

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 11th JUNE 2020 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Councillor Amanda Hack (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Shabbir Aslam, Sam Maxwell, Phil Moitt, Tracey Shepherd, 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.

89. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Imran Uddin.

90. Disclosures of Interest

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

91. 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.

92. Minutes of the Meeting held 30th April 2020

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30th April 2020 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record; subject to the following amendment to Minute 88, Staffing and Job Retention, following the resolution: "Councillor Robert Waterton requested that his vote against the motion be recorded".

93. Business Continuity – Covid-19 Incident Response and Recovery

The Committee reported on actions taken under the Business Continuity Plan in response to the Covid-19 incident, including recovery actions (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the decisions and actions of the Incident Response Leadership Team, notes of the meeting on 12th May 2020 attached at Appendix 1, and notes of the meeting on 3rd June 2020, circulated and filed, be endorsed and approved;
2. that decisions taken by the Executive Officer & Town Clerk under the urgency delegated authority provision, as set out at paragraph 1 in Specific Delegations Section of the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers, attached at Appendix 2, be endorsed and approved;
3. that the expenditure decisions made by the Executive Officer & Town Clerk in response to the Covid-19 incident, attached at Appendix 3, be endorsed and approved; and
4. that the outline arrangements for:
 - (a) Recovery Plans,
 - (b) Recovery Actions: Council Services, and
 - (c) Post-Recovery Plans,as set out in the respective paragraphs in the report and attached at Appendix 4, along with the following comments of the Committee:
 - (d) outdoor play areas be included in the Outline Plans for Phased Reopening of Services (circulated to Councillors for comment and filed),
 - (e) Privacy Notices would need reviewing to ensure compliance with NHS Track and Trace requests, and
 - (f) consideration be given to an appointment system for the Library, similar to one being considered by the County Council,be endorsed and implemented in detail by the Executive Officer & Town Clerk through the Incident Response Leadership Team.

Reasons for Decision

1. *In accordance with the Council's Business Continuity Plan, the Council's Policy & Resources Committee should be convened to consider and receive a report on the action taken.*
2. *To receive a report on the action taken, which under subsection b of the urgency delegated authority provision as set out at paragraph 1 in Specific Delegations Section of the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers, should be made to the next meeting of the Council or relevant Standing Committee, as appropriate.*
3. *To receive details of expenditure made under paragraph 11.1 of the Council's Financial Regulations, by the Executive Officer & Town Clerk as an exception in the case of urgency.*
4. *In accordance with the Council's Business Continuity Plan, to consider the options available for ongoing management of the incident and restoring the Council's Services, including determining and implementing recovery plans.*

94. Covid-19 Incident – Fixed Term Amendments to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Committee considered, for recommendation to Council, fixed term amendments in the form of an addendum to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to take account of the circumstances resulting from the Covid-19 Incident (item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. that a fixed term addendum to the Standing Orders, attached at Appendix 1, be approved until Friday 7th May 2021 unless superseded, amended or terminated earlier by Council or if the Secretary of State supersedes, amends or terminates the Regulations; and
2. that a fixed term addendum to the Financial Regulations, attached at Appendix 2, be approved until the May 2021 Annual Council Meeting unless superseded, amended or terminated earlier by Council.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To facilitate remote meetings, in response to the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions, in a clear and transparent way.*
2. *To provide alternative ways of approving and making payments in response to the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions.*

95. Covid-19 Community Response Coordination

The Committee received an update on the Council's coordination role for the Braunstone Town Community Response Scheme (item 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the current position with the coordination of the Community Response support network in response to the Covid-19 incident, as set out in the report and at Appendix 1, be endorsed; and
2. that the focus for the Future Direction of the Scheme, as set out in the relevant section of the report, including responsibility being allocated to Community Development Committee, be approved; subject to the inclusion of the following for consideration:
 - (a) whether volunteers should be offered testing if supporting residents self-isolating following NHS Track and Trace advice, and
 - (b) how those residents who have been shielding could be supported once the official shielding period ends.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that residents who needed help were put in touch with a friendly volunteer in their community, while minimising risk and ensuring safeguarding measures were in place, particularly safeguards preventing financial abuse.*
2. *To ensure that the scheme remained responsive to changes in circumstances and demand as well as meeting the needs of the*

community in the medium term.

96. Covid-19 Corporate / Service Priorities and Continuity

The Committee reviewed the Council's Corporate / Service Priorities during the Covid-19 Incident, including a draft timetable for gradually recovering non-essential business, to ensure service continuity (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. That, following review, the "Essential Business and Priorities", as set out in the relevant section of the report, which were approved by the Committee on 30th April 2020, be confirmed;
2. that, following review, the current "Incident" which activated the Business Continuity – Incident Response to Covid-19, which was extended beyond 30th June 2020 to 31st August 2020, by the Committee on 30th April 2020, remain unchanged;

THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

3. that the Schedule of Meetings, attached at Appendix 1, be adopted; subject to the start time of Council meetings during 2020 being 6pm.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To meet the requirements to respond to the impact of Covid-19 in terms of delivering corporate and service responsibilities, recovery of services, health and safety requirements, priority projects and supporting the coordination and development of the Community Response.*
2. *Due to the current uncertainty and potential impact on the Council's services, particularly facilities available for hire, and the work involved in managing the recovery process.*
3. *To support the recovery of the Council's non-essential business, while recognising the ongoing risk that normal business may continue to be interrupted by Covid-19 and the associated restrictions and response.*

97. Shakespeare Park - Improvement & Development

The Committee received a progress report on the commencement of the contract for delivering the pavilion and site improvement works. To receive an update on interest and repayment rates for Public Works Loans. To review the outline plan for the playground and tennis courts improvements (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that progress with the *Commencement of the Contract* as set out in the relevant section of the report be noted;
2. that the funding update, including the interest and repayment rates for Public Works Loans, be noted;
3. that the delays to the schedule for commencing the improvements to the playground and tennis courts, as set out in the *Playground and Tennis Courts improvements* section of the report, be noted; and that

- detailed proposals, contract specifications and timetables for tenders, consultation and works be submitted to Policy & Resources Committee, scheduled for 20th August 2020; and
4. that the revised timescales for the project, attached at Appendix 3, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. *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, was delivered efficiently and effectively.*
2. *Appropriate funds were committed and the Committee would review the project payments and the drawing down of funds to ensure the long term financial stability and sustainability of the project.*
3. *To recognise delays to the timescales due to the necessity to focus on responding to the Covid-19 Incident and to provide revised timescales to ensure that this priority capital project was delivered.*
4. *To provide a guide for the progression of the project, which could be amended accordingly as appropriate.*

98. Thorpe Astley Tennis Courts Improvements

The Committee received the results of the consultation for installing an access gate and a bookings system at Thorpe Astley Tennis Courts and to consider whether to progress the scheme (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the installation of the access gate at Thorpe Astley tennis courts be approved;
2. that Policy & Resources Committee consider the charging structure for the hire of the courts at a future meeting; and
3. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to make minor modifications to the project where necessary.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To enable a more structured use of the tennis court facilities and to ensure that funds were available to maintain the standard of the courts in future years.*
2. *To ensure that any charging structure considers all options and provides a fair system for all residents to enjoy the facilities.*
3. *To ensure that the project could be progressed in a timely manner.*

99. Internal Audit Report 2019/2020 and Internal Audit arrangements 2020/2021

The Committee received the Internal Auditor's Report in respect of compliance with relevant procedures and controls in operation during the financial year ended 31st March 2020 and considered appointment of an Internal Auditor for 2020/2021 (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. that the observations of the Internal Audit (attached at Appendix 1 of the report) and confirmation that the Council had appropriate accounting arrangements in place for the financial year ended 31st March 2020 (attached at Appendix 2 of the report), be received and noted;
2. that the outstanding recommendations for improvement from the 2018/2019 Internal Audit, along with the proposed response, as set out in the Improvement Action Plan (attached at Appendix 3 of the report), be rolled forward and implemented by May 2021; and
3. that the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils Internal Audit Service be appointed to undertake the Town Council's Internal Audit for the Year Ending 31st March 2021.

Reasons for Decision

1. *There were no additional recommendations for improvement from the Internal Audit 2020.*
2. *To note that recommendations from the Internal Audit 2018/2019 remained to be implemented due to the Covid-19 Incident and to ensure that these would be addressed in the next twelve months.*
3. *To ensure arrangements were in place for compliance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.*

100. Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020

The Committee considered a report which set out how the Council ensured sound systems of internal control, including the management of risk and the preparation of accounting statements during the financial year ended 31st March 2020, in order to recommend to Council adoption of the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the systems of internal control and management of risk be confirmed as sound and that Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2019/20, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/2020, attached at Appendix 2 of the report, be completed, signed and submitted accordingly.

Reason for Decision

Having reviewed the control measures for each of the areas listed on the Annual Governance Statement and the assessment of risks facing the Council and associated mitigating measures, Policy & Resources Committee were confident that to the best of their knowledge and belief, with respect to

the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2020, there were sound systems of internal control and management of risk.

101. Accounting Statements 2019/2020

The Committee received the End of Year Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2020 in order to recommend to Council adoption of the Accounting Statements 2019/2020 (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that Section 2, Accounting statements 2019/20, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2020, attached at Appendix 9 of the report, be completed, signed and submitted accordingly.

Reason for Decision

Having carried out an assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's financial arrangements, the Policy & Resources Committee concluded that there were sound systems of internal control. The Internal Auditor, having reviewed the annual accounts, found the Accounting Statements to have been prepared on the correct basis and were supported by adequate audit trails to underlying records.

102. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st May 2020 (item 14 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 2020/2021.

103. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 5th February 2020 until 31st March 2020; and from 1st April 2020 until 31st May 2020 (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 5th February 2020 until 31st March 2020; and from 1st April 2020 until 31st May 2020 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

104. Staffing and Job Retention

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

The Committee reviewed the Town Council's approach to retaining Community Centres staff, given the loss of income to the service due to Covid-19 restrictions (item 16 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the Furlough Leave Scheme, including the implementation and associated arrangements, for Community Centres staff be extended until Monday 31st August 2020, as set out in the report and appendix submitted to Committee and approved on 30th April 2020 (minute 88);
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk:
 - (a) to rotate the staff between working, furlough leave, part working/part furlough leave or redeployed to support the Covid-19 Community Response or to provide cover;
 - (b) to invite staff to offer a voluntary reduction in contracted hours;
 - (c) in consultation with the Leader & Deputy Leader of the Council, to develop medium term proposals to address the impact on staffing in the event of an ongoing significant reduction in facilities hires and the associated loss of income; and
 - (d) undertake a consultation with staff, to consider the circumstances and merits of any proposed future contract changes; and
3. that a report setting out future arrangements for Centres staffing be submitted to Policy & Resources Committee, scheduled for 20th August 2020.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Council had lost a significant amount of income, due to the closure of its Facilities in response to the Covid-19 Incident; implementing Furlough Leave and amending contracts assisted the Council with its cash flow and therefore provided more time for recovery of income and a greater chance of avoiding the need to make staff redundant, terminate or not extend contracts, or reduce hours.*
2. *To enable flexibility of Centres staffing over the remainder of the current Covid-19 Incident period and to prepare detailed proposals, including undertaking a consultation, to avoid jobs being fully at risk, while maintaining service continuity and recognising that facilities income was likely to be significantly reduced in the medium term.*
3. *To fully consider the staffing implications of continued reduced facilities hires and income and to put in place arrangements to avoid, where possible, a greater number of jobs being put at risk in the medium to long term.*

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

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: _____