

BRACKNELL TOWN COUNCIL
STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
27th September 2016

Present: Chairman Cllr: Chris Turrell.
Cllrs: Gill Birch, Isabel Mattick, Malcolm Tullet, Sanjeev Prasad.

Apologies: Cllrs: Paul Bidwell, Marc Brunel-Walker, Peter Heydon, Iain McCracken,
Jennie McCracken,

In Attendance: R Reeve (TC), J Burgess (OSM).

The meeting opened at 7.30pm and closed at 8.45pm

1476 Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest, given that the item on South Hill Park Trust had been deferred.

1477 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 14th June 2016 were accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

1478 Matters arising out of the minutes not to be discussed elsewhere - None.

1479 Report from the External Auditor for the year ended 31 March 2016

The unqualified or 'clean' opinions from both the External and the Internal Auditors were noted. The TC/DTC were thanked for again ensuring BTC achieved this outcome.

1480 Appointment of Internal Auditor for the year ended 31 March 2017

It was agreed to continue with the BTC Internal Auditor, Claire Connell ACA, for the 2016/17 audit year.

1481 Financial Report – 2016/17 year

The report of income and expenditure against budget for months one to five for the 2016/17 year was reviewed and noted by councillors, together with the notes of the Budget Monitoring Group meeting held on 6th September. Overall spending was within budget, and income was running ahead of expectations.

1482 Corporate and Business Service Risks

The Corporate Risk Assessment Register update was noted and agreed, subject to the wording of the Great Hollands pavilion re-build risk needing to reflect the BTC impact of failure to progress as planned – this would be revised for the next version. Following a question, the TC advised that no information had been received as yet on any BTC impact of BFC services transformation.

1483 Health and Safety

An update on Health and Safety matters was provided and Councillors noted actions being taken to deal with problems that had arisen in this period and that the benefit of additional H&S training be considered.

1484 Great Hollands pavilion update

Site surveys and investigations had been progressed, and outline plans for the new building presented to the GHP Working Group. Our project funds available were still £1.7m, and costings recently provided had shown that both designs submitted would exceed this budget. The cost reports were therefore to be further reviewed at the next GHP working group meeting for completeness and reasonableness.

The Pavilion Nursery had decided not to pursue a grant application for siting their proposed building at Great Hollands, after having to vacate the grounds of Wooden Hill School next year, but had thanked us for offering a site. **Councillors noted progress and agreed approaches as outlined.**

1485 Birch Hill Nursery update

The Birch Hill nursery was waiting on the outcomes of their DfE funding application in order to be able to relocate to Birch Hill recreation Ground, but had already provided designs for their building on the site.

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Planning approval was to be sought soon, and they would reimburse our legal costs. **Councillors noted update for the relocation of Birch Hill nursery, and next steps planned.**

1486 Computers upgrade

Recent IT improvements had included laptop computers, more back up disks, improved modems and also upgraded software which would help the Council perform much better. The additional spending over budget (£2000 estimate) was to be funded from the uncommitted reserve for future Brooke House spending. **Councillors approved funding from the Brooke House contingency balance in the current year.**

1487 Bracknell Volunteers register

The details of a Bracknell Volunteers Register were considered. This was being set up by Involve for the Bracknell Forest area, with £1000 annual funding from BTC being requested. Councillors were not willing to approve this level of funding at present and had some concerns about details of the scheme appearing onerous for volunteers as proposed. **Councillors proposed that the Clerk write to Involve to agree a pooled approach to recruiting volunteers locally, provided this was not going to be a barrier for volunteering, but that BTC did not wish to make an annual contribution at present.**

1488 Valuation of assets

Linked to our insurance policy extension, we had had our assets revalued. The figures were more accurate now for insurance purposes, but around twice as high as previously, **Councillors noted the outcomes of the asset revaluation and planned use in determining our future buildings insurance requirements.**

1489 Neighbourhood Plan update

Work was currently being undertaken to prepare the draft Neighbourhood Plan in advance of an inspector examination next year. Progress made and a request for further community involvement was being flagged up in the next edition of Bracknell Matters which was to be published soon. In response to a question, it was explained that it was important for momentum to be maintained, but that this was made less urgent by the lack of significant CIL receipts expected to accrue to this Council and that it was also important for the correct process to be followed. **Councillors noted progress made.**

1490 Response to DCLG consultation – introduction of referendum requirement for an increase in Council Tax beyond £5 per band D household

It was outlined that the consultation is on proposals which, if implemented, would mean that the Council would fall within the scope of capping from next year for precept rises greater than 2%, or £5, unless it held a referendum. The estimated cost of a referendum of BTC's electorate was £100,000. An exemption to the referendum is proposed for transfers of services from district to parish if approved by both. The wording of a response was agreed, based on Councillors being reluctant to see imposition of capping or a referendum at the town and parish level.

1491 Approach to digital mapping – way forward

It was hoped to implement the same digital mapping provider as Bracknell Forest Council and to negotiate for this from the end of the contract with our existing mapping provider in February. **Councillors agreed proposed action in potentially switching to the BFC Digital Mapping provider.**

1492 Quality scheme – next level

Councillors were advised of requirements for achieving the Local Council Award Scheme at a higher 'Quality' level. BTC already complied with most of the criteria, with steps needed were outlined. These were reasonably straightforward except evidence of the budget being linked to a community plan would realistically need to wait for the budget cycle next year. **Councillors agreed an approach of working towards achieving the Quality Award at a higher 'quality level' for late 2017**

Next Meeting – 8th November at 7.30pm at Brooke House.

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SignedDated