



**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 Miah (Leader), Hamilton (Deputy Leader), Ashcroft, Blackshaw, A. Gray, Jadeja, Jones and Tillotson (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, 8th February 2024 at 6.00 pm for the following business.

Chief Executive

Southfields  
Loughborough

26th January 2024

**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. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 4 - 9  
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting.
5. QUESTIONS UNDER CABINET PROCEDURE 10.7  
The deadline for questions is noon on Monday, 29th January 2024.
6. BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL 10 - 26  
A report of the Director Finance, Governance and Contracts.
7. 2024-25 GENERAL FUND AND HRA REVENUE BUDGETS AND COUNCIL TAX 27 - 50  
A report of the Head of Finance.  
*Key Decision*
8. MTFS 24-27 + CAPITAL STRATEGY, TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT, MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2024-25 To Follow  
A report of the Head of Finance.  
*Key Decision*
9. NEW CAPITAL PLAN (2024-25 TO 2026-27) 51 - 59  
A report of the Head of Finance.  
*Key Decision*
10. CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT 60 - 68  
A report of the Head of Finance.  
*Key Decision*
11. HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-29 69 - 96  
A report of the Head of Strategic Housing.  
*Key Decision*
12. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024-27 97 - 123  
A report of the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration.  
*Key Decision*



## CABINET 11TH JANUARY 2024

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

Councillor Rattray

Chief Executive  
Director Finance, Governance and Contracts  
Democratic Services Manager  
Director Commercial and Economic Development  
Director Housing and Wellbeing  
Head of Transformation, Strategy and  
Performance  
Head of Planning and Growth  
Head of Strategic Housing  
Communities and Wellbeing Manager  
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Jones

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.

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

No disclosures were made.

57. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader made the following announcement:

I would like to place on record my thanks and the Cabinet's thanks to all the agencies, organisations, Council staff and volunteers who have helped our local communities during the floods last week.

We have seen some of the worst flooding in Charnwood for years affect the borough with many homes and businesses affected.

We worked hard as a council to respond and support communities and we will continue that work in the coming weeks and months.

I would also like to thank the community for rallying around and helping each other during these difficult times. It was heart-warming and inspiring to see the voluntary work, parcel collections and fundraising taking place to help those who have been hit the hardest by these floods.

The Council will continue to support the recovery of the most affected areas.

We will also support investigations into why the flooding happened and any resulting need for future flood protection measures.

58. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

59. QUESTIONS UNDER CABINET PROCEDURE 10.7

No questions had been submitted.

60. CORPORATE STRATEGY 2024-2028

Considered, a report of the Chief Executive: Corporate Strategy 2024-2028, for recommendation to Council (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Rattray, 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 Commission was thanked for its scrutiny of the matter.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the new Corporate Strategy 2024-2028, attached at the annex to the report, be approved and **recommended to Council**;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make minor amendments to the Strategy;
3. that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to design the final document for publication.

Reasons

1. To enable the draft Corporate Strategy to set out the direction for the Council for the period 2024-2028.
2. To allow minor corrections and amendments to be made in a timely manner prior to publication.
3. To ensure that the designed version of the Corporate Strategy can be developed for public circulation.

61. COSSINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Considered, a report of the Head of Planning and Growth: Cossington Neighbourhood Plan (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader thanked the people of Cossington for the work they had undertaken.

**RESOLVED** that the Cossington Parish Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' to confirm its status as part of the statutory development plan for Charnwood, in accordance with the provisions of Section 38(A) (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Reason

To fulfil the legal duty to make the Cossington Parish Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for Charnwood.

62. CHARNWOOD GRANTS – STRATEGIC PARTNERS (2024/25-2025/26)

Considered, a report of the Director Housing and Wellbeing: Charnwood Grants - Strategic Partners (2024/25-2025/26) (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Rattray, 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 Commission was thanked for its scrutiny of the matter.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the following Strategic Partner Grants be approved, subject to budget approval:

Organisation	Amount Awarded 2024/25 (Year 1)	Provisional amount subject to budget review 2025/26 (Year 2)
Citizens Advice Charnwood	£86,705	£86,705
Equality Action	£20,454	£20,454
Fearon Hall Community Association	£29,727	£29,727
Gorse Covert Community Association	£19,922	£19,922
John Storer Charnwood	£84,490	£84,490
Shepshed Volunteer Centre (John Storer Charnwood)	£9,537	£9,537

Living Without Abuse	£27,050*	£17,513
		£9537 allocation TBC
TOTAL	£277,885	£277,885

2. that the Director of Housing and Wellbeing be given delegated authority to finalise the terms and conditions of the Strategic Partner Grants awarded and Service Level Agreements;
3. that it be noted that Syston & District Volunteer Centre did not apply for a Strategic Partner Grant for 2024/25 and 2025/26 and that the amounts set out in resolution 1 include the redistribution of the £9,537 previously ringfenced for Syston & District Volunteer Centre. The Grants Panel recommended that this amount be awarded to \*Living Without Abuse to help to reduce the waiting time for their clients to access support.

### Reasons

1. To provide appropriate levels of financial support to those organisations that have submitted applications and been assessed by Grants Panel, as meeting the criteria for the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme.
2. To enable the grants awarded to be finalised with an approved Service Level Agreement and appropriate information to be supplied to the Council about the outcomes of the projects/services and determine final grant award amounts.
3. To clarify the way in which the funding previously provided to Syston Volunteer Centre will be used.

### 63. DECLASSIFICATION OF PROPERTIES DESIGNATED FOR ALLOCATION TO PEOPLE AGED OVER 45 YEARS

Considered, a report of the Director Housing and Wellbeing: Declassification of Properties Designated for Allocation to People Aged Over 45 Years (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Rattray, 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 Commission was thanked for its scrutiny of the matter.

### **RESOLVED**

1. that the Director of Housing and Wellbeing be authorised to remove the 45+ age classification from the 1071 properties at Appendix 1 to the report, and that:

2. this be completed in four phases at broadly six-month intervals, with the first phase of properties being declassified in the Summer of 2024;
3. the declassification of properties in each phase progress in consultation with the Executive Member for Public and Private Sector Housing, and subject to the successful management of demand on services arising because of declassification;
4. that targeted communication with affected tenants take place on a phased basis i.e., rather than writing to all affected tenants at once, communications will be issued to tenants in advance of each phase of declassification. Initial generic information will be placed in the tenant newsletter, including information relating to the phased nature of implementation;
5. that tenants be advised of the decision and the reasons for declassification, and provided with the opportunity to feed back any specific concerns so they may be responded to;
6. that the order of phases be based primarily on the meeting of housing need, with a particular focus on areas where there are more empty properties (voids). Tenancy management factors have also been considered including levels of ASB and tenancy support needs;
7. that one additional ASB Officer and one additional Tenancy and Estate Management Officer be recruited to, for a maximum period of three years, with the need for additional resource to be reviewed on an annual basis, and that the HRA revenue budget be increased to accommodate this.

### Reasons

1. To support compliance with equalities legislation, and the meeting of housing need.
2. To enable additional capacity currently being put in place to manage voids and allocations to be mobilised, and to put further resources in place to mitigate any increase in demand on tenancy management services.
3. To allow for monitoring of the impact on services, performance, and any increased movement in the housing stock.
4. To reduce the risk of a significant increase in demand on services and movement in the housing stock creating more voids at a time when services are already under pressure.
5. To support effective communication, reassure and provide information to tenants, and provide the opportunity for any specific issues to be responded to.
6. To support the meeting of housing need and to mitigate against increases in demand on services.



7. To mitigate any increase in demand on tenancy management services and to provide capacity to respond to specific tenant concerns and provide support.

64. DECANT AND DISTURBANCE POLICY

Considered, a report of the Director Housing and Wellbeing: Decant and Disturbance Policy (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Noted that it would be useful to circulate the policy once adopted to all councillors so that they were aware of it, particularly given the recent floods.

**RESOLVED** that the Decant and Disturbance Policy attached as appendix A to the report be approved.

Reason

To enable officers to provide a service that treats tenants equitably and consistently when they have to move to alternative accommodation for reasons not of their own choosing, primarily for the Council to carry out repairs in their home that cannot be carried out with the tenant remaining in occupation.

NOTES:

1. Councillor Rattray attended this meeting virtually. She was not taking decisions.
2. The following officers listed as present attended this meeting virtually: Director Commercial and Economic Development, Head of Planning and Growth, Head of Strategic Housing, Communities and Wellbeing Manager.
3. The Democratic Services Manager attended this meeting in her role as Deputy Monitoring Officer.
4. The decisions in these minutes not in the form of recommendations to Council will come into effect at noon on Friday, 19th January 2024 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, 19th January 2024.
6. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Cabinet.

## CABINET – 8TH FEBRUARY 2024

### Report of the Director Finance, Governance and Contracts Lead Member: Cllr Ashcroft

#### Part A

#### BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL

##### Purpose of Report

To consider the conclusions of the Budget Scrutiny Panel following its scrutiny of the Council's draft budget for 2024/25.

##### Recommendation

Set out below are the Panel's conclusions, followed by officer comment. The Cabinet is asked to note the conclusions.

##### Reason

To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Budget Scrutiny Panel. On this occasion, there are no recommendations to be considered or agreed by the Cabinet.

#### **Panel Conclusions**

The Panel notes that due to the impact of higher interest rates on monies invested and the ability to use Business Rates Pool income in future years, the Medium Term Financial Strategy working balance is at £4.1 million not £2.8 million. This is a much stronger financial position than was previously expected.

Whilst many councils appear to be financially struggling, it is good to see that Charnwood will be able to budget with a limited use of reserves that have been built up over many years of shrewd fiscal management.

There are potential risks on the horizon, particularly within the housing benefits subsidy and we wait to see what changes can be made to assist the General Fund through additional income or cuts in expenditure.

#### Comment of the Director Finance, Governance and Contracts

The Panel's comments are noted.

#### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Scrutiny Commission, at its meeting on 8th January 2024, agreed that the report of the Budget 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), sufficient 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

A report setting out the draft General Fund and HRA Budget 2024/25 is included on the agenda for this meeting, for recommendation to Council at its meeting on 26th February 2024.

The Cabinet's response to the Panel's conclusions 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 comment.

Key Decision: No

Background Papers: None

Officer to contact: Laura Strong  
Democratic Services Officer  
(01509) 634734  
[laura.strong@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:laura.strong@charnwood.gov.uk)

## Part B

### Background

1. Following a decision of the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 7th August 2023, a Budget Scrutiny Panel has undertaken scrutiny of the Council's draft budget for 2024/25.
2. The Scrutiny Commission considered the Panel's report at its meeting on 8th January 2024 and resolved that the conclusions of the Panel be submitted to the Cabinet for its consideration .
3. The following extract from the Scrutiny Commission's minutes outlines its consideration of the matter:

"92. BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL

*A report of the Budget Scrutiny Panel to enable the Commission to consider any recommendations and observations of the Budget Scrutiny Panel was submitted (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).*

*Councillor Seaton assisted with the consideration of this item as a Budget Scrutiny Panel member. The following summarises the discussion:*

- i. The Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Panel (Councillor Charles) communicated via email that he would like to thank the members and officers involved in the Budget Scrutiny Panel. He went on to say that whilst the Council would face financial challenges in the year ahead, it was in a strong position to face these challenges.*
- ii. Members acknowledged the relatively strong financial position of the Council and thanked members and officers for their work in scrutinising the Council's upcoming budgets.*

**RESOLVED** *that the Budget Scrutiny Panel report be approved for submission to the Cabinet at the next available meeting.*

### Reason

*To ensure timely and effective scrutiny of the matter and subject."*

4. The Panel's report submitted to the Scrutiny Commission is attached as an Annex.

Annex          Report of the Budget Scrutiny Panel, January 2024

# REPORT OF THE 2023/24 BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL

(Scrutiny of 2024/25 Draft Budgets)

## 1. Background

Following a decision of the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 7th August 2023, a Budget Scrutiny Panel has undertaken scrutiny of the Council's draft budgets for 2024/25.

## 2. Panel Membership

Councillors Charles (Chair), Haynes, Monk, Popley, Seaton, Westley.

## 3. Meetings and Matters Considered

### 24th October 2023

Considered:

- Scrutiny Plan/Timetable
- Presentation on financial position of the Council
- Approach to 2024/25 budget setting.

### 12th December 2023

Considered:

- Draft Budgets 2024/25 (Cabinet Report 14th December 2023)
- Whether any recommendations/observations for Panel's report at this meeting.

### 3rd January 2024

Considered:

- Provisional Financial Settlement from Government (verbal update)
- Final Panel report for submission to Scrutiny Commission on 8th January 2024.

The information considered by the Panel at its meetings is available on the Council's website, here:

[Browse meetings - Budget Scrutiny Panel - Charnwood Borough Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk)

Minutes detail the Panel's discussions at each meeting and are available via the above link, also attached as an **Appendix** to this report.

#### **4. Other Attendees**

Others attended meetings of the Panel and assisted with its scrutiny as follows:

Director Finance, Governance and Contracts, Acting Head of Finance.

Leader of the Council, Cabinet Lead Member for Finance, Customer & Support Services, Revenues and Benefits.

#### **5. Panel Conclusions**

The Panel notes that due to the impact of higher interest rates on monies invested and the ability to use Business Rates Pool income in future years, the Medium Term Financial Strategy working balance is at £4.1 million not £2.8 million. This is a much stronger financial position than was previously expected.

Whilst many councils appear to be financially struggling, it is good to see that Charnwood will be able to budget with a limited use of reserves that have been built up over many years of shrewd fiscal management.

There are potential risks on the horizon, particularly within the housing benefits subsidy and we wait to see what changes can be made to assist the General Fund through additional income or cuts in expenditure.

#### **6. Background Papers**

The information considered by the Panel at its meetings is available on the Council's website, here:

[Browse meetings - Budget Scrutiny Panel - Charnwood Borough Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/finance/budget-scrutiny-panel)

#### **7. Appendix**

Minutes of 3 x Panel meetings outlined above.

January 2024

**BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL  
24TH OCTOBER 2023**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Charles)  
Councillors Haynes, Monk, Popley and Seaton

Councillor Ashcroft (Cabinet Lead Member for  
Finance, Customer & Support Services, Revenues  
and Benefits)

Director Finance, Governance and Contracts  
Democratic Services Officer (RD)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Westley

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

No disclosures were made.

2. DECLARATIONS - THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

3. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

4. SCRUTINY PLAN/TIMETABLE

Considered, a Scrutiny Plan/Timetable for the Panel's scrutiny of the 2024/25 Draft Budgets (item 5 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

**RESOLVED** that the scrutiny plan/timetable be noted.

Reason

To ensure that the Panel are kept informed of timescales.

5. FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL

*Councillor Seaton arrived at the meeting at 6.04pm. She left the meeting during the discussion at 6.18pm for a short duration.*

The Panel considered a presentation by the Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts detailing the financial position of the Council.

*Post meeting note: The presentation was published after the meeting as an agenda supplement.*

The information given in the presentation represented current projections of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). A fully updated version would be produced and it was planned that this would be adopted by Council at the end of February 2024.

Key points of discussion:

- (i) Council tax was capped (currently 3% increase assumed for 2024/25) and limits set each year as part of the financial settlement. Confirmed it was a stable source of income.
- (ii) The MTFS assumed there would be a reduction in grant funding going forward, but updated projections assumed a small real terms increase, a more optimistic position than previously presented.
- (iii) Considered positive that the structure of the financial settlement for 2024/25 would be the same as for 2023/24.
- (iv) Important to note however that these were projections at this stage and subject to change following government review.
- (v) The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) would cease in April 2024. The Council's share of the distribution of funds from the Business Rates Pool could be in excess of £1 million albeit subject to minor restrictions on spending.
- (vi) Revenues and Benefits – exempt report to Cabinet in September 2023 indicated ongoing savings of £0.3 to £0.4 million per annum. Pensions were included as direct savings.
- (vii) Annual Housing Benefit subsidy loss estimated at £0.8 million to 30th June 2023. Rent increases at the Carpenters Arms could mean a loss of up to £1.4 million annually going forward. Ongoing work with the charity to challenge rental costs and mitigate risks.
- (viii) Confirmed there was neither profit nor loss being made with regard to the council's leisure services and that leisure centre provision was being closely reviewed.
- (ix) Original assumptions for pay awards were increases of 4.75%, 3.5% and 2% in successive years, revised assumptions now 6%, 5% and 4%. Pay awards not yet agreed for 2023/24. Confirmed that back-pay would be available and not a sudden strain on the budget once back-pay awarded.



- (x) Investment income – more money was allocated in the budget this year reflecting higher interest rates and as a result the Council was in a stronger position, with investment returns in September above 5%. £50 million invested.
- (xi) Concerns raised about the need to fall back on reserves. Confirmed that budget setting should address this (at least in part) by looking at service areas such as garden waste, car parking and general service cuts. Council tax was capped and unlikely to assist in improvements.
- (xii) There had been some issues relating to the housing stock and appointment of contractors.
- (xiii) Discussion around housing stock – a question was asked whether once properties/voids were sold through the Right to Buy scheme, the Council gained the revenue and were able to re-invest the funds. The Panel requested further advice on this.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the presentation and discussion on the matter be noted.
2. That further advice and information be sought from the relevant department regarding the sale of housing stock and revenue gained from sales.

### Reasons

1&2. To ensure the Panel were informed of the financial position of the Council and to assist with the future discussions of the Panel.

## 6. APPROACH TO 2024/25 BUDGET SETTING

Prior to the meeting a report was circulated to members of the Panel by the Cabinet Lead Member for Finance, Customer & Support Services, Revenues and Benefits on the approach to 2024/25 Budget Setting.

*Post meeting note: The Cabinet Lead Member's report was published after the meeting as an agenda supplement.*

Key points of discussion:

- (i) The MTFs for last year predicted that for 2024/25 the working balance would reduce to £2.8 million. This prediction had now changed to £4.1 million, due to risk mitigation and management decisions. Would not want to be below £2.5 million. The shift in the MTFs figures showed an improved financial position.
- (ii) Moving forward would be looking at revenue and expenditure and the impact on services with the aim of reducing the use of the working balance. Statutory services and environment strategy would be planned in.

- (iii) Corporate Plan in progress and a residents' survey was currently being distributed.
- (iv) No plans for cash/capital to revert back to treasury as underspends unlikely to be an issue.

**RESOLVED** that the report and discussion on the matter be noted.

Reason

To ensure the Panel was kept informed about the approach to 2024/25 budget setting and to assist with the future discussions of the Panel.

NOTES:

1. Councillor Ashcroft attended the meeting virtually.
2. 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 the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
3. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Panel.

**BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL  
12TH DECEMBER 2023**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Charles)  
Councillors Haynes, Monk, Seaton and Westley

Councillors Ashcroft (Cabinet Lead Member for Finance, Customer & Support Services, Revenues and Benefits) and Miah (Leader of the Council)

Director Finance, Governance and Contracts  
Acting Head of Finance  
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGIES: None

Councillor Popley attended this meeting virtually, see notes at end of minutes.

Note: The meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. 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.

7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th October 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

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

No disclosures were made.

9. DECLARATIONS - THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

10. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

*Councillor Popley joined the meeting virtually (6.02pm).*

11. DRAFT BUDGETS 2024/25

Considered, the report to be considered by Cabinet on 14th December 2023 setting out the draft 2024/25 General Fund and HRA Budgets (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Summary, key points of discussion:

- (i) Reference was made to the approach to budget setting report provided by the Cabinet Lead Member at the last meeting of the Panel and an update given on work undertaken since then which had now fed into the draft budgets. Decision to keep working balance as it was to ensure robust budget. Addressing structural deficit would require a number of budget rounds.
- (ii) It was hoped that the provisional financial settlement from the Government would be received before Christmas, so should be known for the Panel's final meeting at the beginning of January.
- (iii) Agenda page 12, reduced management fees from leisure provider not quantified? Stated in appendix 1 to the report.
- (iv) £100,000 Community Grants pot to be funded from Business Rates Pool income. Noted that overall budget position had been assisted considerably by this windfall income. Other uses of this income outlined. Expectation re: this income in future years, smaller amounts/less certain.
- (v) Discussion re: risk related to Carpenters Arms (unrecoverable housing benefit). Very active in working on matter and with organisation concerned, possible change in regulation of sector might assist position, but challenging. Additional cost burden £1.4m worst case scenario. Position unlikely to be resolved in short term.
- (vi) Explanation was provided of the information set out in Table 2B, agenda page 16, draft General Fund budget 2024/25, revenue balances. Setting 2024/25 budget before outcome of 2023/24 budget was known.
- (vii) Agenda page 15, net General Fund Service Expenditure, reason for approximately 12-13% increase? Increased costs included pay award, some contractors, utilities, Microsoft office. Noted also affected by change in way figures presented such that actual increased expenditure likely slightly higher. Pay award below this increase, outlined.
- (viii) Discussion re: leisure provider position. Council was prepared should another contractor need to be engaged, but not looking to do so currently. Difficult market position in that respect. Monitoring closely, practical approach being taken. Some debt outstanding, but Council still in position where providing at zero cost. Provider had also been supported during Covid pandemic.
- (ix) Agenda page 12, investment in housing stock, concern that available funds were not being used. In response, had been problems with contractors including major contractor going into administration, position was improving, expected to spend in line with monies available for second half of this year, but no catch up re: first half. Reference to recent decisions taken to get void properties back into use, proposed to spend all funds available for investment in Council's housing stock.

- (x) Agenda page 20, explanation was provided of zero amount in Major Repairs Reserve for 2024/25 budget. Historical and less flexible in terms of permitted uses, preference was to build up Capital Finance Reserve. Various reserves in HRA could generally be considered as one pot.
- (xi) Funding Guarantee was one element of Government's financial settlement. It was not known what the make up of the settlement would be for the coming year. Since report prepared, had become known that core spending power for each county would be increased by minimum of 3%, as a result anticipated worst case approximately £80,000 worse than figures set out. Was uncertainty until settlement was known.
- (xii) Question re: what targeted savings had been identified and value of those? In response, from a number of different areas, some were included within budgets set out. Some were ongoing improvement savings, some identified decision savings and others were based on projects. Certain potential long-term savings required a study to investigate. Some were more defined than others at this stage. Options for change provided examples, although sensitivities prevented some from being listed within report at present. The Medium Term Financial Strategy would show some of the carry on of savings. Kept structural deficit down from what projected for this year in last MTFs, aim to retard growth in structural deficit. Monitoring that in addition to working balance.
- (xiii) Concern expressed that reference to service reviews across a number of identified services was vague. Also, that office accommodation review had been ongoing for some time. In response, sensitivities re: service reviews reiterated, was list which included both consideration of income and cost reduction. Re: office accommodation, short term proposed income for new lease ground floor. Added that budget process always ongoing flux and had been previously, potential options from service areas not large in context of overall budget spending, but important to challenge and be as efficient and deliver services as well as possible.
- (xiv) The approach being taken to reviewing car parking was briefly outlined. A report would be considered by Cabinet in due course. Reference to position being taken re: office accommodation, currently no change proposed.
- (xv) Agenda page 15, re: commercialisation, no amount to reserve for 2024/25, reducing focus on commercialisation? In response, requirement of £1.5m reached, considered sufficient for any risks associated with portfolio.
- (xvi) Agenda page 23, Loughborough Special Expenses, concern expressed re: 18.7% increase CCTV costs, reason? Cost increased considerably over last 2-3 years. In response, issue had been discussed at Loughborough Area Committee and project currently looking at as aware of matter. Number of cameras had increased and associated employee costs. Also cameras required replacing over time. Valued service that helped to keep our communities safe. Comment that Thurmaston had reviewed and decided service was valuable and should be retained.

(xvii) Agenda page 23, Loughborough Special Expenses, why cost increase of almost 50% Shelthorpe Golf Course? In response, due to decrease in income, and some reapportionment of costs associated with extended contract Idverde.

(xviii) Confirmed that Labour manifesto had stated Council Tax would be capped at 3% (increase). Maximum permitted was 3% or £5.

**RESOLVED** that the draft 2024/25 General Fund and HRA Budgets be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the scrutiny panel's consideration of the draft budgets.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS FOR PANEL'S REPORT

This item had been included on the agenda to enable the Panel to consider the recommendations/observations that it wished to include in its report (having undertaken above scrutiny of the draft budgets 2024/25) (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Noted that, if the above was not completed at this meeting, the Panel would need to agree a process by which recommendations/observations could be decided upon following this meeting. There was a very short period of time between the Panel's next and final meeting (3rd January 2024) and submission of the Panel's report to the Scrutiny Commission (8th January 2024), so the report submitted to the Panel on 3rd January 2024 for agreement should already have been seen by all members, commented upon and any required amendments made, so that any further amendments decided upon at that meeting were minimal.

The Panel did not identify any recommendations or observations at this meeting.

**RESOLVED**

1. that a draft report template and the minutes of the Panel's meetings to date be sent to members of the Panel as soon as possible to enable any recommendations/observations for the Panel's report to be proposed and commented on prior to the Panel's final meeting on 3rd January 2024;
2. that, in addition to agreeing the Panel's final report, the meeting on 3rd January 2024 include a verbal update on the provisional financial settlement from the Government.

Reasons

1. To ensure the Panel can conclude its scrutiny of the draft budgets 2024/25 in a timely manner and submit its report to Scrutiny Commission on 8th January 2024.
2. The information will be of interest to the Panel.

NOTES:

1. Councillor Popley attended this meeting virtually so was not taking decisions. The Acting Head of Finance also attended this meeting virtually.
2. 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 the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
3. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Panel.

**BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL  
3RD JANUARY 2024**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Charles)  
Councillors Monk and Seaton

Director Finance, Governance and Contracts  
Acting Head of Finance  
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGIES: None

Councillors Haynes, Popley and Westley attended this meeting  
virtually, see notes at end of minutes.

Note: The meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. 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.

13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

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

No disclosures were made.

15. DECLARATIONS - THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

16. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

17. PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT

Considered, a verbal update by the Director Finance, Governance and Contracts on the provisional financial settlement, as requested by the Panel at its last meeting, summarised as follows:

The settlement comprised two elements: the various grants and the retained Business Rates parameters. Re: the former, total amount was approximately £97k less than budgeted, manageable. Re: the latter some modelling work remained to be done on those numbers which required updating of software, but no significant issue anticipated. Position with calculation of core spending power also outlined.



Summary, key points of discussion:

- (i) The complex nature of the matter was noted.
- (ii) The various grants monies could be used for any Council expenditure.
- (iii) The final position with the settlement would be reflected in the final budget.

**RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Panel's consideration of the matter.

18. PANEL REPORT

Considered, the Panel's report for submission to Scrutiny Commission on 8th January 2024 (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Chair proposed wording setting out the conclusions of the Panel, for inclusion in its report. The Panel was content with those conclusions to include minor amendment suggested by the Director Finance, Governance and Contracts. At the meeting, the wording as amended was as follows:

“The Panel notes that due to the impact of higher interest rates on monies invested and the ability to use Business Rates Pool income in future years, the Medium Term Financial Strategy working balance is at £4.1 million not £2.8 million. This is a much stronger financial position than was previously expected.

Whilst many councils appear to be financially struggling, it is good to see that Charnwood will be able to budget with a limited use of reserves that have been built up over many years of shrewd fiscal management.

There are potential risks on the horizon, particularly within the housing benefits subsidy and we wait to see what changes can be made to assist the General Fund through additional income or cuts in expenditure”.

This item also included brief discussion of matters relating to the Business Rates Pool.

**RESOLVED** that authority be delegated to the Chair to agree the Panel's final report, to include the above conclusions of the Panel and any minor amendments he considers are required.

Reason

To ensure the outcome of the Panel's scrutiny of the 2024/25 draft budgets is reported to the Scrutiny Commission in a timely manner.

NOTES:

1. Councillor Haynes, Popley and Westley attended this meeting virtually so were not taking decisions.
2. 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 the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
3. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Panel.

## CABINET – 8TH FEBRUARY 2024

### Report of the Head of Finance

Lead Member: Councillor Ian Ashcroft

#### Part A

#### GENERAL FUND AND HRA REVENUE BUDGETS 2024/25

##### Purpose of the Report

This report sets out the proposed General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budgets for 2024/25. It is a legal requirement to set a balanced budget each financial year. The report also incorporates the proposed Council Tax levy which must be set by Council at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The indicated Council Tax for Charnwood Borough Council as a whole is based on the budget to be recommended to Council and it is proposed that there is equivalent to an increase of 3.00% per band D property per annum in 2024/25. This is within the allowable increase for the Council based upon the Council's current band D charge being in the lowest quartile across England.

The report also presents the 2024/25 proposals to increase rent and service charges within the ring fenced Housing Revenue Account.

##### Recommendations

That Council is recommended:

1. To approve the Original General Fund Revenue Budget for 2024/25 at £20,395,951 as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To set a base Council Tax at £144.68 at Band D, an increase of 3.00% (£4.21) on the 2023/24 rate as set out in Appendix 2.
3. To set the Loughborough Special Levy at £82.72, an increase of 1.99% (£1.61) on the 2023/24 rate, as set out in Appendix 3.
4. To approve the Original HRA Budget for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 5.
5. To amend the HRA weekly rents in line with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance.
6. To amend the non-HRA dwelling properties in line with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance.
7. To approve the HRA service charges in accordance with the MHCLG Guidance.
8. To approve that the shop rents retain their current rents in accordance with an assessment by the Valuation Office.

9. To approve that garage rents are increased in accordance with an assessment by the Valuation Office.
10. To approve that the Leasehold Management and Administration charge increases to £180.35 per annum for Leasehold flats, and £112.98 for Leasehold shops.
11. That the Lifeline weekly charge is increased in-line with CPI + 1% and that the new digital Lifeline Service charge is set to recover costs.
12. To determine that the basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive according to the principles set out by the Secretary of State.

### Reasons

1. That the necessary finance is approved to carry out services in 2024/25.
2. That the Council Tax can be set in accordance with legal and statutory requirements.
3. That a Loughborough Special Levy can be set in accordance with legal and statutory requirements.
4. To ensure sufficient funding for the Housing Revenue Account in 2024/25.
5. To comply with social housing rents guidance.
6. To be consistent with the other council house stock.
7. To ensure the correct alignment of costs and service charges for tenants in accordance with best practice.
8. That shop rents follow the assessment and guidance provided by the Valuation Office.
9. To increase the rent generated for garages in line with the guidance from the Valuation Office.
10. That there is sufficient recovery of the costs associated with operating the leasehold flat and shop services.
11. That there is sufficient recovery of the costs associated with operating the Lifeline service.
12. To comply with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The budget is essential to all policies of the Council and the setting of a Council Tax levy is a legal requirement of the Council. The rents are set in accordance with DLUHC Guidelines.

## Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

This report will be available for consideration by the Scrutiny on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and, if approved by Cabinet, will be tabled for agreement by Full Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The actual budget will then come into effect on 1st April 2024.

The draft budget was also considered by the Budget Scrutiny Panel on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 and their comments are due to be considered separately by Cabinet at the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 meeting and are also referred to later in this report.

## Report Implications

### *Financial Implications*

The effects of the adoption of these budgets are explained in Part B of the report.

### *Risk Management*

Risks identified in respect of the Original Budget are tabulated below:

<i>Risk Identified</i>	<i>Likelihood</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Overall Risk</i>	<i>Risk Management actions planned</i>
Failure to take account of the spending plans of the Council.	Unlikely (2)	Minor (1)	Very Low (2)	Robust budget planning and Budget Monitoring process are in place.
Further exceptional spending being required during the financial year.	Likely (3)	Major (3)	Moderate (9)	It is considered that the Working Balance reserve (and other revenue reserves) remain sufficient to manage normal and one-off events for 2024/25.

### *Equality and Diversity*

There are no specific Equalities and Diversity issues affecting the recommendation in this report, although any such issues arising from particular service pressures and savings will be considered and subject to an equalities impact assessment prior to proposals being implemented.

Key Decision: Yes

Background Papers: None

Officers to Contact: Neil Whittall  
Acting Head of Finance  
01509 635215  
Neil.whittall@charnwood.gov.uk

Simon Jackson  
Director of Finance, Governance & Contracts  
01509 634699  
simon.jackson@charnwood.gov.uk

## Part B

### General Fund Revenue Budget 2024/25

1. The approach and context for this budget were set out in the report to Cabinet of 14 December 2023. The salient features of the draft budget were set in this report and are reiterated as applying to the final budget proposals to Council:
  - **Use of General Fund Working Balance:** no use of the Working Balance is projected within the draft budget; this would leave the Working Balance at £5.4m at 31 March 2025, well above the £2.5m minimum level currently assessed by the Section 151 officer
  - **Council tax:** the general Borough council tax increase is restricted to three percent; this increase is below the rate previously allowed under the historical 'capping rules' which are expected continue into 2024/25
  - **Loughborough Special Expenses:** the Loughborough Special Expenses council tax increase is to be set at 1.99%, in line with previous years.
  - **Community grants:** A £100,000 grants pot is to be created to enable community groups working with residents struggling with the cost of living, £25,000 of which is to be specifically allocated to the Citizens Advice Bureau
  - **Garden waste collection charges:** the charge for garden waste collections is to be frozen for 2024/25

With respect to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA):

- The budget assumes a **'break even' position.**
  - **Investment in stock:** some £7.2m within the HRA is earmarked for investment in the housing stock; £4.3m arising from the depreciation charge and a specific allocation of £2.9m
  - **Rent increases:** rentals are planned to increase by CPI+1% in accordance with national guidelines; this equates to a 7.7% increase, although around three-quarters of tenants will be insulated from this increase due to Housing Benefit and Universal Credit payments.
  - **Reserves:** the HRA reserve will be maintained at £110 per house in line with historical precedent.
2. The only alteration to the headline position versus the draft budget concerns the HRA financing fund which will potentially reduce to £12m, compared to the draft position which expected the fund to be maintained above £13m due to refinement of the calculations. This remains a comfortable position for this reserve, being well above short term refinancing commitments.
  3. Appendix 1 shows the General Fund summary position and includes a variance column comparing the Original budget being recommended to Council with the draft one reported to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The changes are set out below.
  4. The working balance is estimated to be £5,472k as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
  5. The precept Income has Increased by £122k compared to the draft. This is summarized as:

	<b>Draft Budget 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Original Budget 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Movement Draft to Original 2024/25 £</b>
Revenue Support Grant	353,000	350,444	(2,556)
NNDR	6,800,000	7,100,000	300,000
Funding Guarantee	3,000,000	2,473,608	(526,392)
Council Tax Receipts	8,710,763	8,634,300	(76,463)
Loughborough Special Levy	1,410,409	1,397,836	(12,573)
New Homes Bonus	0	404,254	404,254
Services Grant	0	27,319	27,319
General Government Grants	0	0	0
Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	0	8,190	8,190
Precept Income	<b>20,274,172</b>	<b>20,395,951</b>	<b>121,779</b>

6. The council is currently part of the Leicestershire business rate pool which means that they do not have to pay this balance over to Central Government and payments instead are directed to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEEP) via the business rates pool.
7. Due to timing differences between years in finalising amounts due to other parties, e.g. the County, Police and Fire in respect of Council Tax and the County, Fire and Central Government in respect of NNDR, the authority operates a Collection Fund. This acts like a trust account where amounts are paid in/out during the year and surpluses/deficits are retained at the year end and then paid out/recovered in following years once final figures are known. The final report to Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 will include the final figures, the figures for County, Fire and Police in this report are provisional.
8. The amount due to the Council from Council Tax receipts has decreased by £76k compared with the draft report. The tax base was calculated in December 2023 and was less than originally anticipated.
9. The New Homes Bonus (NHB) Grant figure is £404k for 2024/25 (£373k 2023/24).
10. Funding Guarantee has continued for a second year and is £2,474k (£2,295k 2023/24).
11. Service pressures, savings and options for change are detailed at Appendix 6. This is summarized as:



	<b>Draft Budget 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Original Budget 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Movement Draft to Original 2024/25 £</b>
Net Options for Change (Saving)/Pressure	(366,000)	(366,000)	0
Service Savings (Ongoing)	(124,200)	(91,200)	33,000
Service Savings (Oneoff)	(71,600)	(71,600)	0
Community Grants (Oneoff)	100,000	100,000	0
Service Pressures (Ongoing)	309,400	419,900	110,500
Service Pressures (Oneoff)	122,300	122,300	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>(30,100)</b>	<b>113,400</b>	<b>143,500</b>

### Consultation on the Budget

12. A programme of consultation commenced following the consideration of the draft budget by Cabinet 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023. This has involved members of the public, partner organisations, scrutiny (especially the Budget Scrutiny Panel), unions and businesses. An online consultation was held between 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The consultation was highlighted in the local media and across other channels including the Council's website, social media, and email alerts. *There were no responses submitted to the online consultation.*

### *Budget Scrutiny Panel*

13. A Budget Scrutiny Panel has undertaken scrutiny of the draft budget for 2024/25. There were no specific recommendations of the Panel; their comments are set out in a separate report to this Cabinet meeting.

### *Comments of the Industrial and Commercial Ratepayers Meeting*

14. A consultation meeting with representatives of Industrial and Commercial Ratepayers was held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024. In summary:
- The current reliance on using reserves and how this use could be reduced was discussed; members and offices present outlined the 'Options for Change' process which had the objective of moving the Council towards financial resilience over the term of the current administration.
  - The Council's proposed investment in economic regeneration resources and the plans in respect of town centres and car parking were discussed.
  - the timing of the financial settlement from the Government was noted as being challenging for the Council's budgetary process.

## Loughborough Special Expenses Appendix 3

15. The budget position for Loughborough Special Expense and Levy for 2024/25. The increase to the Loughborough Special Levy is 1.99% to a rate of £82.72 per Band D property (2023/24: £81.11), details of this budget and year to year comparisons are included in Appendix 3.

### Council Tax Base

16. The tax base, as approved by a decision delegated to the s151 Officer, has been used in the relevant calculations.

### Precept Amount

17. The Precept amount in Appendix 2 shows an equivalent overall increase of £4.21 (3.00%) on the Base Band D Council Tax plus the Loughborough Special Levy. The band D rate for 2024/25 is set at £144.68 for the base precept.

### Parish and Town Councils and Other Precepts

18. All but two Parish and Town Council precepts have been received; and are detailed in Appendix 4 where available. Approved precept information is still to be received from the County Council, the Police and Fire Authorities and the figures therefore shown in Appendix 2 are provisional. These and outstanding parish precepts will be updated in time for the main Council meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

### General Fund Revenue Balances and Reserve

19. The General Fund Balances are included in Appendix 1. The budget shows a net zero use of Working Balance is required to balance this year's budget, with the Working Balance estimated to be £5,472k as at March 2025.

It is a requirement to ensure that the level of balances is appropriate for the Council's commitments and current level of expenditure. The recommended minimum working balance set by the Section 151 Officer is £2.5m (but is under review as set out in the Medium Term Financial Outlook 2024 – 2027), representing six weeks net expenditure, in line with good practice. The original budget balance on this fund at the end of March 2025 is projected is above this limit.

The Reinvestment Reserve This is used for three purposes, these being:

- For items that produce a payback to the Council;
- To fund costs that lead to appreciable service improvements;
- To fund one-off costs.

The Reinvestment reserve is estimated to be £356k at the end of March 2025. to be used for the above purpose. This may be topped up should this be operationally justified and financially feasible.

The Capital Plan Reserve is estimated to be £1,874k at the end of March 2025. This revenue reserve can be used to finance General Fund capital expenditure. The reserve can also be used for revenue expenditure and there is no minimum balance for this reserve.

There are fifteen specific earmarked reserves which may be used in line with the purpose of the reserve fund or for general fund purposes totaling £3,429k. Included within the earmarked reserves is the Commercialisation Reserve. This was set up in 2021/22 to cover any future losses on the Commercial Property Income. A contribution of £26k has been set aside in the 2024/25 budget and by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, the balance on this reserve will be £1.5m.

The overall total General Fund Reserve balances estimated as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 is £13,090k.

## Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Appendix 5

20. The draft original budget position for 2024/25 is breakeven. The 2024/25 budget funds the capital programme through a contribution of £2.7m Revenue Contribution to HRA Capital and the Major Repairs Reserve via a £4.3m Depreciation Charge. There are Service pressures of £0.9m which are comprised of £0.4m inflationary pressures (*Appendix 7 - Table 1*) and ongoing additional pressures totaling £0.5m (*Table 2*). Note that an additional £98.6k has been added since the draft Housing Revenue Account budget presented to Cabinet on 14 December 2023 (*Item 7 - Draft General Fund and HRA Budget 2024/25*).
21. Rents have been increased by CPI+1% in accordance with national guidelines which is a 7.7% increase. CPI is as at September 2023. The rent increase will be covered by Housing benefit and Universal Credit, subject to benefit eligibility. There are approximately 1,344 tenants (as on 21 November 2023) thought not to be in receipt of these benefits.

### Impact of proposed rent increase

Charge	Average weekly charge 2023/24	2024/25 Average weekly charge 7.7% increase	Increase
Housing rent (52 weeks)	84.33	90.82	£6.49 per week (Eligible for Universal Credit)

22. Void loss (rent lost through empty properties) has been calculated at 4.8% which is approximately £1.2m of the anticipated income stream. Recent investments in staffing and additional resources in the repairs and maintenance of void properties will assist in making this target achievable.
23. Rents on Garages have been increased by approximately 6.09% per week to £11.50 per week which is an increase of £0.66 per week (48 weeks). This is following the recommendations of a review by the Valuations Office.
24. The rent charges for shops has also been reviewed by the Valuations Office, and their recommendation was to retain them at the current levels.
25. Service charges have been set in line with the recovery of direct costs. Each sheltered court has a different charge to recover costs directly associated with that sheltered court only. This is for services such as laundry/wate and furniture in communal areas. This limits tenants not in those sheltered courts from contributing to the costs of their upkeep.

## HRA Balances (Reserves)

### *Principal HRA reserve*

26. Section 151 Officer recommends a minimum level of working balances for the HRA of £110 per property (under review for future years as described in the Medium Term Financial Outlook 2024 – 2027). There are 5,428 properties anticipated on 31st March 2025 (anticipating 22 right to buy sales); working balances have been adjusted to reflect this projection at £597k.

### *HRA Financing Fund*

27. The HRA Financing Fund was set up to set aside monies to cover future expenditure. Cabinet have approved a facility whereby a further £0.5m can be drawn down from the Financing Fund each year. (*Recommendation 2 – Landlord Services Capacity – Cabinet 1 June 2023*). The budget as presented excludes this additional £0.5m which is held in reserve until required. It also excludes a recent addition of £50k earmarked from the £0.5m to assist in the aftermath of the recent flooding in Loughborough. It is assumed that a proportion of this expenditure may be recoverable through insurance. The anticipated balance of the HRA Financing Fund on 31 March 2025 is £12m although this will reduce to £11.5m if it is drawn down in full during 2024/25.
28. An anticipated net overspend of £1.8m relating to the forecast closing budget for 2023/24 has been adjusted to the opening balance of the HRA Financing Fund. This is based on the forecast for revenue monitoring as estimated in January 2024. Whilst this does not impact directly on the 2024/25 Original Budget for the HRA, it has reduced the level of Housing Financing Fund projected to be available on 1 April 2024.

### *Major Repairs Reserve*

29. The Major Repairs Reserve is a statutory fund and can only be used to finance capital expenditure and debt repayment. The anticipated balance on 31 March 2025 is zero. This is because the projected brought forward balance of £4.5m will be used to fund the 2024/25 capital programme £3.5m and £1m loan payment to the Public Works Loan Board. This is the first of the loans maturing from the £79m self-financing settlement in 2012.
30. The HRA draft Capital Programme for 2024/25 is £13.9m. This is funded from Depreciation £4.3m, HRA Revenue contribution to Capital (RCCO) £2.7m, and the HRA financing fund £3m, the Major Repairs Reserve £3.5m and £0.4m from 1- for-1 capital receipts (HRA Right to buy sales).
31. Note that this is £0.6m higher than the draft Housing Revenue Account budget presented to Cabinet on 14 December 2023 (*Item 7 - Draft General Fund and HRA Budget 2024/25*). The changes to the capital programme financing, additional service pressures and 2023/24 shortfall in budget have reduced the anticipated investment income by £87k.
32. Total HRA balances on 31 March 2025 are anticipated to be £12.6m compared with £20m at 1 April 2024. This represents a substantial investment in the housing stock via the £13.9m capital programme.

33. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) of a local authority to report on the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides. This report must be considered by Cabinet and full Council as part of the budget approval and council tax setting process. This can be found at Appendix 8.

#### Robustness of Estimates

34. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 also requires an authority to take due consideration before setting the budget as there is no recourse to setting a further levy during the year, and any unexpected financial event would have to be met from reserves, or by cutting expenditure on services.
35. This budget has been drawn up using the best estimates of the cost of service delivery by those officers delivering the services, under the overall management of the Chief Financial Officer and with professional advice and guidance from the Financial Services team. The basis of estimation has been to take account of all known costs in delivering a set level of service together with any new or amended services that have been approved by Members.
36. It is recognised that during the eighteen months period, from the start of the budget process until the end of that financial year, there are likely to be budgets that have pressures on spending; equally there are budgets that will under spend. The key is to ensure that the position is under control at all times and that timely, effective action is taken where budget issues are identified in year. Financial procedures are in place to ensure that all decisions that affect spending are fully considered before committing the authority, and that effective monitoring is in place.
37. All spending plans are based on the service planning process and the proposed use of reserves and balances conforms to the approach set out in the Financial Strategy.

#### Adequacy of Reserves

38. The Chief Financial Officer can confirm that the levels of reserves for both the General Fund and HRA are considered to be adequate to fund the planned expenditure identified by the Council as presented in this report. However, they will need to be monitored and reviewed in the future to ensure that they can be maintained at an adequate level.

#### Assurance Statement of the Council's Section 151 Officer

39. The Chief Financial Officer confirms that this budget, as set out above and in the attached appendices, is robust and meets the requirements of the Council for its current spending plans and conforms with the procedures agreed for the use of balances.

## Appendices

- 1 - General Fund Budget Summary 2024/25
- 2 - Council Tax Analysis 2024/25
- 3 - Loughborough Special Expenses 2024/25
- 4 - Council Tax Town and Parish Council Precepts 2024/25
- 5 - HRA Revenue Budget Summary 2024/25
- 6 - General Fund Service Pressures and Savings 2024/25
- 7 - HRA Revenue Service Pressures 2024/25
- 8 - Report of the Chief Financial Officer ('Section 25' report)

## Appendix 1

Actual 2022/23	General Fund Budget Summary	Original Budget 2023/24	Draft Budget 2024/25	Original Budget 2024/25	Movement Draft to Original 2024/25
£000		£000	£000	£000	£000
18,829	Net General Fund Service Expenditure	19,220	21,627	21,627	0
0	Less MRP & Interest & Commercial Reserve	(929)	0	0	0
0	Net Options for Change (Saving)/Pressure		(366)	(366)	0
0	Service Savings (Ongoing)	(417)	(124)	(91)	33
0	Service Savings (Oneoff)	0	(72)	(72)	0
0	Community Grants (Oneoff)	0	100	100	0
0	Service Pressures (Ongoing)	1,931	309	420	111
0	Service Pressures (Oneoff)	579	122	122	0
<b>18,829</b>	Net Service Expenditure	<b>20,383</b>	<b>21,597</b>	<b>21,741</b>	<b>144</b>
85	Revenue Contributions to Capital	0	0	0	0
1,302	EZ LLEP Contribution				0
	MRP Charge	604	611	611	0
280	Interest Paid	230	58	58	0
(1,076)	Less: Interest on Balances	(1,500)	(1,300)	(1,300)	0
<b>19,420</b>	Total Borough Expenditure	<b>19,717</b>	<b>20,965</b>	<b>21,109</b>	<b>144</b>
5	Contribution (from)/to Reinvestment Reserve	500	274	274	0
77	Contribution(from)/to Working Balance	(1,297)	1	1	0
0	Contribution to/(from) business rates pool		(141)	(141)	0
122	Contribution (from)/to Collection Fund	0	0	0	0
(35)	Contribution(from)/ to Capital Plan Reserve	0	(850)	(872)	(22)
200	Contribution(from)/to Commercialisation Reserve	325	26	26	0
(142)	Contribution (from)/to Other Reserves	0	0	0	0
0	Contribution (from)/to Growth Support Fund		0	0	0
<b>19,647</b>	Precept Requirement	<b>19,245</b>	<b>20,274</b>	<b>20,396</b>	<b>122</b>
					0
174	Revenue Support Grant	329	353	350	(3)
6,604	NNDR	6,400	6,800	7,100	300
	Funding Guarantee		3,000	2,474	(526)
7,981	Council Tax Receipts	8,314	8,711	8,634	(76)
1,346	Loughborough Special Levy	1,367	1,410	1,398	(13)
1,631	New Homes Bonus	373	0	404	404
0	Services Grant	0	0	27	27
1,790	General Government Grants	2,462	0	0	0
122	Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	0	0	8	8
<b>19,647</b>	Precept Income	<b>19,245</b>	<b>20,274</b>	<b>20,396</b>	<b>122</b>

Actual 2022/23	Revenue Balances	Final Budget 2023/24	Draft Budget 2024/25	Original Budget 2024/25	Movement Draft to Original 2024/25
£000		£000	£000	£000	£000
(6,567)	<b>Working Balance at 1 April</b>	(6,211)	(6,766)	(6,766)	0
0	Use of reserve committed in 2023/24		1,295	1,295	0
(199)	Transfer (from)/to General Fund	1,297	(1)	(1)	(0)
0	Transfer (from)/to Reinvestment Reserve	500	0	0	0
<b>(6,766)</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(4,414)</b>	<b>(5,472)</b>	<b>(5,472)</b>	<b>(0)</b>
(495)	<b>Reinvestment Reserve Balance at 1 April</b>	(328)	(500)	(500)	0
	Allocated balance	328	418	418	0
(5)	Transfer (from)/to General Fund	(500)	(274)	(274)	0
<b>(500)</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(500)</b>	<b>(356)</b>	<b>(356)</b>	<b>0</b>
(1,909)	<b>Capital Plan Reserve Balance at 1 April</b>	(1,695)	(1,874)	(1,874)	0
	Contribution (from)/to Business Rates Pool		(850)	(872)	
35	Transfer from/(to) General Fund	0	850	872	22
<b>(1,874)</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(1,695)</b>	<b>(1,874)</b>	<b>(1,874)</b>	<b>0</b>
0	<b>Growth Support Fund Balance at 1 April</b>		0	0	0
	Transfer (from)/to General Fund				0
0	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
(3,051)	<b>NDR Deficit COVID Reserve at 1 April</b>	(3,052)	(1,477)	(1,477)	0
1,574	Funding of NDR COVID Deficit	3,052			0
<b>(1,477)</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,477)</b>	<b>(1,477)</b>	<b>0</b>
0	<b>Business Rates Pool Reserve at 1 April</b>	0	0	0	0
0	Monies received in year	0	(1,702)	(1,702)	0
0	Use of reserve 2022/23	0	72	72	0
0	Use of reserve committed in 2023/24	0	135	135	0
0	Use of reserve committed in 2024/25	0	141	141	0
0	Use of reserve committed in 2025/26	0			0
0	Transfer (from)/to Capital Plan Reserve		850	872	
0	Transfer (from)/to General Fund	0	0		0
<b>0</b>	<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(505)</b>	<b>(483)</b>	<b>22</b>
(3,344)	<b>Other Revenue Reserve Balances at 1 April</b>	(3,343)	(3,403)	(3,403)	0
(59)	Transfer (from)/to General Fund	(325)	(26)	(26)	0
<b>(3,403)</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(3,668)</b>	<b>(3,429)</b>	<b>(3,429)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(14,020)</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCES</b>	<b>(10,277)</b>	<b>(13,111)</b>	<b>(13,090)</b>	<b>22</b>



COUNCIL TAX ANALYSIS 2024/25					
2023/24			2024/25		%
59,186.3		<b>TAX BASE (at CBC collection rate)</b>	59,678.6		Change
16,855.2		<b>LOUGHBOROUGH TAX BASE</b>	16,898.4		Per Band D 0.83
£	£ p		£	£ p	%
19,245,129	325.16	TOTAL BUDGET REQUIREMENT	20,395,951	341.76	5.11
(1,367,125)	(23.10)	Less: Loughborough Special Levy	(1,397,836)	(23.42)	1.39
17,878,004	302.06	Less:	18,998,115	318.34	5.39
(373,187)	(6.31)	New Homes Bonus	(404,254)	(6.77)	7.29
(6,400,000)	(108.13)	NNDR	(7,100,000)	(118.97)	10.02
(2,295,397)	(38.78)	Funding Guarantee	(2,473,608)	(41.45)	6.88
(166,753)	(2.82)	Services Grant	(27,319)	(0.46)	(83.69)
(328,767)	(5.55)	Revenue Support Grant	(350,444)	(5.87)	5.77
8,313,900	140.47		8,642,490	144.82	3.10
0	0.00	Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	(8,190)	(0.14)	0.00
<b>8,313,900</b>	<b>140.47</b>	<b>BASIC BOROUGH PRECEPT</b>	<b>8,634,300</b>	<b>144.68</b>	<b>3.00</b>
		Other Precepts			
4,565,965	77.15	Parishes	4,878,460	81.75	5.96
90,286,510	1,525.46	Leicestershire County Council	95,580,088	1,601.58	4.99
4,692,882	79.29	Combined Fire Authority	4,692,882	78.64	(0.82)
16,171,485	273.23	Police & Crime Commissioner for Leics	16,171,485	270.98	(0.82)
115,716,842	1,955.13		121,322,915	2,032.95	3.98
1,367,125	81.11	SPECIAL LEVY (LOUGHBOROUGH)	1,397,836	82.72	1.99
125,397,867	2,118.70	<b>TOTAL REQUIREMENT</b>	131,355,051	2,201.04	3.89
124,030,742	2,095.60	<b>AVERAGE PARISH PRECEPT</b>	129,957,215	2,177.63	3.91
120,831,902	2,099.56	<b>LOUGHBOROUGH PRECEPT</b>	126,476,591	2,178.60	3.76

Leicestershire County Council provisional figure. LCC Cabinet 9th Feb 2024

Police and Fire precepts - awaiting figures as at 22nd Jan 2024

**LOUGHBOROUGH SPECIAL EXPENSES**

Appendix 3 (Table A)

2023/24		2024/25	2023/24 to		
Loughborough Special Expenses £	Service	Loughborough Special Expenses	2024/25 Difference £	% Variance	Note
96,800	Loughborough CCTV	103,100	6,300	6.1%	1
65,500	Community Grants - General / Fearon Hall / Gorse Covert	65,500	0	0.0%	2
38,000	Marios Tinenti Centre / Altogether Place / Community Hubs	39,000	1,000	2.6%	3
6,700	Charnwood Water Toilets	6,600	(100)	-1.5%	4
39,700	Voluntary & Community Sector Dev Officer post (75% LSX)	41,900	2,200	5.3%	5
126,200	Contribution towards Lough Open Spaces Grounds Maintenance	138,300	12,100	8.7%	6
(9,400)	November Fair	(14,200)	(4,800)	33.8%	7
	<u>Parks:</u>				
352,700	Loughborough - including Loughborough in Bloom	371,800	19,100	5.1%	8
72,200	Gorse Covert and Booth Wood	78,300	6,100	7.8%	9
	<u>Sports Grounds:</u>				
117,500	Derby Road	130,800	13,300	10.2%	10
44,800	Lodge Farm	49,900	5,100	10.2%	11
96,600	Nanpantan	104,800	8,200	7.8%	12
18,600	Park Road	15,400	(3,200)	-20.8%	13
24,800	Shelthorpe Golf Course	49,100	24,300	49.5%	14
56,800	Loughborough Cemetery	71,400	14,600	20.4%	15
50,400	Allotments - Loughborough	57,900	7,500	13.0%	16
9,200	Carillon Tower	10,500	1,300	12.4%	17
55,300	Festive Decorations and Illuminations	51,200	(4,100)	-8.0%	18
105,000	Town Centre Management	102,000	(3,000)	-2.9%	19
1,367,400		1,473,300	105,900	7.2%	
	Adjustments from Year 2022/23	(75,464)			
-275	Adjustments from Year 2021/22				
1,367,125	AMENDED SUB TOTAL	1,397,836			
Divided by 16,855.20	Council Tax Base	Divided by 16,898.40			
<u>81.11</u>	Special Council Tax	<u>82.72</u>			

## Analysis of Budget Movement

## Appendix 3 (Table B)

Service	2023/24 £	Employees £	Operating Costs £	NNDR £	MOS Contract £	Enviromental Services Contract £	Support Services £	Income £	2024/25 £
Loughborough CCTV	96,800	(2,100)	(1,100)				8,800	700	103,100
Community Grants - General / Fearon Hall / Gorse Covert	65,500								65,500
Marios Tinenti Centre / Altogether Place / Community Hubs	38,000			1,000					39,000
Charnwood Water Toilets	6,700		(100)						6,600
Voluntary & Community Sector Dev Officer post (75% LSX)	39,700	2,200							41,900
Contribution towards Lough Open Spaces Grounds Maintenance	126,200				12,100				138,300
November Fair	(9,400)						(4,800)		(14,200)
<u>Parks:</u>	-								-
<i>Loughborough - including Loughborough in Bloom</i>	352,700		(10,000)		15,800	6,000	7,300		371,800
<i>Gorse Covert and Booth Wood</i>	72,200				5,600		500		78,300
<u>Sports Grounds:</u>	-								-
<i>Derby Road</i>	117,500				6,300	1,200	1,800	4,000	130,800
<i>Lodge Farm</i>	44,800				1,800	300	1,300	1,700	49,900
<i>Nanpantan</i>	96,600			(200)	2,400	700	4,300	1,000	104,800
<i>Park Road</i>	18,600				400	500	900	(5,000)	15,400
<i>Shelthorpe Golf Course</i>	24,800			(600)	3,700	700	1,300	19,200	49,100
Loughborough Cemetery	56,800	9,000	31,000	2,200	4,800		7,600	(40,000)	71,400
Allotments - Loughborough	50,400				1,100		6,400		57,900
Carillon Tower	9,200	1,500	(1,000)				800		10,500
Festive Decorations and Illuminations	55,300						(4,100)		51,200
Town Centre Management	105,000	3,800			200		(7,000)		102,000
	<b>1,367,400</b>	<b>14,400</b>	<b>18,800</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>54,200</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>25,100</b>	<b>(18,400)</b>	<b>1,473,300</b>

## 2024/2025 Council Tax - Parish Precepts

Parish/ Meeting/ Town Council	Precept Requirement	Council Tax Base	Parish/ Special Requirements at Band B
	£		£
Anstey	392,550	2,683.2	146.30
Barkby / Barkby Thorpe	14,990	162.5	92.25
Barrow-Upon-Soar	266,765	2,577.0	103.52
Beeby	-	39.1	0.00
Birstall	502,112	4,601.6	109.12
Burton-on-the-Wolds, Cotes, & Prestwold	35,000	574.9	60.88
Cossington	17,500	220.1	79.51
East Goscote	72,000	935.2	76.99
Hamilton Lee	-	285.5	0.00
Hathern	50,000	885.1	56.49
Hoton	14,674	147.7	99.35
Mountsorrel	589,631	3,084.1	191.18
Newtown Linford	62,599	535.4	116.92
Queniborough	69,575	1,229.5	56.59
Quorndon	349,284	2,578.7	135.45
Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake	3,500	88.5	39.55
Rearsby	25,972	499.9	51.95
Rothley	209,023	2,348.2	89.01
Seagrave	21,717	284.7	76.28
Shepshed	438,600	5,172.6	84.79
Sileby	281,297	3,064.5	91.79
South Croxton	12,742	134.6	94.67
Stonebow Village	-	73.5	0.00
Swithland	5,500	155.8	35.30
Syston	673,457	4,381.5	153.70
Thrussington	13,500	254.0	53.15
Thurcaston & Cropston	53,379	938.7	56.86
Thurmaston	547,351	2,923.4	187.23
Ulverscroft	-	62.4	0.00
Walton-on-the-Wolds	5,400	132.1	40.88
Wanlip	4,400	86.3	50.98
Woodhouse	97,812	1,005.2	97.31
Wymeswold	48,131	634.7	75.83
	4,878,460	42,780.2	
Loughborough (Special Expenses)	1,397,836	16,898.4	82.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,276,296</b>	<b>59,678.6</b>	
<b>Average</b>			105.17

## Appendix 5

2022/23 Actual	Housing Revenue Account	2023/24 Original Budget	2024/25 Draft Original Budget	2024/25 Final Original Budget	Variance
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	<b>Expenditure</b>				
6,052	Supervision and Management	6,512	7,118	7,216	(98)
7,626	Repairs and Maintenance	7,429	8,385	8,385	0
505	Rents, Rates and Other Charges	291	408	408	0
13	Provision for Bad Debts & Other Charges	118	333	333	0
3,991	Depreciation	3,942	4,278	4,278	0
(331)	Net Revaluation non-current assets increase	0	0	0	0
22	Debt Management Expenses	16	22	22	0
<b>17,878</b>	<b>Expenditure Sub-total</b>	<b>18,308</b>	<b>20,544</b>	<b>20,642</b>	<b>(98)</b>
	<b>Income</b>				
(21,001)	Dwelling Rent Income	(22,711)	(24,582)	(24,582)	0
(398)	Shops, Land and Garages Rent	(402)	(387)	(399)	12
(47)	Warden Service Charges	(49)	(53)	(53)	0
(316)	Central Heating, Cleaning and Communal Charges	(328)	(361)	(336)	(25)
(198)	Leasehold Flat and Shop Service Charges	(160)	(198)	(198)	0
(24)	Hostel Service Charges	(23)	(25)	(25)	0
(8)	Council Tax Recharged	(8)	(8)	(7)	(1)
<b>(21,992)</b>	<b>Income Sub-Total</b>	<b>(23,681)</b>	<b>(25,614)</b>	<b>(25,600)</b>	<b>(14)</b>
<b>(4,114)</b>	<b>Net (income)/Cost of service</b>	<b>(5,373)</b>	<b>(5,070)</b>	<b>(4,958)</b>	<b>(112)</b>
(80)	Transfer from General Fund – Grounds Maintenance	(90)	(97)	(97)	0
2,737	Interest Payable	2,738	2,737	2,738	(1)
(501)	Investment Income	(506)	(517)	(430)	(87)
<b>(1,958)</b>	<b>Net Operating Expenditure/(Income)</b>	<b>(3,231)</b>	<b>(2,947)</b>	<b>(2,747)</b>	<b>(200)</b>
0	Revenue Contribution to Capital	3,231	2,947	2,747	200
(605)	Pension Adjustment	0	0	0	0
18	Accumulated Absence Adjustment	0	0	0	0
331	Reversal of Gain on Revaluation	0	0	0	0
<b>(256)</b>	<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>3,231</b>	<b>2,947</b>	<b>2,747</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>(2,214)</b>	<b>(Surplus)/Deficit for the year</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>2022/23</b>		<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	
<b>Actual</b>	<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Draft Original Budget</b>	<b>Final Original Budget</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>£'000</b>		<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
(606)	HRA Balance at beginning of year	(603)	(598)	(598)	0
(2,214)	(Surplus)/Deficit for the year	0	0	0	0
2,217	Transfer to/(from) Reserves	(1,826)	1	1	0
0	Adjustments to 2023/24 Budget	1,831	0	0	0
<b>(603)</b>	<b>HRA Balance at end of year</b>	<b>(598)</b>	<b>(597)</b>	<b>(597)</b>	<b>0</b>
(14,576)	<b>HRA Financing Fund at beginning of year</b>	(16,793)	(14,967)	(14,967)	0
(2,217)	Transfer (to)/from Reserves	1,826	1	1	0
0	Revenue Contribution to Capital	0	2,869	2,951	(82)
<b>(16,793)</b>	<b>HRA Financing Fund at end of year</b>	<b>(14,967)</b>	<b>(12,097)</b>	<b>(12,015)</b>	<b>(82)</b>
<b>(4,475)</b>	<b>Major Repairs Reserve at end of year</b>	<b>(4,475)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(21,871)</b>	<b>Overall HRA balances at end of the year</b>	<b>(20,040)</b>	<b>(12,694)</b>	<b>(12,612)</b>	<b>(82)</b>

**Table 1 - Inflation**

Head of Service	Service	Account	Amount	Description
Head of Governance and Human Resources	Corporate Management	Professional Fees	7,000	Inflationary increases for professional fees
Head of Governance and Human Resources	Civic Expenses	Mayoral Allowance	500	Mayoral allowance increases in line with salary increases
Head of Transformation, Strategy and Performance	HR	Software Annual Charges	7,000	Inflationary increases for software charges
Head of Transformation, Strategy and Performance	HR	Leicester County Council	11,000	SLA HR increases in line with salary increases
Head of Governance and Human Resources	Audit & Risk	Consultant Fees	2,600	SLA H&S Consultant with LCC increases in line with salary increases
Head of Governance and Human Resources	Audit & Risk	Internal Auditors	10,000	SLA NWLDC increases in line with salary increases
Head of Governance and Human Resources	Legal Services	Software Annual Charges	7,300	Inflationary increases for software charges
Head of Governance and Human Resources	Register of Electors	Software Annual Charges	2,000	Inflationary increases for software charges
Head of Governance and Human Resources	Democratic Svs	Member Allowance	18,700	Members allowances increases in line with salary increases
Head of Governance and Human Resources	Emergency Planning	Emergency Planning	1,700	Local Resilience Forum (salary time) increases in line with salaries
Customer Experience	ICS	Software Annual Charges	18,500	5% inflationary increase to Annual Software charges
Customer Experience	ICS	Azure Overage Costs	28,000	5% inflationary increase to Azure Overage in costs
Head of Strategic Housing	Private Sector Alarm System	Oadby and Wigston BC Contract Income	(400)	Additional income through charge rises
Head of Strategic Housing	Private Sector Alarm System	Private Lifeline Charges	(16,100)	Additional income through charge rises
<b>Total Inflation Pressure</b>			<b>90,800</b>	

**Table 2 - Ongoing Pressures**

Head of Service	Service	Account	Amount	Description
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Beehive Lane Multi Storey Car Park	Season Tickets-Car Park	11,400	Following COVID and how lifestyles have changed since
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Southfields Car Parks	Staff Car Parking Charges	9,000	Following COVID and how lifestyles have changed since
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Southfields Car Parks	Capita Car Park Charges	2,000	Following COVID and how lifestyles have changed since
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Granby Street Shoppers Car Park	Parking Penalty/Fine	1,000	Following COVID and how lifestyles have changed since
Head of Contracts: Leisure,Waste and Environment	Refuse Collection	Environmental Services Variation	30,000	Contract variation to comply with new EA Legislation on POPs (soft furnishing)
Head of Planning and Growth	Building Control	Employee Costs	10,500	BC Trainee
Head of Finance	Managed Savings	Employee Costs	100,000	Additional salary provision
Head of Finance	External Financial Overheads	Bank Charges	40,000	Increasing charges due to the way CBC collect receipts
Head of Contracts: Leisure,Waste and Environment	Leisure Services		216,000	
<b>Total Ongoing Pressures</b>			<b>419,900</b>	

**Table 3 - One-Off Pressures**

Head of Service	Service	Account	Amount	Description
Head of Contracts: Leisure,Waste and Environment	Loughborough Cemetery	Sub contractors	31,000	Memorial Testing
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Beehive Lane Multi Storey Car Park	Car Parks charges	50,800	Pending Car Park Review Strategy
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Browns Lane (Leisure Centre) Car Park	Car Parks charges	6,400	Pending Car Park Review Strategy
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Southfields Car Parks	Car Parks charges	3,800	Pending Car Park Review Strategy
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Granby Street Shoppers Car Park	Car Parks charges	16,800	Pending Car Park Review Strategy
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Southfields Extension Car Park	Car Parks charges	13,500	Pending Car Park Review Strategy
<b>Total One-Off Pressures</b>			<b>122,300</b>	

**Table 4 - Ongoing Savings**

Head of Service	Service	Account	Amount	Description
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety	Street Management Team	LCC Reimbursement	(22,500)	Net increase for LCC street management reimbursement
Head of Contracts: Leisure,Waste and Environment	Loughborough Cemetery	fees	(31,000)	Cemetery income based on current figures
Head of Assets and Property	Southfields Offices	Southfields Office Rent	(3,500)	Increase in floor space at Southfields from Oct23 - Nov25
Director Commercial and Economic Development	Market Street Commercial Property	Commercial Properties Rent	(34,200)	Tenancy agreed from 25/03/2024
<b>Total Ongoing Savings</b>			<b>(91,200)</b>	

**Table 5 - One-Off Savings**

Head of Service	Service	Account	Amount	Description
Head of Strategic Housing	Housing Standards Licensing Scheme	Housing Standards Licences (Metastreet)	(51,700)	Licence Fee income relating to Housing Standards Licence Scheme
Head of Strategic Housing	Head of Strategic Housing	Dept Communities and Local Government	(11,100)	Additional grant to cover salaries
Head of Strategic Housing	Housing Standards	Dept Communities and Local Government	(8,800)	Additional grant to cover salaries
<b>Total One-Off Savings</b>			<b>(71,600)</b>	

Table 1 - HRA Inflation

Service	Account	Amount	Description
Responsive Repairs	HRA - General Repairs	326,300	Materials, deliveries, labour and contractor inflationary cost increases.
Tenancy & Estate Management	Contract Cleaning	18,000	Inflationary costs recovered by a higher service charge.
Housing Income Team	Software Annual Charges	19,300	For software covering rental analytics which supports the identification of rent arrears cases that income officers need to focus on. It was introduced in 2020 and rent collection and arrears performance has improved year on year since.
		<b>363,600</b>	

Table 2 - HRA Pressures Ongoing

Service	Account	Amount	Description
Responsive Repairs	Door Entry Maintenance	15,000	Demand led service which is expected to increase.
Responsive Repairs	Legal Costs / Court Fees	200,000	Disrepair costs rapidly increasing due to Barrister charges. Nationally, there has been an increase in disrepair claims.
Responsive Repairs / Capital Team	Salaries	129,900	Three additional resident liaison officers are needed to both prevent and support the response to complaints and improve the customer experience around repairs. The context is a national increase in housing repairs complaints of around 78%, and a relatively new requirement under the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code to respond to each complaint formally in writing.
Housing Income Team	Salaries	43,300	To make permanent a temporary post - Universal credit Officer. This post was introduced several years ago to support tenants to transfer on to and claim Universal Credit successfully and therefore to sustain rental income and prevent evictions. The government roll out of Universal Credit has been intermittent, however continues. The post has been resourced on an annual basis from underspends, with the duration of the post each year. This pressure clarifies the correct budget for the continuation of the post.
Tenancy & Estate Management	Estate Maintenance	98,600	Declassification of properties designated for allocation to people aged 45 years +
Tenancy & Estate Management	Estate Maintenance	38,100	Demand led service - more items are being discarded in communal areas at Council accommodation. The Council must keep these areas clear to comply with its fire safety duties.
Business Support	Salaries	12,600	To strengthen the resilience of the Leaseholder service. Spend to save.
		<b>537,500</b>	
	<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>901,100</b>	



**Report of the Chief Financial Officer ('Section 25' report)**

The Local Government Act 2003 (Section 25) requires that when a local authority is agreeing its annual budget and precept, the Chief Finance Officer must report to it on the following matters:

- The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations
- The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The authority must have due regard to the report when making decisions on the budget and precept.

The Chief Finance Officer for the Borough Council is Simon Jackson (Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts).

In expressing his opinion, the Chief Finance Officer has considered the financial management arrangements that are in place, the budget assumptions, the overall financial and economic environment, the financial risks facing the Council, the level of reserves, and its overall financial standing.

The Chief Finance Officer considers that the Council has robust financial management arrangements. This can be evidenced by the Council's consistent record in preparing the statutory financial statements in line with the required statutory timetable and receipt of unqualified audit reports from the external auditor. Further detail of the financial and wider Council governance arrangements are set out in the Annual Governance Statement which is presented alongside the latest audited financial statements for 2022/23.

The assumptions which underpin the budget were developed through a detailed iterative process involving officers and members representing service areas across the Council. The following may be noted:

- Business rate retention – this is a complex area and funding can be volatile with small changes within detailed assumptions and calculations creating material differences to the funding released; however, the Council works closely with its professional advisers and has developed a sophisticated business rate retention model and the resultant estimates are considered robust
- Income and savings targets incorporated into the budget represent a prudent assessment of a portfolio of realistic options for income and savings developed through the budget process, allowing for implementation time and optimism bias
- Of the £1.9m Leicestershire business rates pool money due to the Council, allocated between revenue and capital budgets in line with the agreement between member authorities, some £1.3m has already been received, whilst the balance due is considered unlikely to differ materially from the projected £0.6m

The overall financial and economic environment, and the outlook for future government funding (2025/26 and beyond) remains difficult and uncertain, and there seems little doubt that careful management of the Council's finances will be required in the medium term.

The key financial risks to the Council remains the future level of government funding combined with the persistent challenge of costs increasing faster than income. There are also specific financial risks in service areas such as homelessness, housing benefit losses associated with supported living accommodation and the as yet unknown costs associated with the implementation of the Environment Act 2021.

In recent months a number of Councils have been required to issue 'Section 114' notices. In most of these cases to date there have been specific circumstances beyond the general funding pressures on the sector. Where district councils have run into difficulties this has usually been associated with high levels of general fund debt which has become increasingly expensive to service as interest rates have risen. It is worth noting that the Council's general fund debt is just £2m (arising from a longstanding loan taken out in 1984), an amount which is due for repayment in June 2024. High indebtedness is therefore NOT a risk for this Council.

Further details are set out with the Medium Term Financial Outlook 2024 - 2027 (MTFO) presented at the Council meeting in February 2024, alongside this final budget report.

Historically, the minimum appropriate general funding working balance has been assessed by the Chief Financial (s151) Officer as equating to around six weeks of net general fund expenditure, or £2.5m. This is being reviewed as part of the MTFO. The budget for 2024/25 projects that the working balance at 31 March 2025 will be £5.5m. Notwithstanding future uncertainty, this level of reserve can be considered as adequate.

Simon Jackson

February 2024

## CABINET - THURSDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2024

### Report of the Director Finance, Governance and Contracts Lead Member: Executive Member for Finance, Customer & Support Services, Revenues and Benefits

#### Part A

#### NEW CAPITAL PLAN 2024-25 TO 2026-27)

#### Purpose of Report

To consider a new three year Capital Plan for the period 2024-25 to 2026-27.

#### Recommendation

That Cabinet endorses the new three year Capital Plan 2024-25 to 2026-27 for the General Fund and HRA schemes at Appendix 1, for recommendation to Council on 26th February 2024.

#### Reason

So that the Plan becomes the basis for capital spending by the Council for the period.

#### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Council's Capital Plan is an integral element of all policies.

A draft of the Plan was considered by the Cabinet on 14th December 2023 and endorsed for the purposes of consultation.

#### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions

The Plan will be submitted to Council on 26th February 2024 for approval. If approved, it will come into effect on 1st April 2024. Any subsequent changes to the Plan will be considered by Cabinet, and Council if necessary, as part of the capital plan amendment process.

#### Report Implications

#### ***Financial Implications***

None related to the recommendation in this report. However, if the Plan is approved by Council, there will be financial implications for the Council as set out in Part B of this report. Overall, the Capital Plan will be fully funded through the use of revenue and capital resources.

#### ***Risk Management***

None related to the recommendation in this report. However, if the Plan is approved by Council, there will be associated risks as set out in Part B of this report.

### ***Equality and Diversity***

None related to the recommendation in this report. Issues affecting particular schemes will be considered as part of those schemes' formal appraisals.

### **Climate Change and Carbon Impact**

None related to the recommendation in this report. Issues affecting particular schemes will be considered as part of those schemes' formal appraisals.

### **Crime and Disorder**

None related to the recommendation in this report. Issues affecting particular schemes will be considered as part of those schemes' formal appraisals.

### **Wards Affected**

All wards.

### **Publicity Arrangements**

Not applicable.

### **Consultations**

Consultation was undertaken on the draft Plan with key partners, including Towns and Parishes and via the Budget Scrutiny Panel

### **Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Caring for the Environment	Yes
Healthy Communities	Yes
A Thriving Economy	Yes
Your Council	Yes

Key Decision: Y

*Date included on Forward Plan* 10/01/2024

Background Papers: None

Officer to contact: Simon Jackson  
Director Finance, Governance and Contracts  
[simon.jackson@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:simon.jackson@charnwood.gov.uk)

Neil Whittall  
Acting Head of Finance  
[neil.whittall@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:neil.whittall@charnwood.gov.uk)

## Part B

### Background

1. It may be noted that no changes have been made to the proposed 2024 – 2027 Capital Plan since the draft Plan was submitted for consultation at the Cabinet meeting of 14 December 2023. The following paragraphs replicate the text in that report.
2. The Council operates the Capital Plan on a three-year basis to reflect the longer-term nature of capital expenditure and in accordance with best practice. Heads of Service held discussions with their Lead Members and Directors before submitting Capital Appraisals to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for initial appraisal. These appraisal forms cover areas such as enhancements of an existing asset, planned improvements to existing assets and scheme affordability. Schemes are categorised as either Live, Provisional, Major or Third-Party. Live schemes are project managed by Charnwood Borough Council with relatively known costings and timescales, Provisional schemes are committed in principal but with no known costings and timescales, Major schemes are separately categorised for presentational purposes to avoid dilution of performance alongside more 'business as usual' schemes (although no new schemes are categorised as such). Third-Party schemes are fully funded by external resources.
2. New schemes have been originated either by Members, in line with manifesto commitments, or by senior officers responsible for the maintenance and upgrade of existing Council assets.
3. New schemes have been reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, with informal approval from relevant Lead Members prior to schemes being put forward for consultation. Following this appraisal process a New Draft Capital Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27 was produced for the General Fund and HRA as set out at Appendix 1.
4. Notable schemes coming forward in this plan for approval are:
  - Housing*
    - a. A 'warm homes' fund of £0.25m to be created for Council tenants (HRA project)
    - b. Additional funding of over £2m to be allocated within the HRA to purchase 'off plan' homes from developers to add to our housing stock
  - Climate change*
    - c. Delivery support for carbon neutral projects - £0.2m to be set aside for additional resource to facilitate delivery of the Council's climate change agenda
    - d. Solar array – £0.25m to be allocated for a feasibility study re the creation of a solar array. A solar array has various practical challenges, including that of connectivity to the National Grid, but the feasibility study will investigate in detail whether such challenges can be overcome and will also look at other options for solar power related to existing Council assets.

5. It should be noted that only limited information is available at present on many schemes, and the costings are presented on a 'best estimate' basis. Firm quotations or tender prices have not been obtained in most cases, but in any event would need updating as and when approval for the new Capital Plan is achieved.

New Draft Capital Plan 2024/25 to 2026/27

6. The tables below show a summary of the new schemes, split between General Fund and Housing Revenue Account schemes, and the anticipated funding positions.

**Table 1 – GENERAL FUND**

	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b><u>General Fund New 3 Year Plan</u></b>				
<b>Total Gross Cost of Schemes</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>1,659</b>	<b>4,386</b>
External Funding	99	720	1,127	1,946
CBC Capital Receipts	927	981	532	2,440
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>1,659</b>	<b>4,386</b>

7. Table 1 shows total proposed schemes of £4.4m requiring council capital receipts funding of £2.4m, and external funding of £1.9m. As at 31 March 2027 there will be approximately £11.4m Usable Capital Receipts estimated in balances, therefore the draft 3-year Capital plan is affordable from current resources. This assumes that there are no major asset disposals, apart from council house sales, during the next three years of the plan.
8. Anticipated External Funding is in respect of grants and capital contributions which are expected over the next three years. It should be noted that the grants are scheme specific and cannot be used to fund other schemes.
9. In addition to the Council's Usable Capital Receipts, the Council also maintains a Capital Plan Reserve which is available to support either Capital or Revenue one-off expenditure. This fund will be supplemented by Business Rate Pool receipts and will be used to fund projects which can be viewed as having 'regeneration' or 'economic development' characteristics.

**Table 2 – HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b><u>Housing Revenue Account</u></b>				
<b>Total Gross Cost HRA Schemes</b>	<b>6,210</b>	<b>12,528</b>	<b>10,829</b>	<b>29,567</b>
Capital Receipts	0	449	449	898
Revenue Contribution to Capital Major Repairs Reserve/HRA Finance Fund	2,947	2,947	2,947	8,841
	3,263	9,132	7,433	19,828
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>6,210</b>	<b>12,528</b>	<b>10,829</b>	<b>29,567</b>

10. Appendix 1 shows all the new HRA schemes for the capital plan period.
11. The Major Repairs Reserve, or equivalent, effectively represents the amount set aside for depreciation each year and this becomes a cash amount that will be spent on capital works. The draft Housing Revenue Account report shows that in 2024/25 the depreciation budget is £4,278k and the RCCO budget is £2,947k. It can be reasonably assumed that these levels will continue for 2025/26 and 2026/27 so the plan is fully funded.
12. The level of capital expenditure will be set to ensure that the housing stock is kept in good repair and at a level that allows the Council to service the £79.19m borrowing that it undertook to pay the government in March 2012. Between 2024/25 and 2026/27, £5m of this borrowing is due to be repaid or refinanced as the debts taken out in 2012 reach maturity. The £1m maturing in 2024/25 is budgeted to be paid in full from the Major Repairs Reserve, whilst decisions on the other loans maturing over this three-year period will be based on the impact of actual spend on the level of HRA reserves and the Council's Treasury Management policy and interest rates at that time. As such, the HRA Capital Plan will be adequately funded over the three years.
13. Further detail of schemes within the new Capital Plan are set out at Appendix 1.
14. It should be noted that the current (2022/23 – 2024/25) Capital Plan is still extant. Once approved the new Capital Plan (2024/25 – 2026/27) will be merged with the current Capital Plan (as may be amended via the usual Capital Plan amendment and Outturn reports) for the 2024/25 financial year.

Prudential Code

15. To comply with the Prudential Code capital expenditure must be affordable in the long term, and therefore sustainable, which requires that the decision-making process must be prudent. The revenue impact of the capital expenditure must be contained within the forward plans of the authority which provides a level of Council Tax that the Council considers acceptable. Implementation of the proposed General Fund Capital Plan would result in net

revenue savings and therefore is in line with the proposed Revenue Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

16. Consideration has been given to undertaking prudential borrowing to fund General Fund capital expenditure. However, this would incur additional revenue costs for both interest and repayments which the council would have to be able to fund as well as the savings programme which is required to continue to fund services in the light of reduced central government funding. In view of this and as set out in the current Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Council does not intend to undertake any such material borrowing in the medium term.

#### Risk Management.

17. The risks associated with any future decision to approve the proposed Capital Plan and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Insufficient funding	Remote (1)	Major (4)	Low (4)	The funding of the Capital Plan is regularly monitored, and any apparent shortfalls are brought to the attention of Cabinet with suggested solutions
General Risks associated with capital expenditure	Unlikely (2)	Serious (3)	Moderate (6)	The Capital Plan is controlled through Capital Monitoring & Senior Leader Team and Cabinet.

#### Appendices

A list of Capital Plan schemes is attached at Appendix 1.



	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Scheme Details	New Plan £	New Plan £	New Plan £
<b>SUMMARY OF CAPITAL PLAN</b>			
<u>Live Schemes</u>			
Commercial & Economic Development	210,000	65,000	70,000
Finance, Governance & Contracts	100,000	0	0
Customer Experience	345,000	450,000	220,000
Housing & Wellbeing - General Fund	148,700	833,200	1,240,000
Housing & Wellbeing - HRA	5,680,100	9,905,200	9,206,200
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	<b>6,483,800</b>	<b>11,253,400</b>	<b>10,736,200</b>
<u>Provisional Schemes</u>			
Commercial & Economic Development	50,000	200,000	0
Finance, Governance & Contracts	172,000	152,500	128,500
Housing & Wellbeing - HRA	530,000	2,623,000	1,623,000
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>	<b>752,000</b>	<b>2,975,500</b>	<b>1,751,500</b>
<b>GF Total</b>	<b>1,025,700</b>	<b>1,700,700</b>	<b>1,658,500</b>
<b>HRA Total</b>	<b>6,210,100</b>	<b>12,528,200</b>	<b>10,829,200</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7,235,800</b>	<b>14,228,900</b>	<b>12,487,700</b>
<b>Commercial &amp; Economic Development</b>			
<u>Live Schemes</u>			
CG Replacement Loughborough Christmas Lights	150,000	0	0
JH Delivery Support - Carbon Neutral Projects	60,000	65,000	70,000
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	<b>210,000</b>	<b>65,000</b>	<b>70,000</b>
<u>Provisional Schemes</u>			
JH Solar Farm - Feasibility to delivery	50,000	200,000	0
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Commercial &amp; Economic Development - Total</b>	<b>260,000</b>	<b>265,000</b>	<b>70,000</b>
<b>Finance, Governance &amp; Contracts</b>			
<u>Live Schemes</u>			
MB Sports Pavilion - Nanpantan Sports Grounds	100,000	0	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<u>Provisional Schemes</u>			
MB (Wheelchair) Accessible Parks Programme	50,000	100,000	50,000
MB Green Spaces Refurbishment Programme	122,000	52,500	78,500
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>	<b>172,000</b>	<b>152,500</b>	<b>128,500</b>

Scheme Details	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	New Plan £	New Plan £	New Plan £
<b>Finance, Governance &amp; Contracts - Total</b>	<b>272,000</b>	<b>152,500</b>	<b>128,500</b>
<b>Customer Experience</b>			
<b><u>Live Schemes</u></b>			
AK Z085 Hardware Replacement Programme	45,000	90,000	90,000
AK Z354 Infrastructure Development	0	30,000	30,000
KB Revenue and Benefits - IT Systems	250,000	0	0
GH Z744 Beehive Lane Car Park Improvements and refurbishment scheme	50,000	100,000	100,000
GH Loughborough Parking Equipment Upgrade	0	150,000	0
GH Car Parks Pay Machines	0	80,000	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	<b>345,000</b>	<b>450,000</b>	<b>220,000</b>
<b>Customer Experience - Total</b>	<b>345,000</b>	<b>450,000</b>	<b>220,000</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Wellbeing - General Fund</b>			
<b><u>Live Schemes</u></b>			
VG Z348 Charnwood Community Facilities Grants	0	50,000	50,000
VG Z427 Members Grants - Members Choice	50,000	63,000	63,000
KM Z210 Disabled Facilities Grants - Block Sum	98,700	720,200	1,127,000
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	<b>148,700</b>	<b>833,200</b>	<b>1,240,000</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Wellbeing - General Fund - Total</b>	<b>148,700</b>	<b>833,200</b>	<b>1,240,000</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Wellbeing - HRA</b>			
<b><u>Live Schemes</u></b>			
NG Z761 Major Adaptations	0	450,000	450,000
DB Z301 Minor Adaptations	0	50,000	50,000
AM Z302 Stairlifts	0	60,000	60,000
DB Z762 Major Void Works	0	280,000	280,000
<b><u>Compliance</u></b>			
AM Z434 Asbestos Removal	140,000	200,000	200,000
NG Z771 Communal Area Improvements	0	75,200	75,200
AM Z742 Communal Area Electrical Upgrades	0	68,000	68,000
NG Z773 Fire Safety Works	0	50,000	50,000
<b><u>Stock Maximisation</u></b>			
NG Z375 Garages	100,000	10,000	10,000
<b><u>Decent Homes</u></b>			
NG Z763 Kitchens	1,681,600	1,794,100	1,794,100
NG Z764 Bathrooms	2,225,900	1,876,800	1,876,800
AM Z765 Electrical Upgrades	0	100,000	100,000
NG Z766 Window Replacement	121,200	955,000	245,000
AM Z767 Central Heating & Boiler Installation	460,400	1,199,000	1,446,000
DB Z743 Sheltered Housing Improvements	190,000	190,000	190,000

			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
<b>Scheme Details</b>			<b>New Plan</b>	<b>New Plan</b>	<b>New Plan</b>
			£	£	£
NG	Z768	Door Replacement	0	700,000	700,000
NG	Z769	Roofing Works	350,000	600,000	600,000
NG		Insulation	250,000	50,000	50,000
NG	Z770	Major Structural Works	0	250,000	250,000
<b>General Capital Works</b>					
NG	Z776	Estate and External Works	15,000	200,000	200,000
BD	Z857	Housing Capital Technical Costs	0	438,100	438,100
NG	Z378	Door Entry Systems	46,000	159,000	73,000
PO		Create a 'Warm Homes' Fund - HRA tenants	100,000	150,000	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>			<b>5,680,100</b>	<b>9,905,200</b>	<b>9,206,200</b>
<b>Provisional Schemes</b>					
KM	Z760	Acquisition of Affordable Housing to meet housing need	0	1,123,000	1,123,000
SR		Replacement of the Lifeline Priority Notification Centre ('PNC')	30,000	0	0
PO		Create fund to purchase 'Off Development' properties	500,000	1,500,000	500,000
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>			<b>530,000</b>	<b>2,623,000</b>	<b>1,623,000</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Wellbeing - HRA - Total</b>			<b>6,210,100</b>	<b>12,528,200</b>	<b>10,829,200</b>

## CABINET – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Report of the Head of Finance Lead Member: Cllr Ashcroft

#### Part A

#### CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT

##### Purpose of the Report

This report requests Cabinet to consider and approve changes to the 2023-2026 Capital Plan and its financing.

##### Recommendations

1. That the current Capital Plan for 2023/24-2025/26, as amended by the changes shown in Appendix 1, in the budgeted sum of £52,853,600, be approved.
2. To note additional decisions taken by Officers, in relation to new S106 schemes added to the Capital Programme, included in Appendix 1.
3. To note amendments to the Capital Programme since 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 minute 53.

##### 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 ensure members are aware of additional decisions taken by Officers, in relation to new S106 schemes added to the Capital Programme, also included in Appendix 1.
3. To ensure members are aware of amendments to the Capital Programme since Cabinet 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 minute 53.

##### 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 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023 minute 58.

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

This report will be available for scrutiny by the Scrutiny Commission in accordance with usual arrangements.

## 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 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:

Neil Whittall  
Acting Head of Finance  
01509 632515  
[Neil.whittall@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Neil.whittall@charnwood.gov.uk)

## Part B

### Background – Capital Plan

1. The Capital plan amendment report provides a breakdown of the new/amended schemes for 2023/24 budgets, and detailed budgets are set out in Appendix 1 for 2023/24 to 2025/26.
2. The net effects of these changes on the 2023/24 Capital Plan are as follows:

<b>2023/24 Capital Plan</b>	<b>£</b>
Approved 2023/24 Capital Plan	38,920,400
Net new/amended schemes	51,700
<b>Amended 2023/24 Capital Plan</b>	<b>38,972,100</b>

<b>Funded by:</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>General Fund:</b>	
External Borrowing	15,000,000
Grants, S106 Contributions and Revenue	5,505,600
Contributions from Capital Plan Reserve	167,400
Contributions from Reinvestment Reserve	37,700
Contributions from Capital Receipts	4,492,400
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>25,203,100</b>
<b>HRA:</b>	
S106 Contributions	1,200
MRA or equivalent	12,222,800
Contributions from Capital Receipts	1,545,000
<b>Total HRA</b>	<b>13,769,000</b>
<b>Total Funding for 2023/24</b>	<b>38,972,100</b>

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

4

<b>New/Amended Schemes</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Syston Town Council – Central Park, Syston – new Community Hub building</b>	<b>£59,500</b>
To add a new scheme in 2024/25 for the provision of youth and adult recreation facilities – fully funded by S106 contributions.	
<b>Mountsorrel Parish Council – Halstead Road Park – improve play provision</b>	<b>£51,700</b>

To add a new scheme in 2023/24 for the provision of open space and children’s play facilities – fully funded by S106 contributions.	
---	--

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 2023/24-2025/26

**CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT 2023/24**

**Appendix 1**

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Capital Plan Amendment Report - 14th December 2023- Minute 53	38,920,400	13,415,200	406,800
<u>Delegated Decision (DD219 2023) - 21st December 2023</u> Syston Town Council - Central Park , Syston - new community hub building - fully funded by S106 contribution		59,500	
<u>Delegated Decision (DD113 2023) - 14th June 2023</u> Mountsorrel Parish Council - improve play provision - Halstead Road Park, Mountsorrel - fully funded by S106 contribution	51,700		
<b>Update Report - Total</b>	<b>38,972,100</b>	<b>13,474,700</b>	<b>406,800</b>
<b>Total of 3 Year Capital Plan (2022/23 to 2024/25)</b>			<b>52,853,600</b>



**CAPITAL PLAN 2023/24 & 2024/25**

Appendix 2

Scheme Details	2023/24			2024/25	2025/26
	Current Budget £	Actual Spend 31/12/23 £	Balance £	Current Budget £	Current Budget £
<b>SUMMARY OF CAPITAL PLAN</b>					
<u>Live Schemes</u>					
Chief Executive	0	0	0	0	0
Commercial & Economic Development	3,270,500	497,244	2,773,256	1,269,200	0
Finance, Governance & Contracts	2,317,700	149,697	2,168,003	73,600	0
Customer Experience	2,269,700	1,388,770	880,930	970,000	0
Housing & Wellbeing - General Fund	63,000	32,471	30,529	63,000	0
Housing & Wellbeing - HRA	13,769,000	3,323,849	10,445,151	7,690,000	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	<b>21,689,900</b>	<b>5,392,031</b>	<b>16,297,869</b>	<b>10,065,800</b>	<b>0</b>
<u>Provisional Schemes</u>					
Chief Executive	0	0	0	0	0
Commercial & Economic Development	5,000,000	0	5,000,000	0	0
Finance, Governance & Contracts	10,000,000	4,161,423	5,838,577	0	0
Customer Experience	0	0	0	0	0
Housing & Wellbeing - General Fund	87,000	0	87,000	87,000	0
Housing & Wellbeing - HRA	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>	<b>15,087,000</b>	<b>4,161,423</b>	<b>10,925,577</b>	<b>87,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<u>Third Party Schemes</u>					
Chief Executive	0	0	0	0	0
Commercial & Economic Development	0	0	0	0	0
Finance, Governance & Contracts	878,500	187,520	690,980	972,600	0
Customer Experience	0	0	0	0	0
Housing & Wellbeing - General Fund	1,316,700	640,130	676,570	2,349,300	406,800
Housing & Wellbeing - HRA	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub-total Third Party Schemes</b>	<b>2,195,200</b>	<b>827,650</b>	<b>1,367,550</b>	<b>3,321,900</b>	<b>406,800</b>
GF Total	25,203,100	7,057,255	18,145,845	5,784,700	406,800
HRA Total	13,769,000	3,323,849	10,445,151	7,690,000	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>38,972,100</b>	<b>10,381,104</b>	<b>28,590,996</b>	<b>13,474,700</b>	<b>406,800</b>
<u>Chief Executive</u>					
<u>Live Schemes</u>					
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Chief Executive - Total</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Commercial &amp; Economic Development</u>					
<u>Live Schemes</u>					
JH Z832 Feasibility Work - New Council Offices	138,400	83,892	54,508	0	0
CG Z861 Town Deal - Living Loughborough	1,568,000	249,947	1,318,053	1,149,200	0
IB Z310 Planned Building Improvements - Block Sum	655,000	25,488	629,512	120,000	0
JH Z796 Carbon Neutral Action Fund - Block Sum	909,100	137,917	771,183	0	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>	<b>3,270,500</b>	<b>497,244</b>	<b>2,773,256</b>	<b>1,269,200</b>	<b>0</b>
<u>Provisional Schemes</u>					
JH Z817 Regeneration Projects	5,000,000	0	5,000,000	0	0
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<u>Third Party Schemes</u>					
<b>Sub-total Third Party Schemes</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Commercial &amp; Economic Development - Total</b>	<b>8,270,500</b>	<b>497,244</b>	<b>7,773,256</b>	<b>1,269,200</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Finance, Governance &amp; Contracts</b>							
<b><u>Live Schemes</u></b>							
MB	Z484	Closed Churchyard Wall	8,100	4,630	3,470	0	0
MB	Z757	Town Hall Roof Upgrade	17,200	0	17,200	0	0
MB	Z784	Loughborough Cemetery - New Burial Provision	28,000	0	28,000	0	0
MB	Z791	Shelthorpe Golf Course - Fencing	77,100	0	77,100	0	0
MB	Z798	Town Hall - Victoria Room - Air Handling	23,500	0	23,500	0	0
MB	Z799	Town Hall - additional seating	140,000	0	140,000	0	0
MB	Z881	Loughborough Town Hall - new website commissioning	15,000	0	15,000	0	0
MB	Z802	Allotment Improvements	10,000	3,767	6,233	0	0
MB	Z805	Queens Park Aviary Improvements	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
MB	Z806	Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan	36,300	8,078	28,222	0	0
LT	Z810	Unit4 Agresso Upgrade	32,800	0	32,800	0	0
AW	Z870	Audio Visual Equipment - Loughborough Town Hall	75,000	0	75,000	0	0
MB	Z824	Shepshed Public Open Space Enhancement Queens Park - Improvements to Childrens Play Provision & Adult	61,400	0	61,400	0	0
MB	Z828	Recreation Provision	203,200	0	203,200	0	0
MB	Z831	Loughborough Playground Improvement Plan	100,000	0	100,000	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	45,200	6,042	39,158	0	0
MB	Z862	Leisure Centre barrier and entry control	50,000	0	50,000	0	0
MB	Z873	Town Deal - Lanes and Links	509,400	61,934	447,466	73,600	0
MB	Z875	Town Hall - Main Auditorium Air Handling Equipment	90,000	65,246	24,754	0	0
MB	Z878	Refuse Collection Vehicles	440,000	0	440,000	0	0
MB	Z882	Carillon Tower - Re-imaging Loughborough's Iconic Tower	249,300	0	249,300	0	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>			<b>2,317,700</b>	<b>149,697</b>	<b>2,168,003</b>	<b>73,600</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Provisional Schemes</u></b>							
SJ	Z818	Enterprise Zone	10,000,000	4,161,423	5,838,577	0	0
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>			<b>10,000,000</b>	<b>4,161,423</b>	<b>5,838,577</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b><u>Third Party Schemes</u></b>							
MB	Z500	Birstall Cedars Academy all weather pitch	50,000	0	50,000	0	0
JT	Z697	Bell Foundry Pocket Park - Phase 1 & 2	32,200	24,903	7,297	0	0
MB	Z699	Shelthorpe Public Open Space Enhancements	111,700	0	111,700	0	0
MB	Z778	Syston Community Garden	21,600	0	21,600	0	0
MB	Z825	Loughborough Police Station Centre - Front Enquiry Desk	98,800	0	98,800	0	0
MB	Z830	Holt Drive PA Enhancements	11,000	0	11,000	0	0
MB	Z850	Sileby Parish Council - improvement and provision of additional youth/adult facilities at Sileby Memorial Park	174,600	152,926	21,674	0	0
MB	Z860	Radmoor Road Public Open Space Enhancements	53,600	0	53,600	0	0
MB	Z864	Hathern Village Hall - additional community space	3,900	0	3,900	0	0
MB	Z874	Barrow Parish Council - Youth/Adult Recreation - new facilities at Willow Road Park, Barrow Upon Soar	41,500	0	41,500	0	0
MB	Z876	Anstey Parish Council - Jubilee Hall, Staddon Rd, Anstey - extension & redevelopment	90,900	0	90,900	0	0
RB	Z877	Hathern Community Woodland Project - planting and enhancement	44,200	0	44,200	0	0
MB	Z879	Sileby Memorial Park	83,100	0	83,100	390,000	0
MB	Z880	Halstead Road Sport & Recreation Scheme, Mountsorrel	0	0	0	523,100	0
MB	Z846	Queniborough Parish Council - play equipment - King George V Playing Field	9,700	9,691	9	0	0
MB	Z883	Syston Town Council - Central Park , Syston - new community hub building	0	0	0	59,500	0
MB	Z884	Mountsorrel Parish Council - improve play provision - Halstead Road Park, Mountsorrel	51,700	0	51,700	0	0
<b>Sub-total Third Party Schemes</b>			<b>878,500</b>	<b>187,520</b>	<b>690,980</b>	<b>972,600</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Finance, Governance &amp; Contracts - Total</b>			<b>13,196,200</b>	<b>4,498,640</b>	<b>8,697,560</b>	<b>1,046,200</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Customer Experience</u></b>							
<b><u>Live Schemes</u></b>							
AK	Z085	Hardware Replacement Programme	90,000	87,832	2,168	45,000	0
AK	Z354	Infrastructure Development	50,000	13,419	36,581	30,000	0
RB	Z787	Bedford Square Gateway	462,800	22,996	439,804	700,000	0
AK	Z812	Server Redesign	70,000	39,733	30,267	0	0
AK	Z813	Cloud Implementation	60,000	57,716	2,284	0	0
AK	Z816	Northgate - Single Use System	15,200	2,692	12,508	0	0
RB	Z835	Shepshed Public Realm	1,092,200	1,138,470	(46,270)	0	0
GH	Z863	DNO Connections and Electric Vehicle Charge Points for car parks	150,000	0	150,000	0	0
GH	Z388	CCTV	181,600	0	181,600	45,000	0
GH	Z744	Beehive Lane Car Park Improvements and refurbishment scheme	65,100	25,912	39,188	0	0
GH	Z786	Car Parks Resurfacing and Improvements	32,800	0	32,800	150,000	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>			<b>2,269,700</b>	<b>1,388,770</b>	<b>880,930</b>	<b>970,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Provisional Schemes</u></b>							
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Customer Experience - Total</b>			<b>2,269,700</b>	<b>1,388,770</b>	<b>880,930</b>	<b>970,000</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Housing &amp; Wellbeing - General Fund</b>							
<b><u>Live Schemes</u></b>							
VG	Z348	Charnwood Community Facilities Grants	50,000	28,421	21,579	50,000	0
VG	Z427	Members Grants - Members Choice	13,000	4,050	8,950	13,000	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>			<b>63,000</b>	<b>32,471</b>	<b>30,529</b>	<b>63,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Provisional Schemes</u></b>							
KM	Z346	Private Sector Housing Grants - Block Sum	87,000	0	87,000	87,000	0
<b>Sub-total Provisional Schemes</b>			<b>87,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>87,000</b>	<b>87,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Third Party Schemes</u></b>							
KM	Z210	Disabled Facilities Grants - Block Sum	1,309,700	640,130	669,570	2,349,300	406,800
KM	Z363	Fuel Poverty Scheme	7,000	0	7,000	0	0
<b>Sub-total Third Party Schemes</b>			<b>1,316,700</b>	<b>640,130</b>	<b>676,570</b>	<b>2,349,300</b>	<b>406,800</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Wellbeing - General Fund - Total</b>			<b>1,466,700</b>	<b>672,601</b>	<b>794,099</b>	<b>2,499,300</b>	<b>406,800</b>
<b><u>Housing &amp; Wellbeing - HRA</u></b>							
<b><u>Live Schemes</u></b>							
NG	Z761	Major Adaptations	611,200	360,303	250,897	450,000	0
DB	Z301	Minor Adaptations	50,000	7,990	42,010	50,000	0
AM	Z302	Stairlifts	60,000	75,060	(15,060)	60,000	0
DB	Z762	Major Void Works	656,000	(21,540)	677,540	280,000	0
<b><u>Compliance</u></b>							
AM	Z434	Asbestos Removal	200,000	290,408	(90,408)	60,000	0
NG	Z771	Communal Area Improvements	350,000	95,208	254,792	75,200	0
AM	Z742	Communal Area Electrical Upgrades	68,000	45,995	22,005	68,000	0
AM	Z772	Carbon Monoxide Alarms	50,000	7,281	42,719	0	0
NG	Z773	Fire Safety Works	100,000	868	99,132	100,000	0
<b><u>Stock Maximisation</u></b>							
NG	Z375	Garages	50,000	0	50,000	0	0
<b><u>Decent Homes</u></b>							
NG	Z763	Kitchens	1,396,000	172,876	1,223,124	112,500	0
NG	Z764	Bathrooms	1,743,800	98,246	1,645,554	675,000	0
AM	Z765	Electrical Upgrades	150,000	50,515	99,485	100,000	0
NG	Z766	Window Replacement	426,000	1,910	424,090	223,800	0
AM	Z767	Central Heating & Boiler Installation	543,000	382,092	160,908	831,600	0
DB	Z743	Sheltered Housing Improvements	239,800	56,868	182,932	0	0
Redevelopment Sheltered Accommodation - St Michael's Court,							
PO	Z871	Thurmaston	400,000	155,773	244,227	1,600,000	0
NG	Z768	Door Replacement	700,000	203,317	496,683	700,000	0
NG	Z769	Roofing Works & Insulation	650,000	278,744	371,256	250,000	0
NG	Z770	Major Structural Works	400,000	552,981	(152,981)	250,000	0
<b><u>General Capital Works</u></b>							
NG	Z776	Estate and External Works	300,000	287,022	12,978	200,000	0
BD	Z857	Housing Capital Technical Costs	438,100	0	438,100	438,100	0
NG	Z378	Door Entry Systems	200,000	(29,622)	229,622	27,000	0
KM	Z760	Acquisition of Affordable Housing to meet housing need	3,862,500	198,803	3,663,697	1,123,800	0
KM	Z851	Acquisition of Dwellings - S106	1,200	0	1,200	0	0
NG	Z775	Mobility Scooter Storage	30,000	25	29,975	15,000	0
DB	Z867	Delivery of Stock Condition Survey and Associated Costs	60,200	25,951	34,249	0	0
AS	Z869	Digital Filing - HRA Software	33,200	26,775	6,425	0	0
<b>Sub-total Live Schemes</b>			<b>13,769,000</b>	<b>3,323,849</b>	<b>10,445,151</b>	<b>7,690,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Wellbeing - HRA - Total</b>			<b>13,769,000</b>	<b>3,323,849</b>	<b>10,445,151</b>	<b>7,690,000</b>	<b>0</b>

## CABINET - THURSDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2024

### Report of the Head of Strategic Housing Lead Member: Executive Member for Public and Private Sector Housing

#### Part A

#### HOUSING STRATEGY

##### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to obtain Cabinet approval for the updated version of the Charnwood Borough Council Housing Strategy.

##### Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approve the new Charnwood Borough Council Housing Strategy for 2024 – 2029 at Appendix 1.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Strategic Housing in consultation with the Executive Member for Public and Private Sector Housing to make minor amends to the Strategy.

##### Reasons

1. To set out the approach of the authority to delivering the supply of homes needed to support demographic, economic and employment growth in our area
2. To enable minor amendments to be made.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

Although there is no statutory requirement for a local authority to produce a housing strategy, councils still have responsibility to assess and meet the housing needs of their local population as housing delivery enablers. The housing strategy is a key element in setting out how this will be achieved. The existing strategy covered the period 2015 – 2020 and has now expired, therefore there is a need to develop a new strategy which reflects the current context.

##### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions

If not subject to call in the new Housing Strategy will be effective from 01/04/24.

##### Report Implications

#### **Financial Implications**

None identified.

#### **Risk Management**

No specific risks have been identified with the Strategy, which largely reflects existing service delivery.

**Equality and Diversity**

None identified.

**Climate Change and Carbon Impact**

The aims of the Housing Strategy include improved energy efficiency of homes in the private sector and council owned housing stock.

**Crime and Disorder**

None identified.

**Wards Affected**

All wards.

**Publicity Arrangements**

The Housing Strategy will be published on the Charnwood Borough Council website where it can be accessed by residents and stakeholders.

**Consultations**

Presentations on the new Housing Strategy have been given to:

- Parish Clerks Liaison Meeting (20/10/23)
- HMAB (10/01/24)

**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Caring for the Environment	Yes
Healthy Communities	Yes
A Thriving Economy	Yes
Your Council	Yes

Key Decision: Y

Date included on Forward Plan 10/01/24

Background Papers: None

Officer(s) to contact: Katie Moore  
Head of Strategic Housing  
katie.moore@charnwood.gov.uk

Dawn Eckersley  
Strategic Housing Manager  
dawn.eckersley@charnwood.gov.uk

## Part B

### Background and Summary

Preparation of the Housing Strategy has required consideration of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

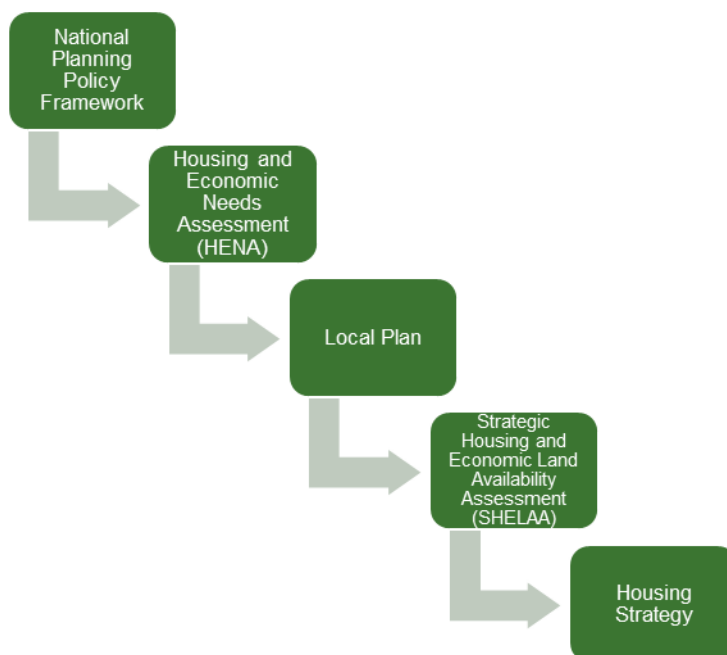
The NPPF sets out government planning policies and how these should be applied, providing a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

The requirements of the NPPF must be considered in the Charnwood Local Plan and planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Local Plan.

Local Plans should set out the contributions expected from market-led development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure).

The Housing Strategy describes how affordable housing is delivered on market-led developments is secured through section 106 (s106) Agreements (Town and Country Planning Act 1990). These legal agreements between local authorities and developers are linked to planning permissions and can also be known as planning obligations or “development gain”.

The below chart shows how the local housing strategy sits in the broader policy and evidence base framework.



---

In this context, the strategy sets out how we intend to meet the challenge of delivering new homes for our growing population, monitor the quality of the private rented sector and respond to the climate emergency.



The aims for Charnwood Borough Council set out in the strategy are therefore:

- Deliver sufficient supply of new homes, calculated through a robust standard methodology, to meet the needs of a growing population
- Use the planning process to harness the potential of private development to deliver affordable homes for rent and purchase
- Align the location of homes with economic and employment needs and growth
- Work proactively with private developers and registered providers to meet the need for affordable homes
- Work collaboratively with strategic partners and commissioners to deliver specialist housing, including accommodation for older people
- Use council-owned assets, including land, to contribute to the supply of new homes
- Work with owners and landlords of homes in the private sector to improve property condition, including energy efficiency
- Deliver active asset management across our own housing stock to improve financial performance and property condition, including energy efficiency.

#### Appendices

Appendix 1 - DRAFT Charnwood Borough Council Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

# **DRAFT Housing Strategy**

**Charnwood Borough Council  
2024 - 2029**

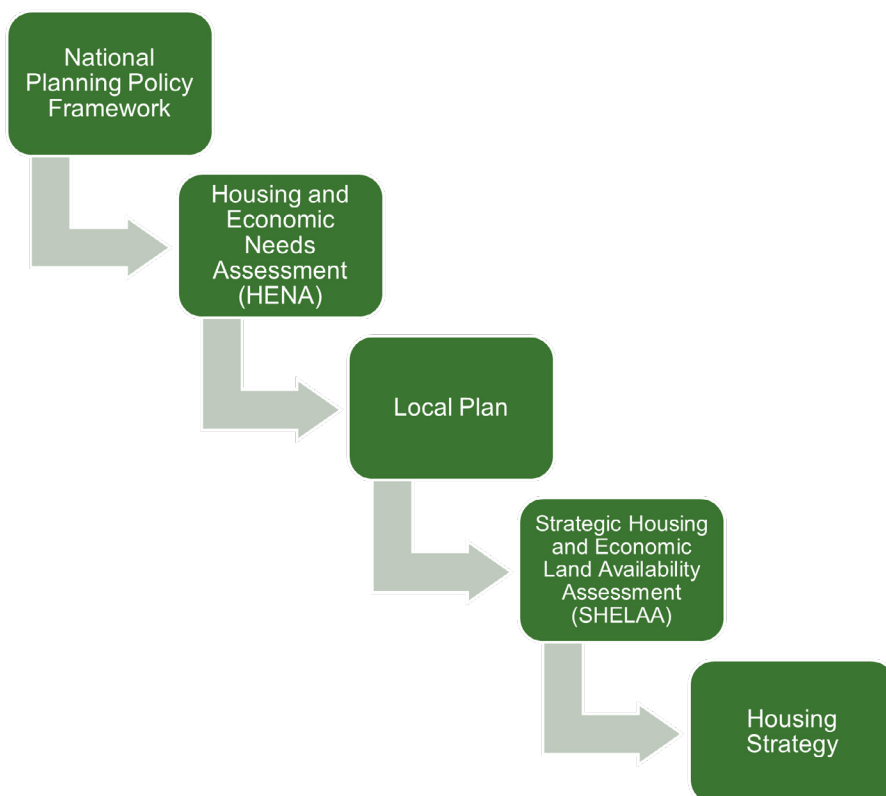
# Housing Strategy

## Aims

This document sets out how we intend to meet the challenge of delivering new homes for our growing population, monitor the quality of the private rented sector and respond to the climate emergency.

Strategic aims for Charnwood Borough Council:

- Deliver sufficient supply of new homes, calculated through a robust standard methodology, to meet the needs of a growing population
- Use the planning process to harness the potential of private development to deliver affordable homes for rent and purchase
- Align the location of homes with economic and employment needs and growth
- Work proactively with private developers and registered providers to meet the need for affordable homes
- Work collaboratively with strategic partners and commissioners to deliver specialist housing, including accommodation for older people
- Use council-owned assets, including land, to contribute to the supply of new homes
- Work with owners and landlords of homes in the private sector to improve property condition, including energy efficiency
- Deliver active asset management across our own housing stock to improve financial performance and property condition, including energy efficiency.



# National Planning Policy Framework

[National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-guidance)

Preparation of this strategy has required consideration of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The NPPF sets out government planning policies and how these should be applied, providing a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

The requirements of the NPPF must be considered in the Charnwood Local Plan and planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Local Plan.

To achieve sustainable development the planning system has three overarching and interdependent objectives:

- **Economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure
- **Social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations and by fostering well-designed beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support the health, social and cultural well-being of communities
- **Environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy

## The presumption in favour of sustainable development

Local Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For **plan-making** this means that strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas.

For **decision-taking** this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Local Plan without delay.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the Local Plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted.

## Strategic Policies

Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for:

- Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development
- Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)
- Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure)
- Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment

## Development contributions

Local Plans should set out the contributions expected from market-led development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure).

## Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

To support the government objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with planning permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance.

In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be calculated when establishing the amount of housing required.

The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies including:

- Affordable housing (rented and home ownership)
- Families with children
- Older people
- Students
- People with disabilities
- Service families
- Travellers
- People who rent their homes
- People wishing to commission or build their own homes

Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning permissions for market-led developments should specify the type of affordable housing required and expect it to be met on-site unless:

- Off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified
- The agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities

Affordable housing on market-led developments is secured through section 106 (s106) Agreements (Town and Country Planning Act 1990). These legal agreements between local authorities and developers are linked to planning permissions and can also be known as planning obligations or “development gain”.

A typical Charnwood Borough Council s106 Agreement may prescribe an affordable housing requirement of 30% in all major developments with exceptions for brownfield sites, where the requirement may be reduced to 10% to encourage regeneration. The Agreement will also require a mix of housing types, tenures and sizes including homes to meet the needs of our ageing population and homes that are wheelchair accessible. It is usual for to Agreement to specify the proportion of affordable homes for rent and for purchase including shared ownership and discount market sale (First Homes).

Local authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period.

The Leicester & Leicestershire Housing & Economic Needs Assessment Housing Distribution Paper April 2022 (HENA) identifies these figures for Leicester City and each of the district authority areas including Charnwood.

[Leicester & Leicestershire HENA \(June 2022\).pdf \(charnwood.gov.uk\)](#)

## Identifying land for homes

[Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, 2020 - Charnwood Borough Council](#)

Local authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, considering availability, suitability and likely economic viability.

Planning policies should identify a supply of:

- Deliverable sites for years 1- 5 of the plan period
- Developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15

Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and can be built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:

- Identify, through the Local Plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare
- Use tools such as area-wide design assessments and Local Development Orders to help bring small and medium sized sites forward
- Support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions
- Work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites where this could help to speed up the delivery of homes.

Local planning authorities should support the development of entry-level exception sites, suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home), unless the need for such homes is already being met within the authority area. These sites should be on land which is not already allocated for housing and should:

- Comprise of entry-level homes which offer one or more types of affordable housing as defined in the NPPF
- Be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in the NPPF, and comply with any local design policies and standards

The NPPF defines affordable housing as follows:

*“Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented (with rents of up to 80% of market rents) and intermediate housing (including homes for sale) provided to certain households whose needs are not met by the market”*

The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes).

Thousands of homes are already planned for the large Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) developments west of Loughborough (Garendon Park), north of Birstall (Broadnook) and northeast of Leicester (Thorpebury).

In total these developments provide space for 10,603 new homes already planned in the borough.

## Maintaining supply and delivery

Planning policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period. Local authorities should identify and update annually a supply of deliverable sites to provide a minimum of a 5-year supply of housing against their housing requirement and include a buffer to ensure delivery.

To maintain the supply of housing, local authorities should monitor progress in building out sites which have permission. Where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery has fallen below 95% of the local planning authority’s housing requirement over the previous 3 years, the authority should prepare an action plan in line with national planning guidance, to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years.

## Rural housing

In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments to reflect local needs. Local authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites providing affordable housing to meet identified local needs and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would support financial viability.

To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless certain defined circumstances apply.

## Leicester & Leicestershire Housing & Economic Needs Assessment

The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) has been commissioned by the local authorities across Leicester & Leicestershire and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) to inform Local Plans across the sub-region.

The HENA provides a joint evidence base relating to housing need, economic growth and employment land needs recognising that housing market and functional economic geographies broadly align to the county boundary.

## Economic & Property Market Dynamics

Leicester & Leicestershire is a £27 billion economy which supported 550,000 jobs in 2019 and in recent years has performed well.

Key employment sectors include manufacturing with a particular focus on food and drink, textiles, metals, logistics, distribution and education including three universities. Finance and insurance are strongly represented in Leicester and other potential growth sectors include space technologies, focused on Leicester; and life sciences, focused on Loughborough. Agricultural-focused activities are important in the rural parts of the county.

Leicester City is the largest economy but has land supply constraints affecting ability to meet the housing need to support this economy. The HENA assesses how housing need over the period to 2036 might be distributed between the Leicestershire authorities

There are three broad considerations in assessing the distribution of homes and unmet need:

- Functional relationships between different authorities and Leicester City
- Local alignment of jobs and homes
- Deliverability considering supply and market capacity

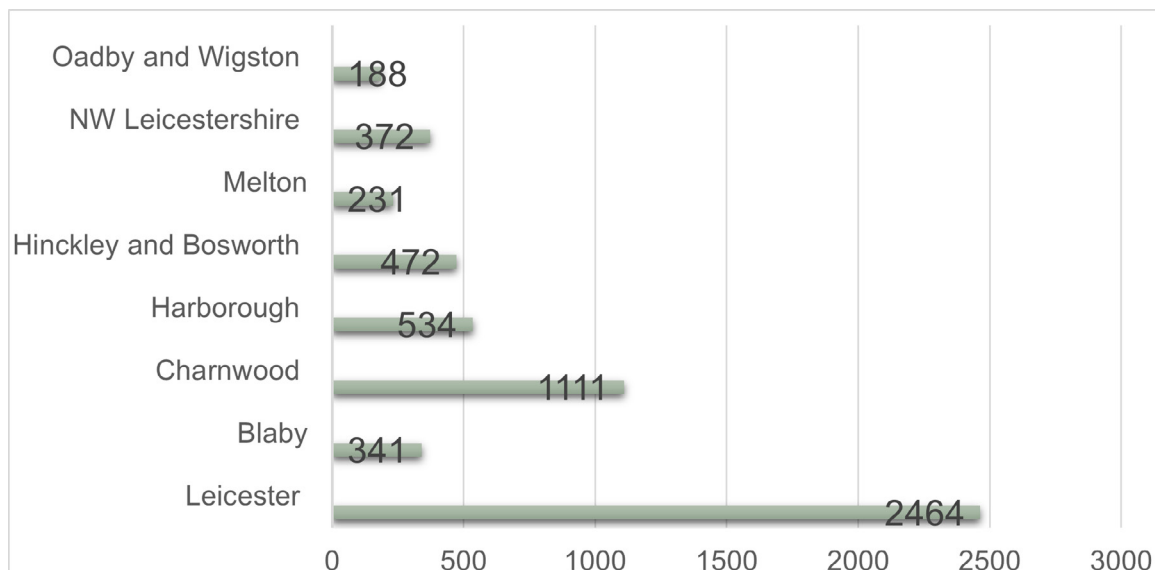
The local housing market has performed strongly in recent years, with long-term price growth of 6.4% per annum resulting in a median house price of £222,000 in 2020. Melton and Harborough have seen the strongest recent growth in absolute terms. Sales of detached and semi-detached homes predominate, with the evidence pointing to weaker relative demand for flats. Leicester City has seen the strongest rental growth over the last 5 years but average rents of £600 per month are slightly below the Leicestershire average of £625.



Population growth has been above average since 2011 with the Leicester population growing by 7.5% and Leicestershire by 8.4%. More recent trends have seen relative growth in the county than the city with evidence showing a correlation with housing delivery.

## Overall Housing Needs

Minimum Local Housing Need using the Standard Method – Dwellings per annum



Leicester City is unable to meet its housing need in full within its administrative area. The latest evidence points to an unmet need for 15,935 dwellings in the city over the period to 2036.

The long-term distribution of development in the sub-region is to be informed by a Strategic Growth Plan (2018). However as there is a lead-in time to the delivery of major strategic sites and growth locations, which can be 10 years or more, so the HENA proposes an interim distribution of housing to address unmet needs from Leicester to 2036.

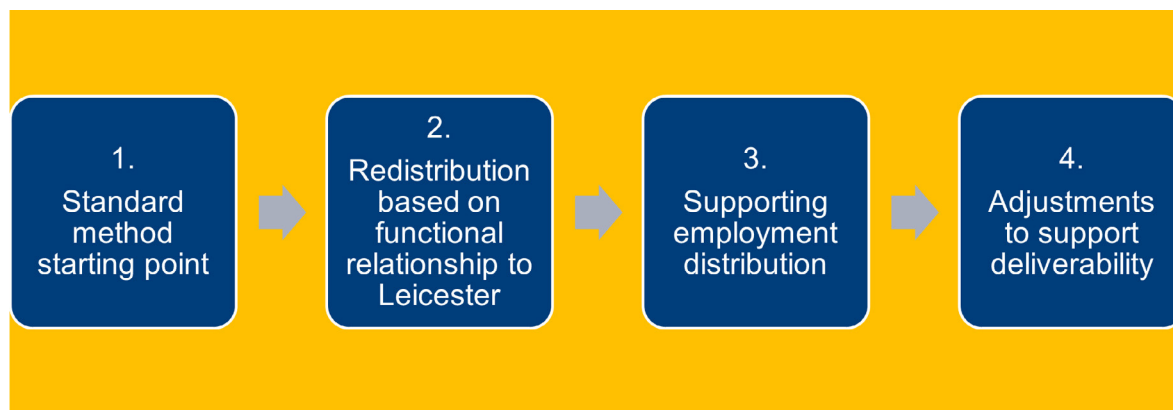
The standard method of calculating housing need is a minimum level of provision. A redistribution is considered based on the functional relationship of different Leicestershire local authorities with the city.

Adjustments are then made to this distribution:

- To align new homes with the spatial distribution of future employment growth over the period to 2036
- To promote a balance in the delivery of jobs and homes at a local level and limit the need to travel
- Consider the deliverability of the distribution of development

Adjustments are then made to ensure different local authorities are sharing the burden in meeting unmet need and to ensure deliverability of the proposed distribution from a market capacity perspective.

## Overview of Housing Distribution Methodology



The standard method calculation is set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and provides a starting point for considering overall housing need.

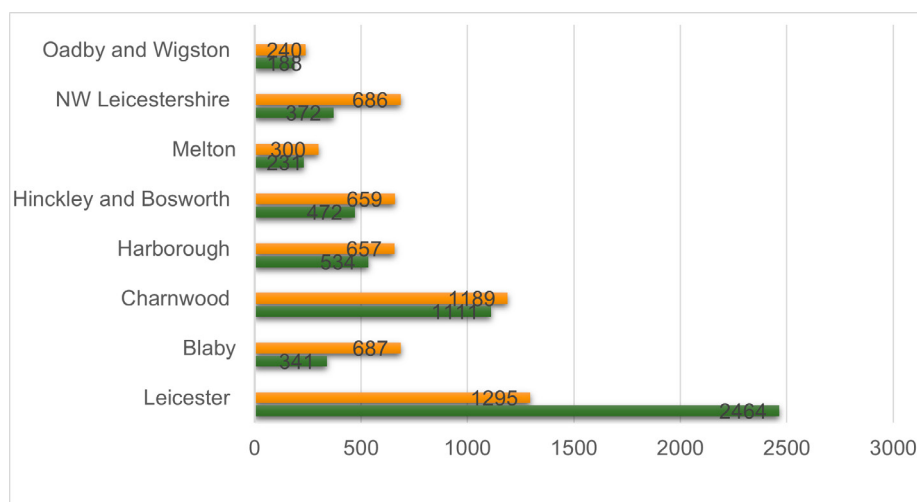
The latest data (March 2022) points to a housing need as follows:

### Standard Method Local Housing Need Dwellings per annum

Local authority area	Dwellings per annum
Leicester	2,464
Blaby	341
Charnwood	1,111*
Harborough	534
Hinckley & Bosworth	472
Melton	231
North West Leicestershire	372
Oadby & Wigston	188
Leicester and Leicestershire	5,713

Charnwood's figure is set using the data from 2021 (including household growth for the 2011-21 period and 2020 affordability ratio) as it submitted its Local Plan for Examination in December 2021.

### Proposed Interim Distribution of Housing Need, 2020-36



The authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) must work together to address the unmet need in Leicester and agree an alternative distribution of housing provision.

The urban area extends beyond the Leicester City administrative boundaries into Oadby and Wigston, Blaby and Charnwood and to a more modest extent into Harborough. There are several settlements within the Leicestershire authorities which are close to Leicester but remain freestanding settlements including Anstey and Syston. It is therefore necessary to consider the migration and commuting relationship between the City and the Leicestershire authorities.

The strongest migrating and commuting relationships are with Oadby and Wigston, Charnwood and Blaby. The strongest in-commuting to Leicester is from Charnwood and Blaby, followed by Oadby and Wigston and the pattern is similar for migration.

There is a rationale for locating homes in areas from which people commute into Leicester, as the commuting flow is indicative of a housing market relationship. Equally where there is out commuting from Leicester, locating homes in these areas may help to reduce journey times and distances.

The next step is to compare the standard method figures for different areas to the potential employment growth and the associated economic-led housing need identified in the HENA.

Any redistribution of housing need from Leicester to county local authorities will support workforce growth in the recipient authority, support economic growth in these areas and minimise commuting.

The third stage of the process of considering the potential housing distribution is to appraise deliverability considerations. This includes issues related to land supply and to the localised market capacity to absorb growth.

## HENA Conclusions and Summary

The standard calculation method indicates a need for 91,400 homes across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) over the 2020-36 period. Leicester City has a constrained land supply, resulting in an unmet need of 18,700 homes. The authorities in the Housing Market Area are required through national policy to work together to address this and agree a revised distribution of housing provision through the Duty to Cooperate.

The HENA identified three broad considerations in assessing the distribution of homes and unmet need:

- Functional relationships between different authorities and Leicester
- Local alignment of jobs and homes
- Deliverability (including issues of both land supply and market capacity)

The standard method is a minimum level of provision for each Leicestershire local authority, as individual local plans would be expected (in line with the NPPF) to meet their own need using the standard method.

The next step was then to consider the redistribution of the Leicester City unmet need. The functional relationships of the different Leicestershire authorities with the City have been considered, taking account of migration and commuting relationships between the authorities to generate an initial distribution of unmet need.

Adjustments were then made to this distribution to align with the spatial distribution of future employment growth, to achieve balance in the delivery of jobs and homes at a local level and limit the need to travel. This seeks to locate houses close to where job opportunities arise and provide additional labour where needed.

The third consideration is the likely deliverability of distributed development taking into account where authorities are already planning for higher growth or where there are land supply constraints restricting development.

The HENA then considers the comparative rate of housing growth in different areas and adjusts the distribution to support deliverability, and ensure all authorities are contributing proportionally to the unmet need. This approach will avoid over-concentrating development in specific areas which could result in localised market capacity issues which inhibit the delivery of overall housing need.

The revised figures will be tested through the plan-making process and sustainability appraisals to ensure that these potential scales of growth are achievable. They are intended to help inform, alongside other evidence, the setting of housing requirement figures to 2036.

## Charnwood Local Plan

The Charnwood Local Plan 2021-37 has been under development for several years and is currently in the examination process. The plan will provide a robust strategy for growth which simultaneously safeguards the environment and builds healthy communities.

The plan identifies the location of land and infrastructure needed to support the growth of the borough up to 2037 and meet Government targets for new homes, in addition to providing employment land and critical infrastructure.

Independent planning inspectors have been appointed by Government to scrutinise the plan to assess whether it is “sound”:

There are four tests of soundness:

- Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.
- Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.
- Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.
- Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

## Growth objectives in the Local Plan

- Development of Loughborough as the economic, social and cultural heart of the borough. Focus on new homes as well as developing a town centre offer with a diverse mix of uses including retail, residential, leisure, office and professional services.
- Regeneration and growth around the edge of Leicester, as the county's central city, and additional focus on Shepshed as part of the town's ongoing regeneration and its role as the county's international gateway.
- Delivery of 8,355 new homes, plus schools and associated infrastructure, in the three Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) which have already been approved for Garendon Park, Broadnook and Thorpebury.
- Additional development will be divided between Leicester's urban edge at Birstall, Thurmaston and Syston (2,104 homes), Loughborough (2,242 homes), Shepshed (1,878 homes), large villages, (1,819 homes) and small villages (815 homes).
- The majority of new housing in larger villages split between Anstey (647 homes), Barrow (703 homes) and Sileby (345 homes). Focus of development to provide the critical mass of homes needed to secure infrastructure, such as schools and roads, to meet existing and future demand.
- New primary schools planned for Anstey, Barrow, Loughborough, Shepshed and Syston. Partnership working on a new school for Glenfield. Extension of the existing school at Cossington to support development at Sileby.
- Allocation of 81 hectares of employment land, including 15 hectares of office space and 66 hectares of light industrial land, across Farendon Park, Broadnook and Thorpebury, plus other sites including Watermead Business Park and Dishley Grange.
- Allocation of 73 hectares of land for the long-term expansion of Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP) to support investment, innovation and high-technology jobs.
- Various enterprise development initiatives are included to support growing businesses. These include flexible office and managed workspace, live/work units, small business units and freehold industrial units. Superfast broadband required for all new homes and employment land.
- Support for the rural economy with environmentally sensitive small-scale business expansion and farm diversification through conversion of existing buildings.

## Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Report

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires strategic policy-making authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to *“have a clear understanding of the land available in their area. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, considering their availability, suitability and likely economic viability”*.

The NPPF also requires planning policies to *“set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth”*. To support this economic growth planning policies should *“set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period”*.

## Growth objectives in the Local Plan

The Charnwood Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) responds to both the housing and employment requirements set out in the NPPF and provides an assessment of the land available in the Borough.

The purpose of the SHELAA is to provide evidence which:

- Identifies sites in Charnwood with the potential for housing and employment
- Assesses that potential
- Considers when these sites are likely to be developed

It is important to note that the SHELAA does not represent policy and will not be used to determine whether a site should be allocated or granted planning permission for

development. The SHELAA simply determines which sites are suitable, available and achievable for housing and employment development.

The SHELAA is an important part of the evidence base for local plan making. It helps to monitor the housing trajectory set out in the Local Plan and provides evidence of the five-year supply of deliverable sites.

## The Housing Delivery Test

The Housing Delivery Test is an annual measurement of housing delivery in plan-making authorities. The test is a percentage measurement of the number of net homes delivered against the number of homes required, as set out in the relevant strategic policies for the areas covered by the Housing Delivery Test, over a rolling 3-year period.

## Local Challenges

### Sheltered Accommodation Review

The council owns 13 sheltered accommodation schemes providing over 400 units. Sheltered accommodation is defined as independent living with each individual dwelling having front door. Residents also have a 24-hour alarm system, mobile warden service, access to a communal lounge and a programme of activities is also provided.

Most of these schemes contain a mixture of bedsits and flats. Many bedsit units are small, do not have kitchens with adequate space and layout, and are not self-contained so residents therefore use shared bathing facilities. There are long corridors and changes in levels at schemes, making schemes hard for people with mobility issues to navigate. Most schemes were constructed in the late 1960s and early 1970s and do not meet either the needs of aspirations of older people.

These properties are hard to let, and the number of void properties has increased over time. The rents are low, and there are high costs associated with the blocks, which perform poorly from a financial asset perspective.

Much of the accommodation is well located in the centre of settlements, close to shops and services. Schemes have a social value, and many have a sense of community, however the reduction in occupancy has inevitably led to a reduction in social activity.

Charnwood like many authorities have found that the local authority housing developed and available for older people no longer meets demand and this is borne out by high levels of empty properties and lengthy void times.

A Project Group is assessing asset performance across our sheltered stock and exploring options for remodelling or redevelopment of sites

## Owned Stock – Asset Management

As a stock-holding authority we aim to provide high-quality housing for our residents through our Asset Management Strategy 2023 – 2028. The asset management strategy will contribute to delivery of our corporate plans and deliver three core components of asset management:

- **Stock investment:** Investing to maintain the stock to a standard that meets customer and council needs and regulatory requirements including building safety.
- **Active Asset Management:** Activities to improve the performance of assets that have a poor social, economic or environmental performance, because of low demand or high costs, and either improving them, or replacing them with properties which are fit for purpose.
- **Supporting wider objectives:** Being clear where and how asset management is supporting wider objectives, such as, energy efficiency, increasing the supply of new homes and creating sustainable communities.

The document is designed as a robust, evidenced based asset management strategy to lead our investment decisions. Its foundations are our understanding of our properties and the work needed to keep them in a good condition, safe and energy efficient alongside resident priorities for their homes. It seeks to deliver value for money for the council and our current and future residents.

[Charnwood Borough Council Asset Management Strategy 2023 - 2028](#)

## Private Sector Licensing

The Council recognises the privately rented sector as an important source of accommodation for Charnwood Residents.

The 2021 Census shows an increase in households privately renting, a decrease in those owning their home with a mortgage, and a decrease in the number of social rented homes in the Borough since 2011. This reflects the national picture with younger households finding it more difficult to access to home ownership and social housing than previous generations.

Percentage of households by tenure in Charnwood		
Tenure	2011	2021
Private Rented	14.1%	17.5%
Owns Outright	35.7%	37.4%
Own with a Mortgage	36.4%	33.4%
Social Rented	11.8%	11.3%

(Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011, 2021)



To ensure the quality of privately rented accommodation in Charnwood, the council have introduced selective and additional licensing.

There are three private sector housing licensing schemes in Charnwood to monitor the quality and safety of properties:

- Mandatory and additional schemes for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)
- Selective scheme for privately rented properties in the Lemyngton and Hastings wards in Loughborough

A licence is required for a rented property which either:

- Meets the definition of being a house in multiple occupation (HMO) anywhere in the borough of Charnwood
- A privately rented property located in the Hastings or Lemyngton wards in Loughborough

## Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

The Housing Act 2004 requires Local Housing Authorities to licence mandatory licensable HMOs and allows the licensing of other HMOs through an additional licencing scheme.

Types of housing licensing are:

- Mandatory Licensing
- Additional Licensing

A HMO is an entire house or flat let to 3 or more tenants who form 2 or more households and who share a kitchen, bathroom, or toilet. For a property to be classed as a HMO, it must be used as the tenants only or main residence and it should be used solely or mainly to house tenants.

### Mandatory Licensing

Mandatory Licensing under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 requires a HMO occupied by 5 or more persons in 2 or more households, sharing an amenity regardless of the number of storeys, to be licensed.

The Council has a responsibility under Section 55 of the Housing Act 2004 to licence all Mandatory HMOs.

### Additional Licensing

The Housing Act 2004 provides a power for Local Authorities to licence HMOs which are not covered by Mandatory Licensing. Part 2 of the Housing Act provides for Additional Licensing of HMOs for example, in a particular area or the whole borough for those not covered by Mandatory Licensing.

Charnwood Borough Council has designated the whole of the Borough subject to Additional Licensing in respect of the following types of HMOs:

- HMOs of any size of building that are occupied by 3 or 4 persons
- Section 257 HMOs (a s257 HMO is a building which has been converted, or part converted, into self-contained flats that did not comply with the appropriate building standards and still does not comply with those standards, and less than two-thirds of the self-contained flats are owner occupied).



## Selective Licensing

Selective Licensing was introduced in the Hastings and Lemyngton Wards of Loughborough in April 2023. Landlords must have a selective licence if they rent out a home in those areas, where the tenants consist of one household, or two households, with no more than two people sharing.

## Management Arrangements

The Council must be satisfied that “the proposed management arrangements are satisfactory” before granting a licence. Those arrangements include (but are not limited to) consideration of whether the:

- Persons proposed to be involved in the management of the premises has a sufficient level of competence to be involved.
- Persons proposed to be involved with the management of the premises are actually involved in the management.
- Persons are ‘fit and proper’ and the proposed management structures and funding arrangements are suitable.

When considering whether a person is ‘fit and proper’ the council will have regard to the conduct of the relevant person concerned including any evidence of:

- Committed any offence involving fraud or other dishonesty, violence or drugs and sexual offences listed in the Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Unlawful discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origins or disability
- Contravened any provision of Housing, Public Health or Landlord and Tenant law (including Part 3 of the Immigration Act 2016); or acted otherwise than in accordance with an approved code of practice

Having a fire risk assessment for a licensed HMO is a legal requirement under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which is enforced by East Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority.

## Energy Efficiency Grants

As part of our commitment to reducing carbon emissions in line with our Climate Change Strategy, and improving standards in private housing across the Borough, Charnwood Borough Council is a member of the Leicestershire Green Living Partnership.

The Partnership delivers energy efficiency grants to homes and residents in the private sector and typical Installations include measures such as external wall insulation, solar PV panels and loft insulation.

During 2022/23 we were able to facilitate 67 energy efficiency measures in 66 properties in Charnwood using £510,435 of grant funding. CBC will commit to remaining in the partnership, ensuring delivery of future grant allocations to improve energy efficiency in the private sector.

**Equality Impact**  
**Assessment**  
**Housing Strategy**  
**(2023 – 2028)**

- **Background**

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

- **Legislation- Equality Duty**

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation.
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

**For the following protected characteristics:**

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Gender reassignment
- ✓ Marriage and civil partnership
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Religion and belief
- ✓ Sex (Gender)
- ✓ Sexual orientation

**What is prohibited?**

- ✓ Direct Discrimination
- ✓ Indirect Discrimination
- ✓ Harassment
- ✓ Victimisation
- ✓ Discrimination by association
- ✓ Discrimination by perception
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
- ✓ Discrimination arising from disability
- ✓ Failing to make reasonable adjustments

**Complete this action plan as you go through the questions**

- **Step 1 – Introductory information**

Title of the policy / strategy / project	<b>Housing Strategy</b>
Lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	<b>Dawn Eckersley Strategic Housing Manager</b>
Date EIA started	<b>18<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>
Date EIA completed	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024</b>

- **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed**

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)

It is not a statutory requirement for a local authority to approve and publish a housing strategy, but this document sets out how we intend to meet the challenge of delivering new homes for our growing population.

Strategic aims for Charnwood Borough Council:

- Deliver sufficient supply of new homes, calculated through a robust standard methodology, to meet the needs of a growing population
- Use the planning process to harness the potential of private development to deliver affordable homes for rent and purchase
- Align the location of homes with economic and employment needs and growth
- Work proactively with private developers and registered providers to meet the need for affordable homes
- Work collaboratively with strategic partners and commissioners to deliver specialist housing, including accommodation for older people
- Use council-owned assets, including land, to contribute to the supply of new homes
- Work with owners and landlords of homes in the private sector to improve property condition, including energy efficiency
- Deliver active asset management across our own housing stock to improve financial performance and property condition, including energy efficiency.

What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?

The Housing Strategy will potentially impact all existing and future residents of the borough. In common with other areas in Leicester and Leicestershire, Charnwood has a growing population. To support the increasing population we must ensure, through both the planning process and data-informed strategic housing work, the right houses are built in the right locations. The needs of many households will be met by purchasing or privately renting properties, but we must also deliver a supply of affordable accommodation for households whose needs are not met by the market or have specific needs.

Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?

- Housing Strategy Project Group
- Equality Working Group

- **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.

Data/information such as:

- Consultation
- Previous Equality Impact Assessments
- Demographic information
- Anecdotal and other evidence

The requirements for the delivery of new homes are set by a government formula which uses demographic and economic data. It is the responsibility of Charnwood Borough Council to develop planning and housing strategies and policies to support delivery of this objectively assessed housing need.

Charnwood must deliver 1189 homes a year in the period to 2036; a proportion of these must be for affordable rent or home ownership. The council is also obliged to work strategically with partners such as the upper-tier authority to deliver homes for groups with specific needs such as older people, disabled people, people with mental health problems and the gypsy and traveller community.

The council has limited resources to purchase housing stock meaning this housing supply will be delivered by harnessing market-led development through the planning system and strategic work. Our objective is to work collaboratively with internal teams and external partners to deliver the right homes of the right sizes and tenures in the right places.

What does this information / data tell you about diverse group? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)

The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment tells us the number and types of houses we must deliver to support predicted population and economic growth. The council is required to produce a Local Plan setting out how this will be achieved, and progress is monitored through the Housing Delivery Test.

The Housing Strategy Project Group will monitor delivery of the objectives in the strategy and the related project-based work driving these aims.

● **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

Considering the answers given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not explain why.

Housing needs are objectively assessed using a standard government formula which gives consideration to the needs of groups such as older people and those whose needs are not met by the market because of income levels.

● **Step 5 – Assessing the impact**

Considering any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge, identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision. Please refer to the general duties on the front page.

Age	Positive
Disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Visual</li> <li>• Hearing</li> <li>• learning disabilities</li> <li>• mental health</li> </ul>	Positive
Gender Reassignment (Transgender)	Neutral
Race	Neutral
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	Neutral
Sex (Gender)	Neutral
Sexual Orientation	Neutral
Other protected groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregnancy &amp; maternity</li> <li>• Marriage &amp; civil partnership</li> </ul>	Neutral
Other socially excluded groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carers</li> <li>• Low literacy</li> <li>• Priority neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Health inequalities</li> <li>• Rural isolation</li> <li>• Asylum seeker and refugee communities</li> </ul>	Positive

Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.

- If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.
- Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.

Eligibility for properties (other than market properties) is assessed through objective policies or criteria which are not related to protected characteristics and not discriminatory.

Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

The Housing Strategy will not have a negative impact in relation to equality and diversity.

● **Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation, review**

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? How will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?

The Housing Strategy Project Group will oversee and monitor delivery of housing supply and project-based activity around specific projects such as remodelling our offer of accommodation for older people. The annual Housing Delivery Test will objectively measure our progress towards prescribed housing delivery targets.

How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g., policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.

The Housing Strategy will be approved by Cabinet and regular update reports will be provided.

- **Step 7- Action Plan**

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan. The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan

Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date

- **Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

	Who needs to know?	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?	Residents of Charnwood	Published on CBC website

- **Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the **Service Head**)**

Delete as appropriate
<b>I agree with this assessment</b>
Signed (Service Head):



Katie Moore  
Head of Strategic Housing  
24<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Please send completed & signed assessment to **Vicky Brackenbury** for publishing.



## CABINET - THURSDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2024

### **Report of the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centres**

#### **Part A**

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024-27

##### Purpose of Report

To present an updated Economic Development Strategy for the Borough for the period 2024 – 2027.

##### Recommendation

That the final draft Economic Development Strategy 2024 – 2027 be adopted.

##### Reason

To set out objectives which help businesses and residents by facilitating a stronger economy for Charnwood and to enable the Council to undertake economic development activities which align with strategic priorities.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

This Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 includes the 'A thriving economy' theme. It states that regeneration and growth will support the borough's economic strength. It is likely that once approved the Council's new Corporate Strategy will also include a focus on economic growth in Charnwood. The Economic Development Strategy 2024-27 will enable and encourage effective implementation of actions across the Council and with key external stakeholders.

This Council's Climate Change Action Plan and Carbon Neutral Plan have informed development of the Economic Development Strategy and will provide a useful accompaniment to it in steering delivery over the coming years. Cabinet approved a Regeneration Prospectus in December 2023 and this updated Economic Development Strategy sits alongside it to give potential investors and funding organisations confidence that the Council has clarified priorities to create the conditions for economic and business success.

##### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions

Should Cabinet approve the adoption of the draft Economic Development Strategy, implementation will commence immediately. The Economic Development and Regeneration Service Plan will reflect the priorities of the Strategy.

Monitoring of the delivery of the Strategy will occur through performance management mechanisms and scrutiny processes which are now in place consistently and as standard across the organisation.

Report Implications

**Financial Implications**

The strategy has no financial implications for the finance year 2024/2025.

**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
A major event, such as further pandemic or civil emergency, that prevents officers from being able to deliver the strategy.	Unlikely (2)	Serious (3)	Moderate (6)	Officers have experience of working in a pandemic situation and agile working plans would support our ability to continue delivery of many, if not all actions.
Major recession in the national or international economy.	Unlikely (2)	Serious (3)	Moderate (6)	A review of the strategy would be undertaken and a revised Strategy and priorities would be put before Cabinet.

**Equality and Diversity**

EqlA info attached as Appendix

**Climate Change and Carbon Impact**

The economic development strategy links to aspects of the Climate Action Plan, providing information and support to businesses including promoting energy efficiency and supporting the delivery of Living Loughborough and Lanes and Links.

**Crime and Disorder**

None identified

**Wards Affected**

All Wards.

**Publicity Arrangements**

The Strategy will be published on the Council’s website and the inCharnwood website. The Communications Team will issue a press release and utilise social media. The Economic Development and Regeneration Team will notify partners and actively promote the strategy via social media and business networks.

**Consultations**

Consultation has been undertaken both internally and externally with stakeholders. A draft of the Economic Development Strategy and the background document (see Appendix 2) was shared with consultees, with an invitation for comments to be received by 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Consultees included: Sustainability Officer, Head of Strategic Housing, Director of Housing and Wellbeing, Head of Contracts, Leisure, Waste and Environment, Director of Commercial and Economic Development Jane Hunt MP, Edward Argar MP, Loughborough University, Federation of Small Businesses, East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, and Loughborough BID. Cllr Tillotson and Cllr Miah were also involved in commenting on the content of the Strategy.

The consultation comments have been analysed and this final draft Economic Development Strategy has been amended to take into account comments received. A summary of the consultation responses is included at Appendix 3.

**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Caring for the Environment	No
Healthy Communities	No
A Thriving Economy	Yes
Your Council	No

Key Decision: Yes

*If yes*

*Date included on Forward Plan* 10/01/2024

Background Papers: None.

Officer(s) to contact: Christopher Grace, Head of Economic Development and Regeneration,  
  
Liz McCusker, Economic Development and Regeneration Manager  
Tel: 01509 634534,  
christopher.grace@charnwood.gov.uk,  
Liz.McCusker@charnwood.gov.uk

## Part B

### Background

1. This Council's previous economic development strategy was adopted in 2018. Review of the strategy was scheduled for early in the new decade, but the Covid-19 pandemic meant that 'business as usual' was put on hold whilst the Council and its partners focused on supporting residents and businesses of Charnwood and through to recovery. During 2023 the Council recruited into posts within the Economic Development and Regeneration Service which were either vacant or newly created because of the Council's Leadership review. This has created a stable environment which, alongside removal of all pandemic related restrictions, has meant work could commence during the latter half of 2023 in reviewing economic strategy to make it relevant for the forthcoming years through to 2027.

2. The UK economy, similar to that of many others, shrank from the impact of restrictions imposed on individuals and businesses for reasons associated with the Covid-19 'pandemic'. There has been minimal recovery with economic growth being weak and following the pandemic economies have faced increased global energy prices, rising inflation and cost of living issues. The local economy of Charnwood is affected significantly by international, national and regional circumstances. The document attached to this report at Appendix 2 looks at some of these issues especially across the regional and local aspects. Footfall and retail vacancy rates in Loughborough, business trends information supplied by the LLEP, and information from East Midlands Chamber of Commerce and the Office for National Statistics will be reviewed annually to ensure that trends and impacts can be monitored.

3. The Economic Development Strategy 2024-27 and associated actions is intended to create a positive environment in which businesses can be successful and local people can find opportunities to be employed in those businesses or start up their own businesses. The Strategy will give potential investors confidence that Charnwood has plans to create conditions to encourage economic growth.

4. The strategy is concise to clearly show the Council's economic development priorities. There are four main strategic themes:

- I. Places and infrastructure
- II. Business environment
- III. People
- IV. Innovation

Each of these themes is underpinned by a series of key objectives which the Council and partners will look to achieve via the implementation of actions.

5. The final draft Economic Development Strategy 2024-27 strategy is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

### Consultation and Consultation Responses

6. A consultation draft of the strategy was shared with both internal and external stakeholders (see Part A of this report). Consultees were encouraged to provide comments regarding the strategy and in doing so were invited to consider some specific questions:

- Are the four main strategic priority areas of Places and Infrastructure, Business Environment, People, and Innovation appropriate?
- Has the strategy omitted any significant objectives which in your view should be included? (If so, what are they and why are they important?)
- Does the strategy include too many objectives?
- Does the strategy provide a useful platform upon which collaborative working and delivery of actions can be developed?
- What would be your 'Top 3' areas of action from those which are included within the draft strategy?
- Is the strategy relevant to the needs of businesses in Charnwood?
- Will the strategy help facilitate an inclusive approach to economic development, for all parts of the borough and for people and businesses of diverse circumstances?

7. A summary of consultation responses is attached to this report at Appendix 3.

### Conclusion

8. This final draft strategy reflects the national, regional and local economic situation, and is based on previous successful initiatives and views of internal and external stakeholders which help deliver economic development and regeneration initiatives. It provides a framework which if approved will enable the development and implementation of specific action plans. These action plans will highlight partnerships, collaborative working to help create an environment which encourages business success and facilitates opportunities for businesses and residents of Charnwood.

### Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Economic Development Strategy 2024 – 2027

Appendix 2 – Background Document (to be reviewed annually)

Appendix 3 – Summary of consultation responses

Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

## **CHARNWOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2024 – 2027**

I am pleased to be able to present Charnwood Borough Council's Economic Development Strategy for 2024 -2027.

In recent years, the borough has come through the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic which had a massive impact not only on people but also on businesses and local economies. In the current international economic climate of instability, low economic growth and inflationary pressures mean it is more important than it has been for many decades for a Council to be pro-active in undertaking initiatives which help the local economy.

This Strategy sets out our approach to creating an environment for growth and to promote Charnwood as a vibrant, accessible area for business activity and investment. Economic development and regeneration actions which will flow from the Strategy will contribute to a better quality of life for all residents of Charnwood, regeneration of our towns and a vibrant business community. The Council will work in close partnership with other organisations to deliver our strategic objectives.

We are committed to ensuring that economic growth is sustainable, creating local opportunities which reduce the need for people to travel and encourages innovation which makes the best use technologies which protect the natural environment. Charnwood has excellent prospects due to our connectivity, being home to one of the UK's top universities, its two Enterprise Zone sites and a superb mix of small businesses and large internationally renowned companies.

I look forward to seeing the Strategy being implemented over the coming years and to working with local people and businesses to make Charnwood even better than it already is.

Councillor Jenni Tillotson

Cabinet lead for economic development, regeneration, towns, and villages

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Charnwood Economic Development Strategy reflects on how recovery from the pandemic is progressing and also provides the strategic direction that our regeneration and economic development initiatives will be aligned to over the next 3 years. The Strategy has been developed by taking in to account the nature of the Charnwood economy, the views of business representation organisations, regional and national economic strategy, and the Council's new Corporate Strategy.

The Council Identifies a focus on maximising economic opportunities that benefit everyone and foster economic growth across Charnwood. This economic development strategy is consistent with that over-arching corporate strategy and identifies priority areas for the period through to 2027:

- PLACES AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT
- PEOPLE & SKILLS
- INNOVATION

The strategy will be led by the Council's Economic Development and Regeneration Service but its implementation will involve collaborative working with a number of other teams at the Borough Council and partner organisations.

### **PLACES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Creating favourable conditions for economic growth is dependent on the provision of good infrastructure and a built environment in which businesses can thrive. We can play an influential role in this and will focus our activities on the following actions and objectives:

#### **A. TOWN CENTRES**

- Work with partners to improve the public appearance and encourage investment in Loughborough town centre.
- Collaborate with the Business Improvement District to promote events and support businesses under the "Love Loughborough" brand.
- Support the increase in Council led events across Charnwood
- Continue delivering the Shepshed public realm.
- Ensure delivery of the Living Loughborough and Lanes and Links Town Deal projects
- Work with partners to look for opportunities for regeneration of our town centres across Charnwood.

#### **B. DELIVERING INFRASTRUCTURE AND EMPLOYMENT LAND / PREMISES**

- Support and influence power infrastructure providers to deliver capacity which meets the future needs of existing and incoming businesses in partnership with Planning and Growth.

- Support the facilitation of the supply of major employment sites and enable infrastructure through planning and growth delivery mechanisms.
- Work with partners to enable the regeneration of the East Loughborough Industrial Heritage Quarter.

### **C. DEVELOPING A STRONG BOROUGH-WIDE ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE**

- Work with partners to drive forward possible regeneration opportunities including those highlighted in the Regeneration Prospectus.
- Encourage and facilitate the diversification of the rural economy to deliver jobs and business opportunities.
- Working collaboratively with Leicestershire County Council to support increased digital connectivity and speed across all parts of Charnwood to help reduce the need to travel and encourage homeworking.
- Promote initiatives which support businesses to make efficient use of resources, reduce waste and improve efficiency to reduce environmental impact.

### **D. MARKETING CHARNWOOD AS A DESTINATION OF CHOICE FOR VISITORS**

- Undertake a place marketing activity linked to the Invest Leicester team and strategic initiatives for the county.
- Work with partners to enhance further the quality of events and visitor attractions.

### **BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT**

Charnwood consists of a wide variety of businesses, across various sectors and size including SME's, this strategy will work to provide a positive business environment for all. Businesses drive success in the local economy, but we recognise that there are many occasions when businesses can need some support. We will prioritise business support delivered in Charnwood, including for scale-ups as well as start-ups.

Locations which encourage and facilitate good interaction amongst business support agencies, and which offer a strong 'welcome' to relocating / new businesses are best positioned to create a vibrant environment for businesses which is able to respond to everchanging economic circumstances, as well as looking to support businesses in Charnwood who needs mean they may need to relocate, to choose to do this within Charnwood.

Charnwood has a strong reputation as a business-friendly area, and we will improve this further through the following actions and objectives:

#### **A. CREATING A FERTILE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT FOR GROWTH**

- Promote the availability of support to businesses across Charnwood.



- Provide access to information about programmes and organisations which help our businesses to progress, start-up, survive and access business support / funding opportunities.
- Work with partner organisations to promote Charnwood as a vibrant easily accessible area for business activity and growth.
- Give first class advice about regulatory aspects of running a business and promote the Better Business for All initiative.

#### **B. PROMOTING INWARD INVESTMENT AND ENGAGING WITH BUSINESSES**

- Maximise awareness of the opportunities for business and investment presented by the Enterprise Zone and Life Sciences Opportunity Zone.
- Attract and support potential investors that could be interested in locating in Charnwood.
- Adopt an ‘aftercare’ approach for companies relocating to and active in Charnwood.
- Increase awareness of the ‘inCharnwood’ inward investment brand, promoting Charnwood as one of the UK’s prime locations for business.

### **PEOPLE & SKILLS**

Sustaining high levels of employment, achieving increased productivity in the local economy and future-proofing business success is best achieved where the local workforce has access to good education and skills training. However, employers identify that there are barriers to recruitment and retention of personnel – not because there are not enough people, but due to the absence of skills training relevant to the opportunities which exist in a modern, changing 21st century economy. We want to work with partners to help ensure that Charnwood residents can have better local jobs prospects and at the same time help our companies to have confidence that skills levels here will give them a competitive edge. In doing this, we will collaborate with partners to focus on the following actions and objectives:

#### **A. BUILDING A SKILLED AND LEARNING WORKFORCE**

- Enable workforce development, apprenticeships and the development of higher-level skills, including green skills and new technologies, AI, digital transformation across all sections of the community and for people from all types of backgrounds.
- Bring employers and education / training providers together to identify and address skills gaps in the local economy.
- Work with partner organisations to provide opportunities which encourage graduates to remain employed or in business within the borough.

#### **C. ENCOURAGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

- Support the delivery of or work partnership to Deliver an entrepreneurship and enterprise support programme in partnership with a suitable training provider(s).
- Ensure enterprise and entrepreneurship support programmes are targeted towards helping and encouraging those members of the community who are currently farthest from being in work or business.

## **INNOVATION**

The inCharnwood brand has a strapline of “Be at the Centre of Innovation”. The phrase is more than a marketing slogan, it reflects the fact that across Charnwood and in Loughborough in particular, there is a strong clustering of businesses involved in leading-edge innovative technologies. Innovation is increasingly important across all commercial sectors and can play a major part in the uplift of the value and competitiveness of a local economy. Charnwood can significantly capitalise on national Government efforts to drive and support innovation because of the presence of Loughborough University, two Enterprise Zone sites and a strong existing base of companies in high-value, innovative sectors. We intend to further enhance this position through the following actions and objectives:

### **A. STRENGTHEN CHARNWOOD’S EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND ADVANCED MANUFACTURING**

- Support innovation and key sectors’ growth partnerships / networks.
- Work closely with Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park (LUSEP) and Charnwood Campus to develop a cluster of high value companies and employment.
- Hold events which showcase innovation and bring innovative businesses together.

### **B. SUPPORT A PROGRESSIVE, KNOWLEDGE BASED ECONOMY WHICH FOSTERS INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO BUSINESS**

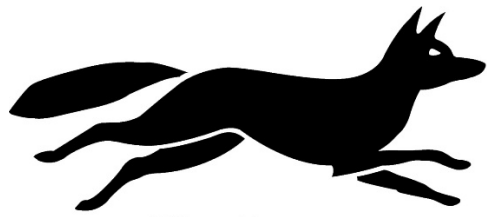
- Bolster and develop the Council’s relationship with Loughborough University, Loughborough College and other regional universities to encourage innovation and the commercialisation of research.
- Engage directly with innovation leaders and institutions to secure awareness of Charnwood’s offer and provide the catalyst for investment.

## **ACTIONS AND MONITORING**

This Strategy sets out strategic priorities and objectives.

The Council (and its partners) will develop action plans which show how the Strategy will be delivered. It is important that actions are monitored in order to evaluate performance of delivery and to assess how much progress is being made in achieving the objectives of the Strategy.

Monitoring of actions will occur through the Council’s scrutiny processes, regular updates to the responsible Lead Member within Cabinet and in consultation with the Economy and Skills Group of Charnwood Together.



# Charnwood



## **Charnwood Borough Council Economic Development Strategy Background Document**

<b>Date for review</b>	<b>Nov 24</b>	<b>Nov 25</b>	<b>Nov 26</b>	<b>Nov 27</b>
<b>Review completed (signature)</b>				

## Economic Development Strategy Background Document

### Background

This document gives an economic overview of Charnwood. This information will be updated on an annual basis which will help to develop a picture of not only where we are currently but also to show any changes or trends over the period of this Economic Development Strategy. Monitoring will cover footfall and vacancy rates in Loughborough, this data is provided by the BID monthly and September figures will be used to show annual changes. As Loughborough is the largest town in the Borough and the information is openly available it should give a good indication and reflect what is happening across the Borough, we also use data from across the region as well as from Charnwood. Each quarter East Midlands Chamber of Commerce compile an economic survey, this includes Charnwood Businesses, our aim is to encourage more Charnwood businesses to regularly take part in these to ensure our voice is heard. We will monitor against Q2 to capture the information including September to reflect against our local situation. As well as this we will monitor other relevant data that may affect the economic situation.

### Information from East Midlands – taken from East Midlands Chamber of Commerce

East Midlands is showing improvements in sales activity, cashflow and pricing expectations which is above expectations nationally. Recruitment is improving across the region with less businesses for the second quarter reporting difficulties in recruiting new staff than previously. This is also corresponding with other responses to the survey that shows that the recent increases in utility costs, wages and fuel are easing for businesses, which is reflected in the fall in pressure to increase their own prices, down from 54% the previous quarter to 36% in Q2. The impact of this is that businesses are reporting a more positive expectation that their profitability will grow over the next quarter, from 28%, 34%, 38% to 41% respectively across the last four quarters. At Charnwood we must ensure that we continue to provide support to businesses to start and grow and that they are in the best position to move forward.

### Information from Charnwood – taken from Office for National Statistics (ONS)

From the 2011 Census to Census 2021 Charnwood saw a percentage population growth higher than both the national (6.6% growth) and East Midlands (7.7% growth) with 10.8% growth, taking the population passed 180,000. Whilst private renting in Charnwood increased by 3.2% this represents 17.4% of the population.

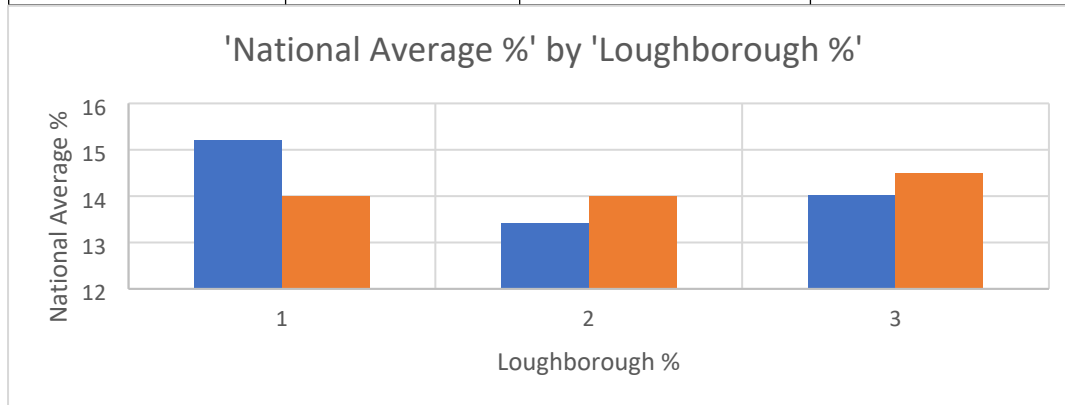
Status	2011 Census	2021 Census
Owens outright or with a mortgage or loan	72.1%	69.8%
Shared ownership	0.8%	1.0%
Social rented	11.8%	11.7%
Private rented	14.1%	17.4%
Lives rent free	1.2%	0.1%

The 2021 Census also shows that 30.2% of the working population (25,638 residents over 16 years and in employment) are now working mainly at home, this rise will impact on town centre footfall and will influence shopping habits and potentially the viability of town centre shops. If a person is travelling to work daily, they will be more tempted to visit retail units, also consequentially a person who is home daily will find it easier to have their online shopping delivered to their home address as they will spend longer there than when going out to work.

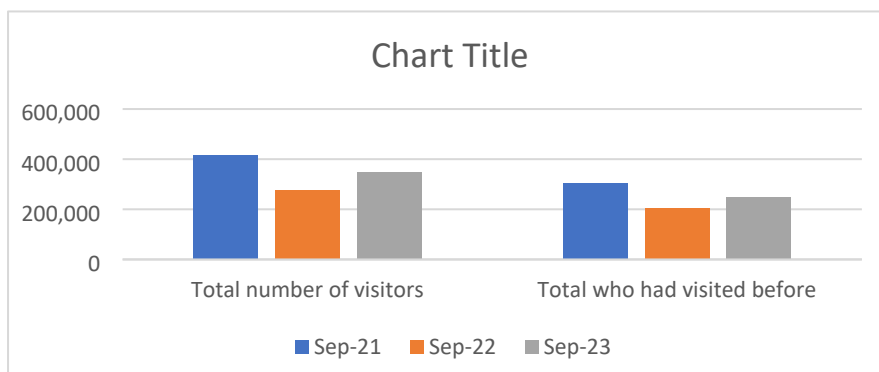
**Information from Loughborough – taken from the Loughborough BID**

**Vacancy rates in Loughborough town centre**

Date	Chart – horizontal axis ref	Loughborough %	National Average %
September 2023	1	15.20	14.00
September 2022	2	13.41	14.00
September 2021	3	14.01	14.50

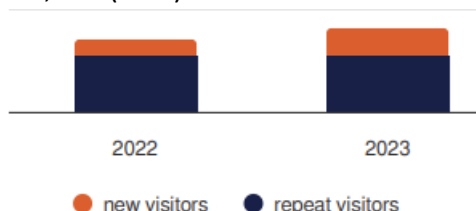


**Footfall in Loughborough town centre**



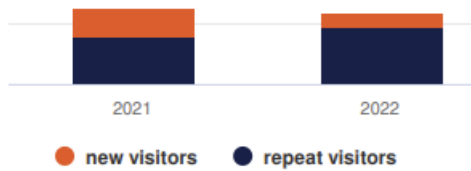
**Sept 23**

- The total number of visitors was 349,219 of which 248,008 (71%) have visited previously and 101,211 (29%) were new.



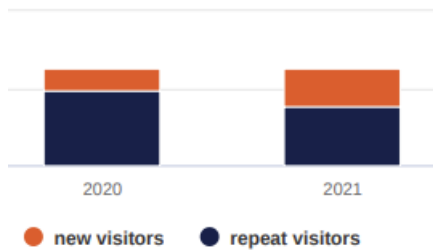
**Sept 22**

- The total number of visitors was 278,574 of which 203,263 (73%) have visited previously and 75,310 (27%) were new.



**Sept 21**

- The total number of visitors was 415,193 of which 302,856 (73%) have visited previously and 112,338 (27%) were new.



**LLEP updates on business trends**

The image below compares the monthly number of dissolved and incorporated businesses across the LLEP from January 2022 to August 2023.

Figure 18 compares the monthly numbers of dissolved and incorporated businesses for the period January 2022 onwards.

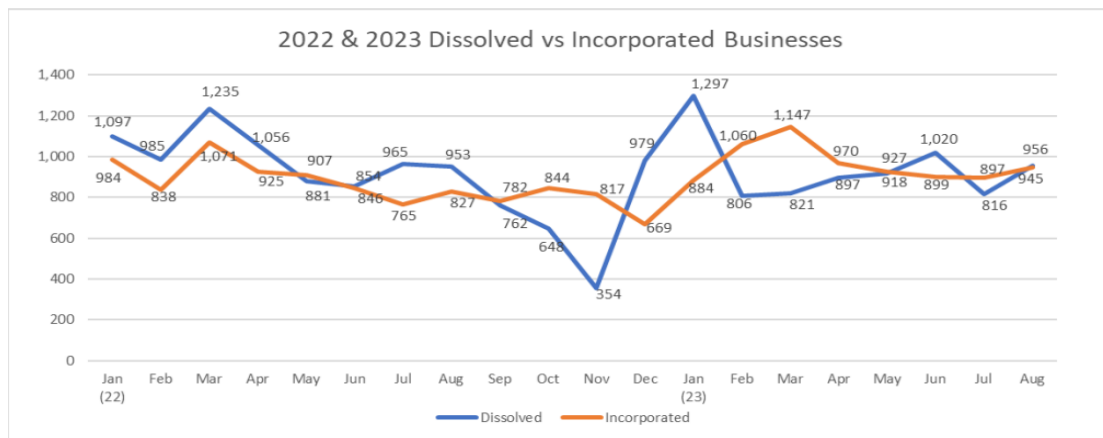


Figure 18: LLEP Area Dissolved and Incorporated Businesses Monthly Comparator  
Source: BVD Fame

When comparing closures with incorporations across the LLEP in 2023 (YTD) there were 7,531 closures and 7,729 incorporations. The is a difference of 198. In Charnwood there were 824 dissolved businesses against 959 incorporated businesses, a difference of 135. Not every council reflected this with half seeing more dissolved businesses than incorporated.

## **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS & Responses**

Consultation List:

Internal:

- Housing
- Planning
- Sustainability
- Cllr Tillotson
- Matt Bradford

External:

- Loughborough University
- Loughborough College
- BID
- Shepshed Town Team
- MP's
- FSB -
- E Mids Chamber

Seven questions as part of the consultation exercise.

The 7 questions and responses:

**Q1. Are the four main strategic priority areas of Places and Infrastructure, Business Environment, People, and Innovation appropriate?**

- The proposed priorities seem to be appropriate.
- Would recommend that the People section becomes People & Skills
- Yes, however we would suggest that 'People' should become 'People **and skills**' and should be considered in moving to be the priority as they are the key part of the strategy and central to the work of Charnwood and partners.
- 

**Q2. Has the Strategy omitted any significant objectives which, in your view, should be included? (If so, what are they and why are they important?)**

- Notes are track changed to the attached document and under each are some suggestions of additional objectives most of which are in process so far through various initiatives. I've tried to draft text in the comments so if you do choose to add them, you have some proposed text already.
- One suggestion I would make is that you could potentially provide more specificity on named projects or partners – for example in some cases Town Deal projects are named (Town Centres - section A bullet 4) in others there is no explicit reference to specific projects (People – section C bullet 1 / 2 no mention of work undertaken by LUinc. in support of businesses hence the suggestion of 'building on...' addition) appreciate you can't namecheck everyone / thing but just an suggestion.
- See my suggested additions in Business Environment Section A - on clusters, John Weightman recently share this information which might be of interest and relevance:

<https://www.centreforcities.org/publication/innovation-hotspots-clustering-the-new-economy/#:~:text=Hotspots%20are%20places%20where%20innovative,work-ers%20within%20and%20between%20companies>

In this respect, this strategy could make more specific mention of existing and growing clusters and 'strengths of Charnwood' hence my suggesting to include more on sport, health, wellbeing, net zero, manufacturing etc. you will see this features in a number of comments on Business Env section.

- Another point, not captured in my comments made in document, is that there might be more which could be said about exploration of how best to leverage value from local clusters in support of those most in need across our communities – Town Deal Healthy & Innovative Living Project is a good example of this in action.
- Another point to consider is whether the strategy captures the strong need for the workforce to upskill into new technologies. With the emergence of AI and a variety of advanced manufacturing methods and new ways and means of working it would be good to see more captured on the need to upskill people in new technologies in particular corresponding with the governments science and technology – and again this being for the whole borough not just the tech focussed areas. Again, Town Deal offers a vehicle to 'deliver' on this and connecting with the University DigiLabs and Lou College initiatives.
- Within Places and Infrastructure A. we would suggest including all the Towns Deal projects as a collective, these could be referred to as a 'building on the success of'...and 'we will work with partners to continue the delivery of...'
- 
- Within Places and Infrastructure B. Delivering Infrastructure and Employment Land/Premises we would propose an additional bullet point that references skills needed to deliver this infrastructure – working with partners to develop an offer that can be part of a package that attracts large employers to the area.
- 
- Within Places and Infrastructure C. Developing a Strong Borough-Wide Economy and Sustainable Practice there is a reference to digital, we feel the strategy would benefit from a focus/objective on AI and digital transformation to enable Charnwood to be forward thinking with the infrastructure to support the future needs of businesses in the area.
- 
- Within Business Environment there is no reference to Loughborough University Incubator which delivers this in the local area, alongside activity from the Business Gateway Hub at the LLEP. We would suggest including these organisations and the work they deliver to reduce the chance of duplication and ensure complementary support. This comment is also relevant to the People C. Encouraging Entrepreneurship.
- 
- Within Business Environment B 'attract and support potential investors', we would suggest also including the 'development of the support package', this offer could be very impactful across all partners including training providers to attract business and investment to the area.
- 
- Within People A. 'Building a Skilled and Learning Workforce' – we aren't clear on what this sentence is trying to say.
- 
- Within People A. 'Building a Skilled and Learning Workforce' – bullet point two 'bring employers and education together. This is activity undertaken by the East Midlands Chamber in



their role as the Employer Representative Body for the Local Skills Improvement Plan and therefore there may be a duplication here. We would suggest that the Local Skills Improvement Plan is also referenced in the strategy.

- 
- Within People A. 'Building a Skilled and Learning Workforce' – bullet point three 'encourage graduates to remain in the borough'. We would also propose consideration being given to engagement of businesses during study and offering of work placements across Further Education and Higher Education to enable this to happen. Our experience has found that students grow loyalty and commitment to businesses when they engage with them and if this can be earlier in their study, they are more likely to stay post-graduation.
- 
- Within People A. 'Building a Skilled and Learning Workforce' – the student population in the area and connection between people, skills and business growth doesn't feature here however we believe it is key to delivering a skilled workforce and so inclusion should be considered.
- 
- Within Innovation there isn't reference to the role of Further Education and Colleges role. There may be a point missing here in terms of the process innovation that businesses can deliver where large R&D isn't required but small improvements replicated in a process can lead to business innovation. This is particularly relevant to our SME population of businesses and connects with existing work being delivered by the college and into innovation organisations such as Innovate Edge hosted out of the East Midlands Chamber.
- 
- Place planning is key when considering any influx of businesses or expected population growth and how capital/infrastructure investment will be targeted in this area. Place infrastructure including education infrastructure, and more practically school and college places should be considered to connect the infrastructure and place objectives. In addition, there is an ongoing need for local student accommodation post 16 that isn't referred to in the infrastructure section. This would drive economic development within Charnwood, and we would recommend this is included within the strategy with support and incentives for those who are able to partner to enable this to be delivered.
- 

**Q3. Does the Strategy include too many objectives?**

- Subject to the additional proposed objectives the number of objectives seems to be just right. Particularly as for many we have 'live' projects already seeking to address these and therefore there is good chance we will make solid progress together on them.
- The overarching number of 4 seems to be correct. In considering suggestions above we would recommend the inclusion of 2 or 3 objectives within these.

**Q4. Does the strategy provide a useful platform upon which collaborative working and delivery of actions can be developed?**

- Certainly; though through suggested additions I have tried to add depth to these and articulate wording which might be relevant if we work together on joint bids or explore other opportunities in the future (e.g. comment on Town Centres section C bullet 3 is an example of this)

- The objectives outlined do provide a framework for collaborative working however we would need to be clearer on the intent and where accountability sits to maintain engagement in the delivery of the strategy. Further detail in the actions and monitoring section would help us to understand this.

**Q5. What would be your ‘Top 3’ areas of action from those which are included within the draft Strategy?**

This is difficult to answer! All of it is very important to us but I would consider the following top priorities from my perspective:

- 1) Town Centres – animating the town centres and Loughborough as a place for people to setup businesses but also to live and engage in community and leisure
- 2) CREATING A FERTILE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT FOR GROWTH – promotion of business support to businesses and what the support offer comprises, who deliver it etc. & ENCOURAGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP – working with individuals to inspire them and support them to explore entrepreneurship and to upskill to understand how to plan, experiment, build, test, and develop new businesses and innovations
- 3) SUPPORT A PROGRESSIVE, KNOWLEDGE BASED ECONOMY WHICH FOSTERS INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO BUSINESS - Building up and raising profile of our clusters and particular strengths across the Borough
- Support the facilitation of the supply of major employment sites and enable infrastructure through planning and growth delivery mechanisms. – we would recommend including skills here as referenced above.
- Work with partner organisations to provide opportunities which encourage graduates to remain employed or in business within the borough. – we would recommend considering during study opportunities also as referenced above.
- Support innovation and key sectors’ growth partnerships / networks – we would recommend a reference to colleges and the role of further educations here as reference above, either within this objective or as a separate objective in this section.

**Q6. Is the Strategy relevant to the needs of businesses in Charnwood?**

Yes it’s relevant, though the action plans should give greater specificity to how this activity will unfold.

Also, picking up a comment made in the document on Business Env introductory section, suggest there should be greater reference made to SMEs and/or more ‘established’ small businesses as well as earlier stage and/or knowledge based businesses.

The SME voice is extremely important within the area and this doesn’t seem to feature heavily enough within the strategy. The focus on inward investment and the reference in Business Environment A. Creating a Fertile Business Environment for Growth supports a lot of the ongoing activity. Is there an opportunity to be more ambitious here to support further impact for existing businesses? We would also suggest aligning the areas referred to here with the people and skills challenges outlined in the People section to ensure consistent messaging.

**Q7. Will the Strategy help facilitate an inclusive approach to economic development, for all parts of the borough and for people and businesses of diverse circumstances?**

The objectives outlined do provide a framework for this, further connectivity across the strategy between the objectives may help to broaden the impact.

**General Comments given:**

- Sport, physical activity and health have no mention in the strategy. The volume of businesses in the area and events that these generate is really valuable to the local economy.
- We would suggest there would be value in broader reference to the wider regional investment connections, such as the Freeport, as employment opportunities here will benefit people from within Charnwood, this connection may also assist with driving the Charnwood strategy.

I like the 4 main strategic priority areas and I can't think of any other main areas for inclusion and yes, clearly relevant to the needs of quality businesses.

I did wonder if there were too many objectives, but couldn't come to any conclusion about which ones to omit and I believe it does provide a sound basis on which to work with partners. We could combine People and building a skilled workforce.

It is hard to identify what is more important, but my top 3 areas of action are:

- working with partners to drive forward regeneration opportunities.
- Create a fertile business environment for growth.
- Sustain high levels of employment.

While I am substantially happy with the document, I have a few minor thoughts:

In developing a strong borough wide economy, do we want to encourage more homeworking? Could we instead change the end of this paragraph, after Charnwood, to limit the need to travel and enable homeworking, while recognising that in most cases 100% homeworking is not desirable ( could also add as high levels of homeworking is known to impact other parts of the economy and also have a detrimental effect on the mental health of individuals).

In creating a fertile business environment for growth: work with partner organisations to promote Charnwood as a vibrant easily accessible area for business activity and growth.

And finally, in either People or building a skilled workforce, could we say develop strategies and opportunities to encourage local graduates to stay local.



# **Equality Impact Assessment Economic Development Strategy 2024 - 2027**

- **Background**

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

- **Legislation- Equality Duty**

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation.
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

**For the following protected characteristics:**

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Gender reassignment
- ✓ Marriage and civil partnership
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Religion and belief
- ✓ Sex (Gender)
- ✓ Sexual orientation

**What is prohibited?**

- ✓ Direct Discrimination
- ✓ Indirect Discrimination
- ✓ Harassment
- ✓ Victimisation
- ✓ Discrimination by association
- ✓ Discrimination by perception
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
- ✓ Discrimination arising from disability
- ✓ Failing to make reasonable adjustments

**Complete this action plan as you go through the questions**

- **Step 1 – Introductory information**

Title of the policy / strategy / project	<b>Economic Development Strategy 2024 – 2027</b>
Lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	<b>Lead Officer: Liz McCusker</b>
Date EIA started	<b>15<sup>th</sup> January 2024</b>
Date EIA completed	<b>18<sup>th</sup> January 2024</b>

● **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed**

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy, Strategy, project? (Specify aims and objectives)
The Economic Development Strategy 2024 – 2027 sets out the objectives to help facilitate a stronger economy for Charnwood and enable the development of action plans to deliver the strategic priorities.
What specific group/s is the policy, Strategy, project designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?
The strategy shows the four main strategic themes: Places and Infrastructure; Business Environment; People (and skills) and Innovation. Working across these themes will positively impact on the business community and residents of Charnwood including those with protected characteristic groups. Successful delivery of the economic strategy should benefit all groups in Charnwood including those with protected characteristics and monitoring to ensure that each action plan and partners we will work with adhere to equality at all levels. The purpose of the strategy should not have any adverse impact on any groups or individuals as its purpose is to make improvements for all.
Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy, Strategy, Policy?
Consultation has taken place with Loughborough College, Loughborough University, and business groups, such as FSB and East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, data has also been incorporated from the ONS to identify statistics of Charnwood.

● **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc. Data/information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation</li> <li>• Previous Equality Impact Assessments</li> <li>• Demographic information</li> <li>• Anecdotal and other evidence</li> </ul>
Use of ONS data to monitor aspects related to economy, this is to be reviewed annually and any adjustments to work and actions is incorporated. All partnerships will be checked to ensure that they have an equalities policy which they adhere to.  Various programmes will provide monitoring opportunities to review data to ensure all groups are able to engage, be represented and included in our work. Materials used will also be checked prior to being used to ensure representation and appropriateness for all.
What does this information / data tell you about diverse group? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)
The development of the economic development strategy will ensure that the actions and objectives provide positive outcomes for everyone living and working in Charnwood. Where a potential adverse impact is identified through consultation, review, and engagement this will be either addressed via

mitigating action within the strategy and/or the associated action plans or where appropriate in specific partnership and/or programmes to address any inequality issues.

● **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

Considering the answers given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not explain why.

Not in this circumstance. The strategy is an overarching strategy which will include a range of initiatives and different projects which are designed to provide positive outcomes for the wider community. Further consultation with individuals of protected characteristics, will take place as part of the ongoing development and implementation of these specific projects and initiatives which make up the strategy.

● **Step 5 – Assessing the impact**

Considering any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge, identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups who identify with any ‘protected characteristics’ and provide an explanation for your decision. Please refer to the general duties on the front page.

Age	<p>Positive Impact - Overall the strategy should have a positive impact on individuals of all ages across Charnwood.</p> <p>Specific initiatives may have age restrictions, especially some of the work with partners in education, however at all stages this will be challenged, and restrictions will only apply in appropriate situations, such as legal age restrictions with certain jobs, courses, i.e. Driving age, serving alcohol.</p>
<p>Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Physical</li> <li>● Visual</li> <li>● Hearing</li> <li>● learning disabilities</li> <li>● mental health</li> </ul>	<p>Positive Impact - The actions and objectives set out in the strategy should have a positive impact on this protected characteristic. All action plans will need to provide all reasonable access and adaptations to be inclusive, whichever disability is presented at all times, if venues are chosen and then cannot provide any requirements, alternatives will be found, whether this is physical, visual, hearing, learning or mental.</p>
Gender Reassignment (Transgender)	<p>Neutral Impact - No activity, outcomes of this strategy should impact negatively on anyone in this characteristic. A potential barrier may be access to and availability of relevant information as there is little national and local information on gender re-assignment both within the Council and other organisations. Therefore, additional engagement and monitoring may be required to ensure there is no negative impact whether intended or not.</p>



Race	Positive Impact - The actions and objectives of the strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristics of race. Delivery and action plans will be open to all who participate, and a strong economy will have a positive impact on businesses and residents of Charnwood.
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	Positive Impact - The actions and objectives of the strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristics of religion or beliefs. Delivery and action plans will be open to all who participate, and a strong economy will have a positive impact on businesses and residents of Charnwood.
Sex (Gender)	Positive Impact - The actions and objectives of the strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristics of sex. Delivery and action plans will be open to all who participate, and a strong economy will have a positive impact on businesses and residents of Charnwood.
Sexual Orientation	Positive Impact - The actions and objectives of the strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristics of sexual orientation. Delivery and action plans will be open to all who participate, and a strong economy will have a positive impact on businesses and residents of Charnwood.
Other protected groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregnancy &amp; maternity</li> <li>• Marriage &amp; civil partnership</li> </ul>	Positive Impact - The actions and objectives of the strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristics of pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnerships. Delivery and action plans will be open to all who participate, and a strong economy will have a positive impact on businesses and residents of Charnwood.
Other socially excluded groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carers</li> <li>• Low literacy</li> <li>• Priority neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Health inequalities</li> <li>• Rural isolation</li> <li>• Asylum seeker and refugee communities</li> </ul>	Positive Impact - The actions and objectives of the strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities including carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation and asylum seekers and refugee communities.

Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.

- If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.
- Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.

Equality Impact Assessments will also be undertaken where appropriate on individual elements of the projects and initiatives which will deliver the strategy.

Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

The economic development strategy 2024 – 2027 aims to provide a positive impact for all individuals living and working in Charnwood and therefore meets the Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity.

● **Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation, review**

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? How will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?

Once the strategy has been approved action plans will be developed, these will show actions matched against the strategy's priorities and objectives, and have where appropriate performance indicators, when implementing the action plans where appropriate EIA's will be undertaken to mitigate any barriers or adverse impacts to any of the protected characteristics.

How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g., policy reviews, annual plans, and use of performance management systems.

The recommendations of this assessment will be shared with the Economic Development and Regeneration team. Monitoring will take place annually and at relevant stages of implementation and delivery of the action plans.

● **Step 7- Action Plan**

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan. The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan

Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
001	Further consider the protected characteristics of gender reassignment and sexual orientation when developing and implementing action plans against the economic development strategy.	Economic Development Manager	Ongoing

● **Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

	Who needs to know?	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees		The EIA will be available via the information from cabinet meetings including online. It can also be requested via email to the Economic Development and Regeneration Team

Partners and stakeholders		The EIA will be available via the information from cabinet meetings including online. It can also be requested via email to the Economic Development and Regeneration Team
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?	N/A	N/A

- **Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the **Service Head**)**

<b>I agree with this assessment</b>
Signed (Service Head): Christopher Grace
Date: 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2024

Please send completed & signed assessment to **Vicky Brackenbury** for publishing.