

**BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY 31st OCTOBER 2019 AT 7.30PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Councillor Amanda Hack (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Sam Maxwell, Darshan Singh and Robert Waterton.

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

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

**27. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shabbir Aslam and Bill Wright.

**28. Disclosures of Interest**

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

**29. 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 were no members of the public at the meeting.

**30. Minutes of the Meeting held 22nd August 2019**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

**31. Shakespeare Park - Improvement & Development**

The Committee received a progress report on the commencement of the contract for delivering the pavilion and site improvement works. The Committee also received an update on interest and repayment rates for Public Works Loans (item 5 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that the funding position set out in the report, including the impact of the interest rate rise for the Public Works Loans as detailed in the report and at Appendix 1, be noted;
2. that a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Housing,

- Communities and Local Government, the local MP, NALC, LRALC and any other relevant organisation or office holder seeking a review of the decision to increase the interest rates on Public Works Loans and requesting that the interest on borrowing for community/sports facility projects and/or for Town/Parish Councils be reduced to previous levels (as applied up to 8th October 2019);
3. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to submit an application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to vary the terms of the borrowing approval, should outstanding funding applications be successful;
  4. that the anticipated costs for the site and pavilion improvements following the tender uplift assessment, as detailed in the report, be approved;
  5. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, to liaise with the Council's Architect and Surveyor:
    - (a) to finalise revisions to the drainage specification and layout,
    - (b) determine whether any specifications could be modified, and
    - (c) to make technical modifications to ensure that the planning conditions were discharged; and
  6. that the revised timescales for the project, attached at Appendix 2, including the signing of the contract to commence site and pavilion works, be approved.

#### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *To enable appropriate funding options to be assessed and sought to ensure the long term financial stability and sustainability of the project.*
2. *An exemption had been applied to Local Authority Borrowing for building Social Housing. Community and Sports facility projects, especially those provided by Parish/Town Councils, should also be exempt in order not to impede delivery of new and improved community and sporting facilities. It was understood that borrowing to invest in commercial activity was different.*
3. *To enable the allocation of funds from successful grant applications to the first stage of the project and to provide for the balance of the borrowing to be utilised for the second stage of the project.*
4. *To recognise that material and service costs had increased since the tenders were prepared in March 2018.*
5. *To allow detailed arrangements for the work to be finalised, enabling flexibility and minimising disruption to service users, and for contracts to be signed.*
6. *To ensure that the project, which would enable an increase in sport participation and improve recreation and play facilities in a Ward which had high rankings of multiple deprivation across a range of domains, including income, employment and education and had the worst proportion of overweight or obese children in the County of Leicestershire, moved to the delivery stage in the autumn of 2019.*

### **32. Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning**

The Committee received a report setting out the context for the Council's medium term priorities and financial planning (item 6 on the agenda).

#### **RESOLVED**

1. that it be noted that the Council was unlikely to need the funding allocated in the budget in the current financial year towards the repayment of the Public Works Loan for the Shakespeare Park Improvements and therefore this could be factored into the income/expenditure projections for 2020/21;
2. that the report be updated to include the payment savings from Public Works Loans which mature during the projected period;

#### **THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

3. that the current projections based on known financial pressures identified in the report be noted;
4. that the Council's Mission Statement and the Objectives for each Service Area be used as the basis for calculating the annual budget and any external funding sought; and
5. that the Council's General Reserves be used to invest in infrastructure and assets and in the development and remodelling of services, including the Town Council's operations.

#### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *£21,306 was allocated in 2019/2020 to fund the repayments on borrowing for Shakespeare Park; however, since the loan had not been drawn down and repayments would be due in May and November, no repayments would be made during the current financial year offsetting the projected £18,000 budget deficit.*
2. *Three loans would mature during the plan period, amounting to a total ongoing expenditure saving of £15,779, which could be reinvested into the Council's reserves and Capital Projects.*
3. *To provide a foundation for preparing budget estimates for 2019/2020 and beyond.*
4. *To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending given the future financial uncertainties.*
5. *To ensure the highest possible standards within the resources available in the future.*

### **33. Revenue Savings Projects 2020/2021**

The Committee considered savings to meet projected increases in expenditure and to enable continuous improvement (item 7 on the agenda).

#### **RESOLVED**

1. that progress be noted with the implementation the capital investment projects which generate revenue savings, as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report; and

2. that the recommended savings as detailed in the table under Revenue Savings in the report be included in the budget preparations for 2020/2021.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. To note that those which had been implemented had produced predicted savings and that there was a plan in place for the implementation of the other projects identified.
2. To enable the 2020/2021 Financial Strategy ongoing savings to be delivered.

**34. Assessment of income and expenditure against budgets**

The Committee received a report setting out the cost of utility bills and 5 years of comparative income figures for Room Hires, ahead of the 2020/2021 budget setting process (item 8 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted and that the figures be used as part of the analysis for recommending budgets for 2020/21.

*Reason for Decision*

*To ensure that budget setting was realistic and expenditure and income against budgets would be achievable.*

**35. Insurance Renewal**

The Committee considered renewal of the Council's Corporate Insurance for 3 years (item 9 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the agreement with the Council's current Insurance Broker be renewed to 31st October 2022 and the terms of the agreement, as set out in Appendix 2, be approved.

*Reason for Decision*

*To ensure that arrangements were in place to provide a competitive insurance quote and to ensure that the Council's assets were protected from underinsurance.*

**36. Park & Open Spaces Winter Works Programme 2019/2020**

The Committee considered items for inclusion on the Winter Works Programme for 2019/2020 for the Councils Parks, Open Spaces and Grounds (item 10 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that the Winter Works Programme 2019/2020, attached at Appendix 1, be approved; and
2. that Franklin Park be the chosen park/open space to be maintained in the Winter Works Programme 2019/2019.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. To ensure that parks and open spaces in Braunstone Town would be maintained to a high level.
2. Work was required to the play area safety surfaces, pond area and a tree survey would need to be undertaken on Franklin Park.

**37. Update on Thorpe Astley Culvert and legal transfer of Thorpe Astley Park**

The Committee received an update on the current position with Thorpe Astley Culvert and the legal transfer of Thorpe Astley Park (item 11 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that an update report on progress with Thorpe Astley Culvert be submitted to the Committee in February 2020.

*Reason for Decision*

*To keep a watch on progress with implementing the Town Council's desire to complete the transfer of Thorpe Astley Park, a significant asset that should be owned by the Town Council, without further delays and additional cost.*

**38. Tennis Court Improvements**

The Committee considered arrangements for installing access gates and a bookings system for the Town Council's Tennis Courts (item 12 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that the potential to install the Lawn Tennis Association's tennis courts venue management system and gate access technology at the Town Council's managed Tennis Courts be supported in principle; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to obtain quotes, seek funding and enter into technical discussions to devise a scheme, particularly for Thorpe Astley Tennis Courts, for consultation and further consideration.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *To enable a more structured use of the tennis courts facilities and to ensure that funds were available to maintain the standard of the courts in future years.*
2. *To explore the viability of introducing a venue management system and gate access technology at Thorpe Astley Tennis Courts and to access external funding towards the cost of installation.*

**39. Library - Management and Consultation Arrangements**

The Committee set out a governance model for the Library Service to ensure that the Council delivers a better and more responsive Library service in Braunstone Town (item 13 on the agenda).

## RESOLVED

1. that the Governance and Consultation Arrangements for the Library Service, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved, subject to the inclusion of the Chair of Community Development Committee on the Library Service Consultation Group, as the chair of the group (with another Councillor being able to substitute to cover absence); and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Community Development Committee, to make amendments to the role, function and membership of the Library Service Consultation Group.

### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *To provide a forum for Councillors, staff and volunteers in developing future Library provision and ensuring a better and more responsive service.*
2. *To ensure that the Group could be refocussed in the light of experience in order that it remained productive and fit for purpose.*

## 40. **Adoption of Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding and Protection Policy**

The Committee confirmed the adoption of the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding and Protection Policy following consultation (item 14 on the agenda).

## RESOLVED

1. that the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding and Protection Policy, incorporating the amendments following consultation, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and adopted on Monday 4th November 2019; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to update references in the Policy to reflect changes in legislation, policy, organisation structure, roles and responsibilities and service provision.

### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *To ensure that the Town Council's safeguarding procedures continued to be fit for purpose, especially in the context of taking over responsibility for the management of Braunstone Town Library.*
2. *To ensure that the references included in the Policy were kept up to date in a timely manner so that the document was an easy and reliable reference document for all safeguarding related matters.*

#### **41. Adoption of Volunteer Management Policy**

The Committee confirmed the adoption of the Volunteer Management Policy following consultation (item 15 on the agenda).

#### **RESOLVED**

1. that the Volunteer Management Policy, incorporating the amendment following consultation, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and adopted on Monday 4th November 2019; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to update references in the Policy to reflect changes in legislation, policy, organisation structure, roles and responsibilities and service provision.

#### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *To ensure that the Town Council had clear and transparent policies in relation to volunteers, especially in the context of taking over responsibility for the management of Braunstone Town Library.*
2. *To ensure that the references included in the Policy were kept up to date in a timely manner so that the document was an easy and reliable reference document for all volunteering safety matters.*

#### **42. Complaints Monitoring**

The Committee received details of formal complaints dealt with and determined as a result whether policy or procedural changes would be required to ensure that future reoccurrence was minimised (item 16 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### *Reason for Decision*

*The Procedure by including all complaints, whether minor or major, simple or complex, and providing for the informal stage and formal stage to deal with these as appropriate results in complaints being resolved and/or closed effectively.*

#### **43. External Audit 2018/2019**

The Committee noted that the External Audit was completed on 18th September 2019 and no matters were raised concerning the Town Council's accounts and governance arrangements for the year ended 31st March 2019 (item 17 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that it be noted that the External Audit for 2018/2019 financial year was completed on 18th September 2019.

*Reason for Decision*

*An unqualified opinion was given by the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP, on the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018/2019.*

**44. Blaby District Parish Councils Group**

The Committee determined arrangements for attending and liaising with the Blaby District Parish Councils Group and to receive feedback (item 18 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that Councillor Robert Waterton be authorised to attend the Blaby District Parish Councils Group to represent Braunstone Town Council, with any Councillor being able to substitute at Councillor Robert Waterton's request in his absence; and
2. that a standing item be included on the Policy & Resources Committee agenda to enable feedback from the meetings to be given and issues to be identified to be raised.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. To enable the Town Council to be represented at a networking group for local parish councillors.
2. To ensure that the Town Council was aware of current issues and could share its current issues with local parish council representatives.

**45. End of Quarter Financial Position - Cashbook and Reserves**

The Committee received a summary of the Council's Cash and Reserves for the period 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2019 (item 19 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the end of quarter financial position be noted.

*Reason for Decision*

There were no issues of concern with management of the Council's Finances.

**46. Financial Comparisons**

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2019 (item 20 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

*Reason for Decision*

*There were no issues of concern with income and expenditure against the budget for 2019/2020.*



**47. Approval of Accounts**

The Committee considered payments from 14th August 2019 until 22nd October 2019 (item 21 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 14th August 2019 until 22nd October 2019 be approved.

*Reason for Decision*

*To authorise payments in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations.*

**48. Improvements to Walking and Cycle Routes**

**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 temporarily excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reason for exception – Legal Advice.*

The Committee considered supporting and facilitating proposals for improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes (item 22 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that the scheme set out in the report in relation to Mosssdale Meadows be approved in principle and consent be given to Blaby District Council to include the proposals in bids for funding;
2. that assuming the funding bids were successful, prior to the scheme being implemented a full report be submitted to the Committee setting out:
  - (a) the full details of the scheme in relation to Mosssdale Meadows, including the details of the legal agreements and the specifications for the works, and
  - (b) details of the wider scheme across Braunstone Town, including how scheme would provide safe routes; and
3. that it be recommended to Blaby District Council that safety improvements be investigated at the following locations as part of the scheme:
  - (a) Braunstone Lane, Shakespeare Drive, Braunstone Avenue junction, and
  - (b) at least one of the Narborough Road South subways.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *To support in principle the proposals and to enable Blaby District Council to develop the plans further and to secure the necessary funding to deliver the schemes for the wider benefit of residents and businesses.*
2. *To ensure that the legal and technical aspects of the Mosssdale Meadows part of the scheme were determined and to enable the Town*

- Council to input into the wider scheme as a consultee.*
3. *To provide safe walking and cycling routes between Braunstone Town/ Lubbethorpe and Braunstone Park/Leicester and National Cycle Route 6.*

**49. Conversion of Car Park and Footpath Lighting to LED**

**RESOLVED** *That in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is 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). Reason for exception – Commercial Interest.*

The Committee considered conversion of the Town Council's Car Park and Footpath Lighting to LED (item 23 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that the quotation received from supplier A be accepted; and
2. that the work to replace the lamps be undertaken as soon as mutually agreeable with the supplier.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *The quotation received from supplier A provided value for money.*
2. *To ensure that savings on electricity consumption and carbon footprint be reduced as soon as practically possible.*

**50. Revisions to Thorpe Astley Pre-School Agreement**

**RESOLVED** *That in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is 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). Reason for exception – Commercial Interest.*

The Committee considered a request from the current Thorpe Astley Pre-School provider for revisions to the agreement in accordance with clause 13 of the conditions of contract (item 24 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the request of Pop Up Care Clubs Ltd, for a review under clause 13 of the Early Years Childcare Contract at Thorpe Astley Community Centre, to reduce their hours and fixed sum payments from August 2019 to July 2020 be approved as set out in their request of 18th October 2019.

*Reason for Decision*

*To recognise that there was not sufficient interest in the organisation providing after school and school holidays provision and the revised fixed sum payment was pro-rata to the revised hours of operation.*

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: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_