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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 The Preston Room, Woodgate Chambers, Woodgate, Loughborough on Monday, 2nd September 2019 at 6.30 pm for the following business.

Chief Executive

Southfields
Loughborough

23rd August 2019

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

4.2. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS 4 - 5

To consider significant, recent matters affecting the Council or the Borough (if any).

10. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 6 - 13

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

10.1 BANNING SALE OF FUR ITEMS

Question submitted by Councillor Campsall.

10.2 FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND

Question submitted by Councillor Parton.

10.3 VICTORIA STREET FLATS REGENERATION

Question submitted by Councillor Parton.

10.4 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Question submitted by Councillor Boldrin.

10.5 HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT 2017

Question submitted by Councillor Draycott.

10.6 CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Question submitted by Councillor Bolton.

10.7 BULKY WASTE COLLECTION

Question submitted by Councillor Bolton.

10.8 THE "BIG SWITCH" SCHEME

Question submitted by Councillor Needham.

10.9 STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN

Question submitted by Councillor Needham.

COUNCIL – 2ND SEPTEMBER 2019

ITEM 4.2 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

RETIREMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Madam Mayor, I would like to mention that this is the last Council meeting for our Chief Executive, Geoff Parker, who is retiring from local government. Geoff has been the Chief Executive for 9 years and has pioneered remarkable change and his leadership has made a significant and positive impact on the wellbeing of the residents of the Borough.

He has been an incredibly strong advocate for customer service at the Council and his support was critical to the Council securing the Government's Customer Service Excellence standard across the whole organisation in 2015. The organisation has consistently retained the award thanks to his drive and commitment to high customer service standards.

His work to build relationships in the borough has been key to the Council's success, perhaps highlighted by our close ties with Loughborough University.

Please join me in wishing Geoff a long and happy retirement.

COUNCILLOR ERIC VARDY

Madam Mayor, I would like to thank Eric Vardy for his service in a number of senior roles at the Council over the years. Please join me in wishing Eric, and his wife to be, Julia, well. He will be missed.

FOOD SAFETY TEAM AWARD

Madam Mayor, I am also delighted to announce that recently the Council's Regulatory Services won the Best Small Business Friendly Regulatory Approach at the Federation of Small Businesses' (FSB) Leicestershire and Rutland Local Authority Small Business Friendly Awards.

The award celebrated the Council's business coaching project, created and delivered by the Food Safety Team. The initiative provides new food businesses in Charnwood with advice, information and training to help them achieve the highest possible food hygiene rating when opening. Businesses achieving the top ratings are then promoted on the Council's Food Safety Facebook site.

I hope you will join me in congratulating the Food Safety Team for their excellent work in supporting small businesses in Charnwood.

ARMED FORCES COVENANT EMPLOYER SCHEME

Madam Mayor, I am proud to find out that the Council recently became one of the first local authorities in the East Midlands to receive a gold award for its support for the Armed Forces Community along with our neighbours Rushcliffe Borough

Council. The Armed Forces Employer Scheme gold award is the highest badge of honour for organisations who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant.

Congratulations to everyone involved in achieving this award and we will continue to do everything we can to support the armed forces community, including current and former service personnel.

MEMBER CHAMPION ROLES

Lastly, I would like to announce that I have appointed the following Member Champion roles with terms of office running from 2019-2023:

- Tree Planting – Councillor Howe
- Loneliness – Councillor Parton
- Climate Change – Councillor Needham

Member champions are Councillors who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the Councils business and activities.

COUNCIL – 2ND SEPTEMBER 2019

ITEM 10 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

10.1 Councillor Campsall – Banning sale of fur items

Would the Lead Member consider encouraging Loughborough Town Markets to ban the sale of items made using real fur? I would like to see Charnwood follow in the footsteps of Aylesbury District Council and signs up to the “fur free markets scheme”. This would be banning the sale of “new fur” products, much of which are imported, often from countries where animal welfare is considered less of a priority than here in the UK. I believe that such a move would have the added benefit of adding value to the experience of shopping in Loughborough market, giving it an ethical and modern edge.

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

As part of the current Market Review the Council has already explored a number of schemes and initiatives including the “fur free markets scheme” which would result in banning the sale of “new fur” products that could be implemented with the intention of widening the appeal of the market to a wider demographic.

To implement this and other changes identified the market team is currently engaged in a process of reviewing the markets regulations which requires the consultation of traders. The team is currently not in the position to determine the outcome of the consultation, but the team expect to be in a position to confirm the Council’s position in the Autumn.

10.2 Councillor Parton – Future High Street Fund

Please would the Lead Member provide the feedback received from Central Government regarding Charnwood’s application for funding?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

Feedback was received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 8th July 2019. It stated that over 300 Expressions of Interest had been received and therefore the Ministry was not providing feedback on individual submissions. The fund of £675m was substantially over subscribed and only 50 towns were progressed to the next round and invited to submit formal bids. The feedback letter stated that a second round of the Fund would be announced in 2020 and further expressions of interest will be invited.

On 26th August 2019, the Prime Minister announced a further 50 high streets, selected from round one expressions of interest, would be invited to make bids. An additional £325m has been made available

taking the overall fund to £1bn for round one. Charnwood is not one of the second wave of authorities under round one.

The Government has invited local authorities unsuccessful under round one to engage with its High Street Task Force to assist them in the preparation of round two applications, which is to be announced in due course.

10.3 Councillor Parton – Victoria Street Flats Regeneration

Would the Lead member please seek to embrace the multi-agency enthusiasm for a clear plan to be put in place to regenerate the Council owned stock and thereby seek to address the many problems that exist in this vicinity?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

In the last four years, £144,000 has been invested in the flats on Victoria Street to meet the Decent Homes and Charnwood standards of accommodation in tenants' homes. Improvements will continue to be made as necessary to maintain these standards.

Officers attended an estate inspection on the 9th August 2019 with the local Police and yourself. A number of improvements to the communal areas were identified, including those to planting, and the bin storage units. The latter are currently secured following reports of drug misuse, and a long-term solution is needed. Officers will arrange for one of the Council's surveyors to visit and produce some options. A plan for the area will be shared with residents and elected members.

10.4 Councillor Boldrin - Housing Development Company

We have been informed that the Council is in the process of setting up its own housing development company and it would be helpful to know:

- 1) What progress has been made by the Council in setting up the company and whether there is a target date for it to begin housing build?
- 2) What the administration's aims and objectives are for the company in relation to providing social and/or private housing for the residents of Charnwood?
- 3) Whether the Council intends including the need for green energy facilities in the housing built by the company?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

- 1) *In December 2018 Cabinet approved a report on the potential to set up a Housing development company, details of which can be found online.*

- 2) *Any business case for a housing company will contain the aims and objectives of the company and be submitted to Cabinet/Council for approval.*
- 3) *Any new housing development will need to comply with all relevant national and local policies and regulations.*

10.5 Councillor Draycott - Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Would the Housing Cabinet Lead inform Council about the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, during its first year 2018/2019, and what pros and cons has been found as a consequence?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

The Homelessness Reduction Bill received Royal Assent on the 27 April 2017 and the date of enactment was the 3rd April 2018.

The Council took the following actions to prepare for the new Homelessness Reduction Act (HR Act):

- *Training on the HR Act completed with Staff, Partners, Lead Member*
- *Cabinet Member Briefing*
- *Lead Member and Finance Lead Member meeting to discuss the financial implications of the HR Act*
- *Service Delivery – Completed a Housing Options Review*
- *Review of the Prevention Tool Kit*
- *Recruitment:*
 - *Extension of the 2 additional Housing Options Officers*
 - *Request for an additional Housing Options Officer*
 - *Social Lettings Coordinator*
- *Accommodation Procurement:*
 - *Short term, fast turnover whilst 6 months accommodation sourced*
 - *Accommodation needed for singles and families*
- *New Allocation Policy*
- *Partnership Working – Core and Cluster model*
- *Pilot of HR Act commenced at the end of November – trialing different ways of working to meet the requirements of the Act*

Currently the Council is participating in the national evaluation of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Council is 1 of 15 Local Authorities selected to take part in the evaluation.

MHCLG has commissioned ICF, Heriot-Watt University, and Kantar Public to conduct the evaluation.

As part of the evaluation, ICF has spent 3 days with the Council carrying out case study research. The aim of the case study research is to understand what implementation has looked like on the ground, identify challenges and good practice, and share learning. This has

included interviews with the Lead Member, Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing, Housing Needs Manager, Senior Housing Options Officer and the Housing Options team, local stakeholders including CAB, Falcon Support Services and The Bridge and residents. MHLCLG will be using the findings to make decisions on future support for Local Authorities to implement and deliver the new duties specified under the Act.

The Council has seen a 121% increase in the number of homelessness applications from 238 (2017-2018) to 525 (2018-2019) and the numbers in temporary accommodation detailed in the table below:

Numbers in Temporary Accommodation

Month	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of applicants in temporary accommodation 2018 – 2019 (snapshot)	44	40	42	47	54	64	77	77	70	75	68	63
Number of applicants in temporary accommodation 2017 – 2018 (snapshot)	35	49	46	52	60	63	61	66	50	51	49	44

The Council has raised a number of issues and concerns as part of this evaluation, for example:

- *The length of the prevention duty although increased to 56 days should be extended to 3 months to provide more time to help to sustain existing accommodation or find alternative*
- *Repeat homelessness legislation and what is deemed to be a material change to an applicant's household to make a repeat application*
- *Resource and time burden of the new reporting requirements for the Act*
- *Inconsistency in the legislation for Homelessness and Allocations for local connection criteria*
- *Increased paperwork and decision letters required to meet the 3 duties*
- *Longer interviews for applicant*

- *Longer stays for applicants in temporary accommodation due to the reduction of supported accommodation across the County*

Despite the added burden and the teething difficulties that usually accompany the introduction of any new legislation, the HR Act does appear to be going a long way towards addressing the challenge of fulfilling the Council's responsibility to deal with homelessness.

10.6 Councillor Bolton - Climate Emergency

Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old Swedish climate change activist, believes that we need to treat climate change as a crisis, because "we can't solve an emergency without treating it like one." I wholeheartedly agree with this sentiment.

Why will Charnwood Borough Council not join the in excess of 220 councils across the UK and declare a climate emergency?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

A notice of motion was approved by Full Council on 24th June 2019 to note the findings from the International Panel on Climate Change report published in October 2018 (minute 23.1 19/20 refers). The notice of motion set the Council the objective to achieve carbon neutrality from its own operations by 2030. The Council also committed to work with residents, businesses and other public bodies across the borough and region to deliver this ambitious goal through all relevant technologies, strategies and plans.

10.7. Councillor Bolton - Bulky Waste Collection

The recent Cabinet meeting passed the charges of £20 per bulky waste collection against the recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission. Delegated authority has been given to officers to waive this fee in cases of exceptional hardship.

How will a case of exceptional hardship be determined and what evidence will residents be expected to provide to receive free bulky waste collections? In addition, what are the likely costs to CBC of establishing cases of exceptional hardship?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

The Cabinet meeting of 4th July 2019 decided, in relation to the introduction of bulky waste charges, that delegated authority be given to the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces to introduce a scheme for waiving the above charge in cases of exceptional hardship, with details of that scheme to be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Performance of Major Contracts.

The precise details of the scheme are still being considered, however, the key considerations are likely to include elements of the following;

1. *A declaration of weekly/monthly income and expenditure to establish exceptional financial hardship. Applicants could be asked to supply supporting documentation to corroborate the information provided.*
2. *Details of how the residents have explored other options to dispose of their waste. The residents will be expected to show that they cannot access other methods of disposing of unwanted items (donations to charity, access to the Household Waste and Recycling Centre, use of recycling websites like freecycle)*
3. *Details of how many times the applicant has received the service under the exceptional hardship provisions in the past. Under normal circumstances, applicants would be expected to use the exceptional hardship scheme reasonably. Consideration may be given to a higher number of applications if the resident is using second-hand goods/appliances which are expected to have a shorter lifespan than new items.*

The cost of administering the scheme is expected to be accommodated within existing budgets.

10.8 Councillor Needham – The “Big Switch” Scheme

The Big Switch: I am pleased to see the introduction of the Council’s ‘Big Switch’ Scheme, and its emphasis on helping residents in fuel poverty and energy efficiency. Please would the Lead Member inform us if the Council has checked that the independent provider prioritises renewable energy suppliers, or made this a condition of our promotion of their services?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

The Charnwood Big Switch is a collective switching scheme which will help residents change energy suppliers with ease and get a better deal.

The scheme will be delivered by the Council and iChoosr, an independent specialist provider in collective energy switching. Collective switching gives people the opportunity to group together and pay less for their energy.

iChoosr, has been discussing a ‘green’ category in the auction for some time but have not, as yet, introduced one.

- *‘Green’ as a category does not have a single clear definition and each supplier subscribes to a different definition meaning they would need to adopt the widest in order to allow enough green suppliers to compete. Suppliers with a purer definition of green would argue this would put them at a disadvantage.*

- *A few years ago, green energy was marketed at a premium and those wanting renewable energy needed to be prepared to pay more for it. More recently, iChoosr has seen some of the challenger suppliers*

making renewable electricity tariffs competitive with non-renewable tariffs. These suppliers which have delivered renewable electricity tariffs to win some of the Auctions. These include Octopus, So Energy, Green Star Energy and more recently Eon announced they had 100% renewable electricity.

iChoosr does not yet feel confident that it could consistently secure such competitive tariffs if it diluted the competition in the auctions by separating the suppliers in to green and non-green categories.

iChoosr will continue to review the approach and believe that in time all suppliers in the auctions will be renewable suppliers as they are in other countries where the adoption of green energy is a way ahead of the UK.

iChoosr hold three auctions each year where energy suppliers bid against each other to provide the lowest priced tariff.

The primary purpose of collective energy switching is to save people money on their energy bills and to keep the switching process quick and easy. Energy suppliers are invited to take part in the auction to bid against each other to offer the best deal.

By restricting the auction to only renewable suppliers means that the Council would not be able to say to residents that they are likely to be getting the best deal because iChoosr needs to ensure that the products are comparable on a like for like basis.

10.9 Councillor Needham - Strategic Growth Plan

Last year Charnwood Borough Council committed to the Strategic Growth Plan (SGP). Many residents in my ward and the surrounding areas are very concerned about this and the proposals for the A46 expressway, which is integral to the plan. Charnwood MP, Ed Argar, has recently withdrawn his support for the SGP, as have two more MP's in Leicestershire and two district councils. In July, this Council voted unanimously to reduce the carbon emissions of our Borough. Would the Lead Member consider that continued support for new roads and mass housing development is in keeping with this stated aim and in view of diminished MP support, would the Council now consider withdrawing its support for the SGP?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan sets out the long-term vision and strategy for growth for the period to 2050. The plan was prepared in partnership with all authorities in Leicestershire taking account of national policy and other relevant strategies. It was approved by all Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities and published in December 2018 having followed a 3-year programme of preparation including sustainability appraisal and consultation. The plan will be used to guide the preparation of subsequent local plans in Leicester and Leicestershire.

The Council resolved in June 2019 its aspiration to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 and to encourage others to do so too. The strategy approved in the Strategic Growth Plan is not incompatible with this commitment.

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.