

CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD IN THE PRESTON ROOM, WOODGATE CHAMBERS, WOODGATE, LOUGHBOROUGH ON 25TH MARCH 2019

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor C. Harris)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Seaton)

Councillor Baines	Councillor Lowe
Councillor Barkley	Councillor Mercer
Councillor Bebbington	Councillor Miah
Councillor Bentley	Councillor Morgan
Councillor Bokor	Councillor Murphy
Councillor Bradshaw	Councillor Pacey
Councillor Brookes	Councillor Parsons
Councillor Campsall	Councillor Poland
Councillor Capleton	Councillor Radford
Councillor Cooper	Councillor Ranson
Councillor Draycott	Councillor Rattray
Councillor Forrest	Councillor Rollings
Councillor Fryer	Councillor Savage
Councillor Gerrard	Councillor Shepherd
Councillor Grimley	Councillor Smidowicz
Councillor Hadji-Nikolaou	Councillor Smith
Councillor Hamilton	Councillor Snartt
Councillor Harper-Davies	Councillor Tassell
Councillor K. Harris	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Hayes	Councillor Tillotson
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Vardy
Councillor Jukes	

Honorary Aldermen J Tormey

85. OPENING THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and, after reflecting on this being her last meeting as Mayor, read the poem 'Look! We have come through' by D. H. Lawrence.

The Mayor then went on to state that the meeting was being recorded and the sound recording would be made available on the Council's website. In addition, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations people may film, record, tweet or blog the meeting and that was outside the Council's control.

86. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Gaskell, Hachem, Huddleston, Page, Paling and Parton and from Honorary Aldermen Bush and Shields.

87. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

The following disclosures of pecuniary and personal interests were made:

- (i) by Councillor Poland – a personal interest in item 8 on the agenda (Position Statements: Crime in Charnwood), as an employee of Leicestershire Police.

88. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 25th February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed, subject to a correction to minute 73(xvi) to state that Councillor Poland's wife was a member of Thurmaston Parish Council.

89. ANNOUNCEMENTS

89.1 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made no announcements.

89.2 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader made the following announcements.

"Madam Mayor, as this is our last full meeting of this Council year, I would like to start by thanking those members who have announced their retirement and will not be standing for re-election this May.

Many have devoted a significant period of their lives to serving and representing their residents over many years, and without their dedication and sense of public duty, this Council would not be the success that it is.

I would also like us to remember those that have passed away during this Council term, most recently John Sutherland, and almost a year ago now, David Slater. Both were exceptional individuals and councillors, and every day, are missed by those that knew them and called them friends.

On behalf of all councillors I would also like to pay our respects to the victims of the recent terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand. Many of you will know of the link between Loughborough and that city, through the work of John Taylor's bell foundry - but hearing of the appalling attack, I was struck by the cold pre-meditated callousness of the act, and the permanent effect it would

have on the Christchurch community. Our thoughts are with the families and friends of those murdered and all the people affected by this, and all, terrorism.

Lastly, Madam Mayor, I would like to thank you, on behalf of the Council, for being our Mayor this past year, but also the Mayor's support staff, and even more particularly Mike Hollingworth, who will be retiring this month, having served countless Mayors of this Borough over many, many years. I know that the University threw a surprise 'thank you' for him last Wednesday – we're not about to repeat that – two in a week would be too many surprises for anyone, but from all of us, thank you Mike, and we wish you a happy, peaceful, and stress-free retirement!"

89.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chief Executive made no announcements.

90. PETITIONS

No petitions were submitted.

91. BUSINESS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

91.1 CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT

A report of the Cabinet, seeking approval for changes to the 2018/19 to 2020/21 Capital Plan and its financing, was submitted (item 6.1 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Barkley, seconded by Councillor Gerrard and

RESOLVED

1. that the Acquisition of Affordable Housing to meet housing need HRA scheme be increased by the sum of £415,000, be added to the Capital Plan in 2020/21 and that it proceeds;
2. that the Disabled Facilities Grant budget of £448,000 slippage from 2018/19 to 2019/20 be approved;
3. that the HRA Bathrooms budget of £426,000 slippage from 2018/19 to 2019/20 be approved.

Reasons

1. To confirm that the Acquisition of Affordable Housing to meet housing need HRA scheme should be increased to the sum of £415,000, and that the cost be funded 30% from retained 141 capital receipts and 70% from HRA Reserves.
2. To enable the scheme budget to be available in 2019/20.

3. To enable the scheme budget to be available in 2019/20.

91.2 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

A report of the Cabinet, proposing amendments to the Constitution following the annual review, was submitted (item 6.2 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Poland, seconded by Councillor Taylor and

RESOLVED that the changes to the Constitution set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Monitoring Officer (attached as an Annex to the report of the Cabinet) be made, to be effective from 6th May 2019, but with the following amendment to those changes (amendment is underlined):

Appendix 1 to the report of the Monitoring Officer, Item 5 – Webcasting, Filming and Recording of Meetings. Final sentence to be amended to read “Any filming, recording or reporting during meetings, including social media, should not be disruptive or intrusive”.

Reason

To ensure the Constitution is kept up to date and fulfils its intended purposes.

91.3 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2018/19

A report of the Scrutiny Management Board, submitting the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2018/19 for consideration, was submitted (item 6.3 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Miah, seconded by Councillor Parsons and

RESOLVED that the work of scrutiny during 2018/19, as set out in the Annual Scrutiny Report 2018/19 attached as an Appendix to the report of the Scrutiny Management Board, be noted.

Reason

To report annually to Council on the workings of scrutiny bodies and the operation of the scrutiny function generally, in accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure 6.3(e) of the Council’s Constitution.

91.4 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL IN RESPECT OF ALLOWANCES PAID TO MEMBERS OF CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR 2019/20

A report of the Chief Executive, enabling the Council to consider the findings and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of allowances paid to members of the Council and the Scheme of Members’

Allowances for 2019/20, was submitted (item 6.4 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Poland, seconded by Councillor Miah and

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, submitted in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Chief Executive, be noted and that the proposed Scheme of Members' Allowances for the 2019/20 financial year, as set out at Appendix B to the report, be adopted.

Reason

To ensure compliance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

91.5 TIMETABLE FOR COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND MEMBER TRAINING DAYS FOR 2019/20

A report of the Chief Executive, enabling the Council to consider a proposed timetable for Council and committee meetings and designated member training days for the next Council year (2019/20) and the period to December 2020, was submitted (item 6.5 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Poland, seconded by Councillor Ranson and

RESOLVED

1. that the schedule of Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and other committee meetings for 2019/20 and the period to December 2020, attached as Appendix 1 to the report of the Chief Executive, be approved;
2. that the proposed dates for member training days for 2019/20 and the period to December 2020, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, be endorsed;
3. that delegated authority be given to the Head of Strategic Support to make minor amendments and corrections to the schedule of Council and committee meetings and member training days.

Reasons

1. To ensure that a schedule of meetings for 2019/20 is agreed to enable planning for the forthcoming Council year and six months into the new year.
2. To ensure that there is a timetable to enable planning for training and development days for councillors and co-opted members.

3. To enable minor amendments and corrections to be made in a timely manner.

91.6 CONFERRMENT OF FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

A report of the Chief Executive, enabling the Council to consider initial arrangements for conferring the Freedom of the Borough, was submitted (item 6.6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor Barkley and

RESOLVED

1. that arrangements be made to confer upon Mr Lez Cope-Newman the honour of Honorary Freeman in view of his eminent services to the Borough and its people;
2. that the ceremony take place at a special meeting of the Council at 6.30pm on 24th June 2019, prior to the ordinary Council meeting proposed for that date.

Reasons

1. To agree in principle to confer a civic honour.
2. To make arrangements for a special meeting to confer the honour as required by statute.

92. CALL-IN REFERENCES

There were no call-in references from Scrutiny.

93. POSITION STATEMENTS

93.1 Crime in Charnwood

The text of the position statement was submitted (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The position statement was introduced by Councillor Taylor and the following issues were raised during the discussion:

- (i) The Council worked with its partners through the Community Safety Partnership to find ways to respond to and address identified crime and disorder issues. There was a limit to what the Council could achieve alone in relation to crime, and responsibility rested with the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- (ii) A multi-agency approach was required to address the various issues associated with crime and anti-social behaviour. The work of the Community Safety Partnership in this regard had been praised.

- (iii) Councillors also had a role to play in reporting concerns and engaging with the Police to deal with issues in their wards.
- (iv) Changes in the number of crimes recorded were best evaluated over periods of time of more than a year to establish trends. However, this was made difficult by changes in the requirements on Police forces in relation to how crimes should be recorded. Those changes were outside the control of the Council and often outside the control of the Police. The Community Safety Partnership also looked at the performance of its peers to assess how successful or not it was being.
- (v) While there had been increases in some crime types, there had been reductions in others. There were also geographical variations with some beat areas seeing larger increases in crime than the average.
- (vi) Crime was a major issue for residents, who were also concerned about the reduction in neighbourhood policing. There were concerns about drugs and knife crime in parts of the Borough. There was a discussion about the national debate regarding the impact of police numbers on crime and knife crime in particular.
- (vii) Any consideration of crime should be focussed not on statistics but on the victims of crime and the fear of crime that many people suffered from.

In summing up Councillor Taylor stated that a number of issues raised during the discussion were outside her remit and some should be addressed to the Police. She cautioned against considering changes in crime solely in percentage terms as some of those changes related to very small increases in the absolute number of crimes. All victims of crime were referred to Victim First for support. She stated that the work of the Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and its impact would continue.

94. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

No motions on notice had been submitted.

95. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The questions on notice and the responses of the Leader or his nominee were submitted (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

95.1 PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Councillor Baines thanked the Cabinet Lead Member for the response. He stated that the current arrangements for parking enforcement appeared to be inadequate, in part because there were insufficient resources provided by the Police or Leicestershire County Council to support those arrangements. He highlighted the fact that other councils had obtained additional powers from the Police to enforce parking restrictions, for example Wokingham Council, and other councils, for example Torquay Council, were seeking to do so. He therefore asked the Cabinet Lead Member whether she agreed that the Borough Council should seek to enhance its civil parking enforcement powers in that way.

Councillor Smidowicz thanked Councillor Baines and stated that inconsiderate parking and pavement parking were topics that were high on her agenda. She stated that over the past 12 months she had attended two conferences relating to parking enforcement and had raised the issue with the Police and Crime Commissioner and a senior Police officer. She stated that she was still awaiting a report back from them regarding the possibility of delegating Police powers to the Borough Council. The Borough Council's street wardens currently only had powers to deal with on-street parking offences that related to yellow lines. The organisation PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulation Outside London) had made representations to the Government regarding making obstruction a civil offence, which would enable local authorities to take enforcement action.

95.2 SHEPSHED REGENERATION PLAN

Councillor Radford stated that she wished to thank the Borough Council for the grants it had given to the Shepshed Town Team. They had enabled businesses to apply for grants to improve shop fronts and CCTV cameras to be provided for Shepshed town centre.

Councillor Vardy thanked Councillor Radford for her question and for her hard work on behalf of Shepshed. He stated that Shepshed was a unique place and it had its own vibrant communities. The regeneration plan for Shepshed would continue and the Council had money set aside, including in its capital plan and from Section 106 agreements, to support Shepshed and its people.

95.3 PROMOTING TOURISM IN THE BOROUGH

Councillor Snartt thanked the Cabinet Lead Member for the answer and for recognising that Bradgate Park was a honeypot destination for visitors to the Borough and the consequences that this had for local residents. He stated that capacity issues were becoming acute, with problems occurring not only on bank holidays but also at many weekends. Councillor Snartt referred to an email he had received from the Chief Constable of Leicestershire Police stating that there was a pattern of tourist attractions being overwhelmed and promotions encouraging more people to visit attractions than could be accommodated. He stated that Newtown Linford Parish Council was having to pay £750 to fund four additional visits by street wardens to enforce parking restrictions, which was an extra burden on local taxpayers. He therefore asked that, if there was a need to include Bradgate Park in the Council's visitor guide, information was limited, how visitors would be directed away from Bradgate Park and that arrangements for the deployment of street wardens be reviewed to avoid the need for extra costs to be incurred by the Parish Council.

Councillor Vardy thanked Councillor Snartt for raising the subject, which had also been raised by Councillor Taylor as the county councillor and by Newton Linford Parish Council. He stated that borough councillors and officers would listen to what had been said and take due account of it in taking any matters relating to tourism forward. He stated that he believed that the situation could be improved in the future, for example through greater partnership working.

95.4 EXPECTED CABINET REPORT RELATING TO LANDLORD SERVICES
PLANNED WORKS, VOIDS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

Councillor Draycott stated that the Cabinet had been due to receive a report on the first year of the contract with Fortem on 14th March; however the report had not appeared. She described the problems with the current contract despite assurances being given regarding the improvements that had been made since the end of the previous contract. She asked whether the Cabinet Lead Member could give assurances that a report would be produced and that the quality of work being provided would not be sacrificed to improve performance in relation to the completion of work.

Councillor Harper-Davies thanked Councillor Draycott for her question and provided an update on performance relating to the contract that would be reported to the Housing Management Advisory Board. That showed that there had been moderate improvements and an action plan had been put in place. She accepted that waiting times had not been acceptable but stated that the adaptations programme work would have caught up with the original schedule by the end of May 2019. Where work had been completed tenants had been pleased with the standard of that work.

95.5 COMMUNITY GRANTS 2015-2019

Councillor Parton had given his apologies and was not present to ask a supplementary question or make a statement regarding the matter.

95.6 LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN PROGRESS

Councillor Parton had given his apologies and was not present to ask a supplementary question or make a statement regarding the matter.

95.7 IMPROVEMENTS TO GREEN SPACES IN SOUTHFIELDS WARD

Councillor Parton had given notice that he did not wish to ask a supplementary question or make a statement regarding the matter.

95.8 PURCHASES UNDER THE RIGHT TO BUY SCHEME

Councillor Miah referred to the number of houses that had been sold, or were in the process of being sold, under the right to buy scheme and the value of those houses. Those sales were at an average discount of 50%. The number of houses that had been sold was vastly greater than could be acquired under the capital plan scheme to purchase houses on the open market, and any houses purchased would themselves be subject to the right to buy.

Councillor Mercer described the history of the right to buy scheme and the philosophy behind it. He also stated that there were now almost 9,000 affordable and social housing units in the Borough.

96. MINUTE REFERENCES

There were no minute references.

97. URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS EXEMPTED FROM CALL-IN AND USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROCEDURE

A report of the Chief Executive, informing Council of two decisions that were exempted from call-in in accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.9, one of which was also taken using the special urgency procedure in accordance with Access to Information Procedure 13.9(b), was submitted (item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

98. CHANGES TO THE DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

A report of the Chief Executive, informing Council of changes to the delegation of Executive functions, was submitted (item 13 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

99. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

There were no proposals to consider.

The Mayor closed the meeting by stating:

“I would like to echo the Leader’s statement earlier in the meeting. This is the final meeting of this Council year and of the Council term. Elections for a new Council will take place in a few weeks. As this is the last time that this Council will gather together I would like to thank councillors for all their hard work over the last four years on behalf of the residents of the Borough. There are a number of councillors who are standing down at the elections and as well as thanking them I would like to wish them the very best for the future.”

Note:

These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Monday 20th May 2019