BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 16th JANUARY 2020 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Councillor Amanda Hack (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Sam Fox-Kennedy (substituting for Councillor Anthea Ambrose), Sam Maxwell, Phil Moitt, Darshan Singh, Imran Uddin and Robert Waterton.

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

There were four members of the public present at the meeting.

51. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anthea Ambrose and Tracey Shepherd.

52. Disclosures of Interest

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

53. 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 four members of the public at the meeting.

In respect of Item 9 on the agenda, Review of Community Centres Room Hire Arrangements, Councillor Christiane Startin-Lorent stated that the focus of Thorpe Astley Community Centre needed to be on fostering a sense of community.

Three members of the public addressed the Committee in respect of item 10 on the agenda, Six month review of the new Bar/Café Operator Contract, raising the following issues:

(a) the Pool Table, which had been in the Civic Community Lounge, and what would be the associated playing area, took up one-third of the room, which was disproportionate;
(b) the Pool Table would change the atmosphere of a small community bar in a Community Centre; and
(c) concerns that the bar was being turned into a restaurant and therefore was too busy, patrons were unable to get a seat until after 9pm and it was disruptive to other users of the Centre; it was suggested that other areas of the Centre could be utilised as a restaurant.

54. Minutes of the Meeting held 31st October 2019

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 31st October 2019 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

55. Shakespeare Park - Improvement & Development

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

The Executive Officer & Town Clerk confirmed that following the one percentage point interest rate increase, borrowing of £936,936, with a repayment period of no more than 40 years, is now 3.24%. Therefore the annual repayment is £41,957.04, an increase of £7,278.74 per annum.

RESOLVED

1. that the approach to drawing down an approved loan and the position concerning the impact of the interest rate rise for the Public Works Loans, as detailed in the report and at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, be endorsed; and
2. that the revised timescales for the project, attached at Appendix 3, including the signing of the contract to commence site and pavilion works, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To provide a plan for drawing down the loan and ensuring appropriate funds were available to fund the repayments in order to ensure the long term financial stability and sustainability of the project.*
2. *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.*

56. Council Objectives

The Committee considered the Council's Priorities and Objectives and determined whether they were relevant to address current and emerging issues faced by the Council and the community (item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the Leicestershire County Council Director of Public Health be invited to a future meeting of the Committee concerning current public health issues and initiatives to address these; and that the report of Blaby District Council Scrutiny concerning Air Quality be included as part of the agenda item;

THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

2. that the nine Town Council Priorities for 2020/2021, based on the 2019/2020 Priorities and as updated, be approved as set out in the report; and
3. that the Council Objectives set out in Appendix 1, as amended, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To acknowledge the importance of public health, particularly the impact of air quality on health, in the context of the Council's "Quality of Life Services" Priority and to understand the role the Town Council could play through its powers, responsibilities and services to improve the level of Public Health/Quality of Life in Braunstone Town.*
2. *The Council's priorities continued to be the focus for delivering a vision for local services and an environment which reached the highest possible standards, and the approach was supported by the Town's Citizens' Advisory Panel and the Council's Standing Committees.*
3. *To ensure that the Council's objectives were relevant and reflected changing issues within the community.*

57. Capital Plan 2020/2021

The Committee considered priorities and projects for 2020/2021 Capital Plan (item 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that exploring the provision of a Changing Places Toilet be included as part of the Current Civic Centre Project "Refurbishment of both sets of Toilets";

THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

2. that the Completed Projects (section a), having now been completed, be removed from the rolling programme of Capital Projects;
3. that the project due for completion (section b) be removed, assuming its completion prior to the end of the plan period, otherwise it be included on the 2020/2021 Capital Plan;
4. that the Current Projects (section c) be rolled forward on to the 2020/2021 Capital Plan; and
5. that the Proposed New Projects (section d) be added to the 2020/2021 Capital Plan.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The refurbishment of the toilets provided an opportunity to ensure that the Civic Centre toilet facilities were fully accessible.*
2. *To confirm that the projects had been completed and there was no further work outstanding.*
3. *To ensure the plan was updated accordingly reflecting progress with its delivery.*
4. *To confirm that the projects were outstanding and were still required.*
5. *To recognise the need to undertake investment and improvement as identified.*

58. Estimates for Budget and Precept 2020/2021 and beyond

The Committee considered the budget and precept for 2020/2021 and received proposed estimates for future years (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

1. that once full costs were known, an amount be earmarked in the reserves to cover the cost of gateway signage to the Town at the Parish Boundary with Lubbesthorpe and at the entrances to Thorpe Astley estate;
2. that a budget of £1,000 be included as a one-off in 2020/2021 budget for the 75th Anniversary of VE Day to provide financial support of up to £200 for each group/event;
3. that no percentage increase be applied to Community Centres, sports pitches and miscellaneous fees and charges;
4. that £9,000 be earmarked in the reserves in 2020/21 to be used to balance the general fund budget;
5. that £10,000 of the £25,000 one-off Library Transfer Grant received from Leicestershire County Council be earmarked in the reserves in 2020/21 to be used to offset the additional Library staffing costs transferred under TUPE;
6. that the Estimates for 2020/2021, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved as the Council's Budget for 2020/2021; and
7. that a Net Precept Requirement for £646,304 for the financial year 2020/2021 be submitted to Blaby District Council.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The signs would be a capital asset, the cost was likely to exceed the amounts in the annual Planning & Environment Expenditure Revenue Budget; however, the life span of the signs would be approximately 30-40 years.*
2. *To ensure appropriate financial support to enable VE Day anniversary events to be organised and to ensure their success.*
3. *Following a review of budgeted income from Room Hires and consideration by Community Development Committee and Citizens' Advisory Panel of support arrangements for community groups, Policy & Resources Committee was due to consider establishing a Panel to review in detail the community centres offer and associated hire scheme and charges.*

4. *Following the withdrawal of Council Tax Support Grant, to use reserves to protect services, while phasing the equivalent in precept increases over a period of 3-4 years to avoid any adverse impact a single large precept increase would have on residents.*
5. *To enable the Town Council to employ staff at Braunstone Town Library, as set out in its proposed service model.*
6. *To meet the Town Council's operating budgets for 2019/2020 along with funding for the Capital Plan and service pressures as identified in the report on Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning.*
7. *The precept requirement for the year being the difference between expenditure and income, calculated in accordance with Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.*

59. Review of Community Centres Room Hire Arrangements

The Committee considered setting up a Panel to consider changes to the Community Centres room hire arrangements in order to support community groups and to ensure the Centres continued to be thriving cost effective community venues (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that a Member Working Group be established to review the Council's Community Centres Service in the context of the Council's Mission, Priorities and Objectives, to analyse information concerning usage of the Town Council's Community Centres, review charges, including discounts and promoting use of facilities;
2. that the Member Working Group report its initial consideration to the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee scheduled for 23rd April 2020; and
3. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make appointments to the Member Working Group and determine whether substitutions would be permitted.

Reasons for Decision

1. To ensure the Centres remained competitive and cost effective, continued to be used by the community, fulfilled the Council's Mission, Priorities and Objectives, and that income generation was maximised.
2. To ensure that the direction the Working Group were considering was endorsed by the Committee in order that detailed work on initiatives could be undertaken.
3. To enable appointments to be made and to ensure the Working Group could undertake its business.

60. Six Month Review of the New Bar/Café Operator Contract

The Committee received a report of the Bar & Café Panel who reviewed progress with the contract to date and proposals for future improvements (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the six month review of the new Bar/Café Operator Contract, undertaken by a Panel of members on 19th December 2019 be noted;
2. that the installation of a Pool Table in the Civic Community Lounge not be permitted; and
3. that a further review of the delivery of the contract take place, the timing of the review being delegated to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

Reasons for Decision

1. *Overall, the Panel were happy with the progress made and initiatives introduced by the new contractor. The Civic Community Lounge had more activities and numbers using the space were increasing, which was positive for both the Community Centre and the sustainability of the Bar/Café Service.*
2. *The Panel recommend a 3 month trial of the Pool Table following strict conditions in light of its purchase and the consultation results. The subsequent sale of the Pool Table negated the Panel's on balance recommendation, since there was no longer a detrimental impact on the operator.*
3. *Enhancements were envisaged for the Bar/Café Facility, which included a Capital Plan item for enhancing the facilities to enable Café Services, as well as further initiatives by the Operator.*

61. Blaby District Parish Councils Group

Councillor Robert Waterton had submitted his apologies to the meeting of the Blaby District Parish Councils Group on 4th December 2019 and had submitted a summary report, which was circulated to the Committee (filed with the agenda and minutes).

Once Councillor Waterton had received the minutes of the Group meeting, these would be circulated at the following meeting of the Committee.

62. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st December 2019 (item 12 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.

63. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 23rd October 2019 until 31st December 2019 (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 23rd October 2019 until 31st December 2019 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

64. Provision of Customer & Information Services

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). *Reason for exception – Personal Information.*

The Committee received an update concerning future funding for the Joint Customer Service Shop, considered interim Library staffing arrangements, and determined how the Town Council's customer services would be delivered going forward (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that a report be submitted to a future meeting of Policy & Resources Committee setting out the future shape of the Town Council's Customer, Enquiries and Reception services; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to make interim changes to the contracted working hours for Customer & Information Service Advisors and Library Assistants in order to ensure cover for the Library on Saturdays and cover for sickness absence, leave and vacancies.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the Town Council continued to provide access to its services for residents while being flexible with resources to ensure all its services and associated costs were sustainable.*
2. *To ensure that staff resources could be effectively utilised to deliver the Council's services, in the context of Blaby services being withdrawn from the Customer Service Shop and the need to ensure adequate cover to staff the Library, particularly on Saturday mornings.*

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

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: _____