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To: All Members of the Borough Council

You are requested to attend the meeting of the Charnwood Borough Council to be held in the Preston Room, Woodgate Chambers, Woodgate, Loughborough on Monday, 24th June 2019 at 6.45 pm for the following business.

Chief Executive

Southfields
Loughborough

14th June 2019

AGENDA

- 6.1. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED PARISH MEMBERS OF THE MEMBER CONDUCT COMMITTEE 2-5

A report of the Monitoring Officer, enabling Council to make appointments of co-opted parish members of the Member Conduct Committee following the parish and town council elections in May 2019, is attached.

10. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 6-14

To deal with questions on notice, submitted under Full Council Procedure 9.9(a).

COUNCIL – 24TH JUNE 2019

Supplementary Report of the Monitoring Officer

Part A

ITEM 6.1 APPOINTMENTS OF CO-OPTED PARISH MEMBERS OF THE MEMBER CONDUCT COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report

To enable the Council to make appointments of co-opted parish members of the Member Conduct Committee following the parish and town council elections in May 2019.

Recommendations

1. That Councillor Victoria (Vicky) Ball, a member of Anstey Parish Council, and Councillor Dennis Marchant, a member of Quorn Parish Council, be re-appointed as non-voting co-opted parish members of the Member Conduct Committee for a period of four years or until they cease to be a parish councillor, whichever is the sooner.
2. That Councillor Julie Jones, a member of Sileby Parish Council, be appointed as non-voting co-opted parish members of the Member Conduct Committee for a period of four years or until she ceases to be a parish councillor, whichever is the sooner.

Reasons

1. To fill two of the three vacancies for co-opted parish members of the Committee, who provide the opportunity for parish and town councillors to contribute to the work of the Committee, which have arisen at the end of the term of office of Councillor Ball's and Councillor Marchant's previous appointments.
2. To fill the third of the three vacancies for co-opted parish members of the Committee, who provide the opportunity for parish and town councillors to contribute to the work of the Committee, which has arisen following the retirement of the previous appointee.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new system for dealing with the conduct of elected and co-opted members of local authorities. As a result, the Council adopted its own new arrangements on 25th June 2012 which came into force on 1st July 2012. In order to address the concerns of parish and town councils about the loss of representation under the system set out in the Localism Act, the Council resolved to co-opt three non-voting parish members to the new Member Conduct Committee which was established (minute 17.3 refers). The

term of office of the previously appointed members ran until 28th June 2019, creating three vacancies.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

Previous appointments of parish members of the Member Conduct Committee have been made for a period until just after the next parish and town council elections. This follows the pattern established for the previous Standards Committee of four-year terms running in parallel with the election cycle for parish and town councils. It is recommended that the new appointments are made to come to an end shortly after the next parish and town council elections in May 2023.

Report Implications

Financial Implications

There is an allowance of £258 per annum payable to co-opted parish members. The cost will be met from the existing members' allowances budget.

Risk Management

No specific risks have been identified in connection with this report.

Background Papers: None

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Part B

Process for Making Recommendations for Appointment

1. Two of the previous three parish members of the Member Conduct Committee remain as parish councillors and both have expressed an interest in continuing to be parish members of the Member Conduct Committee. In consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee, the Monitoring Officer has concluded that further interviews were not required and that both Councillor Ball and Councillor Marchant should be recommended for re-appointment.
2. In order to fill the third vacancy, information about the role of parish member of the Member Conduct Committee was circulated to all parish and town councils in the Borough. Three expressions of interest were received as a result of advertising the role in this way.
3. A panel comprising the Chair and Vice-chair of the Member Conduct Committee will undertake interviews on the afternoon of 14th June 2019 with the parish councillors who had expressed an interest in the role. As a result of that selection process, Councillor Julie Jones who is a member of Sibley Parish Council has been recommended for appointment.

Information about Parish/Town Councillors Recommended for Appointment

4. The following parish/town councillors are recommended for appointment as parish members of the Member Conduct Committee:

Councillor Victoria (Vicky) Ball

Councillor Ball is a current parish member of the Member Conduct Committee, having been appointed in February 2018. Vicky Ball was elected as a parish councillor for Anstey Parish Council in May 1999. In her time as a councillor she has served on many committees, and is currently a member of the Finance and Projects Committee and the Staffing and Events Committee.

She was previously the Chair of the Events Committee and focused on community engagement initiatives that would benefit the people of Anstey. This included organising yearly litter picking with the Scouts and other groups, the Christmas lights in the village, hanging baskets, a party for nonagenarians to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and family Picnics in the Park, as well as many other events.

She has always been involved in village life beginning with organising coffee mornings on behalf of the National Childbirth Trust for new mothers, the Scouts Committee, events secretary of the PTA at Woolden Hill School, secretary of Anstey Community Action and lately a member of the Anstey Christmas Gala Committee. She is also a trustee and Secretary of Anstey Town Charity, a local charity that supports Anstey groups by giving out grants.

She is a retired teacher, having worked for over 20 years at a large, inner city primary school, Catherine Junior School in Belgrave, Leicester, where she was responsible for Information Technology across the school. She was also a teacher-governor for 10 years.

Councillor Dennis Marchant

Councillor Marchant is a current parish member of the Member Conduct Committee having been appointed in November 2017. Councillor Marchant became a member of Quorn Parish Council in May 2016 and has undertaken a range of training since then. He was elected Chair of the Parish Council in May 2019. Through his work in the aircraft industry, and in particular ensuring the airworthiness of aircraft, Councillor Marchant had experience of the auditing and monitoring of aircraft, aircraft operators, maintenance and production organisations. In addition, while employed by the Civil Aviation Authority he carried out the training of new employees, including on the CAA Code of Conduct, and participated in maintenance related investigations of Mandatory Occurrence Reports and for the UK Confidential Reporting Programme for Aviation.

Councillor Julie Jones

Councillor Jones has been a parish councillor for Sileby Parish Council since January 2018 and was elected Chairman in May 2018. She serves on several committees and is currently a member of the following working parties: Finance, Staffing and Policy, Planning, and General Purpose. She is committed to making Sileby a great place to live and work and is leading the work to organise the Remembrance and Christmas celebrations.

Councillor Jones is a retired Civil Servant. Through her work as a senior HR professional she has experience of managing projects and programmes of work related to the strategic management of people. She has been involved in developing and implementing codes of conduct as well as the practical application of those codes. She is a retired Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and a retired Chartered Member of the Chartered Management Institute. She has also trained as a counsellor and mediator.

COUNCIL – 24TH JUNE 2019

ITEM 10 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

10.1 Councillor Draycott – Rent Arrears

Would the Cabinet Lead Member for Housing inform Council of the figures showing a steep increase over the last 12 months of the total debt of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit who are in arrears?

How many rent arrears letters (all types) were issued in the last quarter (January to March 2019) compared to January to March 2018 and January to March 2017?

How many tenancies have ceased, either by eviction or voluntarily, due to Universal Credit arrears for January to March 2019 compared to January to March 2018 and January to March 2017?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

Immediately prior to Universal Credit (UC) full service being introduced in the Borough in June 2018, only 90 tenants were known to be receiving Universal Credit. Since then there has been a steady increase in the numbers of tenants in receipt of UC.

Between the end of October 2018 and the middle of May 2019, the number of tenants receiving UC has risen significantly from 310 to 651 (110%). Total rent arrears for those receiving UC has risen by £177,826 or 121% but the average debt of those receiving UC and being in rent arrears has risen only by 13%. Housing Benefit receipts have fallen by almost 12% and the average debt of tenants in arrears who are not in receipt of UC has hardly changed at all.

The steep increase in the total debt of tenants receiving UC over the past twelve months can be explained, therefore, by the steep increase in the number of tenants receiving UC and the correspondingly steep decrease in the total debt of tenants not receiving UC. This is illustrated in the below table.

Indicator	29th October 2018	13th May 2019
<i>Total non-UC claimant arrears</i>	£450,585	£248,605
<i>Total UC claimant arrears</i>	£146,155	£323,981
<i>Tenants not receiving UC in arrears</i>	1,621	892
<i>Tenants receiving UC</i>	310	651
<i>Tenants receiving UC and in arrears</i>	259	507

<i>Average debt of UC-paid tenants in arrears</i>	<i>£564.31</i>	<i>£639.02</i>
<i>Average debt of non-UC-paid tenants in arrears</i>	<i>£277.97</i>	<i>£278.71</i>
<i>Tenants in receipt of housing benefit</i>	<i>3,577</i>	<i>3,262</i>
<i>Total HB receipts</i>	<i>£217,740</i>	<i>£191,947</i>

The Council's housing management system records actions taken on individual tenant rent accounts. The table below shows the number of arrears actions taken where the action is linked to the production of an arrears letter.

<i>Time period</i>	<i>Number of arrears actions linked to the production of a letter</i>
<i>1st January 2017 – 31st March 2017</i>	<i>4,052</i>
<i>1st January 2018 – 31st March 2018</i>	<i>4,302</i>
<i>1st January 2019 – 31st March 2019</i>	<i>4,216</i>

When tenants give notice to end their tenancy they are asked why they are vacating the property. Vacation reasons are recorded on the Council's housing management system and a category "financial reasons" is available to select. In January to March 2017 and January to March 2019, no tenants gave this reason; in January to March 2018, 1 tenant gave this reason. The Council is not aware of any tenants that have vacated citing UC as the reason for doing so.

To date no tenants have been evicted exclusively because of UC.

Finally, the Council has introduced many measures to prepare its tenants for changes to their benefits, and has significant officer resources working to this end, including:

- Financial inclusion and tenancy support teams - 5.75 full time equivalent staff are supporting tenants on UC;*
- Employment of a dedicated UC officer to maintain accurate UC-related tenancy records and to assist tenants in making and maintaining their UC claim.*

10.2 Councillor K. Harris – Housing Repairs

A resident couple in my ward need a house repair to prevent draught and water entry. They were originally told this was necessary in 2013 when they had other work done. It was botched with a temporary solution. The situation got worse until they were forced to try to get it completed this year.

They contacted the Council in February and an inspector came on 6th March and promised a call within 10 days. None came. They contacted the Council again on 10th April, got the same promise but no call came. A third call on 8th May produced a call but no date for repair was given.

After they contacted me, I made enquiries and thought it was serious enough to refer it to the Chief Executive. I was told that this can be due to various staffing problems. After my intervention the case has been expedited and put on this year's programme.

Can the Lead Member please explain why this has occurred and whether this can be put down as a one-off case? Or is it symptomatic of a wider problem?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

In respect of the case in question, it's worth re-iterating that we received no request to repair to the doors for the 5 year period prior to 13th February 2019 when the tenant contacted the Council. The Council's operative attended on 6th March 2019 to inspect, and on 19th March 2019 the doors were added to the planned door waiting list. We confirmed this verbally to the tenant on 8th May 2019; however we were unable at that point in time to confirm the installation date. Our communication with the tenant wasn't as good as it could have been, and we're pleased to have moved the case forward following Councillor Harris's enquiry.

Almost 12,500 reactive repairs were undertaken at the Council's stock in 2018/19 alongside capital investment of a further £4.1 million. The repairs and investment service received 244 complaints in 2018/19, which is a significant reduction on the year before, and accounts for a very small fraction of the delivery volume. Furthermore the 2018/19 outturn for the percentage of tenants satisfied with their responsive repair (overall) was 97% based on 692 surveys. This shows that the vast majority of the time, we get things right for our tenants.

10.3 Councillor Draycott – Election Count

Could the Leader of the Council inform Council of his views on the new system used for counting ballot papers, the Kangaroo Board system, used on 3rd May and his views on the other new arrangements used on that day?

Would he agree to all members having the opportunity to be asked for their views on the pros and cons of the day, as they are the main recipients of such an important matter for the Council? Does he have any views on how this could be done?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

The arrangements for the conduct of elections are the responsibility of the Returning Officer and outside the remit of the Council. I believe that

the Returning Officer would be happy to receive any views from members and is open to discussions about the process.

10.4 Councillor J. Bradshaw – Medical Training for Council Staff

Could the Lead Member confirm what medical training is given to staff at Charnwood Borough Council to deal with emergencies both in and outside normal working hours?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

The Council has 37 designated first aiders amongst its staff to provide cover during the normal operating hours of the various premises they work in (Southfields offices, ICS building, Town Hall, including public shows and events, Loughborough Museum, and the Oak/Ark business centres). All designated first aiders receive appropriate initial training, and regular refresher training.

The on-site security staff at the Southfields building are all trained first aiders and therefore there is a suitably qualified person on site during evening meetings at Southfields.

In relation to out of hours situations away from the Southfields offices, these are regarded as extremely low risk activities bearing in mind the past record of accidents and incidents, of which there are been very few. Officers supporting the meeting or event would be expected to deal with any incident in a practical and common-sense manner by providing any obvious assistance that may be required for injured or ill persons, and telephoning for an ambulance if necessary. In such situations there is no requirement for the officers to have any specialist medical or first aid training.

10.5 Councillor Tillotson – Social Housing Centenary

1919 saw the introduction nationally of social housing. What plans are being put in place in Charnwood to mark the centenary of this significant national event?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

The Council isn't planning anything in particular to mark the 1919 Housing and Planning Act, a historical piece of legislation which paved the way for large scale local authority house building.

We do however; as part of our broad programme of customer engagement activities, hold a number of events across the year to promote the Landlord Service and celebrate the achievements of tenants.

In August we will hold our garden competition presentation in recognition of those tenants who have made an extra effort to maintain their gardens and properties.

In September a tenant networking event will take place at the Town Hall. This is an informal opportunity for tenants to come and talk to officers from across the Landlord Service, the wider Council and partner agencies. Attendance is growing year on year at this popular event.

Finally, in December we will be holding our annual tenant recognition event. This is an opportunity to celebrate and recognise those tenants who have made a significant contribution to their communities, often making their neighbourhood a better place to live, and have made a positive impact on the lives of others.

10.6 Councillor Hamilton – Gender Pay Gap

It is a requirement for companies, including local authorities, to publish the gender pay gap in median salaries between male and female employees. I asked a question on this last year when Charnwood Borough Council had reported that median pay for women employees was 17% less than that for men. In the answer received we were assured that action was being taken to address this issue. The latest reported pay gap for this Council has increased to 17.6%. This is extremely disappointing. I do understand that any reduction in the pay gap arising from the actions referred to last year may not fully appear until next year's reported figure due to the time lag in the reporting. Even so, could the Leader inform Council why no improvement has been seen in the latest figure and are there any indications that next year's value is on track to achieve a significantly reduced gender pay gap?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

The Council takes the matter of gender equality of pay extremely seriously and is always looking to follow best practice in this matter.

Generally, the Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees and as such commits to:

- *Carrying out Equal Pay Audits at regular intervals*
- *Evaluating posts through an agreed job evaluation process*
- *Analysing Gender Pay Gap information and considering approaches to closing the gap.*

*In considering the gender pay gap it is important to recognise that this does **not** imply any issue with equal pay – all jobs within the Council are carefully evaluated to ensure that all staff receive equal pay for an equal value of work. In contrast, the gender pay gap reflects that males are on average likely to be in roles that attract higher rates of pay.*

Following consideration of the first Gender Pay Gap report at a snapshot date of 31st March 2017, the Council agreed a number of

actions relating to the Repairs and Maintenance Section which was identified as an area to look at following a benchmarking analysis. Repairs and Maintenance teams employ predominantly males on relatively high rates of pay, who also receive additional standby and call-out payments. Actions within the Section included gaining support from managers to positively aim to attract female applicants and to include a female member of staff on selection panels where possible. The Learning and Organisational Development Coordinator has also been involved in discussions about promoting this area of work and related apprenticeship opportunities to females within this service.

A new report was submitted on 2nd January 2019 outlining the gender pay gap for the snapshot date of 31st March 2018. The gender pay gap showed a small improvement in the number of female employees paid within the upper quartile and a slight increase in the number of males paid within the lower quartile; however, the impact of this improvement was offset by the impact of increased numbers of casual staff who happened to be employed at the snapshot date compared to the previous year. Notwithstanding this, the Council's gender pay gap remains lower than the national average.

The Gender Pay Gap report of 2nd January 2019 also considered whether actions recommended by the government for organisations to consider in order to close their gender pay gap were appropriate in the circumstances facing the Council. These actions were considered by the Equalities Working Group and formulated into an action plan for the Council. The action plan was subsequently considered by the regular joint meeting of Senior Managers and Trade Union representatives on 17th January 2019. Subsequently the Action Plan was welcomed by Personnel Committee and agreed following a report presented on 2nd April 2019. Key features of the Action Plan include:

- 1) Ensuring mixed gender selection panels for the majority of recruitment within the Council*
- 2) Including at least 1 test in the majority of selection exercises*
- 3) Monitoring recruitment and selection and promotions within the Council*
- 4) Monitoring the age and gender balance of development opportunities*
- 5) Monitoring gender balance of apprenticeships*
- 6) Monitoring the gender pattern of take up of flexible working opportunities throughout the current flexible working pilot schemes which have been agreed*
- 7) Promoting a more consistent approach to flexible working across the Council.*

The Action Plan is reviewed every three months by the Equalities Working Group and demonstrates the commitment the Council is making to put measures in place to aim to close the gender pay gap.

Addressing the gap requires however, fundamentally, that the Council attracts more female staff to roles attracting higher rates of pay and / or

attracting more male staff into roles attracting relatively lower rates. Achieving this is in turn reliant on creation of vacancies through staff turnover, and appropriately qualified candidates presenting themselves for interview. Whilst actions taken to date do appear to be having a positive impact, the snapshot nature of Gender Pay Gap reporting combined with significant factors largely outside of the Council's control mean that it is not possible to guarantee reductions in the Gender Pay Gap over a single year.

10.7 Councillor Parton – Loneliness and Social Isolation in Charnwood

This Borough is fortunate that it has many voluntary groups that are working to tackle loneliness and social isolation. Please will the Lead Member receive my thanks for this administration's support to these organisations and outline to Council how such assistance is given?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

The Council is committed to supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and appreciates the acknowledgement of the good work that is being undertaken.

Support to the VCS is undertaken in a number of ways. The Council provides Strategic Partner Grants to 11 organisations, funded on 2 year Service Level Agreements, who demonstrate that they deliver key services that contribute to the commitments in the Corporate Plan. Many of these Strategic Partner organisations either host or provide services that help to address both loneliness and social isolation. In addition, the Charnwood Community Grants scheme has been supporting the VCS for many years to deliver a range of community initiatives including many that contribute to tackling loneliness and social isolation. Alongside this funding, Member Grants now provide the opportunity for elected members to support more local projects in their wards.

The Council also employs a Voluntary and Community Sector Development Officer who provides support and advice to many groups/organisations, including undertaking organisational health checks to ensure they are operating effectively and can provide a range of additional support where required. This role also includes working to support the VCS Forum and signposting to external funding opportunities.

The Charnwood Lottery was set up in 2018 and provides an opportunity for groups of all sizes to join free of charge and generate additional income through their supporters to deliver a range of local groups and projects.

Officers also provide support to the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, the Charnwood Mental Health Network and the Charnwood Dementia Action Alliance, all of which positively contribute to the loneliness and social isolation agenda.

10.8 Councillor Miah – Decent Homes Contract Settlement

The question and the answer contain exempt information and have been circulated separately to councillors.

10.9 Councillor Mercer – Presentation of Statistics

Can the Council introduce minimum standards for presenting statistics to members?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

The Council's Constitution requires employees to deal with all matters with a level of competence appropriate to their role and in accordance with any professional codes of conduct which apply to them.

The Constitution also requires that the advice provided by officers should be factual, honest and objective.

These provisions apply to all advice to members and would therefore be relevant and appropriate to the matters referred to by Councillor Mercer. There is no need to introduce any additional standards.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE TO COUNCIL – PROCEDURE

- Councillors are required to submit a question on notice in writing by 12noon on the sixth working day prior to Council, the title of the question is published on the Council Agenda.
- Questions and responses will be published at the end of the previous working day (usually the Friday prior to a Council meeting on a Monday) and will be available at the Council meeting for Councillors, the press and the public.
- After the questions and responses are published Councillors may indicate that they wish to ask a supplementary question and/or make a statement by noon on the day of the Council meeting.
- The Mayor will invite those Councillors who have indicated that they wish to do so to ask a supplementary question and/or make a statement.
- The Leader (or relevant Lead Member on behalf of the Leader) or Chair of the Committee is able to respond.
- The total time each person can speak on a single question is time limited.