

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 11th JUNE 2015 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Shabbir Aslam, Roger Berrington (substituting for Amanda Hack), Sam Maxwell, Stuart Maxwell, Phil Moitt, Chetan Parmar (substituting for Alex DeWinter), Gary Sanders, Robert Waterton and Bill Wright.

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

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

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alex DeWinter and Amanda Hack.

2. Disclosures of Interest

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

3. 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 was one member of the public present at the meeting, Mr. John Dodd. Mr. Dodd raised his concern, and that of the Braunstone Heritage Archive Group, that the County Council potentially would reject the Town Council's proposals for Braunstone Town Library. He added that the Group fully supported the work of the Town Council in seeking to provide a long term solution acceptable to all that would see the continuation of Library Services. Mr. Dodd concluded that the Braunstone Heritage Archive Group would meet to discuss how it could assist the Town Council in this respect.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held 16th April 2015

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th April 2015 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

5. Library / Customer Service Shop Update

The Committee received an update on progress with the Town Council's proposals for a Combined Public Services Facility and to consider further actions as necessary (item 5 on the agenda).

It was noted that the date of Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet meeting to discuss the Future Strategy for Libraries was 16th June 2015 (not 9th July as stated in the circulated report).

RESOLVED

1. that, should Blaby District Council wish to progress the model in respect of the Customer Service Shop and Social Inclusion activities, the Executive Officer and Town Clerk liaise with Blaby District Council on further detailed arrangements for the model, including service levels and standards, the mechanism for identifying and reviewing the costs of the service and the contributions made by each organisation and submit the final proposal to Policy & Resources Committee for determination;
2. that, in the event of 1 above, the Town Council's budget allocation for the Combined Public Services Facility proposal be allocated to funding the agreement with Blaby District Council for the Customer Service Shop;
3. that an assessment of options for Town Council to run Braunstone Town Library, including an assessment of risks, be presented to Policy & Resources Committee on 20th August 2015;
4. that legal advice be sought in connection with the property lease in the context of the decisions being made by both the landlord and the tenant and that this advice be reported to a future meeting of Policy & Resources Committee; and
5. that the Leader of the Council write to the County Council Lead Member expressing the Town Council's disappointment that officers had proposed to Cabinet that the Town Council's proposals not be accepted and urging the Cabinet to reconsider and explore the opportunities further with the Town Council.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To enable those Council's which have a wider vision to direct resources to create community cohesion and social inclusion through maximising access to services, to ensure that the systems, processes and agreements would be made to avoid unnecessary delay.*
2. *To ensure that funding was allocated where a social and community need had been identified.*
3. *To consider different outline models and fully assess the risks and opportunities of the options.*
4. *To consider options for the lease to ensure that any future agreement on the Library service could be implemented.*
5. *To ensure that Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet were made aware that the County Council had a long term financial commitment under a property lease and that the proposed model made efficiency savings to the strategic partners in excess of 50% by utilising current commitments in a partnership framework which would provide for longer opening hours and further social inclusion initiatives.*

6. Parks & Open Spaces – Unauthorised Traveller Encampments

The Committee received an update on actions following unauthorised traveller encampments on the Council's parks and open spaces and considered further preventative measures (item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that new substantial gates with "anti tamper" locks be installed on the vehicular entrance gates to Mosssdale Meadows and Holmfield Park;
2. that an assessment of simple measures for preventing unauthorised encampments be undertaken and included within the Winter Works Programme for 2015/2016; and
3. that measures to prevent unauthorised encampments be factored into future Capital Improvement Projects in respect of the Council's parks, open spaces and car parks.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To take reasonable preventative measures in accordance with advice offered by the Multi-Agency Traveller Unit, recognising the importance of not turning Parks and Open Spaces into fortresses and that a discretionary power existed under Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 for the Police to direct people to leave land providing certain criteria was met, which in the case of land used for public recreation and play was covered by the criteria under the Act.*
2. *To enable possible preventative measures to be assessed on a cost benefit basis and installed as part of a wider programme of parks improvements and maintenance.*
3. *To ensure that future designs met high standards and best practice while reasonably preventing unauthorised encampments.*

7. Report of the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee

The Leader of the Council and the Executive Officer & Town Clerk gave a verbal report to the Committee on the meeting of the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee which was held immediately prior to the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

Review of Systems of Internal Control and Management of Risk

The Sub-Committee having received a report confirming action taken in completing a review of the systems of internal control in line with Section 2 of the Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2015 were confident that to the best of their knowledge and belief, there were sound systems of internal control and management of risk.

External Audit 2013/2014

The Sub-Committee noted that the Council's External Audit had been completed by Grant Thornton UK LLP on 5th September 2014 and an unqualified opinion had been given.

Internal Auditor's Report for the Year Ended 31st March 2015

The Sub-Committee received the Internal Auditor's Report and associated Improvement Action Plan and approved the recommendations for improvement.

Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2015/2016

The Sub-Committee re-appointed North West Leicestershire District Council as the Internal Auditor for 2015/2016.

Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2015

The Sub-Committee received the Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2015 and recommended approval to this Committee and to the Full Council meeting on 25th June 2015.

8. Internal Auditor's Report for the Year Ended 31st March 2015

The Committee received the Internal Auditor's Report and associated Improvement Action Plan in respect of the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2015 (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the observations of the Internal Audit be noted and that the recommendations for improvement, as set out in the Improvement Action Plan, be adopted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the observations of the Internal Audit would be addressed with appropriate and balanced measures.

9. Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2015

The Committee received the Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2015 in order to determine whether to recommend approval to the Full Council meeting on 25th June 2015 (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2015 be adopted.

Reason for Decision

The Committee received a report from the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee, who had carried out an assessment of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit process and the Council's systems of internal control and risk management, and concluded that there were sound systems of internal control.

10. Access to Meridian Leisure via Mossdale Meadows

The Committee considered the practicality, merits and mitigating works for provision of a pedestrian access from Mossdale Meadows to Meridian Leisure Park (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that no further action be taken by the Town Council at present in relation to potential mitigating measures for a gateway from Meridian Leisure into Mossdale Meadows;
2. that the Town Council promote and raise awareness of any Planning Application by Meridian Leisure and its consideration by the Plans & Environment Committee; and
3. that subject to publication by Meridian Leisure of their planning proposals, a future meeting of Policy & Resources Committee consider the mitigating measures being offered and determine whether the Town Council as the land owner could permit access onto Mossdale Meadows.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The circumstances for the Town Council have not changed and therefore there was currently no justification for the Town Council to be initiating change.*
2. *To ensure that the merits of any variation to planning consent were considered and consulted upon on their own merits through the normal arrangements for responding to planning applications.*
3. *To ensure that mitigating measures could be discussed between the neighbouring land owners in the context of the merits of the scheme having been separately consulted upon and determined.*

11. Annual Satisfaction Survey

The Committee considered a proposed annual satisfaction survey for circulation with the Annual Report for 2014/2015 (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that, subject to the overall opinion and general comments section being the last section of the satisfaction element, the Annual Survey as submitted be approved for circulation.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that satisfaction with the Council's services was measured in order to identify where there was need for improvement and to ascertain general opinion of the Town Council's current initiatives.

12. Thorpe Astley Community Centre - Medical Rooms

The Committee received an update on progress for opening the Medical Facility at Thorpe Astley Community Centre and considered whether the Town Council needed to take any further action (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that a letter be sent from the Leader of the Council to Tim Sacks, Chief Operating Officer for East Leicestershire CCG, thanking him for his statement, expressing concern about the length of time being taken to establish GP services from Thorpe Astley Community Centre and urging him to give priority to implementation.

Reason for Decision

There was considerable frustration among Councillors and the community at the length of time being taken by the NHS to establish an outreach GP surgery at Thorpe Astley Community Centre, despite there being an identified need for such services and five years having elapsed since the original agreement was reached with the NHS to provide services at the Centre.

13. Shakespeare Park - Improvement & Development

The Committee considered the next stages in the Improvement and Development Project for Shakespeare Park (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the scope of the Improvement & Development project be as set out in the Capital Programme;
2. that membership of the Working Group be extended to a representative from Shakespeare Park Bowling Club and Braunstone Junior Girls Football;
3. that further representatives contributing towards the Tennis and Play facilities be identified and invited to participate as appropriate; and
4. that a report be submitted to the first meeting of the Working Group setting out options and proposing timings and funding sources for the project.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To clearly define the scope of the project.*
2. *To ensure that key stakeholders were engaged and could contribute ideas to the scheme.*
3. *To identify potential partners who could assist with developing proposals for improvements to the tennis and play facilities.*
4. *To ensure that the Group have the necessary information to assist with discussion and develop deliverable proposals.*

14. Electoral Review of Leicestershire - Consultation on Division Patterns

The Committee received and considered whether to respond to the consultation on division patterns for Leicestershire County Council and also whether to give delegated authority to the Executive Officer and Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader to respond to the consultation on draft recommendations given the consultation was scheduled for a period when the Committee would not meet (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that there was no specific response to the consultation on Division boundaries at this stage; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to respond on behalf of the Town Council to the Electoral Commission's draft recommendations.

Reasons for Decision

1. *There was limited scope for changes to the Division boundaries, potentially any change to the Division boundary which cut through the Parish would involve adjustments along Parish and District Ward boundaries; therefore, there was limited input the Town Council could provide at this stage of the process.*
2. *To allow for the Town Council to submit a response to the draft recommendations, avoiding the requirement to call an extraordinary meeting.*

15. Blaby District Scrutiny

The Committee received Blaby District Council's Annual Report of Scrutiny Commission 2014-15 and considered whether it had any suggestions for Blaby District Scrutiny in the forthcoming year (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that Blaby District Council's Annual Report of Scrutiny Commission 2014-15 be noted; and that no items be suggested for Blaby District Council's Scrutiny Work Programme.

Reason for Decision

There were currently no new significant issues identified by the Town Council which needed further investigation by scrutiny.

16. Signatories List

The Committee considered updating the Council's Co-operative No.1 and No.2 Bank accounts signatories list to include all current members of the Council and to remove those names who are no longer members of the Council.

RESOLVED

1. that Mrs. Jo Fox and Mr. Neville Chamberlain be removed from the account signatories list; and
2. that all current Town Councillors be authorised to become signatories for the Council's Co-operative No.1 and No.2 Bank accounts.

Reasons for Decision

1. *Mrs. Fox and Mr Chamberlain were no longer members of the Council.*
2. *To enable payments to be authorised avoiding unnecessary delay.*

17. Franklin Park Community Orchard Pathway

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was in the public interest that the press/public be temporary excluded and instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply).
Reason for exception – Commercial Interests.

The Committee considered quotes for upgrading the standard of the pathway through Franklin Park Community Orchard/Meadow (item 17 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the quote from Kingsway Carpentry, Joinery and Building Ltd to install a mill waste path through Franklin Park Community Orchard be accepted and arrangements be made for the works to be carried out as detailed in the specification.

Reason for Decision

Kingsway Carpentry, Joinery and Building Ltd offer a suitable solution for a competitive price.

18. Millfield Hall Roof Refurbishment

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was in the public interest that the press/public be temporary excluded and be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply).
Reasons for exception – Commercial Interests.

The Committee considered tenders received in order to select a preferred supplier for the refurbishment of Millfield Hall roof (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the tender from G Cooper (Wolverhampton) Ltd to undertake the Millfield Hall roof refurbishment as detailed in the tender specification be accepted, subject to satisfactory references; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to liaise with the successful contractor, award the contract and determine the detailed timings and arrangements for the works.

Reason for Decision

1. *The tender from G Cooper (Wolverhampton) Ltd represented best value and the contractor demonstrated in their submission ability to undertake the works to the required standard. References would be obtained to independently verify their standard of work.*
2. *To allow flexibility for the work to be carried out in conjunction with other refurbishment works on the Hall minimising disruption to service users.*

19. LED Lighting

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was in the public interest that the press/public be temporary excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reasons for exception – Commercial Interests.*

The Committee considered a scope of works, timetable, funding and selection of contractor for the installation of LED lighting in the Council's Community Centres and whether to commission LED lighting for car parks and footways as part of the County Council's rollout of LED Lighting (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the tender from Voltacon power conversion & lighting to install LED lighting at the Council's Community Centres be accepted;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to liaise with the successful contractor, award the contract and determine the detailed timings and arrangements for the works;
3. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to commission installation of LED lighting at the Council's Car Parks and Footpaths through Leicestershire County Council's LED Street Lighting project (subject to the cost being within the delegated spending limits set out in the Financial Regulations); and
4. that conversion to LED lighting at the Council's sports pavilions be considered as part of relevant Capital Projects for the respective sites.

Reason for Decision

1. The tender from Voltacon power conversion & lighting represented best value and the contractor demonstrated in their submission ability to undertake the work to the required standard.
2. To allow flexibility for the work to be carried out minimising disruption to service users.
3. To enable the Town Council to make economies on installation costs through a larger contract, which would meet the requirements of the County Council Street Lighting Service, who manage and maintain our Car Park and Footpath lighting.
4. It would be more efficient on the installation cost/ongoing saving ratio to undertake the work at the Pavilions as part of wider Capital refurbishments.

20. Organisation Review

RESOLVED that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was in the public interest that the press/public be temporary excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reasons for exception – Personal Information / Legal Advice.*

The Committee received proposals for a review of the Organisation's staffing structure, including terms and conditions of employment, to be circulated for consultation (item 20 on the agenda).

The Organisation Review Panel met on 2nd June 2015 to consider the draft proposals in detail.

RESOLVED

1. that Review objective 11 "*With the exception of growth funding for establishing the living wage and including the proposed staffing budget for the combined Library/Customer Services Shop, the proposals should be met from within the existing staffing budget*" be deleted;
2. that the Organisation Review Proposals, enclosed as an Annex be approved for consultation with staff and Councillors and that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to undertake the consultation;
3. that the Organisation Review Panel be established as the Organisation Review Sub-Committee and be given delegated authority to consider and adopt the final post consultation proposal for implementation; and
4. that the revised timetable for the review be as follows:
 - prior to 12noon on Monday 15th June, meetings with individual staff where their current post would be significantly affected by the proposals;
 - by Monday 15th June at 12noon, proposals circulated to all staff and Councillors;
 - minimum Consultation Period, including consultation meetings with staff: Monday 15th June (12noon) – Monday 6th July 12noon;
 - Week Commencing 13th July – Organisation Review Sub-Committee meets to consider and adopt final proposal;
 - 27th July – 7th August – Slotting in arrangements and internal interviews (if appropriate);
 - August – External Interviews and recruitment.
 - September – allocation of contracted hours and shift rotas for affected employees.

Reasons for Decision

1. *While the cost at implementation stage was lower than the current structure, re-evaluation of posts based on organisation need resulted in a potential increase of £17,640 in costs over subsequent years.*
2. *To fully engage staff and Councillors with the context for the proposed changes and to seek views on alternative models, which complied with the objectives and to enable staff and Councillors to identify any issues or gaps in the proposals which may impact upon implementation.*
3. *To enable the sub-group established to oversee the review to make the final decision post consultation avoiding unnecessary delay or the need to call an extra-ordinary meeting of Policy & Resources Committee.*
4. *To enable the Review to go ahead with clear and realistic timescales to avoid any unnecessary delay with implementation.*

21. Equality Act 2010 – Reasonable Adjustments for Councillors

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 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reasons for exception – Personal Information.*

The Committee considered a request from a Councillor for reasonable adjustments, in accordance with Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010, to enable that Councillor to undertake duties.

RESOLVED that the request from a Councillor (details of which were held on confidential files filed with these minutes) for reasonable adjustments, enabling a claim for reimbursement of travel costs to and from Town Council meetings, training and briefing sessions, in accordance with Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010, be approved.

Reason for Decision

The Councillor concerned had a health condition which prevented independent travel to and from evening meetings, training and briefing sessions and was considered as a request for reasonable adjustments under Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010. By providing reimbursement of the original cost, the Town Council was able to act under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 which gave the Council the power "to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions".

22. Termination of the Meeting

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

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 _____ (CHAIR)

DATED _____