with effect from 22nd April 2014.

12. Financial Comparisons

The Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2013 to 28th March 2014 were received and noted.

13. Parish / Town Council Website Support

It was noted that the contract for the Town Council's website with Leicestershire County Council had been renewed for the coming year at a cost of £375.

RESOLVED

To approve the action of the Executive Officer & Town Clerk in confirming the Town Council's wish to continue subscribing to the Leicestershire Parish Council's website for 2014.

14. Termination of the Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

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.

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.