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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, 25th February 2019 at 6.30 pm for the following business.

Chief Executive

Southfields
Loughborough

15th February 2019

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE AND ANSWERS

10. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

2 - 8

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

COUNCIL – 25TH FEBRUARY 2019

ITEM 10 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

10.1 Councillor Draycott – Staff Redundancies and Vacancies

- (a) Please would the Cabinet Lead Member provide the number of staff made redundant during each of the last 9 years of Conservative austerity (ie the financial years 2010/11 to 2018/19 inclusive), and the cost of redundancy payments, including pension costs, for each year?
- (b) Please would the Cabinet Lead Member inform Council of each vacancy taking longer than 3 months to fill for the last year and the salaries attached to each for the period they were unfilled?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

(a) Redundancies

The following data is extracted from each year’s annual statement of accounts (except for the current year to date), and may also include payments for compromise settlement agreements.

A business case is produced to justify payments for redundancy and compulsory reduction in hours, usually as part of a service restructure, which in most cases will identify a ‘pay-back’ period arising from related efficiency savings.

Financial Year	No. of Employees Affected by Redundancy	No. of Employees Receiving Compensation Payments (eg. Compulsory Reduction of Hours, Early Retirement for Efficiency etc)	Total Redundancy and Compensation Costs (Including Pensions) £’000
2010/11	28*	-	837
2011/12	4	2	46
2012/13	2	4	86
2013/14	3	6	104
2014/15	1	1	4
2015/16	2	4	33
2016/17	2	5	40
2017/18	2	1	25
2018/19 (to date)	1	-	20

* A major senior management restructure was undertaken in 2010/11

(b) Vacancies

It has been agreed with Councillor Draycott to provide the following overall summary information for the current financial year up to 31st January, as it would have taken a significant amount of officer time to produce information on a vacancy by vacancy basis.

The information in the following table is for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account combined.

Description	Budget to 31/1/19 £'000	Outturn to 31/1/19 £'000	Under / (Overspend) £'000
Salaries	15,103	14,318	785
Agency Staff	600	930	(330)
Managed Vacancies	(368)	(368)	0

The net overall underspend of £455k represents 2.97% of the total relevant budgets.

The following table summarises areas where there have been difficulties in recruitment during the last year:

Difficult to recruit to post(s)	Narrative
Planning Officers	Mix of approaches including use of agency staff, recruitment campaign / head hunting, and development / coaching of existing junior staff to progress to more senior roles
Solicitors	Interim cover being provided by qualified locum solicitors, pending a service restructure
Market Operatives	After ongoing recruitment attempts, all the posts are now filled
3 specialist posts in Landlord Services (health & safety, compliance, and investment & programme delivery)	Interim cover arranged pending re-advertising, re-grading and consideration of market supplement
System Developer (ICS)	After unsuccessful recruitment attempts the post was filled using a specialist IT recruitment agency
Housing Options Officers	The posts were filled after several recruitment attempts

10.2 Councillor Bradshaw – Leisure Centre Parking Charges

Given the emphasis on health and wellbeing and its impact on mental health we want to encourage people to use the Council's leisure centres. Why, therefore, is the Borough Council not offering limited time 2 hours free parking to those people who use the Loughborough Leisure Centre?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

The Council has three leisure centres all with car parking facilities. The car parking facilities at Soar Valley Leisure Centre in Mountsorrel and South Charnwood Leisure Centre in Syston are provided specifically for the leisure centres and are free for users.

The exception is Loughborough Leisure Centre which is a designated town centre car park providing parking for the leisure centre and town centre users.

To help prioritise parking for centre users, dual purpose charges are applied with non-leisure centre users paying a higher tariff with charges in line with other Council car parks. Leisure centre users pay 50p for 2 hours parking but also benefit from free parking every evening after 6pm plus all day Sunday.

The provision of 2 hours free parking during the day would encourage non leisure centre users to park, eg people shopping in the town which potentially could impact on leisure centre users' ability to park and use the leisure centre for exercise to improve their physical and mental health.

10.3 Councillor Parton – Houses in Multiple Occupation Consultation

Please would the Cabinet Lead Member outline how many responses were received from the recent Houses in Multiple Occupation consultation and agree to a review of how well publicised the consultation was with the residents of wards with high ratios of C4 dwellings to C3 dwellings?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

The Council has instructed consultants to undertake a study of HMO impacts on communities as part of its evidence to inform the new local plan. This is a live contract and it is not therefore appropriate to comment on its findings until it has been finalised. As part of this work, the consultants have canvassed the views of a limited set of key stakeholders taken from the Loughborough Campus and Community Liaison Group and local elected representatives to assist them in understanding the local perceptions of the impacts of HMOs on communities. The contract has not included a public consultation exercise.

The study is expected to be completed later this spring and there will then be further stakeholder engagement to assist the preparation of policies for the local plan. Once this has been completed there will be public consultation on the draft policy and its supporting evidence as part of the local plan process.

10.4 Councillor Parton – Loughborough Town Centre

Please would the Cabinet Lead Member provide a list of policies and procedures that the Council imposes on Love Loughborough BID events that are staged in Loughborough town centre?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

Charnwood Borough Council works closely with the Love Loughborough team to agree the programme of annual town centre events. The Council is not aware therefore of any which have not been approved as the BID produces the Charnwood events brochure with the Council's input.

The Council does not impose policies and procedures on organisations wishing to hold an event, it must however follow national good practice guidance. Charnwood's events approval process, which any organisation needs to follow, including the Council itself, must ensure the safety of our community, good planning and communications and a successful event.

Any organisation wishing to hold an event in the town centre is asked to submit an application form to the Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing Directorate, including the following:

- *An event management plan (event manual) for larger or more complex events, and a site plan*
- *A copy of their Public Liability Insurance*
- *A risk management Plan*
- *A communications plan*
- *In some cases, the event may need a temporary traffic regulation order (TTRO) from the County Council. Charnwood Borough Council includes BID events which require an Order in its annual TTRO Global Order, to save the BID the vast majority of the County Council's fee.*
- *The BID can apply to use the Council's Premises Licence for Regulated Entertainment covering the town centre*
- *Once the application has been received a consultation process takes place involving the emergency services and key organisations providing public services in the town centre. This would include the Council's Regulatory Services who will respond to any concerns about noise, food and licensing issues. Larger events may be subject to a Safety Advisory Group review.*

We have a very good working relationship with Loughborough BID and therefore I am surprised by your question Councillor Parton.

10.5 Councillor Hamilton – Preparedness for Leaving the European Union

On 28th January the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published its latest guidance on local government Brexit

preparedness. Can the Cabinet Lead Member inform Council what measures this local authority has undertaken in this regard?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

Charnwood Borough Council has been working actively for several months with its partners in the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) in relation to preparations for exiting the European Union.

The developing situation is being monitored on an ongoing basis, and we will continue to liaise closely with our LRF partners.

Locally, officers have recently reviewed and updated the Council's business continuity plans, which cover the relevant material risks that fall within the Council's ability to prepare for and respond to.

Long standing mutual aid arrangements are in place between the various public sector agencies in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, which can be called upon if required.

The Council has been notified that it will receive £35,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to assist with making any required preparations over the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20. Whilst no specific requirements for this funding have been stipulated by MHCLG, the Council's Strategic Directors are identifying the areas where this funding might best be applied.

10.6 Councillor Rattray – Empty Homes

Please would the Cabinet Lead Member inform us as to what steps the Council is taking to deal with the problem of empty homes within our wards?

The Leader, or his nominee, will respond:

The current Empty Homes Strategy for Charnwood was adopted in July 2017 with a target to bring 50 empty homes back into use each year.

The Empty Homes Strategy 2017-2022 concentrates on the delivery of 4 key objectives:

- 1. Encourage empty home owners to bring empty homes back into use.*
- 2. Bring problematic empty homes back into use through enforcement action.*
- 3. Devise and explore new and innovative solutions to reduce the impact of empty homes on local communities and bring them back into use.*
- 4. Develop a co-ordinated approach to help identify and tackle empty homes.*

The table below provides the details of the Empty Homes Officer's interventions to bring empty homes back into use for 2018-2019:

Intervention	Advice and Assistance	Partnership Grant	Tenant Finder Scheme	Enforcement Action	Visits and Investigations	TOTAL
April 2018	0	0	0	2	2	4
May 2018	0	0	0	0	0	0
June 2018	0	0	0	0	1	1
July 2018	1	0	0	0	2	3
August 2018	1	0	0	0	7	8
September 2018	1	0	0	0	4	5
October 2018	7	0	0	0	7	14
November 2018	1	0	0	0	2	3
December 2018	1	0	0	0	3	4
January 2019	2	0	0	1	0	3
TOTAL	14	0	0	3	28	45

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.