

Minutes

Strategy & Finance Committee Meeting



Date	24/01/2023
Time	19:00 - 21:30
Location	Council Chamber Brooke House
Present	Cllrs: Gill Birch, Dai Roberts, Jennie Green, Isabel Mattick, Chris Turrell , Diana Henfrey.
Apologies	Sanjeev Prasad, Marc Brunel-Walker, Paul Bidwell, James Alexander Cllr Gilbe attended virtually
In Attendance	Jackie Burgess Town Clerk

Minutes of the Strategy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 24.01.23

SF1 / 23 – The meeting started at 7pm with a presentation form South Hill Park Trust given by Craig Titley CEO and Mark Hooper Director, Learning, Participation & Community Engagement, followed by a question and answer session.

SF2 / 23 - Declarations of Interest – there were no declarations of interest

SF3 / 23 – Minutes – The minutes of the meeting held on 27th September were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting.

SF4 / 23 - Matters Arising from the Minutes

- Thames Water works at Jocks Lane will be completed in March 2023
- The Ullswater Play area consultation has been arranged for 15th February at 12 noon
- Vehicles – the order for the two new electric vehicles has been placed and delivery is expected April/May 2023
- Birch Hill Toilets. Work is expected to be completed by the end of February 2023
- Open Spaces leases. The leases for the 3 additional play areas have been completed
- King Charles portrait. The Custodian of the Official royal image library has confirmed that the new portrait is not yet available and that the late Queens portrait should stay in position until the new portrait is available.

SF5 / 23 - Budget Monitoring Working Group

To Note the notes of the Budget Monitoring Working Group held on 13th December 2022

SF6 / 23 - Community Events Working Group

The Chairman of the Community Events Working Group gave an update. Everyone involved in the Remembrance Day event was thanked for their contribution to a well organised event. As with all events of this magnitude improvements can always be made and a review will be undertaken at the next working group event.

SF7 / 23 - Annual Grant Applications

Grant Applicant	Proposed Grant
4 th Bracknell Sea Scout Group	£3,000
ABC to Read	£1,000
Autism Berkshire	£1,500
Bracknell Forest Natural History Society	£ 200
Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre	£1,500
Berkshire County Blind Society	£2,000
Bracknell and District Parkinsons Branch	£1,000
Create Hope	£1,000
Bracknell Twinning Association	£ 500
CAB	£6,500
First Days Childrens Charity	£1,000

Home Start	£5,000
Keep Mobile Country Tours	£1,500
St Pauls Contact Centre	£1,000
The Look In Café	£3,000
Wokingham Job Support Centre	£1,500
Youthline	£6,500
Jealotts Hill Landshare	£8,500
South Hill Park Trust	£135,000

It was AGREED that the above grants as recommended by the Grants Working Group would be recommended to Full Council for ratification with the South Hill Park Trust being paid monthly, all other grants will be paid in one instalment in May 2023.

SF8 / 23 - Lily Hill Park

The annual report on Lily Hill Park was reviewed and a discussion was held on the contribution to Lily Hill Park for the next five years. It was AGREED that the Committee recommended to Full Council that the contribution for 2023/24 is £13,420. It is proposed that this is a 5 year agreement with annual RPI applied and a review in 2028/29. The Town Clerk to discuss with the management the potential of using this site for one of the BTC events.

SF9 / 23 - Jealotts Community Land Share

The following item was moved to the Confidential section

SF10 / 23 - Budget 2023/24

The Committee considered the following documents

- Recreational charges, Room Hire Charges and Cemetery Charges
- Draft Budget 2023/24

The draft budget proposes a 3% increase on the precept which equates to a rise of £2.84 per band D to £97.35. Bracknell Town Council has been very prudent with its reserves over the last few years and was lucky to have been able to bring in funds during the pandemic. These reserves have been compiled in order that Bracknell Town Council can maintain its buildings and open spaces as well as take on 3 new play areas and the management of the public toilets at Birch Hill. This year (2023/24) Bracknell Town Council will use some of these reserves to carry out essential maintenance to their buildings. These documents support this and also the realignment of our EMR. Work was carried out in 2022/23 and we need to consolidate on this work by installing solar panels at 3 of our sites (subject to building surveys) and replacing boilers with more energy efficient ones. Also included is the upgrading of fire alarms. Money has also been allocated to continue our investment in moving to more economical and electric vehicles where possible and continuing to invest in our staff by offering training and improvements to our facilities. Also include is membership of the Local Government Association as this gives the Council important updates.

Committee recommended to Full Council that the increase in charges by 5% this year and next, the precept increase of 3% and the draft budget be ratified at the meeting on 21st February 2023

SF11 / 23 - CIL

The CIL report was NOTED

SF12 / 23 - Exceptional Funding Grant

The exception funding grant from the South Berkshire Scouts (9th Bracknell and 1st Easthampstead) was review and it was AGREED that a grant of £396.00 be applied.

SF13 / 23 - Request for the installation of a Salt Bin

The Committee discussed the request for Bracknell Town Council to support the installation of a Salt bin at Wylam and it was AGREED that at this point the Council could not support the request

SF14 / 23 - Traffic Survey at Mill Park

Following previous discussions the Town Clerk has obtained a quotation to carry out a traffic survey at Mill Park to see how often access to Mill Park is obstructed by the queue for McDonalds and how often cars are parked on the double yellow lines making access to the park dangerous at times. The quotation was reviewed and the Town Clerk given the authority to move ahead with the work and take the advice of the Company as when to best carry out the survey.

SF15 / 23 - External Auditors

To NOTE that PKF Little John LLP have been appointed as the External Auditor for Bracknell Town Council from 2022/23 to 2026/27

SF16 / 23 - Code of Conduct and Civility and Respect Pledge

The Committee review the following documents

- Code of Conduct
- Civility and Respect Pledge
- Councillor Officer protocol

All Councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct. The Committee review the proposed changes to the Code Of Conduct and Councillor Officer protocol and RECOMMEND it to Full Council for APPROVAL.

The committee RECOMMENDED to Full Council that Bracknell Town Council sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

The Pledge

By signing the Pledge, Bracknell Town Council is agreeing that the council will treat Councillors, Clerks, employees members of the public and representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles and that it :-

- Has put in place a training programme for Councillors and Staff
- Has signed up to the Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a dignity at work policy.
- Will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise
- Will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens
- Will continue to learn from best practices in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion council through for example the local council award scheme
- Supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

Confidential

To move that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as applied by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, members of the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting.

SF17 / 23 South Hill Park Arts Trust

The Committee review the Management report and Management Accounts supplied by the CEO of South Hill Park Trust

SF9 / 23 - Jealotts Community Land Share

The Committee discussed the issues Jealotts Community Land Share are experiencing and felt it is a good time for there to be a review of the set up. More information will be brought to the Full Council meeting.