

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 28th OCTOBER 2021 AT 7.30PM

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

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

Councillor Christiane Startin-Lorent was also in attendance.

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

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

39. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shabbir Aslam and Phil Moitt.

40. Disclosures of Interest

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

41. 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.

42. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th August 2021 (item 4 on the agenda) were circulated.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th August 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

43. Shakespeare Park - Improvement & Development

The Committee received a progress report on the improvement project and financing for phase 2, along with an update on arrangements for future management of the pavilion and site (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that progress with the Project: Pavilion and Site Works, Tennis Courts improvements and Playground Improvements, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be noted;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Shakespeare Park Improvement Project Sub Committee to reconsider tenders received for the tennis courts improvements and if necessary, re-select a preferred contractor to undertake the works, provided the tender price was within the agreed budget;
3. that the revised timescales for the project, attached at Appendix 2, be approved; and
4. that public notices and information be published concerning the delays and revised timescales for the Project.

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 enable the Council to consider other options to deliver the improvement works to the Shakespeare Park tennis courts, if necessary, in order to avoid any further delays.*
3. *To provide a guide for the progression of the project, which could be amended accordingly as appropriate.*
4. *To ensure residents were fully informed that the project had been delayed due to supply chain issues and that as a result there were revised timescales for delivery.*

44. Medium Term Priorities and Financial Planning

The Committee received a report setting out the context for the Council's medium-term priorities and financial planning, alongside the Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategy (item 6 on the agenda).

The Responsible Financial Officer advised the Committee that the Office for Budget Responsibility's October 2021 "Economic and fiscal outlook" had been published on 27th October 2021, which included a prediction that CPI inflation would reach 4.4% in 2022. The Office for Budget Responsibility had also reported that news since they had closed their forecast would be consistent with inflation peaking at close to 5%.

Based on the figures presented at Appendix 1, a 4.4% increase would result in a precept increase of 6.52% and 5% increase would result in a 7.05% increase.

The Responsible Financial Officer added that the predication was a peak not an average for the year, therefore preceding based on 3% (as shown at Appendix 1) would be a reasonable sum to protect the Council's finances given the use of reserves in recent years and planned use in the coming years.

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 update the Report and the financial projections at Appendix 1, if necessary, following publication of the Office for Budget Responsibility's "Economic and fiscal outlook" report, published on 27th October 2021;
2. that a meeting be held between the Leader, Deputy Leader, Standing Committee Chairs and the Council's Management Team to plan and refocus the Council's priorities for the next 12 to 18 months;

THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

3. that the current projections attached at Appendix 1, based on known financial pressures identified in the report, along with the update provided following publication of the Office for Budget Responsibility's October 2021 "Economic and fiscal outlook", be noted;
4. that the Council's Priorities and Objectives, attached at Appendix 2, be used as the basis for calculating the annual budget and any external funding sought;
5. that the Council's General Reserves be used to invest in infrastructure and assets and in the development and remodelling of services, including the Town Council's operations; and
6. that the Financial, Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies, as set out in the report, be adopted.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the latest economic and fiscal assessments were considered as part of the Medium-Term Priorities and Financial Planning process prior to its adoption.*
2. *To develop a plan for delivering the Council's Priorities, Capital Plan and other commitments given the pressures on financial resources and the limits on human resources.*
3. *To provide a foundation for preparing budget estimates for 2022/2023 and beyond.*
4. *To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending on its key priorities and objectives given the future financial uncertainties.*

5. *To ensure the highest possible standards within the resources available in the future.*
6. *To effectively manage the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, taking into account the associated risks.*

45. Defibrillators

The Committee received details of proposals to install defibrillators at the Council's premises (item 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. That the proposed locations for the installation of defibrillators, as set out in the Background section of the report, be approved; subject to:
 - (a) Braunstone Civic Centre and Thorpe Astley Community Centre being of equal priority, and
 - (b) Mossdale Meadows being added to the list after Shakespeare Park; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to:
 - (a) determine whether to purchase the defibrillators in bulk or on a rolling programme, and
 - (b) to invite quotes, approve and enter into a contract for the supply and installation of defibrillators, ancillary equipment and associated works, including where these exceed £3,000 as set out under Financial Regulation 11.1b(i).

Reasons for Decision

1. *To identify the priority locations for installation of defibrillators based on need and accessibility.*
2. *To enable the procurement, supply and installation of the equipment in a timely manner.*

46. Parks & Open Spaces Winter Works Programme 2021/2022

The Committee considered items for inclusion on the Winter Works Programme for 2021/2022 for the Councils Parks, Open Spaces and Grounds (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Winter Works Programme 2021/2022, attached at Appendix 1, be approved.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that parks and open spaces in Braunstone Town are maintained to a high level.

47. Complaints Monitoring

The Committee received details of formal complaints dealt with and determined as a result whether policy or procedural changes would be required to ensure that future reoccurrence was minimised (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

The Procedure by including all complaints, whether minor or major, simple or complex, and providing for the informal stage and formal stage to deal with these as appropriate results in complaints being resolved and/or closed effectively.

48. Review of Complaints Procedure

The Committee reviewed the current Complaints Procedure to determine whether it was fit for purpose (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the revised and updated Complaints Procedure, attached at Appendix 1, be approved and that the next review be in October 2024.

Reason for Decision

The Procedure by including all complaints, whether minor or major, simple or complex, and providing for the informal stage and formal stage to deal with these as appropriate results in complaints being resolved and/or closed effectively; however, some minor clarifications, tidying up of the wording and updating of cross-references was necessary for clarification.

49. Mossdale Meadows Culvert

The Committee received proposals to rebuild the Culvert at Mossdale Meadows, invite tenders for the works and to consider potential funding sources (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the specifications for the improvement work to Mossdale Meadows brook, removal of the existing pedestrian bridge and replacement of the existing vehicular bridge, attached at Appendix 1, be approved; and
2. that documentation be prepared and published in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1, in order to invite tenders for the proposed works.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To implement construction work to reduce the level of flooding issues on*

- Mossdale Meadows to protect the brook, banks and surrounding land.*
2. *To comply with financial regulations and relevant procurement legislation.*

50. Electoral review of Blaby District Council: consultation on ward arrangements

The Committee considered whether the Council should respond to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consultation on the electoral review of Blaby District Council (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the following response be submitted as the Town Council's consultation response to the Local Government Boundary Commission review of Blaby District Council:

- (a) it be noted that Braunstone Town Council did not agree with the decision to reduce the total number of District Councillors from 39 to 36;
- (b) it would be unreasonable for Braunstone Town to lose 2 Councillors as a result of the review;
- (c) the names of the existing Wards should be used where possible for naming the proposed Wards; and Thorpe Astley should be jointly recognised as part of its Ward; and
- (d) when applying the new District Ward arrangements to the Parish; the Ward which includes Thorpe Astley needs to be subdivided to retain the current separate Parish Ward for Thorpe Astley.

Reasons for Decision

To ensure that Braunstone Town was appropriately represented at both District and Parish level:

- (a) *The population had grown from approximately 70,000 in 1974 to approximately 100,000 today. The area would grow further in the coming years with new developments; for example, Lubbesthorpe.*
- (b) *Braunstone Town was a distinct area and the largest settlement in Blaby District; a significant caseload was generated for Councillors due to the varying demographics and deprivation levels of its population; therefore, the proposed wards, boundaries and representation should avoid the loss of more than one Councillor with rounding considered favourably when considering both the District Wards for Braunstone Town and the District as a whole.*
- (c) *The names used locally to identify the areas of Braunstone Town were well established and widely recognised by the population.*
- (d) *Thorpe Astley was a distinct community from the parts of Winstanley adjacent to Braunstone Lane and with the ratio of electors to Councillor being lower at Parish level could be retained as a separate Parish Ward.*

51. External Audit 2020/2021

The Committee noted that the External Audit was completed on 13th September 2021 and no matters were raised concerning the Town Council's accounts and governance arrangements for the year ended 31st March 2021 (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that it be noted that the External Audit for the 2020/2021 financial year was completed on 13th September 2021.

Reason for Decision

An unqualified opinion was given by the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP, on the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/2021.

52. Blaby District Parish Councils Group

The Committee received feedback from the Blaby District Parish Councils Group (item 14 on the agenda) and considered whether to identify issues to be raised at future meetings.

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

To keep up to date with the discussions and work of the Group and to provide an opportunity to raise any relevant issues.

53. End of Quarter Financial Position - Cashbook and Reserves

The Committee received a summary of the Council's Cash and Reserves for the period 1st April 2021 to 30th September 2021 (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the end of quarter financial position be noted.

Reason for Decision

There were no issues of concern with management of the Council's Finances.

54. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2021 to 30th September 2021 (item 16 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.

55. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 18th August 2021 until 19th October 2021 (item 17 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 18th August 2021 until 19th October 2021 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

56. Carbon Audit

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 proposals and quotes from suppliers to undertake a carbon audit of the Town Council's activities to provide both data and recommended actions to reduce the Council's carbon footprint (item 18 on the agenda).

A supplementary report was submitted, which provided an assessment of the proposals and quotes from suppliers (filed as a confidential item with these minutes).

RESOLVED

1. that Quote 4 be accepted to undertake a Carbon Audit of the Town Council's activities; and
2. that £8,500 be earmarked in the Council's Reserves to cover the costs.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To provide both data on the Council's carbon footprint along with recommended actions, including savings, cost and income sources, to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.*
2. *To enable the audit to be funded, with a view that it would not only provide recommendations to reduce the Council's Carbon footprint but would also provide for ongoing revenue savings.*

57. 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 the proposals for the refurbishment of the Civic Centre Toilets and Civic Centre Bar/Café kitchen (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the current position with regards to costs of and funding 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.*

58. Civic Community Lounge – Service Level Agreement

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 both fixed term and permanent amendments to the Service Level Agreement with JAAAK Limited to provide Bar and Café Services (item 20 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the proposed fixed term and permanent amendments to the Service Level Agreement with JAAAK Limited, as set out in points 1 – 3 in the “Proposed Contract Amendments” section of the report be approved; subject to the inclusion of “*or at such other times as may be agreed by the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, subject to a minimum of 25 hours per week*” being added to the end of point 3; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to issue the necessary legal contractual amendment notices in accordance with 1 above.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To recognise the difficulties of the current trading climate and that provision of a Café Service provided opportunities for both the Operator, users of the facility and local residents.*
2. *To ensure that the agreed provisions could be accommodated accordingly within the Service Level contract.*

59. Conversion of Lighting to LED – Braunstone Town Library

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 quotations and possible funding sources for the conversion of existing lighting in Braunstone Town Library to LED fittings (item 21 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that supplier B be contracted to replace the lighting in the Braunstone Town Library to LED fittings; and
2. that an application for grant funding be made to the Leicestershire County Council Shire Environment Grant scheme.

Reasons for Decision

1. *Supplier B provided the best value for money to undertake the work.*
2. *To help support the Town Council in financing the project.*

60. Organisation Staffing Review: Update on Job Evaluation and Implementation of the Proposals

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 progress with the LRALC job evaluation review of the Management and Administration posts and implementation of the approved restructure in the Library Service (item 22 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that progress with the LRALC job evaluation review of the corporate management and administration posts, as detailed in the report, be noted;
2. that in the event that a suitable candidate cannot be recruited to the role of Senior Library Officer at an average of 13½ hours per week, then the contractual hours of the post be increased to an average of 16 hours per week and re-advertised; and
3. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to make minor alterations to the job description of the Senior Library Officer (attached at Appendix 1) in order to include additional tasks and services which could be provided within the additional hours available.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To fully complete the Job Evaluation review of the Council's Officer posts and ensure that there would be equity in the grading of these posts.*

2. *To make the post more attractive to candidates, given the role of Senior Library Officer was essential to ensure the effective day to day operation of an efficient and high-quality Library service, as well as actively promoting and developing the Library service.*
3. *To ensure that additional resources resulted in additional flexibility and additional service enhancements.*

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

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: _____