

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 27th OCTOBER 2016 AT 7.30PM

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

35. Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

36. Disclosures of Interest

A disclosure of a Non-Pecuniary Interest was made by Councillor Robert Waterton in agenda item 11, Parks & Open Spaces Winter Works Programme 2016/2017, in respect of winter works being carried out on open space adjacent to his property.

37. 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.

38. Minutes of the Meeting held 25th August 2016

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th August 2016 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th August 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

39. Provision of Primary Care and General Practice Services in Braunstone Town

The Committee considered concerns that there was under provision of Primary Care, specifically General Practitioner, Services across Braunstone Town and that this was having a particular impact on the elderly, long term sick and vulnerable, along with receiving an update concerning use of the Medical Room facilities at Thorpe Astley Community Centre (item 5 on the agenda).

In order to assist the Committee with its deliberations concerning the provision of General Practice services in Braunstone Town, Jamie Barrett, Head of Primary Care and Caroline Goulding, Primary Care Assistant Contract Manager from NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group attended the meeting and provided the following updates:

- a) work was being undertaken with Kingsway Surgery to enable it to implement a business plan to address capacity and staffing issues; Thursday afternoon closures and the closure of patient registration was temporary, with emergency cover measures in place, while this work was in progress;
- b) closing patient registrations from within the practice boundary had to be approved by the Clinical Commissioning Group and no such approval had been given in respect of Forest House;
- c) NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group were unaware of operational changes at Forest House but recognised in the context of capacity issues at Kingsway Surgery, providing GPs from Warren Lane only would exacerbate accessibility issues for Braunstone Town residents.

The Executive Officer & Town Clerk updated the Committee in respect of potential health services to be provided from the Thorpe Astley Community Centre Medical Rooms. The Children's Services Manager of the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust had visited the rooms, since she was interested in finding community locations from which to deliver community health services for children. The Centre and the rooms were suitable for this purpose and a decision was anticipated from the Partnership Trust shortly.

RESOLVED

1. that plans by Leicestershire Partnership Trust to make use of the Medical Rooms at Thorpe Astley Community Centre for Children's Community Health Services be welcomed and supported;
2. that the position in respect of primary care services at Kingsway Surgery be received and noted;
3. that NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group be asked to explore the following concerns with Forest House Medical Centre:
 - a) that Forest House patient registrations for the practice area remained open,
 - b) that centralising Doctors at Warren Land and Nurses at Park Drive was causing access restrictions to Braunstone Town residents,
4. that NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group be asked to explore the potential of practice boundaries of General Practices on Braunstone Park being extended to include Braunstone Town either in full or part; and
5. that Thorpe Astley Community Centre be offered as a potential site extension option provision of Primary Care Services to cater for interim growth in patient numbers as a result of the Lubbethorpe Sustainable Urban Extension.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Executive Officer & Town Clerk had met the Children's Services Manager from the Leicestershire Partnership Trust who expressed an interest in providing Children's Community Health Services from the Thorpe Astley Medical Rooms, both the rooms and the venue were suitable. While the services were not a Doctors' Surgery, use for Children's Health Services provided a better use for the community and local area than the rooms standing empty or being used for storage.*
2. *Services at Kingsway Surgery had recently suffered due to reduced capacity and staffing issues. NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group had been working with the Surgery's Partners to address capacity and build in support to enable the partners to put a business plan together to address the current issues. While these issues were being addressed, the Surgery was closed on Thursday afternoons and alternative arrangements had been in place for emergency cover. The patient registration list has also been closed; however, it was due to reopen in December 2016.*
3. *There were concerns that the patient registration for Forest House may have been closed putting additional pressure on availability, NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group had not approved any closure and would be contacting the Forest House to confirm that their patient registration was open. In addition, patients had stated that Forest House was changing its operations by centralising GP appointments at Warren Lane and Nursing appointments at Park Drive, this was causing access issues for patients, particularly Braunstone Town residents, who had to travel to Warren Lane to see a GP, particularly impacting on elderly and vulnerable residents and families.*
4. *There were GP Practices based in Braunstone Park, within NHS Leicester Clinical Commissioning Group Area, which it was understood had spare capacity and were geographically closer to Braunstone Town than the Warren Lane Surgery, at present Braunstone Town was outside these practice boundaries, however, they presented a more accessible alternative which would reduce capacity pressure on the existing surgeries.*
5. *There was sufficient car parking space at the Centre, which provided good access to Thorpe Astley residents as well as Lubbethorpe residents and there was space for Centre expansion.*

40. **Shakespeare Park – Improvement & Development**

The Committee considered consultation comments, to finalise proposals and submit the planning application and to determine tender specifications for the playground and tennis court improvements (item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the consultation responses be noted and the actions identified in the report, including the submission of a Planning Application, be endorsed;
2. that the detailed schedule of improvements to the Playground, as attached at Appendix 1, be approved and that delegated authority be

- given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to make minor modifications where necessary and to draw up the tender specification and criteria and invite tenders for the work;
3. that the detailed schedule of improvements to the Tennis Courts, as attached at Appendix 2, be approved and that delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk to make minor modifications where necessary and to draw up the tender specification and criteria and invite tenders for the work; and
 4. that the updated Timescales, taking into account decisions in 1 to 3 above, attached at Appendix 3, be approved.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Consultation identified that there was general support from among the community, stakeholders and users for the improvements and the comments made could be accommodated within the proposals and future decisions to be made on the usage and operation of the facility.*
2. *To enable potential contractors to visit the playground to assess how they could meet our needs and to submit fully detailed and costed solutions for consideration.*
3. *To enable potential contractors to visit the tennis courts to assess how they could meet our needs and to submit fully detailed and costed solutions for consideration.*
4. *To provide a guide for the progression of the project, which could be amended accordingly, as appropriate.*

41. Medium to Long Term Priorities and Financial Planning

The Committee set out the context for the Council's medium to long term priorities and financial planning (item 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that each Standing Committee review and, where appropriate, update its objectives (Appendix 1 of the report) during the next cycle of meetings;

THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

2. that the current projections based on known financial pressures identified in the report be noted;
3. that the Council's Mission Statement and the Objectives for each Service Area be used as the basis for calculating the annual budget and any external funding sought;
4. that the Council's Reserves be used to invest in infrastructure and assets and in the development and remodelling of services, including the Town Council's operations;
5. that the Executive Officer and Town Clerk produce proposals aimed at mitigating the pressures on resources and the precept identified in the current projections for 2017/18 and 2018/19; and
6. that the Medium to Long Term Priorities and Financial Planning be revised and submitted at least on an annual basis.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that the objectives, which had originally been developed in 2011, were relevant to address current and emerging issues faced by the Council and the community.*
2. *To provide a foundation for preparing budget estimates for 2017/2018 and beyond.*
3. *To ensure the Council focusses its activity and spending given the future financial uncertainties.*
4. *To ensure the highest possible standards within the resources available in the future.*
5. *To meet the identified savings equivalent to the projected reduction in Council Tax Support Grant for 2017/2018 and beyond, to meet projected increases in expenditure and to enable continuous improvement.*
6. *In order that changed circumstances and revised predictions be incorporated into the Council's Medium to Long Term planning process to inform the Council's priorities and decisions.*

42. Arrangements for Future Management of Franklin Park Community Orchard/Meadow

The Committee noted that the meeting of the Franklin Park Community Orchard/Meadow Working Group on 24th August 2016 was the last and it received the minutes of the meeting for consideration and approval along with details of the future arrangements for the management of the Community Orchard (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. That the Franklin Park Community Orchard/Meadow Project Working Group be discontinued and that the responsibilities be undertaken directly by existing Standing Committees and the Citizens' Advisory Panel as follows:
 - a) Community Development Committee – to receive progress reports on community use and agree events and community activities,
 - b) Policy & Resources Committee – management of maintenance schedules and improvements undertaken by the Town Council, and
 - c) Citizen's Advisory Panel – engaged on any proposals for works, improvements or new activities (as appropriate),
2. that the minutes of the final meeting of the Franklin Park Community Orchard/Meadow Project Working Group held on 24th August 2016, attached as an Appendix to the report, be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair of the Policy & Resources Committee, and
3. that the hard work and dedication of the members of the Franklin Park Community Orchard/Meadow Project Working Group and the volunteers involved in the project be recognised in delivering the vision for a community orchard and meadow.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To recognise that intense management of the project was no longer*

required post permanent opening of the site to the public, while recognising that the work already invested in the Community Orchard/Meadow project needed to be continued and developed as a community and educational resource utilised by residents, local schools and community groups.

2. *To ensure that the minutes of the final meeting of the Working Group were considered and approved as an accurate record as required.*
3. *To recognise the important contribution the community and volunteers made to shaping the vision and their hard work and dedication in successfully delivering the project.*

43. Highways Grass Cutting

The Committee received background information, including issues and concerns which had arisen as a result of the reduction in the number of Highways Verge Cuts, and determined whether to finance additional grass cuts and make any recommendations as necessary for consideration as part of the budget estimates for 2017/2018 (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that Blaby District Council's offer to provide an additional (seventh) seasonal highway verge cut, provided this was match funded by the Town Council, be accepted from 2017, subject to the cost not exceeding £1,000 per annum; and
2. that a growth item of £1,000 be included in the Council's budget for 2017/2018 and beyond.

Reasons for Decision

1. *There had been deterioration in the visual amenity, especially during the late summer and early autumn and the offer to part-fund a seventh cut jointly with Blaby District Council would address this issue and was considered good value for money.*
2. *To ensure that sufficient budgetary provision was made.*

44. Use of Parks/Open Spaces for Events

The Committee considered a scheme and application process for community groups and third party organisations who wish to run community events on the Town Council's Parks and Open Spaces (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that, subject to the requirement to provide supporting risk assessments and template risk assessments being available from the Town Council, the application form and criteria, attached as Appendix A to the report, be adopted.

Reason for Decision

To provide a formal application procedure to apply for the use of open spaces in order to ensure that all the correct information about proposed events was provided by the applicant, including proper assessment and mitigation of risks, and to ensure that a consistent and formal approach was

in place for considering all applications.

45. Park & Open Spaces Winter Works Programme 2016/2017

The Committee considered items for inclusion on the Winter Works Programme for 2016/2017 for the Councils Parks, Open Spaces and Grounds (item 11 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the submitted Winter Works Programme for 2016/2017 be approved.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that work identified could be prioritised and scheduled accordingly.

46. Insurance Renewal and Valuation of Property

The Committee considered the renewal of the Council's Insurance arrangements and whether to undertake a valuation of buildings and estates (item 12 on the agenda).

It was noted that the Executive Officer & Town Clerk had been in discussions with the insurance broker concerning the additional policy condition on Tree Felling (attached at Appendix 1 of the report) and that they had agreed to cover tree felling activities undertaken by Council staff, provided these were nominal and only undertaken on council property.

RESOLVED that the agreement with the Council's current Insurance Broker be extended by two years to 31st October 2019 and the terms of the extension, as set out in the report, subject to the inclusion of tree felling (as set out above), be approved.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that arrangements were in place to provide a competitive insurance quote and to ensure that the Council's assets were protected from underinsurance.

47. External Audit 2015/2016

The Committee noted that the External Audit was completed on 29th September 2016 and no matters were raised concerning the Town Council's accounts and governance for the year ended 31st March 2016 (item 13 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that it be noted that the External Audit for 2015/2016 financial year was completed on 29th September 2015.

Reason for Decision

An unqualified opinion was given by the External Auditor, Grant Thornton, on the Council's Annual Return for 2015/2016.

48. Local Government Finance Settlement 2017 to 2018: Technical Consultation

The Committee considered a response to the Government's consultation on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2017/2018 (item 14 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that Braunstone Town Council oppose the Council Tax Referendum Principles for Parish and Town Councils unless other funding policies were adjusted as follows:
 - a) Billing Authorities being required to pass on the Localisation of Council Tax Support Scheme compensation funding to parish/town councils pro-rata to the Tax Base, and
 - b) a proportionate percentage share (to the Tax Base) of locally collected business rates collected within the parish being passed on to the relevant parish / town council; and
2. that in allowing 50% of locally collected business rates to be retained by local authorities, proper safeguards should be included to ensure that the planning process was determined solely on planning grounds and that in business plans for economic growth there was no linkage or justification made based on business rates receipt.

Reasons for Decision

1. *Parish/Town Councils only major source of income for revenue spending was through Council Tax precept and the supporting Council Tax Support Grant. Restrictions on precept rises pose risks to Parish / Town Council budgets should Council Tax Support Grant be withdrawn or reduced. Many businesses benefit from services provided in the local community and Parish / Town Councils have a role in ensuring their communities are sustained with employment opportunities, an income stream from business rates would provide stability and reduce the need to consider precept rises in excess of 2% or £5.*
2. *To ensure credibility and public confidence in the planning process and in the setting of local business rates.*

49. Establishment of Community Centres Working Group

The Committee appointed a Member Working Group to review Community Centres Hire Terms & Conditions and charges, including discounts and promoting use of facilities, in order to report prior to consideration of the Council's budget for 2017/2018 (item 15 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that a Community Centres Working Group be established to review Hire Terms & Conditions and charges, including discounts and promoting use of facilities;
2. that Councillors Nick Brown (Chair), Anthea Ambrose and Phil Moitt be appointed to serve on the Working Group; and

3. that the Working Group report its recommendations to Policy & Resources Committee on 12th January 2017 for consideration as part of the Council's budget for 2017/2018, and after which the Working Group be demised.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure fit for purpose and realistic Hire Terms & Conditions which could be effectively implemented.*
2. *To appoint Councillors to oversee the review.*
3. *To ensure that the proposals could be considered in the context of estimating the Council's income and expenditure for the next financial year and beyond and to formally wind up the Working Group once its task had been completed.*

50. Financial Comparisons

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1st April 2015 to 30th September 2016 (item 16 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

There were no issues of concern with the income and expenditure against the budget to date, other than the Pensions overspend, which was being reviewed as part of the budget setting process and medium to long term financial strategy.

51. Approval of Accounts

The Committee considered payments from 17th August until 18th October 2016 (item 17 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the Period 17th August until 18th October 2016 be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

52. Braunstone Town Library – Lease Agreement

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

The Committee considered proposals from the tenant, Leicestershire County Council, for amendments to the lease agreement, and to sub-let, in respect of the Braunstone Town Library premises (item 18 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the Executive Officer & Town Clerk's proposals for amendments to clauses 12(a), (d) and (e) of the Library Lease agreement between Braunstone Town Council (the Landlord) and Leicestershire County Council (the Tenant) be approved;
2. that subject to the agreement by the Tenant of the proposed amended clauses, approved in 1 above, delegated authority be given to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to make amendments to the wording on the advice of the Council's solicitor, where this would be required for legal reasons and did not change the meaning of the amendments (approved in 1 above), and to conclude the necessary agreements to implement the changes to the Library Lease agreement; and
3. that the Landlord agree in principle to the request of the tenant under clause 2 (16) of the Library Lease to enter into a sub-lease arrangement with a Community Library Group, subject to the full proposed sub-lease agreement being submitted to the Landlord for prior approval by a meeting of the Town Council's Policy & Resources Committee.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To recognise that changes in service delivery methods would be required in order to retain Braunstone Town Library, while continuing to protect Braunstone Civic Centre's business and Braunstone Town Council from additional liabilities and costs over the term of the Library Lease agreement.*
2. *To avoid any further delay in reaching agreement on the Deed of Variation, should the Town Council's proposals be acceptable to Leicestershire County Council, and to enable legal agreements to be approved and drawn up and technical amendments to be made as required.*
3. *To enable further discussions to be held on the detailed arrangements and provisions of a sub-lease arrangement with a Community Library Group and to ensure that any proposed sub-lease agreement was considered and approved by the Committee.*

53. Land Adjacent to M1 Bridge, Thorpe Astley and Land off Meridian East

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 that they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reason for exception – Commercial Interests.*

The Committee considered entering into arrangements for the legal transfer of open space adjacent to the new M1 Bridge and Meridian East (item 19 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that, in respect of Land Adjacent to M1 Bridge, Thorpe Astley and Land off Meridian East, the Town Council pursue options as identified in the "Proposed Way Forward" section of the report.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Town Council was fully conversant with obligations and liabilities while enabling appropriate plans to be drawn up and implemented which would benefit residents of Thorpe Astley with useable recreation space, while in the case of the land adjacent to the M1 Bridge, provide appropriate screening for local residents reducing any adverse environmental impact.

54. Parks & Grounds Plant Vehicles and Machinery

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 that they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reason for exception – Commercial Interests.*

The Committee considered future options for fleet vehicles (item 20 on the agenda).

The Committee also received a supplementary report providing an update on future options for fleet vehicles and revised recommendations.

RESOLVED

1. that one of the quotations from Lex Autolease for the lease of a new vehicle be accepted up to a sum of £2891.28 and that the Executive Officer & Town Clerk be given delegated powers to assess the individual specifications of each vehicle and make arrangements for a 5 year lease on the vehicle most suitable for the Town Council's requirements; and
2. that the lease on the current vehicle through Lex Autolease be extended until such time as a new vehicle became available.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To acquire one new vehicle for grounds maintenance that was suitable for the work required.*
2. *To allow the most competitive quotation to be accepted.*

55. Organisation Review – 12 Month Review of Implementation (Community Centres Staff)

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

The Committee considered the results of a 12 month review of the implementation of the Organisation Review for Duty Officer – Community Centres and Cleaner & Premises Operatives and considered proposals to address the issues identified (item 21 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the review proposals 1 – 5, listed in the report (highlighted bold) be approved with an implementation date of 1st November 2016.

Reason for Decision

The approach provided the Town Council with flexibility, including providing flexible arrangements where there were changes in centre bookings without impacting upon contracted hours and reviewing duties and responsibilities to ensure the most efficient and effective operations for the benefit of centres users and hirers.

56. Termination of the Meeting

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

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 _____