

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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THURSDAY 25th FEBRUARY 2021 AT 7.00PM

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

166. Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

167. Disclosures of Interest

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

168. 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.

169. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2021 (item 4 on the agenda) were circulated.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

170. 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 the future management of the pavilion and site (item 5 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;

2. that the funding update, including the Public Works Loan interest and repayment details, be noted; and
3. 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. *To note the long term financial stability and sustainability of the project.*
3. *To provide a guide for the progression of the project, which could be amended accordingly as appropriate.*

171. Review of arrangements for responding to Covid-19

The Committee received an update on the Council's response to the Covid-19 restrictions; considered arrangements for Covid-19 Secure Facilities Hires from 1st April 2021; and to determine whether the Covid-19 delegations to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk were fit for purpose and if the fixed term period should be extended to enable the management and recovery of the Council's services in response to Covid-19 and the associated restrictions (item 6 on the agenda).

The Committee also received the first draft of the impact of the UK Government Covid-19 Recovery Roadmap on the Council's services for consideration (filed with these minutes).

The draft document was based on initial reading and application of the provisions in the UK Government Covid-19 Recovery Roadmap issued on Monday 22nd February 2021. More detailed reading of the provisions would be undertaken and the updated guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities was awaited. Any changes as a result of further detailed guidance being issued would be considered by the Management Team on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 prior to the document being finalised for publication.

This published plan, setting out the phased reopening of the Council's services, would be subject to review and modification in response to changes to the Roadmap and the evolving Covid-19 recovery.

RESOLVED

1. that the "Covid-19 Essential Business and Priorities", along with the associated actions, as set out at Appendix 3, remain in place until the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for Thursday 13th May 2021; and the position be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting of Policy & Resources Committee on 22nd April 2021;
2. that the fixed term period for the Covid-19 Delegations to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, attached as Appendix 4 of the report, be

- extended to 30th June 2021; and the position be reviewed by Policy & Resources Committee at its meetings in April and June;
3. that the Council's Community Centres Facilities Hires amended general terms & conditions of hire (Appendix 5) and Covid-19 Secure terms & conditions (Appendix 6) be extended to 30th June 2021; with references to 31st March 2021 being amended to 30th June 2021 and references to the 1st April 2021 being amended to 1st July 2021; and that the Covid-19 Secure terms & conditions (Appendix 6) be amended to include a provision that the room must be well ventilated;
 4. that the pre-Covid-19 hire categories (and by extension, prices) be reinstated from 1st April 2021 and that a discount scheme be applied to customers utilising the Council's Regular Hirer's Scheme; the original prices and discounted prices being as set out at Appendix 8 of the report; and
 5. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader & Deputy Leader, to add, end and adjust the discount rates across the customer, room and time categories.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To continue to meet the requirements to respond to the impact of Covid-19 through the spring 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. *To provide flexibility to respond to the ongoing and evolving Covid-19 situation and recovery, 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 presented uncertainty for hirers, which required flexibility. To ensure compliance with regulations and guidance in terms of operating Covid-19 Secure Multi-Use Community Facilities.*
4. *Following Covid-19 restrictions, to reduce charges to account for reduced capacity and to support community groups and activities to start and be sustainable given the need generated as a result of loneliness and the impact upon mental health.*
5. *To ensure that the situation was kept under review, taking into account experience and operations alongside updated Covid-19 Secure Guidance and Regulations, and could be modified accordingly.*

172. 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 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the update report on progress with Thorpe Astley Culvert be noted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that 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.

173. Land adjacent to the M1 Bridge, Thorpe Astley

The Committee received an update on proposals to landscape the land adjacent to the M1 Bridge, to provide protection for residents from the new road and to provide a leisure and recreation space, along with the potential for this land to be transferred to the Town Council (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposals for landscaping and converting to a usable recreation space the land adjacent to the new road to the M1 bridge, as set out in the report and appendices, be noted;
2. that the Initial Suggestions for the land, identified in the report, be endorsed; and
3. that the Next Steps, as set out in the report, be progressed.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To support efforts to utilise the land for recreation space while providing appropriate screening from the M1 and new road for local residents reducing any adverse environmental impact.*
2. *To enable appropriate plans to be drawn up and implemented which would benefit residents of Thorpe Astley with useable recreation space.*
3. *To enable the Town Council to be involved in shaping the proposals and to be considered as the appropriate body for future ownership/management of the site.*

174. Pitch Allocations 2021/2022

The Committee considered pitch capacity, setting fees and the process for allocations for the 2021/2022 season (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that pitch type and capacity be approved, as set out in Table 1 of the Pitch Capacity section of the report;
2. that the pitch fees be confirmed and the availability of pitches be advertised, as set out at Appendix 3, with a closing date for applications on Monday 5th April 2021;
3. that any matches not played in the 2020/2021 season due to the Covid-19 pandemic that have been paid for by the clubs be reimbursed by reducing the season 2021/2022 fees by the appropriate amount;
4. that a fixed term amendment to the Football Terms and Conditions be approved to allow for an extension of the playing season until 30th June 2021;
5. that Clubs be advised that as they recommence matches and training that they must adhere to the relevant national, local and sector Covid-19 regulations, failure to do so could constitute a breach of Health & Safety under the terms and conditions of hire;

6. that it be noted that long term pitch lease arrangements were being explored for Shakespeare Park and new arrangements may supersede the current arrangements during the year; and
7. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to make changes to the Standard Terms & Conditions for football (Appendix 1) and the Bowling Green (Appendix 2) to remove and amend operational content, references to individuals and improve readability.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure a balance between quality of playing surface, the needs of local clubs for provision and the needs of parks users.*
2. *To allow suitable time for applications while acknowledging clubs need the certainty by April of a home playing ground in order to participate in the league.*
3. *To ensure that clubs are reimbursed for matches not played for reasons beyond their control.*
4. *To allow football clubs to play matches missed due to the restrictions put in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic.*
5. *To ensure that Clubs were aware of their own and the Council's obligations to ensure a Covid-19 secure environment under Health & Safety legislation.*
6. *To recognise that as part of the redevelopment of the sporting facilities at Shakespeare Park; longer term pitch leases were being considered with the aim of sustaining and increasing participation in sport.*
7. *The current documents were structured in a way that combined terms & conditions with operational process; this needed to be ironed out for clarity.*

175. Open Spaces & Parks Winter Works Programme - Progress Report

The Committee received a progress report on the Winter Works Programme for 2020/2021 (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the progress of the Winter Works Programme 2020/2021 be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the winter works tasks were on schedule to be completed before the end of the winter works period.

176. Tennis Courts - enhancing provision and participation

The Committee received proposed arrangements for introducing Tap4Tennis to manage use of the Tennis Courts and ensure investment in the facilities; along with arrangements for providing access to tennis equipment and coaching sessions to increase participation in the sport (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the schedule for free use and chargeable hours and the hourly, monthly and yearly charge rates, attached at Appendix 1, for the use of Thorpe Astley Tennis courts be approved;
2. that equipment packs be made available for Braunstone Town residents to hire free of charge, subject to a small, refundable deposit of £5.00 being made;
3. that the cost of hiring Thorpe Astley Tennis Courts with floodlights remain at the existing cost for non-residents but be reduced to £7.00 per court, per hour for Braunstone Town residents;
4. that a further consultation with all Braunstone Town residents be undertaken regarding the proposed charging structure and inclusion of Shakespeare Park tennis courts; and
5. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to determine a suitable implementation date.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that free access to the tennis courts would be made available each day in order to comply with the grant conditions. To ensure that reasonable and comparative pricing would be applied to the use of the tennis courts to enable all residents to be able to access the sports facilities to encourage regular use of the courts.*
2. *To ensure that lack of basic tennis equipment did not prevent local residents being able to take up the sport or enjoy the facilities.*
3. *To ensure that some contribution to the cost of using the floodlights would be made by hirers.*
4. *To ensure that residents have the opportunity to express their views on the proposals to enhance provision and participation, including the proposed charging structure.*
5. *To enable the IT and payments systems to be installed and launched, publicity about the scheme to be made available and for residents to sign up for season passes, ahead of the implementation date.*

177. Citizens Advice Bureau - Service Level Agreement for Braunstone Civic Centre

The Committee considered arrangements for the Citizens Advice Bureau Service at Braunstone Civic Centre post 31st March 2021 (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to finalise and enter into a further Service Level Agreement with Citizen's Advice Bureau from 1st April 2021 based on a similar agreement to the current Service Level Agreement and subject to the total annual grant payment not exceeding the delegated authority limits given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk under Financial Regulation 11.1h in each financial year.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Citizen's Advice Bureau to continue to provide free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to local residents beyond 31st March 2021 without delay or a break in service, in order that residents could receive assistance with a wide range of issues, including benefits, housing, money advice, employment, consumer, relationships, taxation and many more.

178. Blaby District Parish Councils Group

The Committee identified issues to be raised at the next meeting of the Blaby District Parish Councils Group.

RESOLVED that "how services should be rebuilt after Covid-19" should be raised as a topic of discussion.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that relevant issues and good practice in respect of supporting communities post Covid-19 was explored and shared.

179. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st January 2021 (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.

180. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 1st January 2021 until 16th February 2021 (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 1st January 2021 until 16th February 2021 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

181. Repair to Play Equipment at Mossdale Meadows

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 quotations received for the repair of the Lobster Pot Climbing Frame at Mossdale Meadows play area (item 16 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that supplier A be asked to supply and fit a new climbing net to the existing frame of the equipment in the sum of £3337.00 + VAT; and
2. that the repair to be undertaken as soon as possible under the current restrictions with Covid-19.

Reasons for Decision

1. *That the climbing net was specific to this particular frame and supplier A offered the lowest cost to provide and fit the new climbing net.*
2. *To ensure that the play equipment would be available for use by the public as soon as possible.*

182. Shakespeare Park Playground 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 considered a quote for additional items identified in the consultation and to determine arrangements for including these dependent upon the availability of funding (item 17 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that subject to funding being in place, the proposed fitness trail, as set out in the report and illustrated at Appendix 1, be incorporated into the contract for the playground improvement works;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to determine whether to pursue option 1 or option 2, as detailed in the report; and
3. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to liaise with the contractor and determine a suitable alternative, within budget, to the Bannister Slide.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To utilise unused space within the play area, as suggested by a consultation response, integrating both play and fitness, which falls within the wider vision for the site improvements.*
2. *To enable an assessment of cost against lifespan and durability.*
3. *Following a consultation response, to explore alternative options to the Bannister Slide such as a vertical pole or climbing wall, which was considered safer and more appropriate for the age ranges of children that use the play area.*

183. Staffing Organisation Review

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 considered future arrangements for staffing in the context of changes to Services and the impact of Covid-19 and whether to approve draft proposals for consultation (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the Staff Organisation Review Proposals, enclosed as an Annexe, including the associated appendices (except Appendix 7) be approved for consultation with staff and Councillors;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk:
 - (a) to finalise the proposed amendments to the Employment Contract and include at Appendix 7 of the Annexe for consultation;
 - (b) to make minor amendments and corrections to the documentation prior to publication for consultation; and
 - (c) to undertake the consultation;
3. that the arrangements, including the timescales, financial implications, and job evaluation process, set out in this report and in the attached Annexe, concerning the proposed Staff Organisation and the review be approved; and
4. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer and Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to make adjustments to the timescales to take account of any issues arising during the consultation and review.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the Council would have a flexible, resilient, knowledgeable and skilled workforce following service and staff changes and recovery from the impact of Covid-19.*
2. *To ensure that Employment Contracts reflect current Employment Law and Standards and would be adapted based on experience. To ensure that the consultation progressed avoiding any undue delays.*
3. *To provide a clear framework and timescales for undertaking the review.*
4. *To ensure that relevant issues and implications, arising from the consultation, job evaluation results and the review generally, were properly assessed and addressed.*

184. 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 timescales for progressing the refurbishment of the Civic Centre Toilets and for the provision of a new Civic Centre Bar/Café kitchen (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Capital Plan items:

- (a) “Refurbishment of both sets of Toilets, including exploring the provision of a Changing Places Toilet”; and
 - (b) “Refurbishment of the Civic Centre Bar, Kitchen and Store Facilities”
- be progressed, as set out in the Timescales & Milestones section of the report and in accordance with the concept plan for both projects, attached at Appendix 1.

Reasons for Decision

To modernise the Civic Centre toilet facilities ensuring that they were fully accessible; and to provide a café service, utilising the Bar Lounge more effectively and providing a wider community social space.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

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: _____