

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE

THURSDAY 13th JUNE 2024 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Councillor Anthea Ambrose (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Andy Evans and Tracey Shepherd.

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

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

1. Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

2. Disclosures of Interest

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

3. Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, members of the public may attend the meeting for the purpose of submitting a petition and/or making representations, giving evidence or answering questions in respect of any item of business included on the agenda.

There were no members of the public at the meeting.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held 15th June 2023

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th June 2023 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

5. External Audit 2022/20232

The Sub-Committee noted that the External Audit was completed on 14th August 2023 and confirmed that for the year ended 31st March 2023, the Town Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return was in accordance with the proper practices and that relevant legislation had been met (item 5 on the agenda).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

Based on the Council's accounts and governance arrangements for the year that ended on 31st March 2023, the External Auditor's opinion was that the Council had complied with proper practices and relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been met.

6. Managing Cash and Reserves

The Sub-Committee received the context of the current cash flow position and the approved actions to ensure the Council had sufficient cash and reserves to function (item 6 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. that the position with *Cash Flow*, as detailed in the relevant section of the report and in the cash flow forecast at Appendix 1, be noted;
2. that the *Implemented Measures* be confirmed as sufficient to avoid future reoccurrences of cash at the bank becoming critically low;
3. that no further action be taken concerning an overdraft facility at the bank and consideration be given to other potential contingency measures; and
4. that Policy & Resources Committee consider updated and revised Cash Flow forecasts, and appropriate contingency measures to address any overspend, following the end of the quarter period on 30th September and 31st December 2024.

Reasons for Decisions

1. *The position in respect of the Council's cash reserves and overspends during 2023/2024, were all matters that the Council had addressed.*
2. *The Council had implemented mitigating measures for ensuring it had cash reserves during 2024/2025 and beyond.*
3. *Cash Flow forecasts were no longer showing a predicted deficit in April 2025; however, the situation may change.*
4. *To review the cash flow position to ensure that short and long term proposals would resolve the issue and, if necessary, further action could be taken to avoid a repeat occurrence.*

7. Internal Audit Report 2023/2024 and Internal Audit arrangements 2024/2025

The Sub-Committee received the Internal Auditor's Report in respect of compliance with relevant procedures and controls in operation during the financial year ended 31st March 2024 and considered appointing an Internal Auditor for 2024/2025 (item 7 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. that the Internal Audit Report (attached at Appendix 1 of the report) and assessment of the internal control objectives (attached at Appendix 2 of the report) be received and noted;
2. that the recommendations for improvement, along with the proposed response, as set out in the Internal Audit Improvement Action Plan (attached at Appendix 3 of the report), be adopted; and
3. that the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils Internal Audit Service be appointed to undertake the Town Council's Internal Audit for the Year Ending 31st March 2024.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Internal Auditor, having tested all the aspects of the Council's internal controls:*
 - i. *noted that in respect of Internal Control Objective D, the level of general reserves at the end of the 2023/2024 financial year was insufficient and did not meet the guidelines laid out in the JPAG Practitioners' Guide 2024 paragraphs 5.31 to 5.39; and*
 - ii. *was satisfied that in all significant respects all other Internal Control Objectives were achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the Council's needs.*
2. *To ensure that the observations of the Internal Audit would be addressed with appropriate and balanced measures.*
3. *To ensure arrangements were in place for compliance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.*

8. Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024

The Sub-Committee received a report to enable it to review and ensure sound systems of internal control, including the management of risk and the preparation of accounting statements during the financial year ended 31st March 2024 and to recommend to Council adoption of the Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024 (item 8 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the systems of internal control and management of risk, as set out in the report and in the updated Corporate Risk Register at Appendix 1, be approved and confirmed as sound; and that Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/2024, attached at Appendix 2 of the report, be completed, signed and submitted accordingly.

Reason for Decision

Having reviewed the control measures for each of the areas listed on the Annual Governance Statement and also the assessment of risks facing the Council and associated mitigating measures, the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee were confident that to the best of their knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024, there were sound systems of internal control and management of risk.

9. Accounting Statements 2023/2024

The Sub-Committee received the End of Year Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2024 in order to recommend to Council adoption of the Accounting Statements 2023/2024 (item 9 on the agenda).

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. that Section 2, Accounting statements 2023/24, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2024, attached at Appendix 9 of the report, be completed, signed and submitted accordingly; and
2. that it be noted that the Exercise of Public Rights would be undertaken from 1st July 2024 until Friday 9th August 2024.

Reasons for Decision

1. *The Corporate Governance Sub-Committee, having carried out an assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's financial arrangements, concluded that there were sound systems of internal control. The Internal Auditor, having reviewed the annual accounts, found the Accounting Statements to have been prepared on the correct basis and were supported by adequate audit trails to underlying records.*
2. *It was good practice to minute the dates of the Exercise of Public Rights upon approval of the Accounting Statements by the Council.*

10. Automatic Payments (Direct Debit, Standing Order and BACS)

The Sub-Committee received details of current direct debit, standing order and BACS payments for review and endorsement in accordance with Financial Regulations 6.6 to 6.8 (item 10 on the agenda).

RESOLVED

1. that the list of suppliers paid by variable direct debit, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, those listed in black text be renewed and those listed in red text be cancelled;
2. that the supplier paid by use of a banker's standing order, as detailed in the table under Standing Order Payments in the report, be renewed; and
3. that the list of suppliers paid by BACS/CHAPS, attached at Appendix 2 of the report, those listed in black text be renewed and those listed in red text be cancelled.

Reasons for Decision

1. *To ensure that authorisations for variable direct debit payments were reviewed.*
2. *To ensure that authorisations for standing order payments were reviewed.*
3. *To ensure that authorisations for BACS/CHAPS payments were reviewed.*

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

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.

These minutes are a draft and are subject to consideration for approval at the next meeting June 2025.