

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 30th APRIL 2020 AT 5.30PM

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

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

Also in attendance were Councillors David Di Palma, Sohan Johal and Christiane Startin-Lorent. There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

81. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Darshan Singh and Imran Uddin.

82. Disclosures of Interest

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

83. 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 three non-Committee members present and no members of the public at the meeting.

84. Minutes of the Meeting held 13th February 2020

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th February 2020 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

85. Business Continuity – Covid-19 Incident Response

The Committee received a report on the activation of the Business Continuity Plan in response to the Covid-19 incident response (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the activation of the Business Continuity Plan in response to the Covid-19 incident, including the decisions and actions of the Incident Response Leadership Team, notes of meetings attached at Appendix 1, 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 Assessment of the Impact of Levels of Restrictions on Council Services, attached at Appendix 4, be approved and adopted as a guide, subject to amendment by the Incident Response Leadership Team in response to changed circumstances, in relation to managing and providing the Council's Services during the Covid-19 restrictions.

Reasons for Decision

1. *In accordance with the Council's Business Continuity Plan, once the initial critical stages have been dealt with, the Council's Policy & Resources Committee should be convened at reasonable notice to 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 a recovery plan.*

86. Covid-19 Community Response Coordination

The Committee received details and endorsed the Council's coordination role for the Braunstone Town Community Response Scheme and set priorities for the Council's support for the scheme (item 6 on the agenda).

The Committee received a letter from local resident, Lin Burrows, requesting that the Town Council consider a leaflet drop to each household to ensure that residents who did not have access to the internet or were not able to go out would be aware of the opportunity to receive support through the Town's Covid-19 Community Response (filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED

1. that the establishment of a service to support coordination of a Community Response support network of volunteers in response to the Covid-19 incident, as set out in the report and in the notes of the Incident Response Leadership Team, attached at Appendix 1, be endorsed;
2. that the focus for the Future Direction of the Scheme, as set in the relevant section of the report, be approved;

3. that a Covid-19 Community Response Budget Heading is set up under Community Development and initially includes £5,000 with funds transferred to it from existing budget headings as set out in the report;
4. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and Chair and Vice-Chair of Community Development Committee, to refocus the aims and objectives of the Community Response, modify the roles and duties, and provide additional support and resources, where this was required to respond to identified need and changes in circumstances and regulations;
5. that Lin Burrows be thanked for her letter and advised of the work which had been undertaken on the Town's Covid-19 Community Response initiative;
6. that an A5 flyer be produced for delivery to each household in Braunstone Town, setting out details of the Town's Covid-19 Community Response, what it had to offer and how to get in touch to request or offer support; and
7. that community groups be contacted again to provide an update on the Covid-19 Community Response initiative and to request their support in continuing to distribute information to their contacts about the scheme.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that residents who needed help were put in touch with a friendly volunteer in their community.*
2. *To ensure that staff resources focussed on reaching potential volunteers and residents who needed help while minimising risk and ensuring safeguarding measures were in place, particularly safeguards preventing financial abuse.*
3. *To ensure that funds were allocated, if required to support the operation and improve the reach and effectiveness of the scheme.*
4. *To provide flexibility to ensure that the scheme remained responsive to changes in circumstances and demand as well as continuing to be fit for purpose.*
5. *To recognise the contribution of Lin Burrows' letter and to provide feedback on how the scheme had been developed and its future direction.*
6. *Given the scheme was now fully up and running, resourced, plugged into the Blaby Hub and other partner/support organisations, and with community transmission of the virus was now below one; to organise a flyer to be delivered to each household in the Town to ensure that residents who did not have access to the internet or were not able to go out would be aware of the opportunity to receive support through the Town's Covid-19 Community Response.*
7. *To ensure that community groups were kept informed and that updated information was provided to them given they would be able to share this among their contacts.*

87. Covid-19 Corporate / Service Priorities and Continuity

The Committee considered the Council's Corporate / Service Priorities during the Covid-19 Incident and ensuring service continuity (item 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the "Essential Business and Priorities", as set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved;
2. that a 12 month contract extension (for the academic year 2020/21) be offered to Pop Up Care Clubs Ltd based on the current contract terms and payment arrangements applicable to the 2019/20 academic year;
3. that Pop Up Care Clubs Ltd not be charged contract payments for the period of closure resulting from the impact of Covid-19 and associated advice and restrictions, as set out in the section "Service Continuity and Recovery Decisions" in the report;
4. that contract payments under the Bar/Café Operator Contract be deferred during closure of the Bar & Café Service and the end date of the current contract with JAAAK Ltd be extended by the number of days the service remains closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, as set out in the section "Service Continuity and Recovery Decisions" in the report; with the exception that should the Contractor wish to remain closed during any period of uncertainty and recovery, and a function was being held at the Centres, then a one-off service could be provided to the function provided this was agreed by all parties;
5. that the current "Incident" which activated the Business Continuity – Incident Response to Covid-19 be extended beyond 30th June 2020 until 31st August 2020 and reviewed by meetings of Policy & Resources Committee scheduled for June and August;
6. that Covid-19 Recovery Budget Headings be set up for each Service with funds transferred to them from existing budget headings within the same Service, as detailed in the Finance section of the report;
7. that the "Areas of Council activity to be postponed / cancelled", as set out in the relevant section of the report, be approved;
8. that the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for 14th May 2020 not be held, nor held at another time, and that the next Annual Meeting of the Council be held following the end of the period the Regulations are in force, i.e. after Friday 7th May 2021 and prior to the end of May 2021;
9. that the timetable for meetings of the Council and Policy & Resources Committee up to 31st August 2020, as set out in the report, be approved;
10. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader & Deputy Leader of the Council and any other relevant Office Holders:
 - (a) to agree temporary revisions to charges and payments made by Pop Up Care during the Covid-19 incident;
 - (b) to determine any request made by the current Bar/Café Operator to terminate the current contract due to the impact of Covid-19 and associated restrictions, including whether to wave any penalty, outstanding balances and any restrictions on the contractor reapplying for future contracts;

- (c) to cancel, postpone or hold via remote attendance the Annual Towns Meeting, scheduled for 14th May 2020, in response to legislation, regulations and/or legal advice; and
- (d) to make further amendments to the Council's Community Centres terms and conditions of hire, hire charges, including deposits and bonds, as considered necessary in response to the Covid-19 incident and associated restrictions and to facilitate business recovery.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To meet the requirements to respond to the impact of Covid-19 in terms of delivering corporate and service responsibilities, priority projects and supporting the coordination and development of the Community Response.*
2. *To ensure continuity of the Early Years provision to Thorpe Astley residents.*
3. *To support the sustainability of the Early Years/Preschool provider.*
4. *To assist the long term sustainability of the operator and the Bar/Café service and to provide for flexibility during the recovery period.*
5. *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.*
6. *To allocate funds, if required, to support the Business Continuity – Incident Recovery process for the Council's Services.*
7. *To create capacity for Essential Business and Priorities.*
8. *To comply with social distancing rules and to focus resources on Essential Business and Priorities.*
9. *To provide for the Council to transact business required by law and to oversee and monitor the Business Continuity – Covid-19 Incident Response and Recovery process.*
10. *To respond accordingly to the evolving situation without unnecessary delay.*

88. 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 consider the Town Council's approach to retaining Community Centres staff, given the loss of income to the service due to Covid-19 restrictions (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that a Furlough Leave Scheme for Community Centres staff be implemented for an initial time period to commence on Sunday 19th April 2020 until Saturday 27th June 2020, as set out in the report and in Action 1 – 10 of the Incident Response Leadership Team Meeting, held on 17th April 2020, attached at Appendix 1;
2. that in respect of being placed on the Furlough Leave Scheme and

- any subsequent or associated action applied, staff with less than 2 years' Local Government continuous service be dealt with as required by Employment Law and that any additional provisions provided for in the Council's staffing policies be suspended and therefore would not be applicable; and
3. that if an affected member of staff refuses and/or does not consent to being placed on Furlough Leave or to their contract being amended, or withdraws consent at any time, then delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council:
 - (a) to undertake a redundancy consultation where the member of staff has over two year's continuous Local Government service;
 - (b) following any redundancy consultation, to consider the merits and determine whether to make the member of staff redundant;
 - (c) to give notice to terminate contracts, including fixed term contracts, where the member of staff has less than two year's continuous Local Government service;
 - (d) to determine not to extend fixed term contract amendments, where the member of staff has more than two year's continuous Local Government service;
 - (e) to determine and agree the notice period, final salary (including redundancy payment), deductions and arrangements in respect of annual leave and accumulated/deficit hours; and
 - (f) to rotate the staff between Furlough Leave, working or redeployed to support the Covid-19 Community Response or to provide cover.

Councillor Robert Waterton requested that his vote against the motion be recorded.

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. *Due to the unprecedented nature of the Covid-19 Incident and the significant impact upon the Council's Facilities income, continuing to provide these rights and obligations to those staff with less than 2 years' continuous Local Government service in the current circumstances would place a greater number of jobs at risk in the medium to long term.*
3. *Due to the unprecedented nature of the Covid-19 Incident and the significant impact upon the Council's Facilities income, to expedite the process, while meeting all the requirements of Employment Law, in order to avoid a greater number of jobs being put at risk in the medium to long term.*

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

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: _____