



**CABINET**

This meeting will be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website.

Please also note that under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of any images or sound recordings is not under the Council's control.

To: Councillors Bailey, Barkley (Deputy Leader), Bokor, Harper-Davies, Mercer, Morgan (Leader), Poland, Rattray and Rollings (for attention)

All other members of the Council  
(for information)

You are requested to attend the meeting of the Cabinet to be held in Committee Room 1, at the Council Offices, Southfields, Loughborough on Thursday, 15th September 2022 at 6.00 pm for the following business.

Chief Executive

Southfields  
Loughborough

2nd September 2022

**AGENDA**

1. APOLOGIES
2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS, AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

For information, disclosable pecuniary interests and registrable interests relate to entries that are included, or should be included, on a councillor's register of interests. Non-registrable interests relate to any other matters.

- |     |   |         |
|-----|---|---------|
| 3.  | <u>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</u>                                     |         |
| 4.  | <u>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</u>                                | 3 - 11  |
|     | To approve the minutes of the previous meeting.                   |         |
| 5.  | <u>QUESTIONS UNDER CABINET PROCEDURE 10.7</u>                     |         |
|     | The deadline for questions is noon on Monday, 5th September 2022. |         |
| 6.  | <u>DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL</u>                      | 12 - 48 |
|     | A report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources (MO).      |         |
| 7.  | <u>PROCUREMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF REPAIRS MATERIALS</u>            | 49 - 51 |
|     | A report of the Director Housing and Wellbeing.                   |         |
|     | <i>Key Decision</i>   |         |
| 8.  | <u>CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT</u>                              | 52 - 61 |
|     | A report of the Head of Finance.                                  |         |
|     | <i>Key Decision</i>   |         |
| 9.  | <u>SOLAR FEASIBILITY FUNDING UPDATE</u>                           | 62 - 65 |
|     | A report of the Director Commercial and Economic Development.     |         |
|     | <i>Key Decision</i>   |         |
| 10. | <u>URGENT DECISION TAKEN - COUNCIL TAX ENERGY REBATE SCHEME</u>   | 66 - 73 |
|     | A report of the Chief Executive.                                  |         |

## CABINET 7TH JULY 2022

PRESENT: The Deputy Leader (Councillor Barkley)  
Councillors Bailey, Bokor, Mercer, Poland, Rattray  
and Rollings

Councillor Seaton

Chief Executive  
Strategic Director; Environmental and Corporate  
Services  
Head of Strategic Support  
Strategic Director; Commercial Development,  
Assets and Leisure  
Head of Financial Services  
Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing  
Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager  
Performance, Policy and Development Manager  
Corporate Health and Safety Officer  
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGIES: None

Councillors Harper-Davies and Morgan attended this meeting virtually,  
see notes at end of minutes.

The Deputy Leader stated that this meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

12. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS, AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

Later in the meeting, under item 6 Charnwood Grants and regarding the application by Wymeswold Memorial Hall, Councillor Bokor stated she had not been involved with the application, but lived in Wymeswold and had formally shown her support. This was a non-registrable interest, but she came to this meeting with an open mind.

13. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

14. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

15. QUESTIONS UNDER CABINET PROCEDURE 10.7

No questions had been submitted.

16. CHARNWOOD GRANTS

Considered, a report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services to consider applications received for funding in round one of the Community Facilities and Community Grants Schemes for 2022/23 (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager assisted with consideration of the report.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the following Community Grants be awarded:

- £5,000 to Go-Getta CIC towards the Loughborough Youth Motivators project (£3,000 to be funded through the Community Grants scheme and £2,000 through the Community Safety Partnership Locality Fund Youth Prevention and Diversion);
- £1,220 to St Mary's Grub Club towards summer food and activities (to be funded through the Contain Outbreak Management fund for food support);
- £1,000 to Watermead Junior Parkrun towards equipment;
- £135 to Watermead Country Park Parkrun towards pacer bibs (to be funded through the Contain Outbreak Management fund for physical activity);
- £3,500 to Loughborough Wellbeing Centre towards the Wellbeing Café Project Plus Pilot (to be funded through the Contain Outbreak Management fund for VCS support);
- £4,500 to The Arc Community Hub (Grange Park Centre) towards a youth group (£3,000 to be funded through the Community Grants scheme and £1,500 through the Community Safety Partnership Locality Fund Youth Prevention and Diversion);
- £3,000 to New Life Community Church towards the running of the foodbank (to be funded through the Contain Outbreak Management fund for food support);
- £3,750 to B-Buddies CIC towards the "Let's Get Cycling" project;
- £750 to Sileby Tennis and Pickleball Club towards promoting pickleball in Charnwood;
- £3,500 to Upstarts Gymnastics Club towards a gym raised pit with soft landing area;
- £3,000 to Spectrum Sensory Sports UK CIC towards inclusive sports and physical activity sessions;
- £250 to Nanpantan Ward Residents Group towards the ongoing running of the group;

- £300 to Thurcaston and Cropston Gardening Club towards an annual craft and produce show;
- £1,000 to Rectory Wildlife Gardeners towards equipment and tools;
- £1,500 to Quorn Village CIC towards a community garden;
- £2,000 to Without Walls Christian Fellowship towards Thrive Singing Cafe;
- £1,500 to HUB@TheSkofe towards the “Cupboard on the Corner” project (to be funded through the Contain Outbreak Management fund for food support);

2. that the following Community Grant applications be declined:

- Loughborough Air Quality Protection Group - £4,574 requested – applied for funding towards the rental of a Zephyr Air Quality Monitor;
- Together Against Cancer - £2,000 requested – applied for funding towards cancer support days in Charnwood;
- Falcon Support Services - £4,934 requested – applied for funding towards a Community Resilience Programme;
- Gunns Community Gym - £850 requested – applied for funding towards bronze, silver and gold awards;
- Communities Food and Wellbeing Hub - £5,000 requested – applied for funding towards a health, wellbeing and foodbank diabetes project;
- Loughborough Lions AFC - £500 requested – applied for funding towards training equipment;
- Hope for Hunger - £2,500 requested – applied for funding towards hot food and essential items;

3. that the following Community Facilities Grants be awarded:

- Up to £2,932 to Loughborough Town Cricket Club towards accessible doors;
- Up to £9,000 to Wymeswold Memorial Hall towards a replacement floor;

4. that the Head of Neighbourhood Services be given delegated authority to finalise the terms and conditions of the awarded Community Grants.

### Reasons

1. To provide financial support to organisations which meet the criteria of the Community Grants scheme.
2. To decline to provide financial support to organisations which do not meet the criteria for the award of a grant under the Community Grant scheme.
3. To provide financial support to organisations which meet the criteria of the Community Facilities Grants scheme.
4. To enable the grants awarded to be finalised and appropriate information to be supplied to the Council about the outcomes of the project.

*Councillor Harper-Davies, attending virtually, confirmed that she would have voted in favour of the above decision had she been physically present at the meeting and able to do so.*

17. CAPITAL PLAN OUTTURN REPORT (2021/22)

Considered, a report of the Head of Financial Services to consider the Capital Plan outturn position for 2021/22 including schemes that required carry forward of budget to 2022/23 and the financing of the Capital Plan (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Financial Services assisted with consideration of the report.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the outturn position for 2021/22 be noted and slippage of capital budgets totalling £36,370,400, being General Fund £33,384,000 and Housing Revenue Account £2,985,600, be carried forward into 2022/23 and added to the new 3 Year Capital Plan and **be recommended to full Council for approval**;
2. that the financing of the Plan set out in Table 2 in the report be noted.

Reasons

1. To ensure compliance with Financial Regulations and that Capital projects are completed.
2. To indicate how the Plan is to be financed.

*Councillors Harper-Davies and Morgan, attending virtually, confirmed that they would have voted in favour of the above decision had they been physically present at the meeting and able to do so.*

18. GENERAL FUND AND HRA REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT (2021/22) AND CARRY FORWARD OF BUDGETS

Considered, a report of the Head of Financial Services to consider the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) outturn position for 2021/22 and budget carry forwards (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Financial Services assisted with consideration of the report.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the Revenue outturn positions of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account for 2021/22 be noted;
2. that six General Fund carry forwards budgets amounting to £90.8k as per paragraph 41 and HRA £40.8k paragraph 40 funded from specific underspent budgets in 2021/22 are approved.

## Reasons

1. To enable the information to be used when considering future budgets and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
2. To enable the budgets to be carried forward to cover costs of committed resources and services in 2022/23.

*Councillor Harper-Davies and Morgan, attending virtually, confirmed that they would have voted in favour of the above decision had they been physically present at the meeting and able to do so.*

## 19. AMENDMENTS TO ANNUAL PROCUREMENT PLAN

Considered, a report of the Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure to consider amendments to the Annual Procurement Plan 2022/23 (item 9 on the agenda supplement filed with these minutes).

Councillor Seaton, Chair of the Scrutiny Commission, presented a report setting out the Commission's pre-decision scrutiny of the matter and recommendation (copy filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure assisted with consideration of the report.

### **RESOLVED**

1. that the contracts, over £25,000 and up to £75,000, listed in Appendix A to the report be let in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules;
2. that the contracts, over £75,001 and up to £500,000, listed in Appendix B to the report be let in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules;
3. that the future direction of updates to the Annual Procurement Plan as set out in Part B of the report be noted.
4. that the report of the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

## Reasons

- 1.&2. To allow contracts of the Council to be let in accordance with contract procedure rules.
3. To make Cabinet aware of forthcoming changes that will be forthcoming that will change processes to make them more efficient but will not dilute governance or transparency.
4. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Scrutiny Commission.

*Councillors Harper-Davies and Morgan, attending virtually, confirmed that they would have voted in favour of the above decision had they been physically present at the meeting and able to do so.*

20. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Considered, a report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing to consider a Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Seaton, Chair of the Scrutiny Commission, presented a report setting out the Commission's pre-decision scrutiny of the matter and recommendation (copy filed with these minutes).

The Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing assisted with consideration of the report.

As the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing would shortly be leaving the Council, the Cabinet expressed its thanks for all her work, with best wishes for her new role.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing in consultation with the Lead Member for Private Sector Housing to update the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy on an annual basis subject to there being no financial or human resource implications arising from the proposals;
3. that in the event of there being financial implications outside the existing approved budgets or resource implications exceeding the existing approved establishment arising from proposed revisions to the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, a further report on the proposed Policy be brought to Cabinet at the appropriate time.
4. that the report of the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

Reasons

1. To ensure that the Council can meet its obligations that all properties let as residential dwellings and those in private ownership throughout the Borough are of good quality and well managed.
2. To ensure that the Policy remains relevant and responsive during the lifetime of the Policy.



3. To ensure appropriate approvals are sought before finalising changes to the Policy that have financial or human resource implications.
4. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Scrutiny Commission.

*Councillors Harper-Davies and Morgan, attending virtually, confirmed that they would have voted in favour of the above decision had they been physically present at the meeting and able to do so.*

## 21. PROCUREMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Considered, a report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces to consider the different commissioning options for the provision of household recycling and waste collections, as well as street cleaning beyond 31st March 2024 (item 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Seaton, Chair of the Scrutiny Commission, presented a report setting out the Commission's pre-decision scrutiny of the matter and recommendation (copy filed with these minutes).

The Scrutiny Commission was thanked for its scrutiny of this item and items considered earlier in the meeting.

The Performance, Policy and Development Manager assisted with consideration of the report.

### **RESOLVED**

1. that delegated authority be given to the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces in consultation with the Strategic Director; Environmental and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Lead Member for Community Support to commence the contract procurement for the provision of household recycling and waste collections as well as street cleaning beyond 31st March 2024;
2. that Competitive Dialogue is the approved procurement route;
3. that the report of the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

### Reasons

1. To ensure that the Council continues complying with its statutory obligations under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
2. To benefit from the interaction with suppliers while developing the specification requirements, so that best value for money and optimum performance is achieved.
3. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Scrutiny Commission.

*Councillor Harper-Davies and Morgan, attending virtually, confirmed that they would have voted in favour of the above decision had they been physically present at the meeting and able to do so.*

## 22. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

Considered, a report of the Head of Strategic Support to consider the Council's health and safety performance 2021/22 (item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Strategic Support and the Corporate Health and Safety Officer assisted with consideration of the report.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet note the Council's health and safety performance over the preceding year as set out in the Appendix to the report.

### Reason

It is considered good practice by the Health and Safety Executive, the Institute of Directors and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents for public bodies to publish an annual report on health and safety performance. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require all employers to review their health and safety management system. Since 2015 the Council has employed BS OHSAS 18001: "Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems" as its base system for managing health and safety.

*Councillors Harper-Davies and Morgan, attending virtually, confirmed that they would have voted in favour of the above decision had they been physically present at the meeting and able to do so.*

### NOTES:

1. Councillor Harper-Davies attended this meeting virtually as she was away. Councillor Morgan attended this meeting virtually due to recent contact with Covid 19. Decisions were taken only by Cabinet members physically present at the meeting.
2. Councillor Seaton attended this meeting virtually. She was not taking decisions.
3. The following officers listed as present attended this meeting virtually: Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure. The remaining officers listed as present attended this meeting in person.
4. The decisions in these minutes not in the form of recommendations to Council will come into effect at noon on Friday, 15th July 2022 unless called in under Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 11.7. Decisions in the form of recommendations to Council are not subject to call in.

5. No reference may be made to these minutes at the next available Ordinary Council meeting unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on Friday, 15th July 2022.
6. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Cabinet.

## CABINET – 15TH SEPTEMBER 2022

### Report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources (MO)

#### Part A

#### ITEM 6 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL

##### Purpose of Report

To consider the recommendations of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel following its scrutiny of the digital offering of the Council's services and and how this can potentially be developed.

##### Recommendation

Set out below are the Panel recommendations to the Cabinet (1-3), followed by the officer response and recommendation in each case. The Cabinet is asked to consider each of these and decide which recommendations it wishes to agree, if any.

In addition, the Panel made four observations for the Cabinet to note.

##### Reason

To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel and to ensure implementation of scrutiny recommendations where agreed by the Cabinet.

##### **Panel Recommendation 1**

That the Scrutiny Commission scrutinises the website procurement process, which was due to take place in March 2023.

##### Response of the Lead Officer

As the procurement of the website will follow the standard procurement policy and procedures it would be of most benefit for Members to be involved in the testing and feedback stage of the development of any new website adding further opportunity to inform the design and usability of the website.

##### **Officer Recommendation 1**

That Members are invited to be involved in the testing and feedback stage of the development and implementation of the new website.

##### **Panel Recommendation 2**

That participation in the Digital Champions initiative be offered to members. This would involve developing the digital skills of members to enable them to support their residents with enquiries and issues involving online services.

### Response of the Lead Officer

Members becoming digital champions would provided additional support in the community to those residents who may need help with completing online transactions. This recommendation supports the aims of the Customer Service Strategy.

### **Officer Recommendation 2**

That Members are offered and encouraged to participate in the Digital Champions initiative to enable the further development of their digital skills further as required allowing greater support to residents.

### **Panel Recommendation 3**

That member development sessions be organised to increase the digital skills of all members. This would include using the digital services offered by the Council, using IT equipment, using social media and increasing social media presence.

### Response of the Lead Officer

Offering further training on digital services, social media and IT equipment will help to improve confidence and awareness improving the ability for Members to support our residents and customers in their local community.

### **Officer Recommendation 3**

That Members be offered further digital skills training to increase awareness and confidence in the use and services available on line to our customers.

### **Panel Observations**

The Panel also made the following observations, officers may comment if they consider it appropriate.

1. The digital transformation work being undertaken by the Council is substantial and thorough and will enhance the service off across the Council;
2. Digital exclusion of some residents was a concern and the recommendations of the panel will help to overcome this. It is important to note that traditional methods of contact and service delivery, such as face-to-face and telephone would remain in place. Digital transformation will help to encourage more residents to use online services, but would not force them to do so.
3. Residents are most likely to use online services when they are easy-to-use, quick and simple to access, with few issues. The Council should ensure the website is as user friendly as possible.

4. Members have a part to play in the digital transformation of services as they are the connection between residents and the Council. Members should promote online services as much as possible in line with the Council's aims.

#### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Scrutiny Commission, on 5th July 2022, agreed that the report of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel be submitted for consideration by the Cabinet.

Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.12(a) sets out the procedures by which a report of a Scrutiny Committee should be considered by the Cabinet.

In accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.12(d), background information and officer advice has been provided within this report to enable the Cabinet to make any decisions without undue delay.

#### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The Cabinet's response to the Panel's recommendations will be fed back to the Scrutiny Commission, indicating what (if any) action the Cabinet proposes to take. Where necessary, the Scrutiny Commission will review the implementation of any Cabinet decisions at an appropriate time, usually after 6 months.

#### Report Implications

Implications, if any, are as set in out in the above officer responses.

Key Decision: No

Background Papers: None

Officer to contact: Sally Watson  
Democratic Services Officer  
(01509) 634969  
[Sally.watson@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Sally.watson@charnwood.gov.uk)

## **Part B**

### Background

1. At its meeting held on 10th January 2022, the Scrutiny Commission resolved to establish the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel as a formal Panel.
2. The Panel's first meeting was on 28th February 2022, followed by subsequent meetings on 29th March 2022 and 27th April 2022. After the third meeting the Panel concluded its initial business on 16th June 2022.
3. The Scrutiny Commission considered the Panel's report at its meeting on 5th July 2022 and resolved that the observations and recommendations of the Panel be submitted for consideration by the Cabinet. The report agreed by the Scrutiny Commission is set out at Annex 1. This includes a foreword by the Chair of the Panel, Councillor Brookes.

### Annexes

Annex 1      Report of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel

**REPORT OF THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL**

**Foreword by Councillor Brookes, Chair of the Scrutiny Panel**

Today we live in a society in which is highly reliant on digital services. This is even more so following the Covid-19 Pandemic. Many of us use digital services for shopping, booking appointments and working. It is vital that we, as a Council, ensure we meet the expectations of our customers by providing the most convenient and easy to use services. At the same time, the Council faces a shrinking funding base and the need to identify ways to make services more efficient. This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel which sought to gain information into how the Council can further support the digital offering of Council services and to make recommendations as appropriate.

The Panel would like to thank the internal and external witnesses who gave up their time to provide evidence to assist the Panel with its deliberations. These individuals are outlined in Section 4.



## 1. Background

The topic for this Panel was agreed at the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission on 28th June 2021 and agreed to be progressed at the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission on 10th January 2022.

The Panel's first meeting was on 28th February 2022, followed by subsequent meetings on 29th March 2022 and 27th April 2022. After the third meeting the Panel concluded its initial business on 16th June 2022.

## 2. Panel Membership

Chair: Councillor Brookes

Councillors Charles, Gerrard, Hamilton, Needham, Seaton.

## 3. Terms of Reference and Reason for Scrutiny

The Panel's Terms of Reference, agreed by the Panel at its initial meeting on 28th February 2022 and confirmed by Scrutiny Commission on 10th January 2022 were as follows:

*This panel will:*

- *Identify which forms were most used throughout lockdown and whether more forms should be created to support our customers*
- *Identify whether there is a need to create a personalised front-end login portal*
- *If there is a need, would this be for:*
  - *All customers*
  - *Council tenants only*
  - *Another key customer group*
- *If a front end portal is required, what information should be displayed and how will this integrate with existing software.*
- *Identify economies of scale and potential savings for the Council and/ or service.*

The Scope Document for the scrutiny review undertaken by the Panel is attached at **Appendix 1**. This sets out the above Terms of Reference and Reason for Scrutiny. The document outlines the position at the conclusion of the Panel's work and, therefore, includes additional stakeholders and resources identified by the Panel as its work progressed, notes added to assist the Panel, and a summary of the progress made by the Panel.

## 4. Evidence, Stakeholders and Witnesses

The Panel received information from the following stakeholders and witnesses:

#### Information from officers within the Council

- Introduction from Head of Customer Experience on the current position with respect to commercial income generation
- Updates and further information as requested from the Head of Customer Experience and the Information Technology Delivery Manager.
- A demonstration and guidance on the Council's i-Map mapping portal from the Head of Planning and Regeneration.
- Discussion on the communications and marketing strategies used by the Council from the Communications Manager.

#### Information from other Councils

- Discussion and information regarding the 'Digital Coventry' report from Head of IT and Digital at Coventry City Council, Paul Ward.

#### Information from other sources

- Insight from Lead Member for Transformation, Councillor Rollings.
- Research findings from panel members on website experience of other Councils and in the private sector and apps used by other Councils and in the private sector.

#### Documentation

The Panel reviewed documentation as follows:

- Charnwood Borough Council [Corporate Strategy 2020-24](#)
- Charnwood Borough Council [Customer Service Strategy 2022-25](#)
- Charnwood Borough Council [ICT Strategy 2021-23](#)
- McKinsey and Company – [A global view of how consumer behaviour is changing amid Covid-19](#)
- Lloyd's Bank – [UK Consumer Digital Index 2021](#)
- Lloyd's Bank – [Essential Digital Skills Report 2021](#)
- Coventry City Council - [Digital Coventry](#)
- Citizens Online – [Digital Inclusion in Charnwood](#)

Technical Support was provided to the Panel by:

- Karey Barnshaw – Head of Customer Experience
- Ayman Khan – Information Technology Delivery Manager

## **5. Summaries of Panel Meetings**

Summaries of the work undertaken at each meeting of the Panel are set out in the "Progress of Panel Work" section of the Scope Document at **Appendix 1**.

Full details of the information provided by witnesses and the issues considered by the Panel are detailed in the notes of the Panel's meetings listed in Background Papers section of this report, also attached at **Appendices 2**.

The Panel met a total of four times as follows:

- Meeting 1 – 28th February 2022
- Meeting 2 – 29th March 2022
- Meeting 3 – 27th April 2022
- Meeting 4 – 16th June 2022

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

The Improvement and Organisational Development Manager stated that there was not a need for an Equality Impact Assessment.

## **7. Key Findings**

The Panel obtained evidence from a range of sources both internal and external as described in Section 4 above. In doing so the Panel made use of the evidence provided of practice at other councils and organisations with different digital offerings. The following summarises the key findings of the evidence considered by the Panel.

### Ideas for Digitally Transforming Services

The Panel considered methods by which the Council could implement digital transformation where it was not already planned. Considering evidence provided, suggestions included:

1. Developing an app which could be used by customers to make interactions with the Council easier.
2. Developing a 'hook' which would encourage residents to download an app and continue to use it. A hook would also be beneficial if the Council decided not to develop an app but to promote use of the website more. Some suggestions included continually promoting the benefits of using online services over other methods (time, convenience), ensuring online services are very easy to use and unlikely to cause issues and to link online services to high profile events, such as the Queen's Jubilee.
3. That the Council further developed its virtual meetings capacity to allow residents to meet with officers and customer services through virtual platforms.
4. That the Council's website could be simplified for ease of use and to encourage more engagement.
5. That members of the Council become more involved in the digital transformation of the Council. This might include members receiving training to become 'Digital Champions' within their communities, as well as becoming more active on social media.
6. That Parish and Town Councils and Parish and Town Clerks become involved in the digital transformation processes by working with the Council to identify potentially hard to reach members of the public that may be digitally excluded.

7. That after initially requesting a survey of Charnwood residents to understand their requirements and preferences with regards to the digital transformation of services, this was no longer needed.

### Developing an App

The panel had initially felt that the development of an app would be beneficial as it would allow residents to quickly and easily interact with the Council. It was highlighted that many people find using a smart phone easier than using a computer and so it was felt that an app would increase the number of residents interacting with the Council through digital channels. The panel compiled a list of other Councils that had developed an app and were tasked undertake research relating to this.

Following this research, and after further information provided from the Head of Customer Experience and the Head of IT and Digital at Coventry City Council, the panel decided that the development of an app to increase resident engagement was not viable. Other Councils had had negative experiences following the launch of an app and usage rates were typically low. In addition, the cost of developing of an app would be substantial and was not within the Council's budget. However, the panel felt that the Council's website should be made more simplistic, easy-to-use and accessible across all platforms including desktops, tablets and smartphones. This could give the user the experience of using an app but through the website channel, eliminating the issues highlighted.

### Identifying a 'Hook'

Evidence from the Head of Customer Experience, the Head of IT and Digital at Coventry City Council and the Communications Manager had suggested that the identification of a 'hook' would be beneficial in the digital transformation of services. Across other local authorities, online portal usage rates were low. In order to improve engagement, it was necessary to find an incentive to encourage customers to start using online services and then continue to use them.

It was estimated that 80-90% of customers made contact with the Council once a year at present, so it was difficult to incentivize use of online services. The panel were informed that a neighbouring authority had only 5% of total residents regularly using the online services provided by the Council. It was explained that this 5% of residents were mainly accessing self service functions on the Council's online portal, involving accessing financial support.

At a subsequent meeting, the panel received information on the most used online forms and the least used online forms available through the Charnwood Borough Council's website in order to try to identify reasons why some forms were more used than others.

A number of solutions were suggested for 'hooking' customers and retaining their interest. For example, continual promotion of the Council's online services (via social media, during telephone calls with customers). Another example was to ensure the online offering was simple and easy to use and caused very few issues in order to encourage customers to return to the website over using other channels. A further example was to tie online services into other popular events or services. Booking a popular service could require customers to sign up to the portal, such as using a tip.

## Digital Inclusion

It was highlighted that digital inclusion remained an issue within the Borough. There are large rural areas within Charnwood which may not have sufficient broadband capacity to support some of the Council's digital services. In addition, the panel reviewed a digital skills gap analysis which was undertaken in 2020, detailing the estimated digital exclusion risk. There are also many individuals within the Borough that do not want to engage with the Council through digitally, preferring more traditional channels.

The Council continues to support more traditional communication channels such as telephone and in-person conversations, and the Council's Transformation Service Reviews are ongoing to ensure all departments within the Council are updated to provide the best customer service experience possible, and this includes creating easier and more convenient services for the customer. Therefore, the Council is committed to support customers in using online services where possible.

It was highlighted that some members of the community that were at risk of digital exclusion were difficult to reach. In order to overcome this, the Council attempted to reach these customers through offline channels such as through partner agencies working within the community. It was suggested that working with Parish and Town Councils and Parish and Town Clerks may be beneficial to further improve contact with hard to reach members of the community.

It was also highlighted that members of the Council were a valuable resource in connecting with members of the public. It was suggested that members could consider becoming digital champions within their wards, assisting residents to become more comfortable with the online services offered by the council or promoting what is available.

## Ongoing Digital Transformation

At the first meeting of the panel, the Head of Customer Experience gave an outline of the Transformation Service Reviews. Information was provided on areas that each department within the Council had identified could be transformed in order to improve efficiency. The panel was informed that a significant amount of work was already in progress and that some of this would involve digital transformation of services. This included the improvement of the i-Map feature demonstrated by the Head of Planning and Regeneration at the panel's second meeting.

The website management contract was due to be procured in 2023. This would provide some opportunities for upgrading the website. The Panel felt that the procurement should be scrutinized by the Scrutiny Commission at the relevant time.

After receiving information from the Head of Customer Experience, the Information Technology Delivery Manager and the Lead Member for Transformation, the panel

acknowledged that the work being undertaken and planned in the future involved all areas of the Council and would substantially improve the digital offer of the Council.

## **9. Recommendations made by the Panel**

In undertaking its work regarding how the council could improve digital transformation, the Panel concluded that they were satisfied with the ongoing work being undertaken by each service across the Council, and that this would improve the experiences of customers.

The panel also identified some opportunities to support the digital transformation programme at the Council. The most prevalent barriers to the digital transformation process were the digital exclusion of some residents and the ease of use of the website.

The Panel is making the following recommendations to address these issues.

### Recommendations to the Cabinet

#### Recommendations

1. That the Scrutiny Commission scrutinises the website procurement process, which was due to take place in March 2023.
2. That participation in the Digital Champions initiative be offered to members. This would involve developing the digital skills of members to enable them to support their residents with enquiries and issues involving online services.
3. That member development sessions be organised to increase the digital skills of all members. This would include using the digital services offered by the Council, using IT equipment, using social media and increasing social media presence.

#### Reasons

1. To allow members to assess the procurement process to ensure the most appropriate contract is successful and can deliver the outcomes required by the Council.
2. To further develop the Digital Champion role to allow members to support their residents.
3. To develop the digital skills of all members and to encourage them to interact digitally with members of the public to promote this method of communication.

#### Observations

1. The digital transformation work being undertaken by the Council is substantial and thorough and will enhance the service off across the Council.

2. Digital exclusion of some residents was a concern and the recommendations of the panel will help to overcome this. It is important to note that traditional methods of contact and service delivery, such as face-to-face and telephone would remain in place. Digital transformation will help to encourage more residents to use online services, but would not force them to do so.
3. Residents are most likely to use online services when they are easy-to-use, quick and simple to access, with few issues. The Council should ensure the website is as user friendly as possible.
4. Members have a part to play in the digital transformation of services as they are the connection between residents and the Council. Members should promote online services as much as possible in line with the Council's aims.

## **10. Background Papers**

Agenda Papers and notes of Panel meetings available on the Council's website at:

<https://charnwood.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=251&Year=0>

Appendix 1 - Scope Document

Appendix 2 – Meetings Notes – 28th February 2022, 29th March 2022, 27th April 2022, 16th June 2022



**REVIEW TITLE: Digital Transformation Panel**

### **SCOPE OF ITEM / TERMS OF REFERENCE**

This panel will:

- Identify which forms were most used throughout lockdown and whether more forms should be created to support our customers
- Identify whether there is a need to create a personalised front-end login portal
- If there is a need, would this be for:
  - All customers
  - Council tenants only
  - Another key customer group
- If a front end portal is required, what information should be displayed and how will this integrate with existing software.
- Identify economies of scale and potential savings for the Council and/ or service.

### **REASON FOR SCRUTINY**

The panel will also ensure that any current projects connected to the IT Strategy and Customer Services Strategy are progressing in a timely and effective manner as well as providing further ideas for how to transform services.

Increase accessibility to the council services helping to raise customer satisfaction levels.

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP**

Councillor Brookes (Chair)  
 Councillor Seaton  
 Councillor Gerrard  
 Councillor Charles  
 Councillor Needham  
 Councillor Hamilton



<b>WHAT WILL BE INCLUDED</b>
Comparison research gained from other Council's. Officer statements on current projects. Private sector examples
<b>WHAT WILL BE EXCLUDED</b>
<b>KEY TASKS</b> * * including consideration of efficiency savings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate existing Council transformation projects</li> <li>• Make recommendations on future strategy or processes</li> <li>• Review other Local Authority digitalisation and transformation strategies and processes to learn best practice</li> <li>• Review other Private Sector digitalisation and transformation strategies and processes to learn best practice</li> <li>• Provide input into the Council's Transformation Strategy</li> <li>• Interviewing witnesses and Council officers</li> <li>• Identify services that are most challenging to integrate or quite simple to integrate</li> <li>• Send out a survey to our customers for ideas/feedback and to help identify key areas for integration.</li> <li>• To research the use of apps for services in other Local Authorities and in the private sector.</li> </ul>
<b>STAKEHOLDERS, OUTSIDE AGENCIES, OTHER ORGANISATIONS</b> *
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside bodies/ agencies who already have this facility.</li> <li>• Other councils who have this facility.</li> <li>• IT and CRM (Customer Relationship Management) companies.</li> <li>• Individuals with skills in this area.</li> <li>• Our current key partners such as Capita and Serco to understand how they will integrate their services.</li> <li>• Relevant Borough Council departments.</li> </ul>

<b>EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS</b>
<b>Is an impact needs assessment required? – to be considered at the Panel's penultimate meeting</b>
<b>LINKS/OVERLAPS TO OTHER REVIEWS</b>
The Council is already working on improving online forms and there are projects underway

Commercialisation Scrutiny Panel

### RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Lead Officer: Karey Barnshaw, Head of Customer Experience  
Support from Democratic Services (Sally Watson)

### REPORT REQUIREMENTS (Officer information)

Current Projects (meeting 1)

Survey Results (meeting 4)

### REVIEW COMMENCEMENT DATE

28 February 2022

### COMPLETION DATE FOR DRAFT REPORT

June/July 2022

\* Key tasks and stakeholders may be subject to change as the review progresses.

### PROGRESS OF PANEL WORK

MEETING DATE	PROGRESS TO DATE
28 February 2022	<p>At this meeting, the Panel considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the Scrutiny Scope Document agreed by the Scrutiny Commission updated to list Panel membership and meeting dates;</li><li>Charnwood Borough Council Corporate Strategy 2020-24</li><li>key task in the Scrutiny Scope Document, current and future projects at Charnwood Borough Council, including annexes Customer Services Strategy 2022-2025 and Information and Communication Technology Strategy 2021-23.</li><li>scheduling of further key tasks in the Scrutiny Scope Document for the next meeting of the Panel and consideration of any work members of the Panel would undertake in advance of that meeting.</li></ul> <p>The Panel agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>that additional information be requested from the Head of Customer Experience, specifically;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the percentage of enquiries that had been made via a smart device,</li><li>a summary of the work that has already been undertaken as part of the Transformation Service Review</li><li>the McKinsey report, referred to in the Customer Services Strategy 2022-2025.</li><li>the most used online forms over the past two years</li></ul></li><li>that the Chair meet with the Democratic Services Officer in order to discuss the scrutiny scoping document, and any</li></ul>

	<p>updates required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that work be allocated to members of the panel covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The front end/website experience of other councils, including successes</li> <li>○ Exploring apps available at other councils, including successes</li> <li>○ Front end/website/apps experience in the Private sector, including successes</li> <li>○ Services offered by Charnwood Borough Council that could be incorporated into an app/ experience for older people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
29 March 2022	<p>At this meeting, the Panel considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An updated version of the scrutiny scoping document, updated in accordance with discussions at the previous meeting of the panel.</li> <li>• A projects update, containing the information requested by the panel following scrutiny of current and future projects. This included annexes McKinsey and Company – A global view of how consumer behavior is changing amid COVID-19, Lloyds Bank – UK Consumer Digital Index 2021 and – Lloyds Bank – Essential Digital Skills Report 2021.</li> <li>• Feedback on tasks allocated to the panel at the previous meeting.</li> <li>• The ‘Digital Coventry’ report, supported by the Head of IT and Digital and Coventry City Council.</li> <li>• A demonstration of the online planning applications portal to the panel and the council’s i-Map mapping portal that enables spatial searches of planning applications to be made.</li> <li>• Identification of key stakeholders.</li> <li>• scheduling of further key tasks in the Scrutiny Scope Document for the next meeting of the Panel and consideration of any work members of the Panel would undertake in advance of that meeting.</li> </ul> <p>The Panel agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Head of Customer Experience provide the following information to the panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ any further relevant reports by McKinsey and Company.</li> <li>○ data on the usage of all forms across the council to the next meeting of the panel.</li> <li>○ the digital skills gap analysis report before the next meeting of the panel.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• That the Head of IT and Digital and Coventry City Council provide statistics on the rate of ongoing portal usage at Coventry City Council.</li> <li>• That the Head of Customer Experience considered suitable stakeholders with the intention of inviting witnesses to a</li> </ul>

	future meeting.
27 April 2022	<p>At this meeting the panel considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An updated version of the scrutiny scoping document, updated in accordance with discussions at the previous meeting of the panel.</li> <li>• An update on previously discussed items, including the Digital Inclusion in Charnwood report and the total enquiries received via online web forms.</li> <li>• Information provided by the Communications Manager to identify ways to encourage website usage and self-service.</li> <li>• The development of the panel's survey on residents.</li> </ul> <p>The panel agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider a recommendation to encourage members to become digital champions within their wards, assisting residents to become more comfortable with the online services offered by the council or promoting what is available.</li> <li>• That the resident survey on digital transformation of services was no longer required.</li> </ul>
16 June 2022	<p>At this meeting the panel considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The panel's draft final report and recommendations.</li> </ul> <p>The panel agreed to make the following recommendations to Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Scrutiny Commission scrutinises the website procurement process, which was due to take place in March 2023.</li> <li>2. That participation in the Digital Champions initiative be offered to members. This would involve developing the digital skills of members to enable them to support their residents with enquiries and issues involving online services.</li> <li>3. That member development sessions be organised to increase the digital skills of all members. This would include using the digital services offered by the Council, using IT equipment, using social media and increasing social media presence.</li> </ol>
NOTES:  To facilitate witness attendance it is anticipated that times of the meetings will be a	

mix of daytime and early evening.

Panel meetings can be run online apart from the final meeting where recommendations are agreed upon.

**REPORT SUBMITTED TO SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Panel should aim to complete its work and submit its report to the Scrutiny Commission meeting on or before 8th August 2022.

**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL  
28TH FEBRUARY 2022**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Brookes)  
Councillors Charles, Gerrard, Hamilton, Needham  
and Seaton

Councillor Rollings (Cabinet Lead Member for  
Transformation)

Head of Customer Experience  
Information Technology Delivery Manager  
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

3. DECLARATIONS - PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

4. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions were submitted.

5. SCRUTINY SCOPING DOCUMENT

*Councillor Seaton arrived at the meeting at 6:05pm.*

Considered and discussed, the scrutiny scope document for the Panel, agreed by Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 10th January 2022 and updated to list Panel membership and meeting dates.

It was suggested that there may be a need to update the scoping document in accordance with discussions at this meeting, particularly following the discussion of item 8 on the agenda (Work Programme and Key Task Planning).

**AGREED** that the scrutiny scope document be noted.

6. CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE STRATEGY 2020-24

The panel reviewed the Charnwood Borough Council Corporate Strategy 2020-24.

It was highlighted that the council was customer-focussed and committed to constantly improving customer experience. This should be considered throughout the course of the panel.

**AGREED** that the Charnwood Borough Council Corporate Strategy 2020-24 be noted.

7. CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS

In accordance with the scrutiny scope document (key tasks), considered and discussed, a report of the Head of Customer Experience to inform the panel of current and future projects demonstrating the approach to delivering services as outlined in the ICT Strategy and the Customer Services Strategy and how technology will support this

Key points of discussion:

- i. The Head of Customer Experience stated that the following should be considered during the course of the panel:
  - Awareness of the impact of new technology in terms of customer and officer capability.
  - The council's aim of reducing the total number of systems in order to increase efficiency and reduce costs.
  - Any additional services recommended would need to be rational and valid. No assumptions should be made and suggestions would need to be backed by evidence.
  - The costs associated with the implementation of any new systems.
  - Any considerations regarding discrimination of customers.
  - The timescales associated with the implementation of new systems or ways of working.
  - The future support required for any new systems.
- ii. It was estimated that 80-90% of customers made contact with the council once a year. Therefore it was difficult to encourage customers to engage with an online system for which sign up/sign in was required as this required effort for little benefit to the customer. It was important that any portals contained a hook to attract customers, or they may not consider the investment to be necessary.
- iii. The online portal of a neighbouring council was accessed regularly by only 5% of those that had signed up. It was not clear what services this small proportion of residents were accessing via the portal.
- iv. It was acknowledged that many customers may prefer to use mobile smart devices to access council services. It was confirmed that all services offered by the council were smart device accessible. The Head of Customer Experience

- stated that she would provide information on the percentage of enquiries that had been made via a smart device at the next meeting.
- v. The systems used by the council were all capable of customisations to reflect the requirements of Charnwood residents.
  - vi. The timescales associated with the Transformation Service Reviews had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic but the process was ongoing. Progress with this was fed into the council's SWaP Board (Services, Workplace and People Board). The Head of Customer Experience agreed to summarise the work that had already been undertaken as part of the Transformation Service Review and to provide this at the next meeting of the panel.
  - vii. The website contract was due to end in 2023 and a procurement process would be completed to ensure good value for money for a new contract.
  - viii. The methods available for residents to contact the council were managed equally and were logged and responded to via the same stream.
  - ix. The Customer Experience service within the council conducted regular skills and resource audits to ensure that the required experience and skill levels were contained within teams. The service invested in existing staff and ensured teams were trained appropriately for upcoming projects and to meet the aims of the Corporate Strategy 2020-24.
  - x. There had been concerns regarding the capacity of teams in other areas of the council to train sufficiently for new systems being implemented.
  - xi. It was possible for the council to develop an app although this would incur significant costs. An app would work separately from the online portal on the website and it would not be possible to link both systems. It would be necessary to establish a hook for customers to encourage them to download and continuously use the app in order for its production to be cost efficient. There would be a requirement of strong evidence to suggest an app would be beneficial for residents.
  - xii. It was highlighted that information on the needs and preferences of residents would be available following the completion of the survey which would be undertaken by the panel in the coming weeks.
  - xiii. A number of other councils had implemented an app, including:
    - East Riding of Yorkshire Council
    - East Devonshire District Council
    - West Oxfordshire District Council
    - Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
    - East Goscote Parish Council
    - Syston Town Council



- Gloucester City Council

- xiv. Virtual meetings between officers at the council and residents were not yet possible, although it was recognised that this could be beneficial.
- xv. The council had a duty to ensure all customers were able to access all services and that no customer would be discriminated as a result of using a specific contact method. Equality Impact Assessments were provided for new projects where relevant.
- xvi. The Head of Customer Experience agreed to provide the McKinsey report, referred to in the Customer Services Strategy 2022-2025, to members of the panel in advance of the next meeting of the panel.

## **AGREED**

1. The report and discussion be noted.
2. That the Head of Customer Experience provide information on the percentage of enquiries that had been made via a smart device at the next meeting of the panel.
3. That the Head of Customer Experience summarises the work that has already been undertaken as part of the Transformation Service Review and provides this at the next meeting of the panel.
4. That the Head of Customer Experience provides the McKinsey report, referred to in the Customer Services Strategy 2022-2025, to members of the panel in advance of the next meeting of the panel.

## 8. WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY TASK PLANNING

Considered and discussed, the key tasks in the scrutiny scope document to be considered at the next meeting of the Panel and any work members of the Panel would undertake in advance of that meeting.

The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was highlighted that there was a marketing element associated with the engagement of residents in new technologies. The panel was scheduled to interview a witness with marketing experience at a later meeting.
- ii. It was suggested that the panel explored the 5% of residents regularly using the online portal at a neighbouring council, as outlined in the discussion in the 'Current and Future Projects' item on the agenda.
- iii. It was suggested that the Head of Customer Experience provided information to the panel on the most used online forms over the past two years. The Lead

Member for Transformation stated that data on abandoned forms was available. It was suggested that the Head of Customer Experience provided this data to members of the panel at their next meeting.

- iv. It was highlighted that an update of the scoping document would be required following the outcomes of the meeting. It was suggested that the Chair meet with the Democratic Services Officer in order to discuss this, and that the updated scoping document would be reviewed by the panel again at the next meeting.
- v. It was suggested that the website contract procurement should be scrutinised at the appropriate time.

Work allocated to members before the next meeting of the panel was as follows;

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
The front end/website experience of other councils, including successes	Councillor Seaton
Exploring apps available at other councils, including successes	Councillor Charles
Front end/website/apps experience in the Private sector, including successes	Councillors Hamilton and Needham
Services offered by Charnwood Borough Council that could be incorporated into an app/ experience for older people	Councillor Gerrard

## **AGREED**

1. that the Head of Customer Experience provided information to the panel on the most used online forms over the past two years. The Lead Member for Transformation stated that data on abandoned forms was available. It was suggested that the Head of Customer Experience provided this data to members of the panel at their next meeting.
2. That the Chair meet with the Democratic Services Officer in order to discuss the scrutiny scoping document, and that the updated scoping document would be reviewed by the panel again at the next meeting.
3. That panel members undertake the work outlined and feedback at the next meeting of the panel.

## NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 25th April 2022 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication

of these minutes.

2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel.
3. The following attendees listed as present attended the meeting virtually; Lead Member for Transformation, Head of Customer Experience and Information Technology Delivery Manager. The remaining attendees listed were physically present in the meeting.

**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL  
29TH MARCH 2022**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Brookes)  
Councillors Charles, Hamilton and Seaton

Councillor Ward (Head of IT and Digital, Coventry City Council)

Head of Customer Experience  
Head of Planning and Regeneration  
Democratic Services Officer (EB) and Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Gerrard and Needham

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

9. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Gerrard.

10. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

11. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

12. DECLARATIONS - PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

13. SCRUTINY SCOPING DOCUMENT

Considered and discussed, the scrutiny scope document for the Panel, updated following the previous meeting of the panel.

**AGREED** that the scrutiny scope document be noted.

14. PROJECTS UPDATE

A report of the Head of Customer Experience to provide the panel with information related to projects, requested at the previous meeting of the panel, was considered.

Key points of discussion:

- i. It was not clear whether the McKinsey and Company report 'A global view of how consumer behaviour is changing amid Covid-19' would be updated. However, a number of reports had been published by McKinsey and Company which may be relevant to the work of the panel. The Head of Customer Experience agreed that she would highlight any relevant reports to the panel.
- ii. The use of corporate email inboxes was often not an efficient process, as it allowed for free text. A more efficient method of contacting the council was the usage of e-forms with specific fields for residents to populate as this would allow the council to request all relevant information required from the customer in one place.
- iii. It was requested that the panel received data on the usage of all forms used across the council so that the panel could identify customer needs. The Head of Customer Experience agreed to provide this information.

## AGREED

1. That the panel notes the content of the report.
2. That the Head of Customer Experience highlighted any relevant reports by McKinsey and Company to the panel.
3. That the Head of Customer Experience provided data on the usage of all forms across the council to the next meeting of the panel.

## 15. FEEDBACK ON TASKS

Members of the panel provided updates on the work allocated at the previous meeting.

Updates were as follows:

Task	Responsibility
<p>The front end/website experience of other councils, including successes</p> <p><i>Councillor Seaton had liaised with two councils and found that the appearance and feel of a website was significant to user engagement. It was not clear whether the councils that Councillor Seaton spoke to had a good rate of ongoing portal usage from customers that had signed up. Councillor Seaton agreed to enquire about this before the next meeting.</i></p>	Councillor Seaton

<p>Exploring apps available at other councils, including successes</p> <p><i>Councillor Charles liaised with four councils and had detailed feedback from two councils. He stated that these councils did not advocate the use of an app. Feedback ratings from customers using the app were poor and the councils did not recommend using an app.</i></p>	<p>Councillor Charles</p>
<p>Front end/website/apps experience in the Private sector, including successes</p> <p><i>Councillor Hamilton liaised with two private sector organisations. At British Gas, all of the customer tasks were available to complete across all platforms. It was also highlighted that the website reflected an app in terms of the look and feel. It was suggested that this approach could be beneficial because of the ease of use and familiarity, whilst not incurring a significant cost to develop an app.</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Needham was not in attendance and so no update was provided.</i></p>	<p>Councillors Hamilton and Needham</p>
<p>Services offered by Charnwood Borough Council that could be incorporated into an app/ experience for older people</p> <p><i>Councillor Gerrard was not in attendance and so no update was provided.</i></p>	<p>Councillor Gerrard</p>

**AGREED** that Councillor Seaton enquires about the rate of ongoing portal usage from customers at the councils she has previously liaised with.

16. DIGITAL COVENTRY

In accordance with the scrutiny scoping document, to review other Local Authority digitalisation and transformation strategies and processes to learn best practice, the Head of IT and Digital at Coventry City Council attended the meeting to discuss 'Digital Coventry'.

The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was highlighted that Charnwood had rural areas which may not have the same broadband width as other areas of the borough, and so any services

- offered would need to consider this. An [interactive map](#) was available detailing the superfast connectivity in Charnwood. The Head of IT and Digital at Coventry City Council (CCC) stated that customer experiences of IT should be simple, functional and appealing and that with this formula, broadband width would not be a concern.
- ii. The Head of Customer Experience stated that a digital skills gap analysis was undertaken in Charnwood in 2020, detailing the highest risks in digital skills exclusion. It was agreed that the report containing this information would be shared with the panel before the next meeting.
  - iii. It was highlighted that it was difficult to incentivise customers to continue to use online portals due to the nature of services being offered. It was suggested that promoting the benefits of online portal usage over other methods of contact, could be advantageous (for example, the facility is available 24/7, often quicker, cheaper for the council). Another incentive would be to ensure service via online portals was good (for example, forms working correctly, quick feedback if required).
  - iv. The Head of IT and Digital (CCC) stated that he would provide statistics on the rate of ongoing portal usage at Coventry City Council.
  - v. It was suggested that the council would need to better understand customers in order to effectively enhance the website offering.
  - vi. The digital offer at Coventry City Council used attractive services to encourage sign up to the portal. For example, customers would have to create an account in order to book a slot at refuse centres or to book activities.

## **AGREED**

1. That the Head of Customer Experience provides the digital skills gap analysis report before the next meeting of the panel.
2. That the Head of IT and Digital (CCC) would provide statistics on the rate of ongoing portal usage at Coventry City Council.

*Post meeting note:*

*The Head of IT and Digital (CCC) responded to action 2) providing the following information:*

*Current number of MyAccounts (our online customer portal accounts) – 246,379*

*We have 485 online services in total via MyAccount*

49 of these services require users to be logged in (primarily due to having a booking or payment).

## 17. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The panel discussed concerns with the planning applications process with the Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Head of Customer Experience.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration demonstrated the online planning applications portal to the panel and the council's i-Map mapping portal that enables spatial searches of planning applications to be made.

- i. The Head of Planning and Regeneration stated that that he would share a link to access the portal which could be used by members to identify specific planning applications.
- ii. It was acknowledged that it was difficult to find specific planning applications using the search functions on the Planning Explorer Portal as the results of searches were not always listed logically. It was highlighted that a new back-office system was currently being implemented and a new customer focussed applications portal would be available by July 2022. It was anticipated that the user experience of the portal would improve following this.

**AGREED** that the Head of Planning and Regeneration provide the link to access the portal which could be used by members to identify specific planning applications.

*Post meeting note: The Head of Planning and Regeneration provided the following link: [Cadcorp Web Map Layers \(charnwood.gov.uk\)](http://Cadcorp Web Map Layers (charnwood.gov.uk))*

## 18. IDENTIFYING KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The panel discussed key stakeholders for interviewing at a future meeting of the panel.

- i. The panel felt that there was a requirement to interview further witnesses in order to develop a better understanding of how the recommendations of the panel should be formed.
- ii. The Head of Customer Experience stated that she would consider suitable stakeholders with the intention of inviting witnesses to a future meeting.
- iii. It was suggested that the panel liaise with experts in the marketing field to identify ways to encourage website usage and self-service.

**AGREED** that the Head of Customer Experience considers suitable stakeholders with the intention of inviting witnesses to a future meeting.



19. WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY TASK PLANNING

To schedule the key tasks in the scrutiny scoping document to be considered at the next meeting of the panel and to consider any work to be allocated to members of the panel in advance of the next meeting.

No additional work was allocated to members of the panel for the next meeting of the panel.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 25th April 2022 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL  
27TH APRIL 2022**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Brookes)  
Councillors Charles, Hamilton, Needham and  
Seaton

Councillor Rollings (Cabinet Lead Member for  
Transformation)

Head of Customer Experience  
Communications Manager  
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Gerrard

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

20. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gerrard.

21. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

22. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

23. DECLARATIONS - PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

24. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions were submitted.

25. SCRUTINY SCOPING DOCUMENT

Considered and discussed, the scrutiny scope document for the Panel, updated following the previous meeting of the panel (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

**AGREED** that the scrutiny scope document be noted.

26. PANEL UPDATES

A report of the Head of Customer Experience to provide the panel with information on previously discussed items (supplementary item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

**AGREED** that the panel notes the contents of the appendices.

27. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Manager at Charnwood Borough Council attended the meeting to discuss marketing and communications in relation to digital transformation (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The Communications Manager highlighted the work of the Communications team within the council, which included the management of internal and external communications, social media, press releases, email alerts, website content management, newsletters, a 'What's On?' information page, design and liaising with external partners.
- ii. The Communications team created an average 160-70 press releases and responded to approximately 160 media enquiries annually.
- iii. The Communications team issued 900 email alerts annually and there were approximately 15k members of the public subscribed to receive email alerts.
- iv. The council's social media accounts achieved a reach of approximately 20k people. This was considered to be a good rate in comparison to other local authorities of a similar size. Information on the number of Charnwood residents that used social media in general was not known, although it was estimated that the vast majority of residents did use social media, in line with national trends.
- v. The number of social media followers of the council's accounts had increased by 13.5% on Facebook and 4% on Twitter, during the last 12 months. There was a substantial increase in social media followers during the Covid-19 pandemic, of approximately 400%.
- vi. The area within Charnwood with the most social media followers was Loughborough. The most common age group was 35-44 and most of the council's followers on Facebook were female.
- vii. It was highlighted that the average reach for a post on social media from the council's account was 1k (likes, shares, etc), although this varied substantially depending on the nature of the post and engagement activity can be as high as 20-30k reach. The council engaged residents with posts on high interest events such as the Queen's Jubilee and the Loughborough Fair.

- viii. The Communications team did regularly promote the council's online services via their social media pages.
- ix. It was highlighted that some members were not confident in using their personal social media accounts to communicate with their residents, and that some members were unsure of how to share content. The Communications Manager stated that the Communications team were able to provide advice and guidance to members that were unsure.
- x. It was stated that by tagging Charnwood Borough Council on social media posts, an alert would be generated and the Communications team would be made aware of the post. This would provide an opportunity for the Communications team to share the content to reach a wider audience in Charnwood.
- xi. It was acknowledged that it was not possible to reach some customers through online channels. It was difficult to ascertain who and where these customers were, although the council had methods of attempting to communicate. The council attempted to reach these customers through offline channels, such as through partner agencies that work closely with communities, print media and by highlighting online services during phone calls with customers.
- xii. It was highlighted that the council encouraged Digital Champions to support residents that were not confident in using digital channels. Many members of staff at the council used IT and digital portals in their day-to-day work. This was valuable because these members of staff were able to support residents, family and friends in using online systems if required.
- xiii. It was acknowledged that members were a valuable resource in enabling the council to connect with residents in the community, enabling information to be communicated. It was suggested that the panel recommended that members could consider becoming digital champions within their wards, assisting residents to become more comfortable with the online services offered by the council or promoting what is available. In order to enable this, members would need to attend a member development session which would cover information on the online services provided by the council and a guide on using social media to reach members of the community.
- xiv. The council's approach was to post interesting and engaging information for residents to acknowledge and share. This would increase the reach and the council's online presence and provide a large audience for further posts containing important information.
- xv. It was suggested that another way to make contact with hard to reach members of the public was through parish councils and parish council clerks.

## **AGREED**

1. That the panel notes the information.

2. That the panel consider a recommendation to encourage members to become digital champions within their wards, assisting residents to become more comfortable with the online services offered by the council or promoting what is available.

## 28. DEVELOPING SURVEY

In accordance with the scrutiny scoping document, the panel discussed the development of a survey to identify customer needs and preferences (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was highlighted that work was being undertaken to ensure transformation of services was involved in all areas of the council. It was also highlighted that the online services offered by the council were good and that the panel had previously decided there was not a need for an app.
- ii. Online services were promoted through various channels and the Communications team at the council was actively creating content to increase followers and the number of residents engaging with online services.
- iii. The panel agreed that through the discussions of the panel at the previous meetings and at the present meeting, a resident survey was no longer required. Members were content that residents were receiving an appropriate online service and that was being undertaken to improve this further and to encourage and support residents to use online services where possible.

**AGREED** that the resident survey on digital transformation of services was no longer required.

## 29. WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY TASK PLANNING

To schedule the key tasks in the scrutiny scoping document to be considered at the next meeting of the panel and to consider any work to be allocated to members of the panel in advance of the next meeting (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The panel had agreed that a residents survey was no longer required which meant that there would be no items on the agenda for the next meeting of the panel.

The panel were satisfied that no further information was required and that they felt that they were able to make recommendations at the next meeting of the panel.

### NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 4th July 2022 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication

of these minutes.

2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL  
16TH JUNE 2022**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Brookes)  
Councillors Gerrard and Hamilton

Head of Customer Experience  
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Charles, Needham and Seaton

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Charles, Needham and Seaton.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th April 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

No declarations were made.

4. DECLARATIONS - PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

5. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions were submitted.

6. DRAFT PANEL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A draft report of the panel, outlining the key findings and the discussion points of previous meetings of the panel, was submitted (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Democratic Services Officer assisted with the consideration of this report.

The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was suggested that information be added into the final report to outline the panel's discussion regarding the interface of the website. The panel had highlighted that there was a need for a simple and easy-to-use website that could be accessed efficiently across all platforms (desktop, tablet, mobile phone, etc...).
- ii. Members of the panel stated that they felt satisfied with the ongoing work of the Customer Experience service and that were confident that the work would improve the services offered by the Council, and would create better experiences for customers.

The panel agreed to make the following recommendations:

1. That the Scrutiny Commission scrutinises the website procurement process, which was due to take place in March 2023.
2. That participation in the Digital Champions initiative be offered to members. This would involve developing the digital skills of members to enable them to support their residents with enquiries and issues involving online services.
3. That member development sessions be organised to increase the digital skills of all members. This would include using the digital services offered by the Council, using IT equipment, using social media and increasing social media presence.

#### **AGREED**

1. That information be added into the final report to outline the panel's discussion regarding the interface of the website.
2. That the recommendations set out be included within the final report.

#### 7. ACTIONS AND TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW

The Democratic Services Officer stated that following the amendments to the draft report as suggested, the final report would be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

#### NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 4th July 2022 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel.



## CABINET – 15TH SEPTEMBER 2022

### Report of the Director of Housing and Wellbeing Lead Member: Councillor James Poland

#### Part A

#### ITEM 7      PROCUREMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF REPAIRS MATERIALS

##### Purpose of Report

To seek approval from Cabinet to procure, through a framework, a supplier of materials for repairs to housing revenue account assets.

The contract value is estimated at over £500,000, therefore under the Council's Contract Procurement Rules, this distinct report to Cabinet is necessary.

##### Recommendation

That the Director of Housing and Wellbeing be authorised to commence a procurement exercise, identify a suitable framework, and subsequently award a contract for the supply of repairs materials for a period of up to four years.

##### Reason

To deliver repairs to housing revenue account assets on a consistent basis, and to award a contract in a way that is consistent with the Council's procurement rules.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The materials supplied under the contract will support compliance with the Homes and Communities Agency Home Standard (2012), which, in summary, states that the Council must:

- ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.
- meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.
- ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas.

##### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The existing contract for the supply of repairs materials concludes in June 2023.

Subject to call in, it is expected that procurement will commence in September 2022 and the new service will commence in July 2023.

##### Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

### *Financial Implications*

The new contract will run for a maximum period of four years. The estimated contract value is £470,000 per year. The spend under the current Contract is fully funded in the 2022/23 budget, and similar levels of expenditure for future years have been assumed in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

### *Risk Management*

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Failure to follow the Council's Procedures leading to a breach of procurement legislation and not obtaining best value.	Unlikely (2)	Significant (3)	Moderate (6)	Procurement advice to be obtained from Nottingham City Council.  Procurement via framework provides a route which is compliant with the Council's procedures and legislation.

Key Decision:

Yes

Background Papers:

None

Officer to contact:

Peter Oliver  
Director of Housing and Wellbeing  
01509 634 666  
Peter.oliver@charnwood.gov.uk

## **Part B**

### Background

1. To comply with legislation, and to keep its tenants, employees, and contractors safe, the Council undertakes repairs to Council owned assets including dwellings, communal areas, shops, and garages.
2. The existing Contract with Jewson Ltd comes to an end in June 2023. It is therefore necessary for the Council to put in place arrangements to award a new contract.
3. Procurement via framework has the following advantages:
  - Compliance with procurement legislation - framework providers go out to the market, conducting legally compliant procurement processes on behalf of their members.
  - Economies of scale - through the framework buying power.
  - Speed - a contract can be put in place within an appropriate timescale
  - Contract management support - the Council will benefit from the framework's established contract and supply chain management processes.

### Process

2. The Council will identify and approach a suitable framework provider. Depending on the framework rules a direct award to an appropriate supplier may be made, or alternatively a further mini-competition may be undertaken to refine pricing and / or quality statements.
3. Subject to call in, it is envisaged the procurement exercise will commence in September 2022 and the new contract will start in July 2023.

## CABINET – 15TH SEPTEMBER 2022

### Report of the Head of Finance Services Lead Member: Cllr Tom Barkley

#### Part A

#### ITEM 8     CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT

##### Purpose of the Report

This report requests Cabinet to consider and approve changes to the 2022-2025 Capital Plan and its financing.

##### Recommendations

1. That the current Capital Plan for 2022/23-2024/25, as amended by the changes shown in Appendix 1, in the budgeted sum of £72,133,100 be approved.
2. To increase budget for Community Tree Planting Programme by £5.1k in 2022/23 due to an increase in prices quoted, from 2021/22 revenue contribution to capital.
3. To remove the Thorpe Acre Residents Association Scheme – contributions towards Community Hub Building of £25.9k in 2022/23 did not commence. £15.9k of S106 contribution has been returned to the developer and the balance of £10k has been re-allocated as a S106 scheme to John Storer House towards the extension of the Community Hub Venue.
4. That the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) scheme be increased by £5.5k in 2022/23, in line with the Disabled Facilities Grants received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The total DGF Capital budget being £2.5m in 2022/23.
5. A virement of £63k from HRA Capital Plan Kitchens scheme to Delivery of Stock Condition Survey scheme to fully enable the progress of the survey and data collection.
6. To note additional decisions, taken by Officers, in relation to new S106 schemes added to the Capital programme also included in Appendix 1.
7. To note amendments to the Capital Programme since 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 minute 61.

##### Reasons

1. To enable the current Capital Plan to be the basis for capital spending by the Council and so that schemes may proceed.
2. To enable the Community Tree Planting Programme budget to be available in 2022/23.

3. To remove the Thorpe Acre Residents Association – contributions towards Community Hub Building scheme which was funded by S106 contributions.
4. To confirm that the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme be increased which is funded by an external grant.
5. To enable the Delivery of Stock Condition Survey and Associated Costs budget to be available in 2022/23.
6. To note the new Capital Schemes as part of S106 Agreements implemented by Officers for 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties.
7. To note amendments to the Capital Programme since Cabinet 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 minute 61.

### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Capital Plan is an integral element of all policies. The new three-year Capital Plan was approved by Council on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The Capital Outturn report including slippage was approved by Cabinet on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022 minute 17.

### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

This report will be available for scrutiny by the Scrutiny Commission on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

### Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

#### *Financial Implications*

The financial implications are covered in the body of this report.

#### *Risk Management*

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

#### *Risk Management*

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

<i>Risk Identified</i>	<i>Likelihood</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Overall Risk</i>	<i>Risk Management Actions Planned</i>
Insufficient funding	Remote (1)	Major (4)	Low (4)	The funding of the Capital Plan is regularly monitored and serious funding shortfalls would be brought to the

<i>Risk Identified</i>	<i>Likelihood</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Overall Risk</i>	<i>Risk Management Actions Planned</i>
				attention of Cabinet with suggested solutions
Expenditure associated with commercial property, Town Deal projects, regeneration or forward funding of the Enterprise Zone	Unlikely (2)	Serious (3)	Moderate (6)	All such expenditure will require fulfillment of additional governance processes prior to approval
General risks associated with capital expenditure	Unlikely (2)	Serious (3)	Moderate (6)	The Capital Plan is controlled through regular monitoring via the Senior Leadership Team with periodic reports presented to Cabinet.

Key Decision:

Yes

Background Papers:

None

Officer to Contact:

Lesley Tansey  
Head of Finance  
01509 634848  
[Lesley.tansey@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Lesley.tansey@charnwood.gov.uk)

## Part B

### Background – Capital Plan

1. The Capital plan amendment report provides a breakdown of the new/amended schemes for 2022/23 budgets, and detailed budgets are set out in Appendix 1 for 2022/23 to 2024/25.
2. The net effects of these changes on the 2022/23 Capital Plan are as follows:

<b>2022/23 Capital Plan</b>	<b>£</b>
Approved 2022/23 Capital Plan	11,537,600
Net new/amended schemes	41,975,900
<b>Amended 2022/23 Capital Plan</b>	<b>53,513,500</b>

<b>Funded by:</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>General Fund:</b>	
Grants, S106 Contributions and Revenue	8,584,100
Contributions from Capital Plan Reserve	214,200
Contributions from Capital Receipts	4,714,200
External Borrowing	28,000,000
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>41,512,500</b>
<b>HRA:</b>	
S106 Contributions	1,200
MRA or equivalent	10,828,800
Contributions from Capital Receipts	1,171,000
<b>Total HRA</b>	<b>12,001,000</b>
<b>Total Funding for 2022/23</b>	<b>53,513,500</b>

- 3 A full list of the decisions and amendments are listed in Appendix 1. A detailed explanation for the major changes are given in the table below.

4

<b>New/Amended Schemes</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Members Grants – Members Choice</b>	<b>(£13,000)</b>
To reduce the scheme due to reduction of grants being given out.	
<b>Community Tree Planting Programme</b>	<b>£5,100</b>
To increase the scheme due to price increase of materials from previous years revenue contributions.	
<b>Thorpe Acre Residents Association scheme – contributions towards Community Hub building</b>	<b>(£25,900)</b>

To delete the scheme, as the scheme did not commence, and return the S106 contribution of £15.9k to the developer and re-allocate £10k to John Storer House.	
<b>John Storer House – extension and reconfiguration of Community Hub Venue</b>	<b>£10,000</b>
Contribution towards reconfiguration of Community Hub at John Storer House, fully funded by S106 monies already received by the authority.	
<b>Barrow Town Council – new play area Mill Lane</b>	<b>£2,200</b>
Additional contribution for a new surfaced access link between play features, fully funded by S106 monies already received by the authority.	
<b>Disabled Facilities Grants</b>	<b>£5,500</b>
To increase the DFG budget in line with the DFG grant received in 2022/23.	
<b>Delivery of Stock Condition Survey and Associated Costs</b>	<b>£63,000</b>
A virement from HRA Kitchens scheme, to undertake Stock Condition Survey and the collection of data.	

4. The Capital Plan is fully funded as per the table in paragraph 2 of this report.

#### Appendices

Appendix 1 – Details of Capital Plan Amendments

Appendix 2 – Capital Plan 2022/23-2024/25



**CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT 2022/23**

**Appendix 1**

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£	£	£
Capital Plan Amendment Report - 9th December 2021- Minute 61	11,537,600	0	0
<u>Cabinet 11th February 2021 - Minute 85</u> Members Grants - Members Choice - reduction of grants	(13,000)		
<u>Cabinet 10th February 2022 - Minute 81</u> New 3 year Capital Plan 2022-23 To 2024-25	5,480,600	10,520,600	8,099,000
<u>E-mail M Bradford 13th April 2022</u> Community Tree Planting Programme - increased costs	5,100		
<u>Deligated Decision (DD041 2022) - 2nd March 2022</u>  Thorpe Acre Residents Association - contribution towards Community Hub building - £15.9k S106 monies returned and £10k contribution towards John Storer House works John Storer House - extension and reconfiguration of Community Hub Venue - fully funded by section S106 monies	(25,900) 10,000		
<u>Deligated Decision (DD077 2022) - 22nd April 2022</u> Barrow Town Council - new play area Mill Lane - additional S106 contribution	2,200		
Disabled Facilities Grants - Block Sum - increased BCF funding received	5,500		
<u>Cabinet 10th March 2022 - Minute 92</u> Delivery of Stock Condition Survey and Associated Costs	141,000		
<u>Cabinet 7th July 2022 - Minute 17</u> Capital Outturn Report - Slippage from 2021/22	36,370,400		
<u>Email P Oliver - 8th June 2022</u> Delivery of Stock Condition Survey and Associated Costs - virement Kitchens - virement	63,000 (63,000)		
<b>Update Report - Total</b>	<b>53,513,500</b>	<b>10,520,600</b>	<b>8,099,000</b>
<b>Total of 3 Year Capital Plan (2022/23 to 2024/25)</b>			<b>72,133,100</b>

**CAPITAL PLAN 2022/23**

Appendix 2

Scheme Details	2022/23			2023/24	2024/25
	Current Budget £	Actual Spend 31/7/22 £	Balance £	Current Budget £	Current Budget £
<b>SUMMARY OF CAPITAL PLAN</b>					
<u>Live Schemes</u>					
Environmental and Corporate Services	1,260,800	90,487	1,170,313	75,000	75,000
Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure	2,269,100	24,836	2,244,264	750,000	120,000
Community, Planning and Housing - General Fund	6,054,100	1,026,107	5,011,930	1,666,000	1,316,000
Community, Planning and Housing - HRA	12,001,000	411,847	11,589,153	7,529,600	6,519,000
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	<b>21,585,000</b>	<b>1,553,277</b>	<b>20,015,660</b>	<b>10,020,600</b>	<b>8,030,000</b>
<u>Provisional Schemes</u>					
Environmental and Corporate Services	13,000,000	0	13,000,000	0	0
Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure	17,970,000	0	17,970,000	500,000	69,000
Community, Planning and Housing - General Fund	49,900	0	49,900	0	0
Community, Planning and Housing - HRA	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>	<b>31,019,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31,019,900</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>69,000</b>
<u>Third Party Schemes</u>					
Environmental and Corporate Services	435,500	108,999	326,501	0	0
Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure	0	0	0	0	0
Community, Planning and Housing - General Fund	473,100	187,901	285,199	0	0
Community, Planning and Housing - HRA	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub-total Third Party Schemes</b>	<b>908,600</b>	<b>296,900</b>	<b>611,700</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>GF Total</b>	<b>41,512,500</b>	<b>1,438,330</b>	<b>40,058,107</b>	<b>2,991,000</b>	<b>1,580,000</b>
<b>HRA Total</b>	<b>12,001,000</b>	<b>411,847</b>	<b>11,589,153</b>	<b>7,529,600</b>	<b>6,519,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>53,513,500</b>	<b>1,850,177</b>	<b>51,647,260</b>	<b>10,520,600</b>	<b>8,099,000</b>
<u>Environmental and Corporate Services</u>					
<u>Live Schemes</u>					
MB Z784 Loughborough Cemetery - New Burial Provision	52,500	24,483	28,017	0	0
MB Z831 Loughborough Playground Improvement Plan	100,000	0	100,000	0	0
MB Z828 Queens Park - Improvements to Childrens Play Provision & Adult Recreation Provision	203,200	(1,800)	205,000	0	0
MB Z802 Allotment Improvements	10,000	0	10,000	0	0
MB Z824 Shepshed POS Enhancement	102,500	0	102,500	0	0
MB Z805 Queens Park Aviary Improvements	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
MB Z806 Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan	91,900	0	91,900	0	0
MB Z484 Closed Churchyard Wall	8,100	0	8,100	0	0
MB Z854 Lodge Farm Public Open Space Enhancements	31,200	0	31,200	0	0
MB Z855 Cemetery Ashes Plots	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
MB Z856 Cemetery Gates	15,000	0	15,000	0	0
MB Z859 Syston Riverside Walk	50,000	0	50,000	0	0
MB Z791 Shelthorpe Golf Course - Fencing	77,100	0	77,100	0	0
MB Z792 Community Tree Planting Programme	30,700	0	30,700	0	0
AK Z085 Replacement Hardware Programme - Block Sum	37,500	24,242	13,258	45,000	45,000
AK Z354 Infrastructure Development - Block Sum	59,700	13,924	45,776	30,000	30,000
AK Z822 Hybrid Council Meeting - Camera and audio equipment - Virtual Meetings	3,900	34	3,866	0	0
AK Z853 Phone System - Migration to Teams	45,000	0	45,000	0	0

**CAPITAL PLAN 2022/23**

Appendix 2

Scheme Details			2022/23			2023/24	2024/25
			Current Budget £	Actual Spend 31/7/22 £	Balance £	Current Budget £	Current Budget £
KB	Z423	Call Secure System - PCI Compliance	4,200	2,080	2,120	0	0
KB	Z812	Server Redesign	70,000	0	70,000	0	0
KB	Z813	Cloud Implementation	127,400	0	127,400	0	0
KB	Z814	Meeting Rooms - presentation screens	0	1,184	(1,184)	0	0
KB	Z816	Northgate - Single Use System	19,500	26,340	(6,840)	0	0
AW	Z811	Legal Case Management System	13,200	0	13,200	0	0
LT	Z810	Unit4 Agresso Upgrade	32,800	0	32,800	0	0
HG	Z823	Performance Management System	15,400	0	15,400	0	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>			<b>1,260,800</b>	<b>90,487</b>	<b>1,170,313</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>75,000</b>
<b>Provisional Schemes</b>							
SJ	Z818	Enterprise Zone	13,000,000	0	13,000,000	0	0
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>			<b>13,000,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13,000,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Third Party Schemes</b>							
JT	Z697	Bell Foundry Pocket Park - Phase 1 & 2	25,100	0	25,100	0	0
MB	Z699	Shelthorpe Public Open Space Enhancements	111,700	0	111,700	0	0
MB	Z830	Holt Drive PA Enhancements	11,000	0	11,000	0	0
MB	Z860	Radmoor Road Public Open Space Enhancements	53,600	0	53,600	0	0
MB	Z778	Syston Community Garden	22,300	0	22,300	0	0
MB	Z847	Barrow Town Cricket Club - extend clubhouse facilities, creating additional changing and ancillary provision	9,000	9,000	0	0	0
MB	Z849	Barrow Town Council - new play area Mill Lane	2,200	0	2,200	0	0
MB	Z850	Sileby Parish Council - improvement and provision of additional youth/adult facilities at Sileby Memorial Park	70,700	0	70,700	0	0
MB	Z865	Quorn Parish Council - additional play equipment - Cave's Field, Quorn	29,900	0	29,900	0	0
MB	Z866	Barrow Upon Soar Parish Council - Barrow Cemetery extension	100,000	99,999	1	0	0
<b>Sub-total Third Party Schemes</b>			<b>435,500</b>	<b>108,999</b>	<b>326,501</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Environmental and Corporate Services - Total</b>			<b>14,696,300</b>	<b>199,486</b>	<b>14,496,814</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>75,000</b>
<b>Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure</b>							
<b>Live Schemes</b>							
SW	Z801	Lighting strategy to support the Masterplan lane strategy - feasibility study	10,000	11,500	(1,500)	0	0
NB	Z748	Loughborough Festive Lights and Street Dressing	4,400	0	4,400	0	0
SW	Z757	Town Hall Roof Upgrade	17,200	0	17,200	0	0
SW	Z797	Loughborough Town Hall - Lower Level Elevation Repairs & Feasibility Study	1,900	0	1,900	0	0
SW	Z798	Town Hall - Victorial Room - Air Handling	23,500	0	23,500	0	0
SW	Z799	Town Hall - additional seating	225,000	0	225,000	0	0
IB	Z310	Planned Building Improvements	742,000	13,336	728,664	750,000	120,000
JH	Z832	Feasibility Work - New Council Offices	150,000	0	150,000	0	0

**CAPITAL PLAN 2022/23**

Appendix 2

Scheme Details			2022/23			2023/24	2024/25
			Current Budget £	Actual Spend 31/7/22 £	Balance £	Current Budget £	Current Budget £
JH	Z796	Carbon Neutral Action Fund - Block Sum	1,095,100	0	1,095,100	0	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>			<b>2,269,100</b>	<b>24,836</b>	<b>2,244,264</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>
<b>Provisional Schemes</b>							
JH	Z817	Regeneration Projects	15,000,000	0	15,000,000	0	0
SW	Z861	Town Deal	2,970,000	0	2,970,000	500,000	69,000
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>			<b>17,970,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17,970,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>69,000</b>
<b>Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure - Total</b>			<b>20,239,100</b>	<b>24,836</b>	<b>20,214,264</b>	<b>1,250,000</b>	<b>189,000</b>
<b>Community, Planning and Housing - General Fund</b>							
<b>Live Schemes</b>							
AT	Z388	CCTV	136,600	0	136,600	45,000	45,000
VG	Z348	Charnwood Community Facilities Grants	139,600	6,761	132,839	50,000	50,000
VG	Z427	Members Grants - Members Choice	13,000	1,845	11,155	13,000	13,000
AT	Z744	Beehive Lane Car Park Improvements and refurbishment scheme	120,600	36,322	84,278	0	0
AT	Z786	Car Parks Resurfacing and Improvements	32,800	0	32,800	0	150,000
AT	Z862	Leisure Centre barrier and entry control	0	0	0	50,000	0
AT	Z863	DNO Connections and Electric Vehicle Charge Points for car parks	0	0	0	150,000	0
RB	Z787	Bedford Square Gateway	1,867,500	1,023,479	844,021	0	0
RB	Z835	Shepshed Public Realm	1,065,200	2,374	1,062,826	300,000	0
RB	Z396	Public Realm - Shepshed Town Centre	8,400	0	8,400	0	0
AS	Z210	Disabled Facilities Grants - Block Sum	2,496,400	(28,611)	2,525,011	1,058,000	1,058,000
AS	Z346	Private Sector Housing Grants - Block Sum	174,000	0	174,000	0	0
AS	Z424	Choice Based Lettings Software	0	(16,063)	16,063	0	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>			<b>6,054,100</b>	<b>1,026,107</b>	<b>5,011,930</b>	<b>1,666,000</b>	<b>1,316,000</b>
<b>Provisional Schemes</b>							
AS	Z141	Regional Housing Pot Grant	42,900	0	42,900	0	0
AS	Z363	Fuel Poverty Scheme	7,000	0	7,000	0	0
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>			<b>49,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>49,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Third Party Schemes</b>							
AT	Z500	Birstall Cedars Academy all weather pitch	50,000	0	50,000	0	0
AT	Z795	Syston Town Council - redevelopment of sports pavilion at Memorial Park	12,000	0	12,000	0	0
AT	Z815	Rothley Parish Council - upgrade Rothley Centre	173,200	101,969	71,231	0	0
AT	Z825	Loughborough Police Station Centre - Front Enquiry Desk	98,800	0	98,800	0	0
AT	Z848	Syston Town Council - Memorial Park - redevelopment of sports pavilion	45,000	0	45,000	0	0
AT	Z868	John Storer House - extension and reconfiguration of Community Hub Venue	10,000	10,000	0	0	0
RB	Z852	Shepshed Town Council - Skate Bowl, Oakley Road Playing Fields	49,700	49,709	(9)	0	0
AT	Z864	Hathern Village Hall - additional community space	34,400	26,223	8,177	0	0
<b>Sub-total Third Party Schemes</b>			<b>473,100</b>	<b>187,901</b>	<b>285,199</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**CAPITAL PLAN 2022/23**

Appendix 2

Scheme Details	2022/23			2023/24	2024/25
	Current Budget £	Actual Spend 31/7/22 £	Balance £	Current Budget £	Current Budget £
<b>Community, Planning and Housing - General Fund - Total</b>	<b>6,577,100</b>	<b>1,214,008</b>	<b>5,347,029</b>	<b>1,666,000</b>	<b>1,316,000</b>
<b>Community, Planning and Housing - HRA</b>					
<b><u>Live Schemes</u></b>					
PO Z761 Major Adaptations	700,000	153,553	546,447	450,000	450,000
PO Z301 Minor Adaptations	50,000	1,360	48,640	50,000	50,000
PO Z302 Stairlifts	60,000	12,499	47,501	60,000	60,000
PO Z762 Major Voids	280,000	0	280,000	280,000	280,000
<b><u>Compliance</u></b>					
PO Z434 Asbestos Removal	150,000	66,779	83,221	100,000	60,000
PO Z771 Communal Area Improvements	300,000	0	300,000	75,200	75,200
PO Z742 Communal Area Electrical Upgrades	200,000	5,321	194,679	68,000	68,000
PO Z772 Smoke/CO & Heat Detection	149,800	4,151	145,649	149,800	149,800
PO Z773 Fire Safety Works	100,000	13,464	86,536	100,000	100,000
<b><u>Stock Maximisation</u></b>					
PO Z375 Garages	50,000	0	50,000	370,000	0
<b><u>Decent Homes</u></b>					
PO Z763 Kitchens	900,000	0	900,000	837,000	112,500
PO Z764 Bathrooms	1,778,100	75	1,778,025	957,700	675,000
PO Z765 Electrical Upgrades	212,500	0	212,500	505,300	505,300
PO Z766 Window Replacement	213,300	0	213,300	44,800	223,800
PO Z767 Heating	460,400	16,880	443,520	504,000	831,600
PO Z743 Sheltered Housing Improvements	200,000	0	200,000	100,000	0
PO Z768 Door Replacement	850,000	0	850,000	700,000	700,000
PO Z769 Roofing Works & Insulation	920,000	1,355	918,645	250,000	250,000
PO Z770 Major Structural Works	250,000	59,982	190,018	250,000	250,000
<b><u>General Capital Works</u></b>					
PO Z776 Estate and External Works	205,000	450	204,550	200,000	200,000
PO Z857 Housing Capital Technical Costs	312,000	0	312,000	312,000	312,000
PO Z378 Door Entry Systems	200,000	694	199,306	27,000	27,000
AS Z760 Acquisition of Affordable Housing to meet housing need	3,302,700	75,284	3,227,416	1,123,800	1,123,800
AS Z851 Acquisition of Dwellings - S106	1,200	0	1,200	0	0
PO Z775 Mobility Scooter Storage	15,000	0	15,000	15,000	15,000
PO Z867 Delivery of Stock Condition Survey and Associated Costs	141,000	0	141,000	0	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	<b>12,001,000</b>	<b>411,847</b>	<b>11,589,153</b>	<b>7,529,600</b>	<b>6,519,000</b>
<b>Community, Planning and Housing - HRA - Total</b>	<b>12,001,000</b>	<b>411,847</b>	<b>11,589,153</b>	<b>7,529,600</b>	<b>6,519,000</b>

## CABINET – 15TH SEPTEMBER 2022

### Report of the Strategic Director – Commercial and Economic Development Lead Member: Councillor Jonathan Morgan

#### Part A

#### ITEM 9 FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR CARBON REDUCTION

##### Purpose of Report

This report requests that the budget initially agreed for Solar Feasibility be expanded in its scope to include feasibility work for any measure to reduce or offset carbon.

##### Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approves wider use of the £150,000 budget allocated for solar feasibility studies to undertake wider carbon reduction/offsetting feasibility studies.
2. That authority for the same be delegated to the Strategic Director – Commercial and Economic Development to commission work.

##### Reasons

1. To understand the Council's options and ability to significantly reduce carbon emissions in the move to net zero
2. To allow for the timely completion of studies such that that any following phases of a project can be planned and submitted for scrutiny and approval.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

In June 2019, Charnwood Borough Council committed to achieving carbon neutrality for the Council's own operations by 2030. This builds on the success of our 2015-2020 Carbon Management Plan, which saw us reduce our carbon footprint by 37% between 2012 and 2018. Since then, our footprint has fallen by a further 3%.

The Council's Carbon Neutral Plan, approved at Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021, sets out a series of actions (also approved) to move the Council further towards its carbon neutral target.

On 10 February 2022, Cabinet approved the use of up to £150,000 to undertake solar feasibility work.

The level of spend required to undertake these studies is above the Key Decision threshold in the Council's constitution and therefore requires Cabinet approval to spend.

The budget will be taken from the Carbon Neutral Action Fund, approved and allocated in the Council's Capital plan.

## Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The decision will come into effect immediately (subject to Call-in).

Following this decision, future reports will come before Cabinet to determine the direction forward and will be open to Scrutiny.

### Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

#### *Financial Implications*

The Carbon Neutral Action Fund forms part of the approved Capital Plan.

#### *Risk Management*

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Surveys return results that are financially unfavourable	Unlikely (2)	Serious (3)	Moderate (6)	Officers will investigate if external funding or partnership opportunities exist.
The budget identified is insufficient to thoroughly understand the potential.	Unlikely (2)	Significant (2)	Low (4)	There is a significant contingency built into the figure for approval. The money need not be spent if not warranted but must be available if needed. The nominated individuals will manage this process as it happens, and robust procurement routes will be used.

#### *Equality and Diversity*

No implications

#### *Crime and Disorder*

No implications

#### *Sustainability*

This decision forms part of the adopted Carbon Neutral Plan

Key Decision: Yes

Background Papers: None

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## Part B

### Background

1. The Council's Carbon Neutral Plan was approved by Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
2. The two major contributors to the Council's carbon footprint are Buildings (15%) and Transport (84%). Reductions in emissions with both areas will take time as the council investigates the options for future accommodation and adoption of green technologies for our fleet as they emerge.
3. Carbon offsetting, in the form of renewable energy installations, provides the best opportunity to significantly reduce the Council's carbon footprint in the shorter term and is one of the main 3 challenges outlined in the Carbon Neutral Plan.
4. At a meeting of Cabinet on 10 February 2022, Cabinet approved a budget of up to £150,000 to undertake solar feasibility work. The majority of this spend was intended to produce feasibility work in support of the development of solar farms on Council-owned land.
5. In beginning this work, officers sought advice to better understand the ability of the National Grid to take electricity generated from such an installation. Western Power has advised that the Grid has reached the limit on the amount of generation that can be added to the network until upstream reinforcements are carried out. The reinforcements are planned beyond 2030 and the National Grid has not advised any firm timescales for this work.
6. As such, none of the budget allocated was spent before this information came to light.
7. Despite this setback, other elements of the Carbon Neutral Plan should be investigated to determine the Council's ability to invest in those other measures sustainably. These could be measures to reduce carbon in buildings and transport as well as alternative offsetting initiatives.
8. Therefore, it is requested that the budget initially agreed for Solar Feasibility be expanded in its scope to include feasibility work for any measure to reduce or offset carbon.

## CABINET – 15TH SEPTEMBER 2022

### Report of the Chief Executive

#### ITEM 10 URGENT DECISION – CHARNWOOD DISCRETIONARY COUNCIL TAX ENERGY REBATE SCHEME

##### Purpose of Report

This is a report on the action taken by the Head of Customer Services made under urgency provisions.

##### Action Requested

To note the action taken by the Head of Customer Services made under urgency provisions.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

Under section 8.3 of the constitution which relates to the delegation of Executive functions there is provision for the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service to take such action as is required in the case of an emergency or urgency subject to:

- (i) consultation with the Leader (or, in the Leader's absence, the Deputy Leaders);
- (ii) consultation with the Chief Executive and relevant Strategic Directors in each case; and
- (iii) report on the action taken being made to the next meeting of the Cabinet.

The decision taken by the Chief Executive being reported to this meeting of Cabinet is:

- DD117 – Charnwood Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme

The decision can be found in the Annex to this report.

##### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions

As detailed within the report attached as an Annex.

##### Report Implications

As detailed within the report attached as an Annex.

Background Papers: None

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Annex

Report of the decision taken by the Head of Customer Services

## Decision under Delegated Powers

### Officer Making the Decision

Head of Customer Experience

### Recommendation

That the policy for the operation of the Charnwood Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme be approved as set out in Appendix A.

### Reason

To take action in relation to a matter which would otherwise have been submitted to Cabinet.

### Authority for Decision

**Delegation of Executive functions** - (Section 8.3 of the Constitution states that the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service can take such action as is required in the case of an emergency or urgency subject to:

- (i) consultation with the Leader (or, in the Leader's absence, the Deputy Leaders);
- (ii) consultation with the Chief Executive and relevant Strategic Directors in each case; and
- (iii) a report on the action taken being made to the next meeting of the Cabinet.

### Decision and Date

*K Barushaw 6/7/22*

### Background

On 3 February 2022, the Government announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate to help households with rising energy bills and including 2 elements to be administered by Charnwood Borough Council (CBC).

- A £150 non-repayable rebate for households in England in Council Tax bands A – D, known as the Council Tax Rebate; and
- £144 million of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who are in need but are not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate, known as the Discretionary Fund.

The Council has distributed the fund of the main scheme to all eligible households and now need to administer the discretionary element of the scheme in an efficient and effective manner.

The Councils policy in respect of Charnwood Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme is set out at Appendix A as approved by dint of this decision.

### **Financial Implications**

The cost of the both the main and discretionary Council tax Energy Rebate Scheme is fully funded by government. For the discretionary element the Council has been allocated a fixed amount of £231,300.00.

The government have also provided some new burden funding, £87,267.00 to cover the cost of administering both schemes.

### **Consultation with Leader and Deputy Leader**

Following an informal briefing, a draft of this policy was used to consult with the Leader and Deputy Leader who confirmed that this could be used as the basis for the final policy. (There have been no changes for the draft to the final policy)

### **Consultation with Strategic Director – Environment and Corporate Services**

The Strategic Director – Environment and Corporate Services, has confirmed his support of the policy and concluded that the recommendation of this report is both necessary and urgent.

### **Consultation with the Chair of the Scrutiny Commission**

The Chair of the Scrutiny was consulted and gave her consent on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to this matter being dealt with under Special Urgency provisions and exempted from the Call-in process.

### **Risk Management**

There are unavoidable inherent risks within the discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme around prioritisation of different groups/types of households and the rationing of the payments, but there are no specific risks associated with this decision.

Key Decision: Yes

*Date included on Forward Plan*

N/A. When twenty-eight clear days' notice cannot be given of the intention to take a decision which meets the Council Constitution definition of a Key

Decision, the Proper Officer is required to publish a special urgency notice.  
This was published on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Background Papers:       None

Appendix A               Charnwood Discretionary Council Tax Energy  
Rebate Policy

## APPENDIX A

# **CHARNWOOD DISCRETIONARY COUNCIL TAX ENERGY REBATE POLICY**

## **1. Background to the Council Tax Rebate**

- 1.1 On 3 February 2022, the Government announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate to help households with rising energy bills and including 2 elements to be administered by Charnwood Borough Council (CBC).
- A £150 non-repayable rebate for households in England in Council Tax bands A – D, known as the Council Tax Rebate; and
  - £144 million of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who are in need but are not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate, known as the Discretionary Fund.

## **2. The Discretionary Fund**

- 2.1 On 23 February 2022, the Government published guidance for local authorities for the Council Tax Rebate which has now been updated 16 March 2022 which can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-council-tax-rebate-2022-23-billing-authority-guidance>
- 2.2 The Council Tax Rebate for the Charnwood Borough Council is being managed by CBC, which is responsible for delivering payments to eligible households. The Council must follow the guidance set by the Government. The Council has authority to make these payments under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.3 Local authorities are asked to make payments as quickly as possible to support struggling households. Once eligible households have been identified, CBC will progress these payments as a matter of urgency but recognise the need to undertake appropriate due diligence before payments are made.

Due to the very compressed timescales to meet the expectations of the Government and residents, CBC has not been able to consult on the development of this policy but has liaised with neighbouring local authorities to inform it. CBC has taken full account of the requirements of Government (as set out in the guidance received on the 23 February and 16 March 2022) and the issues and questions that have

arisen locally and nationally.

### **3. Total Funding Available**

- 3.1 The Government has allocated £231,300.00 to CBC for the Discretionary Fund.
- 3.2 As per paragraph 37 of the guidance, Local Authorities can use this funding to support residents that do not qualify for the core scheme. As per question 15 of The Council Tax Rebate Frequently Asked Questions, Local Authorities can use this funding to provide additional support to residents that qualified for the main scheme.

### **4. Application Process and Timescale**

- 4.1 Due to the scale of the Council Tax Rebate and the limited resources available to the Local Authority, there will be no direct application process for the Discretionary Fund.
- 4.2 Payments will be made to the following groups of residents likely to be in financial difficulty as identified from Council records.  
Group 1
  - CTRS recipients in bands E to H.Group 2
  - CTRS recipients in bands A to H receiving 90% or more CTRS award.
- 4.3 The Council will where we hold Direct Debit details make automatic payments to the eligible bank account. Where Direct Debit details are not held, Customer will be emailed or sent a Post office Voucher to redeem for a cash payment at a local Post Office.
- 4.4 There will be no automatic right of appeal against a decision not to award a payment under the Discretionary Fund, or against the value of any award. However, CBC may, at its discretion, reconsider any refusal or award value if there is clear evidence that a significant and plainly wrong decision may have been made and assuming there is enough funding left to enable a new decision to be made. The only further recourse available to applicants is a judicial review, which is the means by which the decisions of CBC under discretionary powers may be challenged.

### **5. How will the value of award be calculated?**

- 5.1 Eligible residents will receive a payment from the Discretionary Fund as follows:
  - Group 1: £150



- Group 2: A share of the remaining discretionary fund, to be distributed equally across all CTRS recipients.

5.2 Top up payments for residents from Group 2 in exceptional circumstances may be authorised by CBC's Section 151 Officer.

## **6. Managing the Risk of Fraud**

6.1 The Council and the Government will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any person caught falsifying their records to gain a payment may face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to clawback, by civil and/or criminal proceedings as necessary, as may any awards paid in error.

6.2 As per Question 16 of The Council Tax Rebate Frequently Asked Questions, the Council will put in place measures to detect and prevent fraud. These will include verifying the identity of recipients and delaying payment until direct debits have cleared where appropriate. There will also be joint working across councils and government departments in preventing fraud.

6.3 The Council also reserves the right to check against national records and databases to highlight any potentially fraudulent activity.

## **7. Policy Review**

7.1 This policy has been written in line with Government guidance. It will be subject to dynamic review as circumstances dictate and in line with future clarifications and changes that may be announced by the Government.