

**BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT BRAUNSTONE CIVIC CENTRE**

**THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7.30PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Anthea Ambrose (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Shabbir Aslam, Councillor Nick Brown (Chair), Andy Evans, Rebecca Lunn, Sam Maxwell, Tracey Shepherd, Christiane Startin-Lorent and Robert Waterton.

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

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

**23. Apologies**

No apologies for absence were received. However, Councillors Shabbir Aslam and Nick Brown were delayed and arrived later in the meeting. Councillor Aslam arrived prior to the conclusion of item 6 and Councillor Brown arrived prior to the conclusion of item 8. The Vice-Chair opened the meeting and chaired for the duration of the meeting.

**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 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.

**26. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 were circulated (item 4 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

## 27. **Financial Comparisons**

The Committee received Financial Comparisons for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 (item 5 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

*Reason for Decision*

*While utilities expenditure was over budget, this would be partly off-set by a new tariff agreement later in the year. In addition, facilities income was higher. Therefore, the Council's net expenditure for the period was on target.*

## 28. **End of Quarter Financial Position – Income, Expenditure, Cash and Balances**

The Committee received a summary of the Council's Income, Expenditure, Cash and Balances for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (item 6 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that the end of quarter financial position to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024, as detailed in Appendices 1 to 3, be noted;
2. that it be noted that *Cash at the Bank* remained on target compared to the projections considered by the Committee in June 2024, as detailed in the relevant section of the report and at Appendix 4; and
3. that a report be submitted to the meeting of the Committee, scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024, assessing the end of quarter figures to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and, if necessary, proposing options for further reducing expenditure up to April 2025.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *There were no issues of concern with management of the Council's Finances.*
2. *The forecasts considered in June 2024 were on track; however, this was based on using cash reserves towards the end of the financial year and in the first month of the next financial year prior to receipt of precept income.*
3. *Given the projected low balances predicted at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025; reserve options need to be prepared for consideration.*

## 29. **Income from Fees and Charges**

The Committee received an assessment of the impact of the price increases of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 following the end of the first quarter (30<sup>th</sup> June 2024) (item 7 on the agenda).

## **RESOLVED**

1. that the report be noted; and
2. that an increase to fees and charges, ideally based on Consumer Price Index Inflation, be considered by Policy & Resources Committee and Council in January 2025, as part of the budget setting process for 2025/2026, for implementation in April 2025.

### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *Income from fees and charges was higher than budgeted and compared to the same period last year; therefore, the price increases had not had a negative impact on demand.*
2. *To avoid a huge jump in prices in subsequent years given the pressure on the precept for 2025/2026.*

## **30. Climate Change Strategy**

The Committee considered, following consultation, a revised and updated Climate Change Strategy to ensure that it would be relevant, fit for purpose and that the Council had a framework for delivering its commitments (item 8 on the agenda).

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk reported that the National Territorial Footprint figures for 2024 were now available via the Impact Tool and would be included at Figure B of Appendix 2 (Parish Carbon Calculator). The total National territorial footprint in 2024 was 15.4t CO<sub>2</sub>e.

## **RESOLVED**

1. that the definition of Net Zero, as set out in Section 3, Corporate Activities of Braunstone Town Council, be amended to align with the international definition; and
2. that, subject to 1 above, and the inclusion of the National Territorial Footprint figures for 2024 at Figure B of Appendix 2 of the proposed Strategy; **THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the proposed revisions to the Climate Change and Environmental Strategy (highlighted red at Appendix 1 of the report) be approved and adopted.

### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *To apply the internationally recognised criteria of Net-Zero, ensuring that the commitment was both robust and deliverable.*
2. *The Climate Change & Environmental Strategy provided the framework for the Town Council's response to Climate Change; therefore, it was important to ensure that it was fit for purpose, met the needs and aspirations of residents', and would be deliverable.*

### 31. **Climate Reduction Initiative: installation of Solar PV Battery Storage**

The Committee considered options, proposals, costs, financial savings and the impact on the Council's Carbon footprint of installing battery storage for the Solar PV (item 9 on the agenda).

#### **RESOLVED**

1. that the update on *Battery Storage*, as set out in the respective section of the report, be endorsed;
2. that the position with the *Finance*, as set out in the relevant section of the report be received and noted and that the installation saving, and balance of Public Works Loan, of £18,789, be put towards the costs of battery storage; and
3. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to approve a scheme for installing battery storage to the solar PV panels at the Council's facilities, as appropriate, provided the total cost of the scheme did not exceed £20,000 (excluding VAT).

#### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *To deliver the Council's Climate Change & Environmental Objectives, reduce the Council's Carbon footprint, make savings and generate revenue.*
2. *To note the underspend from the installations in 2023 was allocated to battery storage options to further reduce the Council's carbon footprint.*
3. *To fully assess the options, proposals, costs, financial savings and impact on the Council's carbon footprint, and to ensure installation works could be carried out prior to 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024.*

### 32. **Improvements to Walking and Cycle Routes**

The Committee received an update on the delivery of proposals for improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes (item 10 on the agenda).

#### **RESOLVED**

1. that progress on the delivery of proposals for improvements to the connections between walking and cycling routes (as shown at Appendix 1), and detailed in the report and schedule (attached at Appendix 2), be endorsed; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to act on behalf of Braunstone Town Council in respect of agreeing to route signage proposals and post locations.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *The scheme would provide improvements for pedestrians and cyclists connecting facilities, amenities and communities across Braunstone Town, Meridian and Thorpe Astley.*
2. *To ensure the sign posts would be suitably located and that the destinations used on the signs catered for by both longer distance and local pedestrians and cyclists.*

**33. Absence Management Policy & Procedure**

The Committee considered, following consultation, a revised and updated Absence Management Policy & Procedure for adoption (item 11 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the proposed revisions to the Absence Management Policy & Procedure, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and implemented from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

*Reason for Decision*

*To set out the Council's approach to managing absence recognising that while employees may be prevented from attending work through ill health, the Council had a duty to maintain service delivery and minimise disruption.*

**34. Review of Officer's Code of Conduct**

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Officers' Code of Conduct in order to approve these for consultation (item 12 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that the proposed revisions to the Officers' Code of Conduct, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for consultation with staff, Councillors and the Council's HR Advisor, as detailed in the *Timescales and Implementation* section of the report; and
2. that any proposed amendments be presented to the next meeting of Policy & Resources Committee, proposed for 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 for consideration and approval.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *To ensure that staff, Councillors and the Council's HR Advisor could input into the proposed changes to the Officers' Code of Conduct to ensure that it would be practical and fit for purpose.*
2. *To ensure the highest standards of conduct from all Town Council employees. The code outlines existing law, regulations and conditions of service and provided further guidance to assist managers and employees in their day-to-day work.*

### **35. Outside Bodies Report**

The Committee received reports from members of Outside Bodies:

#### **a) Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils**

No Report due to no recent meeting.

#### **b) Shakespeare Park Sports Pavilion Management Association**

A meeting of the Committee of the Shakespeare Park Management Association took place on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024. Both of the Council's representatives, Councillors Andy Evans and Sam Maxwell, had given their apologies.

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk was able to attend the second part of the meeting and fed back as follows:

- a) there had been a disagreement between the operator of Hazel's Café and the Bowls Club concerning access to the Pavilion Clubroom, kitchen and toilet facilities; the Management Association was due to put the suggested solution in writing to the operator for further consideration;
- b) the Treasurer had spoken to Blaby District Council who stated that the Association could complete a form to apply for an exemption from National Non-Domestic Rates; the Committee agreed that if an exemption was approved then there would be no need to pursue charitable status;
- c) discussion took place surrounding hard core, which had been laid by the Bowls Club; the Council would be seeking advice on the flooding risks given permission had not been sought;
- d) discussion also took place on anti-climb paint which had been painted on the perimeter fence of the bowling green by a bowls club member; some of the football club children had got this on their clothes; the Chief Executive & Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council had not given permission and would seek legal and insurance advice on the implications; and
- e) the Chair and Secretary of the Association resigned their positions and their membership of the Committee; an interim Chair was appointed; the Secretary position remains vacant.

### **36. Approval of Accounts**

The Committee considered payments from 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 until 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 (item 14 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the list of Approved Expenditure Transactions for the period 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 until 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 be approved.

*Reason for Decision*

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

**37. Franklin Park Incident**

The Committee received an update concerning the incident at Franklin Park, a summary of action taken to support the community, and discussed ongoing matters (report circulated at the meeting and filed as item 15 on the agenda).

**RESOLVED**

1. that the circulated report be noted; and
2. that the *Town Council Response*, as set out in the relevant section of the report, be endorsed and future actions supported.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *The incident on Franklin Park on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September and subsequent death of Mr Kohli had been deeply difficult and traumatic for the local community.*
2. *To endorse both the action taken to support the community, and to support the ongoing approach and future actions proposed.*

**38. Mossdale Meadows Flood Alleviation and Drainage Improvements**

**RESOLVED** that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is recommended that the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reasons for exception – Commercial Interest and Legal Advice*

The Committee received tenders and determined timescales and proposed financing for rebuilding the Culvert and carrying out flood alleviation and drainage improvements to Mossdale Meadows (item 16 on the agenda).

Three quotes had been received and a request made to submit a quote to undertake the high priority works only. Quotes had been received from two of the contractors and included in the report. The third contractors quote had been subsequently received for the high priority works at £244,867.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the tender documents for the full works be received;
2. that the recommendations for the proposed adjusted works, to only include the high priority work on the culvert bridge and car drainage, be approved;
3. that the quotation received from Contractor B for the adjusted (high priority) work, be accepted;
4. THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the following resolution be approved "to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing,

- Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £128,226 over the borrowing term of 40 years for the cost of the Mosssdale Meadows flood alleviation and drainage improvements; the annual loan repayments will come to around £7,898.36”;
5. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, to put together a borrowing application, with supporting evidence, including a financial appraisal, for submission to Council; and
  6. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to:
    - a) determine the detailed arrangements, timings and work schedules,
    - b) make minor modifications to the design and installation proposals within the delegated spending limits allowed under paragraph 11.1i of the Financial Regulations,
    - c) award the contract;and
  7. that the updated draft timeline for required work be approved.

*Reasons for Decision*

1. *To receive tender quotations received on the full Flood alleviation work on Mosssdale Meadows.*
2. *To acknowledge the substantial costs for undertaking the full Flood Alleviation work and to consider a reduced project in order to undertake only high priority work.*
3. *To note that this was the best value for money being the lowest quotation received.*
4. *To enable the application assessment to be progressed and submitted for consideration by the Assessor on behalf of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.*
5. *To enable the detailed supporting evidence to be gathered and submitted with the Council's application without undue delay. To ensure best financial management to meet the Project's costs.*
6. *To ensure that the work to the Flood Alleviation Scheme could be undertaken in a timely manner.*
7. *To provide a plan of works to be carried out and target dates to work towards.*

**39. Improvements to Impey Close Play Area and Open Space**

**RESOLVED** that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is recommended that the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reasons for exception – Commercial Interest and Legal Advice*

The Committee received tenders and financing options for the refurbishment and enhancement of Impey Close Play Area, along with an update concerning the procurement process for the refurbishment and enhancement of Impey Close Open Space (item 17 on the agenda).



## **RESOLVED**

1. that the shortlisted proposals be received;
2. that Contractor E be selected to undertake the work;
3. that funding sources be investigated to help towards the cost of the proposed work; and
4. that the amended timescales for the project be approved.

### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *To receive proposals from shortlisted tenders to be considered for the work.*
2. *To ensure that the chosen contractor provided a project that would be compatible with the Town Council's vision and provided a fully inclusive and exciting project for the Impey Close playground.*
3. *To ensure that all sources of funding towards the cost of the project were considered.*
4. *To provide a suitable timescale for the project to be undertaken.*

#### **40. Nursery and Pre-school Provision at Thorpe Astley Community Centre**

**RESOLVED** that in view of the special / confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is recommended that the press/public be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw (Standing Orders 3.5 and 3.7 apply). *Reasons for exception – Commercial Interest and Legal Advice*

The Committee considered variations to the bespoke hire contract for the provision of a nursery and pre-school at Thorpe Astley Community Centre (item 18 on the agenda).

## **RESOLVED**

1. that a 20% reduction be applied to the annual fee paid by the provider for the academic year 2024/2025; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to make arrangements with the provider on how the annual payment, including 20% discount, would be applied.

### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *To continue to meet the needs of Thorpe Astley residents and ensure that the nursery/pre-school remained sustainable and use of the Centre was maximised.*
2. *To enable monthly cash flows of both the provider and Council to be considered.*

#### 41. Land adjacent to the New M1 Bridge, Thorpe Astley

**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 and Legal Advice.*

The Committee received an update concerning proposals for transferring the land adjacent to the new road and bridge at Thorpe Astley to the Town Council (item 19 on the agenda).

#### **RESOLVED**

1. that it be noted that the agreed remedial works had been completed and that the new parkland was now open for public use;
2. that it be noted that the land transfer process was underway; and
3. that a risk assessment of the boundary with the Motorway be undertaken to identify any risks and potential mitigating actions; and that the assessment be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

#### *Reasons for Decision*

1. *The agreed remedial works had been carried out in consultation with the Town Council and to the agreed standard.*
2. *Both parties had appointed solicitors who had commenced the transfer process.*
3. *To ensure that the Council assessed the level of risk to public safety and took mitigating action where necessary.*

The meeting closed at 9.55pm.

#### **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 proposed meeting scheduled on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024.*