

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 20th AUGUST 2015 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Councillor Amanda Hack (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Anthea Ambrose, Shabbir Aslam, Sharon Betts (substituting for Alex DeWinter), Sam Maxwell, Stuart Maxwell, Gary Sanders, Robert Waterton and Bill Wright.

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

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

23. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Alex DeWinter.

24. Disclosures of Interest

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

25. 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.

26. Minutes of the Meeting held 11th June 2015

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th June 2015 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

27. Future Options for the Library and Customer Service Shop

The Committee considered the current position and in respect of an agreement with Blaby District Council on the Customer Service Shop and received an assessment of the options for the Town Council to run Braunstone Town Library, including an assessment of risks (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that, should Blaby District Council wish to progress the model in respect of the Customer Service Shop and Social Inclusion activities, the

- Executive Officer and Town Clerk liaise with Blaby District Council on further detailed arrangements for the model, including service levels and standards, the mechanism for identifying and reviewing the costs of the service and the contributions made by each organisation and submit the final proposal to Policy & Resources Committee for determination;
2. 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 submit an Outline Business Case to Leicestershire County Council to run Braunstone Town Library Service based on two alternative models:
 - (a) Combined Public Services Facility: Library, Customer Service Shop, Social Inclusion activities and hub; and
 - (b) Town Council providing a separate Library Service on existing opening hours at the existing premises, retaining the lease agreement with Leicestershire County Council who retain responsibility for premises obligations and costs;
 3. that an outline scheme of support involving Capital Grant funding to a Community Group running public services be drafted and implications for the current Community Grants Scheme for revenue funding be assessed and a report submitted to a future meeting of Policy and Resources Committee setting out the options, costs and implications; and
 4. that a progress report, setting out timescales and decisions to be made, be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of Policy and Resources Committee (scheduled for 1st October 2015).

Reasons for Decision

1. *To enable those Council's which have a wider vision to direct resources to create community cohesion and social inclusion through maximising access to services, to ensure that the systems, processes and agreements would be made to avoid unnecessary delay.*
2. *To use our offices, powers and influence to keep the Braunstone Town Library open and also provide a better service that would be more responsive to the needs of local residents. The deadline for an Outline Business Case to be submitted to Leicestershire County Council was Friday 4th September 2015.*
3. *To ensure that capacity support could be provided where a social and community need had been identified, which would benefit the Citizens' of Braunstone Town.*
4. *To consider different outline models and fully assess the risks and opportunities of the options.*

28. Narborough Road South – Subways

The Committee considered progress with launching a community art project for the subways under Narborough Road South (item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that a consultation exercise be undertaken by the Town Council along with its partners, including using notice boards, website, social media, Braunstone Life, Citizens' Advisory Panel and the BB19 bus; and that the

- consultation offer alternatives such as anti-graffiti paint and allow consultees to make suggestions; and
2. that quotes and potential sources be identified and a report submitted to the next meeting of Policy and Resources Committee (scheduled for 1st October 2015).

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure users, local residents and young people all have a stake in the project and its objectives, to encourage involvement, and to enable other ideas to be submitted and alternatives to be explored.*
2. *To ascertain the costs and potential funding streams in order to assess the viability of the proposed project.*

29. Council Reserves

Following recommendations from the Internal Audit Report, the Committee received an update on the reserves section of the balance sheet to reflect the intended uses, movement during 2014/15 and the current balances (item 7 on the agenda)..

RESOLVED

1. that the movement on the Council's reserves during 2014/15 and balance at 31st March 2015, as set out in Table A in the report, be noted;
2. that the current balances and intended uses, as set out in Table B in the report, be approved; and
3. that an updated current balance and intended uses be reported to Council as part of the Medium to Long Term Priorities and Financial Planning Report and the Annual Budget Estimates.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To acknowledge the context and current position.*
2. *To ensure that the reserves section of the balance sheet reflects the intended uses of the reserves and the balances for the specified reserves, as recommended in the Internal Audit Report 2014/2015.*
3. *To ensure that the Council has up to date balances and earmarked reserves information when considering its financial strategy and setting the budget and precept.*

30. Holmfield Park – Improvements

The Committee considered the current position with regard to external funding and reviewed other options for funding the project (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the outstanding balance of up to £7,010 be funded from the Council's Reserves, with the earmarked total being revised up to £17,010;

2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to review the specification for improvements.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To enable the improvement works to be carried out prior to the winter. Seeking further external funding would result in a delay to the work to at least spring 2016 and may limit our options for external grant funding for other projects during the current financial year.*
2. *To enable the improvements identified to be reviewed in order to be commensurate with the funding being earmarked from the Council's reserves.*

31. Update on Replacement of Stolen Playground Equipment

The Executive Officer & Town Clerk provided an update concerning the Insurance Claim and the replacement of a stolen slide and swings at Mossdale Meadows and a stolen slide at Franklin Park.

The insurance claim for stolen play equipment at Mossdale Meadows had been approved and processed and the replacement equipment had been order and it was anticipated that it would be fitted shortly.

The insurance claim for the stolen slide at Franklin Park was still being processed, it was hoped that this would be approved shortly and a new slide fitted.

32. Thorpe Astley Community Centre - Medical Rooms

The Executive Officer & Town Clerk provided an update on progress for opening the Medical Facility at Thorpe Astley Community Centre and the Committee determined whether the Town Council needed to take any further action.

RESOLVED that NHS England and East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG be contacted again to ascertain progress, including timescales for delivery; failing a response, delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to determine the next steps for the Town Council in terms of progressing the issue and representing the interests of the community.

Reason for Decision

To ensure an appropriate balance between working in partnership, progressing the swift opening of the medical facility, and informing and representing local residents.

33. Legal Transfer of Open Spaces (Barratt Homes) Thorpe Astley

The Committee received a report in respect of finalising the legal transfer of open space at Thorpe Astley from Barratt Homes to the Town Council (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that subject to confirmation that the four issues raised by the Executive Officer and Town Clerk have been satisfactorily resolved; that the legal transfer of the 12 open spaces from Barratt Homes be completed and THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Common Seal be applied to the transfer documentation.

Reason for Decision

To enable the transfer to be completed and for the Town Council to become the legal owner of the public open space.

34. Highways Grass Cutting

To consider an offer from Blaby District Council concerning two verge cuts - one to be funded by Blaby District Council and one to be funded by the Town Council following the reduction in verge cuts by Leicestershire County Council from 7 to 5 per season (item 12 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that Blaby District Council's offer to continue to provide 7 seasonal highways verge cuts, provided this was match funded by the Town Council, not be accepted at this stage; and
2. that a further report be submitted to Policy and Resources Committee in the autumn of 2016 setting out any issues and concerns which had arisen as a result of the reduction in the number of Highways Verge Cuts and making any recommendations as necessary to be considered as part of the budget estimates for 2017/2018.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The issue had not been identified as a priority for the Town Council and no budgetary provision had been allocated.*
2. *To recognise that following the reduction in cuts to 5 seasonal cuts, Town residents would become aware of the impact and may have issues, which the Town Council may consider was worth addressing.*

35. Local Council Award Scheme

The Committee considered which level the Council wished to apply for when the current award (Foundation level) expired in January 2016 and considered actions required to meet the relevant criteria (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the Town Council expresses an interest in registering for the Foundation Level Award and that the Executive Officer & Town undertake actions at Operational Level to ensure compliance with the criteria and also present relevant items to Policy & Resources Committee on 1st October 2015 for determination to ensure compliance; and
2. that the Executive Officer & Town undertake actions at Operational Level to ensure compliance with the Quality Award criteria and that an action

plan and timescales be presented to Policy and Resources Committee on 1st October 2015 to determine whether the Town Council would be in a position to express an interest in registering for the Quality Level Award.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the Town Council retains the level of award that it currently holds and was comparable to the award under the previous Quality Council Scheme.*
2. *To recognise the important role the Council currently has and aspires to continue to develop in terms of reputation, competency and ability to lead a community and work in partnership with principal Councils to deliver local services and an environment which reaches the highest possible standards.*

36. Open Space Audit - Consultation

The Committee received the draft Blaby District Open Spaces Audit for consultation (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the following observations be made in response to the consultation:

- a) Page 51 – Football Teams listed, some are incorrect, and others are missing (taking into account 2014/2015 season);
- b) Pages 63/64 clarify Franklin Park’s status as a Garden? The assessment and qualitative analysis suggests the Community Orchard hasn’t been taken into account and the analysis has been based on the park;
- c) Page 72 refers to Mossdale Meadows as Informal Open Space – clarify referring to Merrileys;
- d) Page 72 – no reference to Kingsway Informal Open Space despite listing several areas of informal open space particularly in Thorpe Astley;
- e) Page 78 (Provision for Children & Young People) – Mossdale Meadows incorrectly identified as being in the Parish of Kilby;
- f) Page 78 (Provision for Children & Young People) – Hilcot Green Missing;
- g) Page 8 (Allotment Improvements) – refers to Salisbury Avenue, Braunstone. Page 82 (Action Plan) identifies Salisbury Avenue as Croft (Braunstone Town Allotments are at Braunstone Close and Rosamund Avenue);
- h) Page 88 (Pitches) – Shakespeare Park Missing;
- i) Page 89 (Pitches Available but not used) – incorrectly lists Holmfield Park – the Town Council has resolved to take this pitch out of use. Note also the inconsistency in naming with page 78 referring to the site as Wardens Walk;
- j) Page 135 – 140 (Capacity on Sports Pitches) – include Shakespeare Park, which was missing;
- k) there appeared in some cases to be a mismatch between supply and demand, for example, Shakespeare Park Bowls Club was struggling to recruit members; and
- l) page 22, section 2.4.4. Population Growth – the statistics showed a decrease in 0-14 years olds between 2015 and 2029 across the district, yet figures for school provision in Braunstone Town showed an increase and that there was under provision; therefore, the audit which looked at

supply at a Parish level should also consider population and age group projections at a parish level given there was likely to be significant differences in population trends across the district.

Reason for Decision

To recognise the importance of the study in terms of identifying future needs and provision and ensuring improvements to local services; the Town Council had particular local knowledge and was able to highlight inconsistencies, errors and omissions in order to assist with the finalisation of the study which would provide an evidence base for future decision making.

37. Blaby District Parish Remuneration Panel

The Committee considered whether the Town Council wished to accept an offer from Blaby District Parish Remuneration Panel to review the allowances paid to Town Councillors (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the offer from Blaby District Parish Remuneration Panel to review the allowances paid to Town Councillors be declined.

Reason for Decision

The Town Council did not consider it necessary to undertake a review of the Town Council's allowances and expenses at the current time.

38. Blaby Housing Strategy – Consultation

The Committee receive the draft Blaby District Housing Strategy for consultation (item 16 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the following observations be made in response to the consultation:

- a) greater efforts should be made to identify provision of affordable housing;
- b) the document needs to provide a strategy for the private rented sector, such as increasing affordable rent opportunities, comparatively across the region Blaby District average rents have increased significantly more than average wages;
- c) a strategy for reaching the affordable housing target was required, currently there was provision for 214 against the target of 900; and
- d) Page 32, Local Housing Company, due to size and scale of resources required, the Council should explore establishing or becoming part of a joint Local Housing Company with neighbouring authorities (Leicester City already has an established company).

Reason for Decision

Providing rented and affordable housing was a significant issue in Braunstone Town.

39. **Financial Comparisons**

The Committee received the Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st July 2015 (item 17 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st July 2015 be received and noted.

Reason for Decision

The budget forecasts for 2015/2016 were on target for 31st July 2015.

40. **Millfield Hall Roof Refurbishment**

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 temporarily excluded and instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply).
Reason for exception – Commercial Interests.

The Committee considered the current position with the contract for the refurbishment of Millfield Hall roof and alternative options (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the tender from W R Leivers Roofing Ltd to undertake the Millfield Hall roof refurbishment as detailed in the tender specification be accepted;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to liaise with the successful contractor, award the contract and determine the detailed timings and arrangements for the works;
3. that the outstanding balance of £52,693 be funded from the Council's Reserves, with the earmarked total being revised to £82,693; and
4. that the SITA Trust Grant and Community Climate Change Grant be accepted and that £5,642.42 be released as a contributing Third Party payment to SITA to receive the grant.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The tender from W R Leivers Roofing Ltd represented best value and the contractor demonstrated in their submission ability to undertake the works to the required standard.*
2. *To allow flexibility for the work to be carried out in conjunction with other refurbishment works on the Hall minimising disruption to service users.*
3. *To enable the improvement works to be carried out prior to the winter. Seeking further external funding would result in a delay to the work to at least spring 2016 and may limit our options for external grant funding for other projects during the current financial year. The Millfield Hall Roof as part of the Civic Centre formed the Town Councils largest asset and represented a cost of £1,800 - £2,400 per year for the lifespan of the roof.*

4. *To enable the grant to be released in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant.*

41. Long Term Lease Agreement – Braunstone Town Library

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 be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reasons for exception – Legal Advice.*

The Committee received advice concerning the long term lease agreement for Braunstone Town Library within the context of the decisions being made by both the landlord and the tenant (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the Legal Advice to the Town Council concerning the status of the Library Premises Lease be received and noted;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to seek any further legal advice, and take action where appropriate, should the Tenant's statements/actions indicate provisions of the lease were likely to be broken; and
3. that Braunstone Town Council retain the Lease agreement on the Library premises and ensures that Leicestershire County Council either directly or indirectly continues to fulfil the lease obligations.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Committee were fully aware of the options and implications for the lease and the implications for ensuring that any future agreement on the Library service could be implemented.*
2. *To protect the Town Council from the lease liabilities.*
3. *Represents best value to the tax payer by providing significant savings to all parties while offering service efficiencies. The Lease agreement protects the Town Council from the ongoing liabilities of the Library premises.*

42. Termination of the Meeting

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

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 _____ (CHAIR)

DATED _____