

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 10th JUNE 2021 AT 7.30PM

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

Councillor Satindra Sangha observed the meeting remotely through Zoom Video Conferencing.

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

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

1. Apologies

No apologies for absence were received from Councillors.

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 were no members of the public at the meeting.

4. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2021 (item 4 on the agenda) were circulated.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

5. Draft Climate Change and Environmental Strategy

The Committee received a proposed draft Climate Change and Environmental Strategy for consideration and consultation (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to make modifications to the draft Climate Change and Environmental Strategy, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, in order to accommodate the following comments and changes identified by the Committee:
 - (a) reference to the impact of climate change on Braunstone Town, for example, increased flooding,
 - (b) identifying measures for the management of our land and assets, which reduce the likelihood of flooding, and
 - (c) reference to cross-cutting and interrelated policy issues, for example, quality of life services and ensuring that the environment reaches the highest possible standards; and
2. that, subject to 1 above, the draft Climate Change and Environmental Strategy be approved for consultation:
 - (a) as set out in the Consultation section of the report, and
 - (b) with the Community Development and Planning & Environment Committees,with the post-consultation version being submitted to Policy & Resources Committee, scheduled for 26th August 2021, for consideration and recommendation to Council for adoption.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To enable general comments and observations to be accommodated into the draft Strategy accordingly.*
2. *Given the Strategy would provide the framework for the Town Council's response to Climate Change, it was important to ensure that it was fit for purpose, met the needs and aspirations of residents', and would be deliverable.*

6. Internal Audit Report 2020/2021 and Internal Audit arrangements 2021/2022

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 2021 and to appoint an Internal Auditor for 2021/2022 (item 6 on the agenda).

The Committee noted that this item had been considered in detail at the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. that the observations of the Internal Audit (attached at Appendix 1 of the report) and confirmation of compliance with the internal control objectives (attached at Appendix 2 of the report) be received and noted;

2. that the recommendations for improvement, along with the proposed response, as set out in the Internal Audit Improvement Action Plan (attached at Appendix 3 of the report), be adopted; 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 2022.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Internal Auditor, having tested all the aspects of the Council's internal controls, was satisfied that in all significant respects the internal control objectives were achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the Council's needs.*
2. *To ensure that the observations of the Internal Audit would be addressed with appropriate and balanced measures.*
3. *To ensure arrangements were in place for compliance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.*

7. Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021

The Committee received a report to enable it to review and ensure sound systems of internal control, including the management of risk and the preparation of accounting statements during the financial year ended 31st March 2021 and to recommend to Council adoption of the Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021 (item 7 on the agenda).

The Committee received a verbal summary of the consideration of this item by the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee as follows:

- (a) the proposed additions to the Council's Corporate Risks Assessment (Appendix 1) in respect of loss of reputation, as identified by the Internal Auditor in his report, was noted; and
- (b) in respect of the Internal Auditor's recommendations concerning the sums in some of the Council's bank accounts exceeding the limit of protection afforded by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme; it was considered that the risk of financial loss was low given the Council only invested in UK Bank Accounts and during the financial crises of 2008, the UK Government had taken steps to prevent banks at risk from collapsing.

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the systems of internal control and management of risk, as set out in the report and at Appendix 1, be approved and confirmed as sound; and that Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2020/21, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/2021, 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, the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee were confident that to the best of their knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2021, there were sound systems of internal control and management of risk.

8. Accounting Statements 2020/2021

The Committee received the End of Year Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2021 in order to recommend to Council adoption of the Accounting Statements 2020/2021 (item 8 on the agenda).

The Committee noted that this item had been considered in detail at the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. that Section 2, Accounting Statements 2020/21, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2021, attached at Appendix 9 of the report, be completed, signed and submitted accordingly; and
2. that an explanatory statement be published with the Accounts setting out the background to the increase in borrowing in respect of the value of the asset and the payments made towards the construction of the new Shakespeare Park Pavilion.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Corporate Governance Sub-Committee, having carried out an assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's financial arrangements, 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.*
2. *The Council had drawn down funds to pay for the cost of the new Shakespeare Park Pavilion; once the builder had completed the works and handed over the facility to the Council, the asset would appear on the fixed assets list.*

9. Shakespeare Park - Improvement & Development

The Committee received a progress report on the pavilion and site improvement works and project financing; along with an update on arrangements for future management of the pavilion and site (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that progress with the Project: *Pavilion and Site Works, Future Management Arrangements and Playground and Tennis Courts*

- improvements*; as set out in the relevant section of the report, be noted; and
2. that the revised timescales for the project, attached at Appendix 1, 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. *To provide a guide for the progression of the project, which could be amended accordingly as appropriate.*

10. Review of arrangements for responding to Covid-19

The Committee received an update on the Council's response to the Covid-19 restrictions and reviewed the implementation of arrangements for Covid-19 Secure Facilities Hires and Covid-19 delegations to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, to ensure that the Council's services recovered following Covid-19 and the associated restrictions (item 10 on the agenda).

It was noted that discussions were taking place with Leicestershire County Council to accommodate a temporary Mobile Testing Unit on the Civic Centre site following an increase in the number of Covid-19 positive cases in the area.

RESOLVED

1. that the review of the implementation of the Council's response to the Covid-19 restrictions and Roadmap out of lockdown, as set out in the report and at Appendix 1, be received and noted;
2. that the fixed term period for the Covid-19 Delegations to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, attached as Appendix 2 of the report, be extended to 31st August 2021; and the position be reviewed by Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting scheduled for 26th August 2021; and
3. that the Council's Community Centres Facilities Hires amended general terms & conditions of hire (Appendix 3) and Covid-19 Secure terms & conditions (Appendix 4) be extended to 31st August 2021; with references to 30th June 2021 being amended to 31st August 2021 and references to the 1st July 2021 being amended to 1st September 2021.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To continue to meet the requirements to respond to the impact of Covid-19 through the summer in terms of delivering corporate and service responsibilities, recovery of services, health and safety*

requirements and priority projects and to ensure that the situation was kept under review, taking into account experience and operations alongside updated Covid-19 Secure Guidance and Regulations.

2. *To provide flexibility to respond to the ongoing and evolving situation with Covid-19 and its variants, providing an open and transparent approach for this to be achieved under the Council's existing governance arrangements and structures.*
3. *To recognise that Covid-19 and its variants presented uncertainty for hirers, which required flexibility.*

11. Blaby District Parish Councils Group

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Blaby District Parish Councils Group was due to be held on 23rd June 2021. No issues were identified for consideration by the Group.

12. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st May 2021 (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 2021/2022.

13. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 1st April 2021 until 31st May 2021 (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 1st April 2021 until 31st May 2021 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

14. Nursery and Pre-school Provision at Thorpe Astley Community Centre

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 – Commercial Interest.*

The Committee considered arrangements for the renewal of the bespoke hire contract for the provision of a nursery and pre-school at Thorpe Astley Community Centre (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council, to make arrangements with the existing provider, Pop Up Care Clubs Ltd, for the renewal of the bespoke hire contract for the provision of a nursery and pre-school at Thorpe Astley Community Centre

Reason for Decision

To continue to meet the needs of Thorpe Astley residents and ensure that the nursery/pre-school remained sustainable and use of the Centre was maximised.

15. Civic Centre Facilities Improvements

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 – Commercial Interest.*

The Committee received an update on timescales for the refurbishment of the Civic Centre Toilets and Civic Centre Bar/Café kitchen following determination of the specification and tender documentation; along with assessing the availability of finance for the project (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the current position with regards to financing the project be received and noted; and
2. that the indicative timescales for the project, as set out in the Progressing the Project section of the report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To recognise the need to sustainably finance the project using a combination of earmarked funds and by accessing external grant funding.*
2. *To provide a guide for the progression of the project, which could be amended accordingly as appropriate.*

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: _____