

**CABINET
13TH JULY 2023**

PRESENT: The Leader (Councillor Miah)
Councillors Ashcroft, Blackshaw, A. Gray, Jadeja,
Jones and Tillotson

Councillor Bokor
Councillor Snartt

Chief Executive
Director Finance, Governance and Contracts
Head of Governance and Human Resources
Director Housing and Wellbeing
Head of Finance
Head of Planning and Growth
Health & Safety Officer
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Hamilton

The 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.

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

Disclosures were made as follows:

- (i) by Councillor A. Gray – interests in respect of item 6 on the agenda (Charnwood Grants) as a trustee of The Arc and having had some involvement with the African Oasis project. Noted that Councillor Gray abstained from voting on this item;
- (ii) by Councillor Miah – an interest in respect of item 10 on the agenda (Local Plan) as a member of Leicestershire County Council.

11. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

13. QUESTIONS UNDER CABINET PROCEDURE 10.7

A. Councillor Bokor – Corporate Plan

“As the new Labour/Green alliance are aware, their election manifesto promises have to form the basis of a new Corporate Plan & associated Service Delivery Plans, which have to be deliverable, affordable & timely over the next 4 years. This is what Administrations are judged on. When can we expect the new Corporate Plan to be published with proposed actions and timescales?”

The following response had been published prior to the meeting:

The Corporate Strategy will follow the usual 4 year process, therefore a new Strategy will be developed for publication in April 2024 – this will cover the period 2024-2028.

The Strategy will be presented to Cabinet on the 11th January 2024 and Full Council on the 26th February 2024.

Councillor Bokor asked a supplementary question/made a statement as follows:

“Councillor Miah pledges in his interview in the Echo on the 7th of June that he will cap any rise in Council Tax to 3% and he also pledges not to use reserves, after criticising the Conservatives for doing so during the extensive costs of the Covid pandemic. That is what reserves are for, to survive during a crisis.

However, his manifesto also commits him to expensive objectives which he seems to believe can somehow be achieved just through unspecified cost savings. For instance, Councillor Miah proposes to streamline Charnwood’s Housing Service, but how will he do that? He also has a manifesto commitment to scrap choice-based letting housing system but fails to say with what he will replace it with and he also intends to build more council houses over the next four years. On what land and with what pot of money?

Labour also promised other expensive spending commitments in their manifesto. These include amongst many: more money in community grants; funding a residents’ energy efficiency scheme; providing direct help to people struggling with energy bills (and I underline “direct help”); freezing bin garden charges; ending void council properties; investing in solar and wind power on council property; providing car-charging points in all council car parks and so on and so on. I believe Labour and their Green allies have taken control of Charnwood based on unrealistic promises to the electorate. All I can see now is an ever increasing need to raise Council Tax beyond 3%, especially in Loughborough, and the extensive use of our limited reserves, until there is nothing left.

So, can the Chief Executive via the Leader please confirm that we have or will have the money to deliver all these promises without using reserves or increasing Council Tax? And how will this be achieved? Will it be by service reductions and/or staff reductions? And, has any of the Manifesto promises been costed out yet?”

The Leader thanked Councillor Bokor for her supplementary question/statement, stating that he had taken note of what she had said and would respond back accordingly.

B. Councillor Snartt – Local Plan

“The responses from the Conservative position statement agenda item 8.1 Council meeting 19th June 2023. I raise the following question, in my view, clarification is needed about the promises made in the Labour Manifesto.

- a. The Labour Manifesto, our promise to you states, ‘develop a new Local Plan covering the whole of Charnwood’. Would the Labour/Green administration give timescales when this new plan will be delivered within this Council term of 4 years?
- b. Would the Labour/Green administration explain if there is officer capacity at the Council to develop a proposed new Local Plan within this Council term of 4 years, promised in the Labour manifesto?
- c. By supporting the current new Local Plan how do the Labour/Green administration propose to refuse any development outside existing town or village boundaries during this Council term of 4 years, promised in the Labour manifesto?
- d. By supporting the current new Local Plan, the Labour/Green administration have agreed to housing located on greenfield sites of 69.6% and the allocation of dwellings 88% on greenfield. How do the Labour/Green administration propose to deliver the promise in the Labour manifesto, ‘setting a preference for brownfield sites to be delivered first’?
- e. With the high percentage of development on greenfield in the new current Local Plan, how do the Labour/Green administration propose to maintain a five-year housing land supply if the preference is for brownfield sites, which is only 12% for the allocation of dwellings in the new current Local Plan?”

The following response had been published prior to the meeting:

As previously clarified, the Council does not have a Labour/Green administration and continuing to refer to it as such is erroneous.

Cllr Snartt asked substantially the same questions at the recent Council meeting on 19th June, and the following answers have already been provided to him:

Cllr Snartt’s question: How the administration proposed to refuse any developments outside of the existing boundaries during the current council term?

Answer already provided: Decisions on planning applications are made within a legal framework which stipulates that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Every planning application has to be treated on its own merits. Making decisions on planning proposals involves making judgments, balancing the benefits of a proposal against adverse impacts, and, depending upon the planning balance, this can lead to refusal of planning permission.

Cllr Snartt's question: How the Labour Group would deliver their Manifesto pledge regrading a preference for brownfield sites without compromising the five-year housing land supply?

Answer already provided: The draft Local Plan allocates both brownfield and greenfield sites for housing development to demonstrate a five-year housing supply on adoption of the plan. It is not possible to meet the districts housing needs on brownfield sites alone and to therefore demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The Local Plan policies are supportive of future applications to make efficient use of brownfield sites and buildings.

Cllr Snartt's question: If the council officers had capacity to deliver the Local Plan?

Answer already provided: The Local Plan will be delivered within the existing capacity of the Council.

Cllr Snartt is also referred to the Labour administration's response to the position statement request regarding the Local Plan which was provided at the Council meeting on 19th June (item 8 on the agenda).

Councillor Snartt asked a supplementary question/made a statement as follows:

"Thank you for your response. In my view, this fails again to answer the direct parts of my question to Cabinet. It would be good to have clarity and be able to understand how this administration, propped up with the Green Party, will be able to deliver on their manifesto promises that I have referred to in my question. Again, in my view the answers do not relate to the parts of the question, and indeed some cases no response given. I do take issue with the statement that I have previously received the answers to the questions, this is certainly not the case.

I now refer to the parts of the question, the original question, which was a. timescales; b. capacity; c. refuse development; and d. brownfield sites.

So, I'll start with a. No timescales given to develop the promised Labour manifesto new local plan covering the whole of Charnwood. I am sure residents would like to know how this administration will deliver these promises to the Council this term. I will ask again, what are the timescales for the administration's new local plan?

b. capacity. I understand that there is not the officer capacity to develop the new promised Labour manifesto local plan whilst the emerging local plan is still not finalised. Would the administration confirm this is the correct position?

c. refuse development. By supporting the emerging local plan what do the administration say to the residents of Woodthorpe and my ward residents when they are supporting 700 plus dwellings on adjacent greenfield land encroaching into a neighbouring parish which is totally against the promise to refuse any development outside of existing towns and village boundaries stated in the Labour manifesto?

d. brownfield sites. How can the administration by supporting the emerging local plan set a preference for brownfield sites first? If a greenfield site in Queniborough, for

instance HA64 in the emerging local plan, came forward it would not be in the gift of the administration to refuse the application.

It does seem now because of the difficulty in responding directly to all the parts of my question does the labour administration regret making promises they are unable to deliver in the four year council term?"

The Leader thanked Councillor Snartt for his supplementary question/statement, stating that he considered that Councillor Snartt had received answers to all of his questions. The Leader also referred to item 10 on the agenda for this meeting which set out the Council's commitment to moving the draft Local Plan forward, thereby offering protection to those villages, towns and settlements that were inundated due to not having a plan in place, so that was the priority at this moment in time.

14. CHARNWOOD GRANTS

Considered, a report of the Director Housing and Wellbeing to consider applications received for funding in round one of the Community Facilities and Community Grants programme for 2023/24 (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED

1. that the following Community Facilities Grants be awarded:

- £3,409 to Anstey St Mary's Parochial Church Council towards church rooms roof and heating refurbishment;
- £2,500 to Barrow upon Soar Community Association towards ramp and railings for Library to comply with DDA regulations;
- £8,700 to Burton on the Wolds Village Hall Renovations towards installation of new toilets and kitchen;
- £5,000 Loughborough Lawn Tennis Club towards improving disability access;
- £1,750 to Newtown Linford Tennis Club towards improving disability access;
- £7,500 to South Croxton Village Hall towards improving community facility accessibility;

2. that the following Community Grants be awarded:

- £2,000 to St Mary's Grub Club towards school holidays club including free meals. £1,000 awarded through Community Grants (Loughborough) and £1,000 from Cost of Living Grant;
- £2,500 to The Walk & Talk Group towards mental health & wellbeing social group;
- £2,500 to Charnwood Ukrainian Community Association towards Ukrainian community social & educational group;
- £2,400 to The Arc Community Hub towards young person's social & life-skills support;
- £3,000 to Love4Life towards young person's social & life-skills support (Awarded from Loughborough Grant);

- £3,000 to African Oasis towards Shelthorpe community garden & aquaponics project (Awarded from Loughborough Grant);
- £1,500 to The Baldwin Trust towards canal boat communications system;
- £3,600 to Charnmac towards face to face debt counselling & support. £2,100 awarded through Community Grants and £1,500 from Cost of Living Grant;
- £3,000 to Passion towards young person's social & life-skills support;
- £2,500 to Age Concern Syston towards information & social support for the elderly;
- £2,500 to PACE towards mental health counselling;
- £2,500 to Shepshed Toy Library towards healthy eating & recycling project for children;

3. that the following Community Grant applications be declined as unsuccessful:

- The Rectory Wildlife Gardeners request for gardening equipment;
- Charnwood Arts request for dementia arts project;
- Upstarts Gymnastics Club request for Gymnast's coaching training;
- Loughborough Town Rugby Club request for girl's participation project;
- Ulverscroft Camera Club requests for camera equipment;
- Falcon Support Services request for mental health first aid training;
- Spectrum Sensory Sports request for activities coaching & delivery;
- Arthritis Support Leicestershire request for arthritis information & social support;
- Charnwood Eco Hub request for a sustainability event;
- St John Ambulance request for first aid training for young people;

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

15. CAPITAL PLAN OUTTURN REPORT (2022/23)

Considered, a report of the Head of Finance to consider expenditure on the Capital Plan for the year 2022/23, the schemes that required carry forward of budget to 2023/24 and the financing of the Capital Plan, for recommendation to Council (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED

1. that the outturn position for 2022/23 **be recommended to Council** and that slippage of capital budgets totalling £9,755,421 being General Fund £6,080,121 and Housing Revenue Account £3,675,300 be carried forward into 2023/24 and added to the Capital Plan;
2. that the financing of the Plan set out in Table 2 to the report **be recommended to Council**.

Reasons

1. To enable projects to be completed.
2. To indicate how the Plan is to be financed.

16. GENERAL FUND AND HRA REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT (2022/23) AND CARRY FORWARD OF BUDGETS

Considered, a report of the Head of Finance to consider the Revenue Outturn position of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2022/23 compared with original budgets (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED that the Revenue Outturn positions of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account for 2022/23 be noted. There are no carry forward budgets for General Fund and HRA.

Reason

To enable the information to be used when considering future budgets and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

17. HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

Considered, a report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources to consider a public record of the Council's health and safety performance (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Governance and Human Resources stated that there were some additional incidents not included in the report that the organisation had been aware of and had been recorded, these were a few additional slips and trips. The numbers would be updated and sent to members of the Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the Council's health and safety performance over the preceding year be noted, as set out in the Appendix to the report (and noting that there had been additional incidents as referenced above).

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.

18. LOCAL PLAN

Considered, a report of the Chief Executive to consider the Borough Council's commitment to moving the draft Local Plan forward to a position where it can be considered by full Council for adoption and a further commitment to working with the County Council in developing and implementing the three Area Transport Strategies and in implementing the Interim Transport Strategy for Charnwood through the Development Management process, to mitigate the impact of growth on infrastructure (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader made the following statement:

"This Cabinet report seeks to provide further reassurance to Leicestershire County Council in relation to securing appropriate infrastructure contributions from developers. To be clear, once the County Council has completed the three Area Transport Strategies and the Local Plan has been adopted, the three Area Transport Strategies will become part of the Local Plan evidence and they will be used to secure appropriate infrastructure contributions in planning decisions. In relation to the Interim Transport Strategy for Charnwood, it is not necessary or appropriate for Charnwood Borough Council to adopt the Interim Strategy for us to implement it. As stated in the report, Charnwood Borough Council are ready to do so as soon as the County Council begin to implement it. Our current understanding is that the County Council have paused its implementation. The Chief Executive has had a further letter from the County Council as of yesterday I believe, and I have asked the Chief Executive to draft a response on behalf of the Cabinet back to the County Council".

RESOLVED

1. that Cabinet confirms its support for the draft Local Plan to be progressed to a stage where full Council can consider its adoption;
2. that Cabinet confirms its support for Leicestershire County Council in the implementation of the Interim Transport Strategy for Charnwood including through the collection of developer contributions as appropriate via the planning process, ahead of the adoption of the Local Plan;
3. that Leicestershire County Council be advised of the Borough Cabinet's commitment to supporting it in the preparation of evidence for the identified three area transport strategies and its incorporation into the Local Plan framework to help guide development and secure developer contributions.

Reasons

1. To provide a formal response to Leicestershire County Council Cabinet report of 23 June 2023, setting out the Cabinet's commitment to the Local Plan.
2. To ensure that the Borough Council can support Leicestershire County Council to secure contributions where appropriate to do so, to mitigate the impact of growth on infrastructure ahead of the adoption of the Local Plan.
3. To ensure that evidence is available to inform the mitigation of growth in Charnwood and that supports the policy framework against which developer contributions may be sought.

NOTES:

1. The following officers listed as present attended this meeting virtually: The Head of Planning and Growth, the Health & Safety Officer. The remaining officers listed as present attended in person.
2. The decisions in these minutes not in the form of recommendations to Council will come into effect at noon on Friday, 21st July 2023 unless called in under Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 11.7. The decisions in minute 18 have been exempted from call in. Decisions in the form of recommendations to Council are not subject to call in.
3. No reference may be made to these minutes at 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, 21st July 2023.
4. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Cabinet.