

## **BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **REPORT OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015 AT 7.30PM**

**Present:** Mr N Brown (In the Chair), Miss A Ambrose (from item 6c), Mr R Berrington, Mrs J Fox, Ms A Hack, Mrs S Maxwell, Mr G Sanders.

**Officers in Attendance:** Mr D Tilley, Executive Officer & Town Clerk, Miss J Leech, Assistant Executive Officer – Admin.

**Apologies:** Mr S Maxwell, Mr W Wright.

**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 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

The report of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 was taken as read and signed by the Chairperson.

**3. 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 were two members of the public present to make representation on the future library services. They raised issues with regard to the staffing of the existing libraries that are scheduled for transfer to community management.

**4. Publications**

LRALC Newsletter, LCR Winter 2014, Leicestershire Policy Stakeholder Briefing Notes Sept 14, Blaby District Council Community Services Contact List, Department for Communities and Local Government Open And accountable local government – A guide for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government, Leics County Council Meeting report held 2<sup>nd</sup> July 14, Business Issues Dec 14, Parish Clerks' Highway News, L&R Wildlife Trust Newsletter Winter/Spring 15, LCC Highways Forum Papers 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015. The Clerk Nov 14.

**5. Changes to provision and development of Local Public Services**

A progress report from the Executive Officer & Town Clerk on implications of various changes and developments involving local public services on the Town Council was received and noted.

a) Future of Leicestershire Libraries / Connect Service Shop

Following consultation with local residents through the Citizens Advisory Panel, the option supported for the provision of the community library service was to create a combined public services facility for the Library and the Connect Service Shop. These proposals had been received at the last meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee. The Executive Officer & Town Clerk reported that, subsequent to the last meeting, the formal expression of interest by the Town Council in running the service had been submitted to Leicestershire County Council. It was expected that a response would be received from the County Council by 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015 as to whether it would be interested in pursuing the Town Council's model for the provision of the services.

- b) Thorpe Astley Community Centre – Medical Rooms  
It was noted that NHS England was expecting to have a plan for the provision of medical services at the Thorpe Astley Community Centre by the end of January 2015. It was hoped that the Town Council would be able to make a public statement shortly.
- c) Leicestershire Police Change Programme.  
It was noted that, from 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015, there was to be a structural change to policing across the County. It was expected that there would be police officers based within community facilities, such as currently with the Thorpe Astley Community Centre, and as part of considering the future library services, Members had considered the benefits of offering the Police a base within the Library facility.

## **6. Parks and Open Spaces**

- a) A progress on the Winter Works Programme for 2014/2015 was received and noted.
- b) Draft Pitches Policy and Procedure  
It was noted that a consultation had been held with the football teams, park users, Shakespeare Park Bowling Club and the Council's staff with regard to the draft Pitches Policy and Procedure document. The amendments to the document were noted.

### **RESOLVED**

*That the draft Pitches Policy and Procedure be adopted.*

- c) Progress Report – Mossdale Meadows Pitch Facilities  
The Executive Officer & Town Clerk updated members on the progress of the second senior pitch at Mossdale Meadows. The pitch was in good condition and should be at a proper standard by next season. It was noted that the first senior pitch was not standing up well to use by four teams. Therefore, it had been agreed with the teams to move a senior team over to the second senior pitch. It was also noted that the Thorpe Astley pitch was standing up well to the level of use. The Senior Groundsman had attended a pitch management course during the year.
- d) Franklin Park Community Orchard  
Arising out of the meeting of the Franklin Park Working Group Meeting held 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014, a schedule of improvement works were received and noted. It was hoped that the works would be able to be completed by March.
- e) Bridge over Culvert – Thorpe Astley Park Area  
The Executive Officer & Town Clerk reported on the progress of the proposals to replace the bridge over the culvert at the Thorpe Astley park area. It was noted that Persimmon Homes had submitted designs for the bridge that were acceptable to the County Council, and that Blaby District Council was pursuing the matter.

**7. Holmfield Park Improvement Project**

*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 – Commercial Interests and Information provided in Confidence)

A report from the Executive Officer & Town Clerk on the Homfield Park Improvement Project was received. It was noted that five schemes had been submitted by play equipment suppliers in response to the tender process for additional/replacement play equipment at Holmfield Park. The drawings submitted had been received by the Citizens Advisory Panel at its meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and a consultation exercise had been carried out with the Parent and Toddler Group and Kideroo Pre-School and details of their responses were received.

Details of the grant applications submitted were received and noted. It was noted that funding would be available from Sita Waste Ltd.

*RESOLVED*

1. That the Specification for the Holmfield Park Improvement Project be adopted using Option 2 for both the Pyramid and Toddlers Play Area schemes;
2. that up to £10,000 be allocated in the Council's Reserves to contribute towards the funding and implementation of the project;
3. that the tender from Wicksteed Playgrounds to undertake the improvements detailed in the tender specification be accepted;
4. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer and Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee, to liaise with Wicksteed Playgrounds as the selected supplier:
  - i. to award the contract and to agree timescales and detailed arrangements for the works;
  - ii. to agree, dependent upon the availability of funding, which specification items were included and in which order; and
  - iii. to make minor and practical amendments to the layout, design and equipment specification.

**8. Shakespeare Park Improvement Project**

*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 – Commercial Interests and Information provided in Confidence)

It was noted that Shared Access was still awaiting confirmation from a number of mobile phone suppliers as to whether Shakespeare Park would be acceptable to them as a site for a mobile phone mast.

*RESOLVED*

- a) That the Executive Officer & Town Clerk and Chair be delegated authority to progress with this issue and legal proceedings etc, should Shared Access confirm that it wishes to proceed with Shakespeare Park as a site for a phone mast.
- b) That a Working Group consisting the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Community Development Committee be established to progress the project to redevelop the Shakespeare Park pavilion facilities.

**9. Staffing**

**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)*

- a) It was noted that employee 98 Customer Services Advisor, had left the Council's employment. The vacant position would be covered on a secondment basis by an existing member of staff until further information on the way forward for the library service had been established.
- b) NJC – 2014-16 Payscale & Allowances Agreement  
Details of the NJC 2014-2016 Payscale and Allowances Agreement applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 were received and noted.

**RESOLVED**

*That an agenda item be included on a future meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to consider the future implication arising from the NJC Agreement on the Council's existing staff structure.*

The Executive Officer & Town Clerk here left the meeting for the following item.

c) **RESOLVED**

*That the following appointment, following a six month probationary period be confirmed:-*

*Employee Reference 102: Position – Executive Officer & Town Clerk*

**10. Evaluation of Training**

The evaluation of Staff and Councillor Training for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 was received and noted.

**11. Blaby District Council Open Spaces Audit**

It was noted that Blaby District Council, as part of its Development Plan, was carrying out an audit of public open spaces within the District. It was noted that these reports could help identify areas of open space suitable for the receipt of developer funding.

**12. Underpasses**

It had been referred by the meeting of the Full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014 (Minute Reference 5273) for the Policy & Resources Committee to consider an item concerning the state of the Narborough Road South underpasses and other underpasses in the Town. It was noted that Leicestershire County Council was refusing to remove graffiti on a regular basis unless it was considered offensive. It was noted that there was also ongoing problems with the recently fitted pump in one of the underpasses and this was being responded to by the County Council. It was discussed the merits of artwork being installed in the underpasses, involving local schools.

**RESOLVED**

*To contact Leicestershire County Council for its view on whether it would be acceptable for an artwork project within the underpasses.*

13. **Citizens Advisory Panel**

The report of the Citizens Advisory Panel Meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> December 2014 was received and noted. The main item for consideration had been the future of the library service.

14. **Local Council Award Scheme**

It was noted that the Local Council Award Scheme, which would replace the Quality Council Scheme, would be launched in January 2015. Existing Quality Councils that needed to renew their certificate were being invited to register for the Foundation level of the scheme for no fee. They would have a year to make a submission onto the next level of the scheme which was the equivalent Quality level or the higher Gold level.

**RESOLVED**

*That the Town Council register its wish to transfer to the Foundation Level of the Local Council Award Scheme with a view to resubmitting to a higher level within the year.*

15. **Annual Report Questionnaire – Proposed Actions/Responses**

The results from the Annual Report Questionnaire relevant to the Committee along with proposed Action/Responses were considered. It was noted that the reports had also been received by the other relevant Committees.

**RESOLVED**

*That the actions and responses as received by all the Committees be implemented.*

16. **Complaints**

A report on a complaint under the Council's Complaints' Procedure with regard to the heating at the Thorpe Astley Community Centre, was received. It was noted that the issues arising had been resolved with the user which was due to the hirer needing regular access to the outside area of the Community Centre. The Town Council had purchased plastic door curtains to install at the doors to allow them access without affecting the heating system.

17. **Parish Polls – Response to Government Consultation**

It was noted that the Department for Communities and Local Government was carrying out a consultation on the proposals to make changes to the arrangements for Parish Polls. A copy of the consultation document, along with draft responses, was received.

**RESOLVED**

*That the draft response to the consultation be approved and submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government.*

18. **Notice of Conclusion of Audit for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014**

Correspondence dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014 from Grant Thornton Auditors along with the copy of the Annual Return confirming the conclusion of the Audit for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, were received. It was noted that no matters had come to the attention of the Auditors.

19. **Estimates 2015/2016**

- a) The Financial Comparisons for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 were received and noted.
- b) The Financial Comparisons for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 were received and noted.
- c) Guidance notes, including the Long Term Financial Planning schedule as received by Policy & Resources on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014, were received and noted.
- d) Capital Projects  
A report on completed, current, proposed Capital Projects was received, along with a list of projects recommended for deletion. With regard to the current and proposed capital projects, there was discussion with regard to whether they could be co-ordinated and scheduled in order to obtain better value and avoid disruption to services.

**RECOMMENDED**

*That the report be received by the Full Council meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015 for approval.*

- e) Revenue Savings Projects  
Arising from the resolutions of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> October 2014 a report on proposals aimed at mitigating the pressures on resources and the precept were received and noted. There was discussion as to the merits for the installation of solar panels at the Council's premises.

**RESOLVED**

*That, with the addition of investigating solar panels, the recommendations included in the report be approved.*

- f) To receive recommendations from Committees.
  - i) Community Development Committee – review of Community Grant budget. A report on the reason on the increase of Community Grant applications, as requested at the last meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee, was received and noted.

**RESOLVED**

- a) *For a recommendation in the 2015/2016 Estimates for the base budget for Community Grants to be increased by £1,000 to £6,000.*
- b) *That an item be included on the next agenda of the Community Development Committee with regard to the value of individual grants.*
- c) *That a one-off virement of £600 from budget heading 'contingency' (125) to the 'Community Grants' (619) be approved.*

g) Draft Estimates 2015/2016

**RECOMMENDED**

i) *For a 2.2% increase in the Council Tax Band Payments*

ii) *That the Estimates for 2015/2016 be adopted at the next meeting of the Full Council on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and a Net Precept of £477,804.00 (excluding the Council Tax Support Grant payable to the Town Council of £49,786.00) be requested.*

**20. Termination of the Meeting**

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 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.