

COUNCIL – 19TH JUNE 2023

ITEM 10 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

10.1 Councillor D Taylor – Landlord Services

Following the Landlord Services Capacity paper that went to Cabinet on 1st June, can the Lead Member please provide the following information:

The Leader or his nominee will respond;

1. How many council-owned void properties does the council have at the current time?

404

2. How many council-owned properties are waiting for major repairs that are empty?

139, of which 50 are sheltered.

3. With the additional HRA salary increase budget of £102.8k how many council-owned properties will be decarbonised and how many sheltered accommodation blocks will be improved?

This investment will fund a dedicated Head of Landlord Services post to provide capacity to (amongst other things) take forward key actions contained in the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2023-2028 which was approved by Cabinet on the 9th March 2023. These actions include development of a roadmap for delivery of SAP C by 2030 and net zero carbon by 2050, and plans for improvements to sheltered accommodation. The quantities will be determined through development and progression of these plans.

4. With the additional £500k each year to be drawn down from the HRA Financing Fund, how many council-owned void properties are planned to be brought back to rentable condition each year?

It is expected a significant proportion of the £500k made available for investment will be used to increase the resources focussed on void repairs.

The number of void properties repaired by the in-house team over the last two years is set out below.

<i>21/22</i>	<i>263 voids</i>
<i>22/23</i>	<i>380 voids</i>

Whilst properties require varying degrees of work it is reasonable to presume that an increase in the capacity of the in-house team (or equivalent contracted capacity) would lead to a broadly proportionate increase in voids repaired.

10.2 Councillor Infield – Voids in Residential Housing Stock

What plans does the administration have to reduce the present high number of voids in its residential housing stock, and also to reduce the considerable backlog of housing repairs?

The Leader or his nominee will respond;

The recent Cabinet report titled Landlord Services Capacity set out a plan to put a dedicated Head of Landlord Services in place. It is anticipated this officer will play a key role around increasing our capacity to deal with the backlog of voids and deliver repairs faster.

Contracts worth over £20 million have recently been procured to deliver planned maintenance activity and are at various stages of mobilisation. Some of this is taking longer than expected as contractors have experienced labour and supply chain problems, which is a national issue. Contractors are taking steps to address this; however, the position has been further compounded by a slowdown in the provision of asbestos surveys to the Council, which are necessary for renovation works to take place. The Council has, in recent weeks, procured an additional asbestos surveying contractor. Delivery is therefore expected to increase significantly over the coming months as contractor resources increase in parallel with asbestos surveying.

10.3 Councillor Bokor - Public EV Charging Points in Charnwood

Could the Labour/Green Leader inform Council of its plans for introducing more public EV charging points in Charnwood as this is proven to be the main obstacle to people purchasing electric cars? There are only three in the Borough at the moment at Thurmaston, McDonalds Dishley & McDonalds Shelthorpe. What about Syston and Anstey?

The Leader or his nominee will respond;

There are other Electric Vehicle (EV) charging sites in the Borough which can be found on the Zap Map App. Charnwood Borough Council have four publicly available charge points on car parks in the Borough.

Charnwood Borough Council's Street Management Team put in a public electric vehicle charger in Beehive car park in 2012. This is a dual 7kW fast charger. The Council also have electric vehicle chargers dedicated to our Street management all electric wardens' vehicles (since 2014).

The Council have worked in partnership with the national highways authority to site a 50kW dual 'rapid' charger on Sileby car park for public use.

Projects Street Management are currently working on or supporting:

ORCS (On-Street Residential ChargePoint Scheme) – Sileby and Anstey

ORCS is a government funded scheme to provide Electric Vehicle infrastructure for residents that do not have driveways and therefore cannot charge vehicles from their homes. ORCS funding has been awarded to CBC and a contractor procured for: Anstey 4 x fast dual units, Sileby 3 x fast dual units. Legal contracts and lease agreements have finally been completed, so installation work should commence on-site imminently

Beehive and Southfields Offices Charge Electric Vehicle Charge Points

The Council has agreed the expansion of Electric Vehicle Charge Points (EVCPs) at Beehive Lane and Southfields Offices car parks. It is considered prudent to have the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) supply set up first with distribution and cabling installed and then the charge points can be added incrementally as demand increases. Initial supplier information has been received with cost estimates. Procurement will commence once further information on operating options is received.

Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Funding Leicestershire County Council (LCC) on street EVCPs

(LCC) are leading on a project for on-street residential charge points. LCC have been awarded funding through the government's LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) scheme. Charnwood Borough Council will have little involvement other than discussions on the proposed on-street site locations – All sites being on County Council highways

Flex-D solar hubs partly using LEVI funding and car share scheme Charnwood Borough Council is part of a Leicestershire wide project which has been awarded LEVI funding for the installation of Solar canopies, battery storage and electric vehicle charge points in Public car parks throughout the County. The project is headed up by Harborough District Council and supported by Nottingham City Council "Green" experts.

10.4 Councillor Bokor - Solar Panels on New Housing Developments in Charnwood

Could the Labour/Green Leader inform Council about making solar panels mandatory on all new housing developments in Charnwood, similar to the new houses being built in Rushcliffe off the A6006 at Sutton Bonington? If not, why not? In the same vein, is there any plans for installing solar panels on the Council offices and building assets, such as the Town Hall. Since the latter is having extensive roof repairs after the fire, surely this is a golden opportunity to make the Town Hall more energy self-sufficient and save money in the long term ?

The Leader or his nominee will respond;

Core Strategy Policy CS16 seeks to encourage sustainable construction to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change. However, planning policies cannot mandate the installation of solar panels because the regulation of these is governed by the Building Act 1984 and its Building Regulations. In setting the Building Regulations for this country the government has not chosen to mandate the installation of solar panels on new dwellings.

The Head of Assets & Property advises the option to install Photo Voltaic (PV) panels on the Council Offices and Town Hall to generate electricity has been explored along with options to improve several other significant assets. Energy efficient project feasibility studies are under regular review through the Climate Action Delivery Board.

However, the council is also currently conducting a strategic review of its operational assets to determine the future needs for the authority. It would not be appropriate to invest in further studies or installations until such time as the results of this wider assets review are known.

10.5 Councillor Bokor – New Council Housing

Could the Labour/Green Leader confirm what Council owned land is available in Loughborough or other towns in the borough to build new council housing as promised in their manifesto. How many could be achieved and at what estimated cost to the taxpayer? How would they raise the money?

The Leader or his nominee will respond;

The housing revenue account is funded by tenants' rent payments, not through taxes. Potential sources of funding for new council housing are:

- *Use of the HRA Self Financing Fund*
- *Additional borrowing*
- *Right to Buy receipts*
- *Grant from Homes England*

An indicative map showing land owned by the Council can be found on the Council's website at the page Interactive Maps. Work will need to take place to determine sites that are suitable for development.

10.6 Councillor Lawrence - Net-Zero by 2030 Goals

What steps will the administration take to ensure that the Council is on track to meet its net-zero by 2030 goals?

The Leader or his nominee will respond;

The Council has historically maintained two separate strategy documents for moving the Council towards Net Zero: The Climate Action Strategy (CAS) and the Carbon Neutral Plan (CNP). The CAS was originally used to capture service actions that contributed to environmental goals, whereas the CNP focused more on actions to reduce the Council's carbon score. The separate nature of these strategies meant that there was opportunity for actions to not be recognised or coordinated.

Officers have completed a new, combined strategy that blends both, and has had significant consultation with the public and partners. This The Plan is overseen by the Climate Action Board. Actions in the Plan are being progressed with collaboration from a number of Council services. Planned investments and efforts being made by different parts of the Council are taken into account to ensure the 2030 Net Zero goal is progressed. There are 13 projects within the Plan some of which require feasibility studies. There has been a notable change in costs of low carbon technology which has had an impact on progressing some actions. These changes have created new challenges but may create new opportunities or priorities which are not featured in this plan.

This will be coming to Members for consideration, following approvals from the Senior Leadership Team.

10.7 Councillor Needham - Waste Management Scrutiny Panel

Late last year, the Waste Management Scrutiny Panel made thirteen recommendations to Cabinet. Please could the Lead Member provide an update on the progress of these recommendations and assurances that they will be implemented, with a view to ensuring that the Council can demonstrate its commitment to good waste management and recycling?

The Leader or his nominee will respond;

It is standard practice to submit six monthly follow up reports to the Scrutiny Commission to confirm progress with the implementation of Panel recommendations. A detailed implementation update report will be considered at the Scrutiny Commission meeting on 3rd July 2023.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE TO COUNCIL – PROCEDURE

- Councillors are required to submit a question on notice in writing by 12noon on the eighth working day prior to Council, the title of the question is published on the Council Agenda.
- Questions and responses will be published at the end of the previous working day (usually the Friday prior to a Council meeting on a Monday) and will be available at the Council meeting for Councillors, the press, and the public.
- After the questions and responses are published **Councillors may indicate that they wish to ask a supplementary question by noon on the day of the Council meeting.**
- The Mayor will invite those Councillors who have indicated that they wish to do so to ask a supplementary question.
- The Leader (or relevant Lead Member on behalf of the Leader) or Chair of the Committee is able to respond.
- The total time each person can speak on a single question is time limited.