

CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL
HELD IN
VICTORIA ROOM, LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN HALL
ON 5TH SEPTEMBER 2022

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Tillotson)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Smidowicz)

Councillor Bailey	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Baines	Councillor Lowe
Councillor Barkley	Councillor Mercer
Councillor Bokor	Councillor Miah
Councillor J. Bradshaw	Councillor Morgan
Councillor S. Bradshaw	Councillor Murphy
Councillor Brookes	Councillor Needham
Councillor Campsall	Councillor Pacey
Councillor Capleton	Councillor Parsons
Councillor Charles	Councillor Parton
Councillor Draycott	Councillor Poland
Councillor Forrest	Councillor Popley
Councillor Fryer	Councillor Radford
Councillor Gerrard	Councillor Ranson
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Rattray
Councillor A. Gray	Councillor Rollings
Councillor B. Gray	Councillor Savage
Councillor Grimley	Councillor Seaton
Councillor Hadji-Nikolaou	Councillor Smidowicz
Councillor Hamilton	Councillor Snartt
Councillor Harper-Davies	Councillor Taylor
Councillor C. Harris	Councillor Ward
Councillor K. Harris	Councillor Williams

Honorary Aldermen Day

38. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bentley, Boldrin, Howe, Paling and Shepherd,

Apologies for absence had been received from Honorary Aldermen Bush, Shields, Stott and Tormey.

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

No disclosures were made.

40. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 4th July 2022 were confirmed and signed.

41. ANNOUNCEMENTS

42. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made the following announcements.

“I would like to tell you about three upcoming events for my charity, Rainbows. The first one is on the 30th September. It is an event that Morrison’s are organising for Rainbows. It is to be held here (Loughborough Town Hall), a charity ball and pie and pea supper. There’s going to be live music and Morrison’s are going to be covering all the expenses, and also promised to match the funds raised at the event. If you possibly can, it would be wonderful if people could attend.

The second is on the 8th October and this again, is for Rainbows, and it is abseiling Derby Cathedral. If that doesn’t appeal, you might want to consider sponsoring Councillor Baines, who has agreed to do it. If anybody hasn’t already supported him and would like to, then please do support Councillor Baines in his endeavours.

The final event is on the 8th November, which is a curry night at Eastern Spice. There will be a grand raffle and prizes, including a magnum of champagne and other prizes. I know times are hard, and this is making fundraising really hard. So if you could support one or all of these events, I would be very grateful, as will the people that use Rainbows.”

43. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader made the following announcements.

“It’s been a while since our last meeting, so quite a lot has happened. I’d like to pay my thanks to the staff that have left us over the last few months, some to move closer to family, others to retire. Particularly, I’d like to pay my thanks to Eileen Mallon, who was our Strategic Director: Community, Planning and Housing and stepped down on Friday. I know many people in this room were able to make her farewell and thanks over lunch and drinks later on in the evening. I pay a huge amount of thanks to Eileen, who has been with us at Charnwood for many years.

I would also like to congratulate Peter Oliver, who has become the Director of Housing and Wellbeing and Karey Barnshaw, who has become the Director of Customer Experience. I wish them well in their endeavours.

On a personal basis on behalf of all councillors, I would also like to congratulate Councillor Hunt. It is very rare for a councillor to be appointed a Government Minister. I am impressed that Councillor Hunt is here this evening. We wish her well and it is a

huge pride for Charnwood to be associated with somebody carrying out a national role as well.

On a personal level on behalf of all councillors, I'd like to pay our good wishes to Edward Argar MP for Charnwood, who got married this past weekend. I know on behalf of all councillors, I pay congratulations to him and his wife, Tish, and we wish them well for the future."

44. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chief Executive made no announcements.

45. PETITIONS

No petitions were submitted.

46. BUSINESS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

47. CAPITAL PLAN OUTTURN REPORT 2021 -22

A report of the Cabinet to consider a recommendation of the Cabinet in respect of the Capital Plan Outturn Report 2021-22., was submitted (item 6.1 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

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

RESOLVED that the outturn position for 2021/22 be noted and slippage of capital budgets totalling £36,370,400, being General Fund £33,384,000 and Housing Revenue Account £2,985,600, be carried forward into 2022/23 and added to the new 3 Year Capital Plan.

Reason

To ensure compliance with Financial Regulations and that Capital projects are completed.

48. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN REVIEW LETTER 2021-22

A report of the Monitoring Officer to make Members aware of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's (LGSCO) review letter for 2021/22 and three cases of complaints that were upheld by the LGSCO during the year, in accordance with the LGSCO's guidance which is that the Monitoring Officer should make a periodic report to councillors summarising any upheld complaints, was submitted (item 6.2 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

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

RESOLVED that the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's appended review letter for 2021/22, and the summary of the upheld complaints as set out in Part B of this report, be noted.

Reason

To comply with the guidance from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman that the Monitoring Officer should make Members aware of upheld complaints on a periodic basis.

49. CALL-IN REFERENCES

There were no call-in references from Scrutiny.

50. POSITION STATEMENTS

51. COST OF LIVING

The Labour Group had given notice of a position statement on the Cost of Living (item 8.1 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The following points were raised by Councillors:

The Leader introduced the Position Statement on the Cost of Living by stating that everyone was aware of the rising energy costs as a direct impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He stated that the Ukraine had the full support of the Council, and that the issues regarding energy prices would not end soon. He stated that the new Prime Minister would need to be bold and stated that locally the Council would do everything possible to support the Government's plan when it is announced. He went on to confirm that the Council would support local partners to help residents and businesses across Charnwood.

Officers had been working on a plan and comments made at the meeting would be fed through to officers to help produce a report to Cabinet. The Leader intended on including the Position Statement on the Cost of Living with the report to Cabinet.

The Leader continued by highlighting that the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy was likely to include £1.3m in spending to cover staff and energy costs.

The Council had created a comprehensive support website. The Leader finished by reiterating that the impact of the Ukrainian invasion would be lasting and that support locally, nationally and internationally would need to focus on residents and businesses and be sustainable for the long term.

Councillor Miah stated that he believed councillors had a responsibility to ensure residents were supported. He stated that the new Prime Minister would ultimately decide the larger plan, but he would like to see the most vulnerable members of the

community receive support. Councillor Miah referred to the financial reserves held by the Council and suggested that these be utilised to support residents.

Councillor Parton referred to the Local Government Associate (LGA) website which included a cost of living hub, containing information on best practice from councils across the country in terms of aspects such as food insecurity and poverty and fuel and energy. Councillor Parton went on to say that Charnwood Borough Council's website included much of the support which was considered best practice by the LGA. He referred to the strong emphasis on mental health that Charnwood Borough Council's website included and thanked Council for this approach.

Councillor Hamilton also highlighted the reserve funding of the council and stated that this funding could be used to support voluntary and community groups to increase the resources available. Councillor Hamilton suggested introducing a discretionary fund to support residents facing financial hardship, using the eligibility criteria of Leicestershire County Council.

Councillor Barkley referred to the financial reserves of the Council and stated that £13m had already been earmarked towards projects. He stated that the working balances were £6m and within three years, this would be reduced to £2m, which was the minimum required by the Council. He stated that the incoming Government were aware of the cost of living and all members of the council and community were impacted by the Ukrainian invasion and increased energy prices. He stated that the Council would do everything possible to support residents and highlighted the existing discretionary funding available to residents, including discretionary housing benefit and Council Tax relief.

Councillor Poland stated that he had had discussions with officers about ways the Council could support residents. He highlighted that the Council employed a number of Financial Inclusion Officers whose role was to support residents with financial difficulties. Councillor Poland urged any residents to seek support from the Council if they needed it.

Councillor Forrest commended the Council for committing to reinstate with its partners the Charnwood Community Action group to help coordinate the response to cost-of-living pressures. She asked what Community Action Groups would be asked to do and how much money they would be provided with in order to undertake these tasks? Councillor Forrest also suggested that the Council supported organisations to facilitate 'warm banks' for residents to attend to socialise in a warm environment.

Councillor Draycott suggested that the Council supported food banks prior to the upcoming winter months. Councillor Draycott highlighted the eviction-free period adopted during the Covid-19 Pandemic and suggested that this be reconsidered. She also echoed Councillor Forrest's suggestion regarding the provision for 'warm banks'. Councillor Draycott felt that food banks and warm banks should be mapped and that information on these facilities should be communicated through various channels.

Councillor Grimley stated that he had received good feedback during the Covid-19 Pandemic regarding the efficiency of the financial payments administered by the council. He said he hoped that any Government support offered could be administered in the same efficient way.

Councillor Mercer thanked Councillor Miah for raising the issue and stated that the Council was already working to help support residents with financial difficulties. He encouraged members to provide any further ideas to the officer team.

Councillor Seaton stated that councillors were able to encourage residents and community groups to undertake the support of the Council and other resources in local areas such as food banks.

Councillor Goddard highlighted the desperation of some of the residents in local communities. She asked when community centres would be consulted on what was required of them and when the energy study outlined in a report referred to Cabinet would be complete?

The Leader thanked all of the members that had participated in the discussion and stated that the discussion had demonstrated the passion and commitment of all of the members of the council. The Leader thanked Councillor Miah for raising the issue and stated that work was already being undertaken by officers to help alleviate the coming pressures. He echoed what Councillor Parton had said about the high standards of work that the Council had undertaken and stated that the Council was often cited as demonstrating best practice. The Leader emphasised that residents were encouraged to seek support from the Council and its partners.

He stated that the submission of a Cabinet report on the cost of living would include a pre-decision review by the Scrutiny Commission prior to a decision being made and that the process would be undertaken as quickly as possible.

The Leader also emphasised that supporting local businesses was key in order to ensure the Borough moves through the issues raised. He confirmed that the Council would work equally as efficient as they did during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

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

RESOLVED that the Position Statement be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

Reason

To enable the Cabinet to decide how to respond to the issue appropriately.

52. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

No motions on notice had been submitted.

53. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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

54. LIMEHURST DEPOT

Councillor Miah did not wish to ask a supplementary question.

55. MINUTE REFERENCES

There were no minute references.

56. URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS EXEMPTED FROM CALL-IN

A report of the Chief Executive to note decisions which were exempted from call-in in accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.9. (item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Miah referred to the Council Tax rebate scheme and asked whether there was a mechanism to allow unpaid Council Tax rebate funds to be credited to a bank account in order to allow the individual to allocate the funds towards energy costs?

The Leader stated that it was a national scheme and that he would ask officers to provide an answer following the meeting.

57. DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

A report of the Chief Executive to inform Council of delegations of executive Functions was submitted (item 13 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

58. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

There were no proposals to consider.

Note:

These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Monday 7th November 2022.