

**CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
HELD IN  
THE PRESTON ROOM, WOODGATE CHAMBERS, WOODGATE,  
LOUGHBOROUGH  
ON 4TH NOVEMBER 2019**

**PRESENT**

The Mayor (Councillor Seaton)  
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Snartt)

Councillor Bailey	Councillor Howe
Councillor Barkley	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Bentley	Councillor Lowe
Councillor Bokor	Councillor Mercer
Councillor Boldrin	Councillor Miah
Councillor Bolton	Councillor Morgan
Councillor J. Bradshaw	Councillor Murphy
Councillor S. Bradshaw	Councillor Needham
Councillor Brennan	Councillor Pacey
Councillor Brookes	Councillor Parsons
Councillor Campsall	Councillor Parton
Councillor Capleton	Councillor Poland
Councillor Draycott	Councillor Popley
Councillor Forrest	Councillor Radford
Councillor Fryer	Councillor Ranson
Councillor Gerrard	Councillor Rattray
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Savage
Councillor Grimley	Councillor Shepherd
Councillor Hadji-Nikolaou	Councillor Smidowicz
Councillor Hamilton	Councillor Tassell
Councillor Harper-Davies	Councillor Taylor
Councillor C. Harris	Councillor Tillotson
Councillor K. Harris	Councillor Ward

Honorary Aldermen R Shields and J Tormey

55. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Baines, Charles, Paling and Rollings, and from Honorary Aldermen Bush and Stott.

56. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

The following disclosures of pecuniary and personal interests were made:

- i. Councillor Fryer disclosed a personal interest in item 8.1 Unitary Status Update, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council.

- ii. Councillor Miah disclosed a personal interest in item 8.1 Unitary Status Update, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council.
- iii. Councillor Parton disclosed a personal interest in item 8.1 Unitary Status Update, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council.
- iv. Councillor Parton also disclosed a personal interest in item 10.2 Town Deals as a Councillor Member of the Leicestershire County Council Town Team.
- v. Councillor Poland disclosed a personal interest in item 8.1 Unitary Status Update, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council.
- vi. Councillor Radford disclosed a personal interest in item 8.1 Unitary Status Update, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council.
- vii. Councillor Seaton disclosed a personal interest in item 8.1 Unitary Status Update, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council.
- viii. Councillor Shepherd disclosed a personal interest in item 8.1 Unitary Status Update, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council.
- ix. Councillor Taylor disclosed a personal interest in item 8.1 Unitary Status Update, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council.

57. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 2nd September 2019 were confirmed and signed.

58. ANNOUNCEMENTS

59. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made the following announcements.

“I would like to mention that Charnwood Council now have a Mayoral Facebook page dedicated to the Mayor of Charnwood. A few of you have already liked the page and are following the updates about the engagements I have been attending. However, I would like to encourage more of you to like the page, which you can find by searching ‘Mayor of Charnwood’ on Facebook.

I am delighted to report that Loughborough has won gold at the Britain in Bloom finals. Earlier this year the town was selected to represent the region in the small city category at the national awards organised by the Royal Horticultural Society. This is the fourth time Loughborough has been at the Britain in Bloom finals. The town was awarded gold in 2016, a silver gilt in 2014 and achieved gold and was named the category winner in 2012. Well done to the many community groups, residents, businesses and organisations in the town that made this possible.

We are heading into a busy period. I have recently attended the Diwali lights celebrations and fast approaching is the Opening of Loughborough Fair on 13<sup>th</sup> November and the big Christmas light switch on taking place on 24<sup>th</sup> November.

I encourage you all to attend either the Loughborough or Mountsorrel Remembrance Day parades on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November. However, I do understand that Councillors may attend a service which is in their local town or village.

The Mayor's Community Carol Service is being held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December, at All Saints with Holy Trinity Loughborough Parish Church. The service starts at 7pm and it would be lovely to see you all there as well."

#### 60. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader made the following announcements.

"Madam Mayor I would like to announce that I have appointed Councillor Sue Gerrard as the Older Persons Champion until May 2023. We now have a range of Member Champions:

- Climate change – Cllr Needham
- Tree Planting – Cllr Howe
- Loneliness – Cllr Parton
- Armed Forces – Cllr Fryer"

#### 61. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chief Executive made no announcements.

#### 62. PETITIONS

Councillor Ward presented a petition on behalf of attendees of a Climate Strike event in Loughborough.

The Mayor confirmed that the petition would be considered and responded to in accordance with the Council's petition scheme.

#### 63. BUSINESS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

#### 64. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

A report of the Cabinet to consider the adoption of an Investment Strategy for the remainder of the financial year 2019/20 and the financial year 2020/21, as recommended by the Cabinet, 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 proposals set out at Appendix B to the report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Services (attached as an Annex) be adopted and incorporated into the extant Capital Strategy.

Reason

To provide additional clarity to the extant Capital Strategy and enable the Council to increase the range of its investment activities.

65. CALL-IN REFERENCES

There were no call-in references from Scrutiny.

66. POSITION STATEMENTS

67. UNITARY STATUS UPDATE

The Labour Group had requested that a position statement regarding the Unitary Status proposals from Leicestershire County Council be present at the meeting.

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

The position statement was introduced by The Leader and the following issues were raised by Councillors:

- i. the proposal of a Unitary Status Council was recurring, and the Council needed to be proactive in order to prepare for future events. The Councils in the area frequently communicated.
- ii. there were other Local Authority models available, other than the unitary approach, which could be adopted instead.
- iii. a Unitary Status Council would not make financial savings, due to high redundancy and pension costs.
- iv. any change in the current Local Authority model would need to be in the interests of the residents in the area, rather than the Council itself.

**RESOLVED** that in addition to the Scrutiny Panel created to review the Unitary Status proposal, the matter be referred to the Cabinet.

Reason

To enable the Cabinet and Scrutiny Panel to consider the matter further in order for the Council to make appropriate preparations in the future.

68. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

69. INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE'S WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

In accordance with Full Council Procedure 9.12, Councillor Poland had given notice of a motion on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism (item 9.1 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The motion was moved by Councillor Poland and seconded by Councillor Morgan, and

## **RESOLVED**

1. that the Council adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of Antisemitism.
2. that the Council notes the examples set out in the motion which may serve as illustrations.

## 70. 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).

### CLIMATE CHANGE

Councillor Gerrard did not have a supplementary statement or question.

### TOWN DEALS

Councillor Parton asked whether there was more information available on how the Towns Deal would benefit Loughborough.

Councillor Morgan stated that our Town Deal would make a significant impact on Loughborough and that the Council was in the process of finalising the details of the programme. The Chief Executive had called a meeting with Senior Officers to agree actions and deadlines and the scope of the deal would be submitted in late November. Proposed improvements at this stage included infrastructure, connectivity, retail space and an increased reduction in Loughborough's carbon use.

### LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Councillor Parton stated that fire safety should be incorporated into the Council's Licensing Scheme. He suggested that resident's additional criteria included bins, exteriors and noise and that this should be addressed within the Licensing Scheme. Councillor Parton was hopeful that the Scheme would be stringent.

Councillor Smidowicz stated that a further criterion which the Licensing Scheme should include was parking. She stated that the Council had over 20 recommendations for the Scheme and welcomed the support of colleagues in approving the evidence-based Scheme.

### LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Councillor Draycott stated that the response received was contradictory and demonstrated a lack of communication. The Landlord in question had made numerous applications over time, all of which were incomplete and rejected, and Councillor Draycott believed that this information should have been communicated to the relevant Officers of the Council. She asked for reassurance that documentation received by the Council relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation would be passed to Licensing Officers for action.

Councillor Smidowicz referred to the mandatory licensing introduced by the Government in October 2018 and explained that the Landlord in question had not complied with this legislation, despite repeated correspondence from the Council. Legislation had been updated in 2016 and the Landlord had responded at this point and so had been prosecuted under the previous law. However, Councillor Smidowicz stated that the application remained incomplete and so the Landlord had not been compliant at any point. She assured the Council that action would be taken against any Landlord found to be not compliant with the Scheme.

Following interaction with private Landlords, Councillor Smidowicz believed that the proposed Scheme would be supported by them.

### COUNCIL TAX ARREARS

Councillor Christine Harris thanked the Lead Member for the response but stated that the chart provided within it was unclear and misleading. The column containing data on Council Tax arrears in 2019 could not be considered as the year was incomplete. Councillor Harris also stated that the number of accounts in arrears did not necessarily represent the number of residents in arrears, as it was possible for residents to have multiple accounts.

Councillor Barkley stated that he did not anticipate that there was a significant number of residents in arrears moving around the Borough and so it was unlikely there were many residents with multiple accounts in arrears. He also stated that the Council does a lot of work to help residents avoid Council Tax arrears and that the Council could not accurately predict the figures for the remainder of 2019 but it is hoped that the decrease in Council Tax arrears continues.

### LEISURE CENTRE

Councillor Julie Bradshaw thanked the Lead Member and Officers for the response but stated that it did not address her concerns. She stated that predominantly the main issues affecting users of the Leisure Centre were that equipment was not being replaced, unsatisfactory lockers, security and CCTV, poor water temperature and air quality systems and a lack of continual investment. Councillor Bradshaw also stated that she felt customer feedback should be collated and reviewed and asked how Members could be more involved in enhancing user experience at Loughborough Leisure Centre.

Councillor Harper-Davies believed that Councillor Julie Bradshaw's supplementary statement was not relevant to her initial question, but she was prepared to investigate these issues further. Councillor Harper-Davies also stated that the ideal water

temperature would vary between users of the swimming pool at the Leisure Centre and so issues relating to this would be difficult to overcome.

### SOCIAL HOUSING

Councillor Bolton thanked the Lead Member and Officers for the response and did not have a supplementary question or statement.

Councillor Morgan stated that he welcomed further discussion on this topic when required.

### COUNTY LINES CRIME

Councillor Goddard commended the invaluable work of the Joint Action Group, the agencies involved in the Community Safety Partnership and the Police and Crime Commissioner. She asked whether there was anymore information available on identifying the signs of exploitation and the nature of gangs in Charnwood in relation to County Lines crime.

Councillor Taylor stated that there had been a 3.1% reduction in overall crime in Charnwood since April 2019 and praised operation Lionheart which was being undertaken by Leicestershire Police. She added that there were various strategies being employed by the Community Safety Partnership and the Police in order to raise awareness of the signs of exploitation, including social media campaigns, market stalls and information sharing. Councillor Taylor welcomed suggestions from Councillors in order to improve this work further.

### BUILDING NEW COUNCIL HOUSING

Councillor Ward thanked the Lead Member and Officers for the response and referred to the report on the proposed Housing Development Company which was considered by the Cabinet in December 2018. At that meeting it was decided that a business case for the establishment of a Charnwood Borough Housing Development would be created. Councillor Ward asked when more information on this would be made available and when it would be brought before Full Council.

Councillor Morgan stated that a category on Housing had been incorporated into the Investment Strategy and that this would supersede the report considered by the Cabinet on a Housing Development Company in December 2018.

### EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS AND HOMELESSNESS

Councillor Boldrin thanked the Lead Member for the response and asked that information within the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) regarding the total number of emergency spaces for the homeless, and the duration that those spaces were allocated for, be shared with Members.

Councillor Mercer agreed that figures could be circulated and stated that the Council had not experienced an issue with insufficient emergency spaces for rough sleepers during a period that the SWEP has been implemented. He explained that he

participated in an annual count of rough sleepers in the Charnwood area and invited Councillor Boldrin to take part.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS FOR NEW BUILDINGS

Councillor Needham thanked the Lead Member for the response and referred to the chapter within the draft Local Plan 2019-36 which considers energy efficiency standards. She stated that a more robust policy was required, to reflect that of other Councils and offered to liaise with the Lead Member regarding this.

Councillor Hunt welcomed a meeting with Councillor Needham and stated that the Local Plan 2019-36 consultation had begun.

### ALLOTMENTS

Councillor Forrest thanked the Lead Member for the response and suggested a meeting to discuss CCTV and other security concerns. She also recommended that the topic of allotment security be discussed at the Loughborough Area Committee at its next meeting.

Councillor Bokor welcomed a meeting with Councillor Forrest and suggested that each allotment site was considered separately as there are different requirements for each.

### FOOD POVERTY AND THE ROLL-OUT OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Councillor Brennan stated that she had seen an increase in hunger in recent years and she believed that this was due to welfare reform, including the removal of the social fund loan and Universal Credit. She outlined data which suggested an average increase in Trussell Trust food bank usage of 52%, 12 months after the implementation of Universal Credit. According to the data, the food banks located in areas where Universal Credit had not been implemented had an increase in usage of 13% and Councillor Brennan highlighted this difference. She thanked the Lead Members and the Officers for the response and asked that the data provided be extended to include the past five years.

Councillor Barkley stated that the Council was involved in substantial work to address food poverty and that it was considered a serious matter. He stated that Universal Credit was not exclusively responsible and that there were numerous factors which contribute towards food poverty. He believed that providing equivalent figures for the past five years would not be helpful in improving the issue.

#### 71. MINUTE REFERENCES

There were no minute references.

#### 72. URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS EXEMPTED FROM CALL-IN - ACQUISITION OF PROPERTIES

A report of the Chief Executive, informing the Council of an urgent decision made by the Cabinet that was exempted from call-in in accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.9, was submitted (item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Draycott stated that the Labour Group had previously been critical of the policy but was pleased that the Council had acquired four two-bedroom properties

Councillor Morgan thanked the Labour Group for their support.

73. URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS EXEMPTED FROM CALL-IN - MEMBER GRANTS SCHEME

A report of the Chief Executive, informing the Council of an urgent decision made by the Cabinet that was exempted from call-in in accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.9, was submitted (item 13 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

74. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

It was proposed by Councillor Poland and seconded by Councillor Morgan and

**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Gerrard be appointed to the Housing, Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Rattray.

Reason

To reflect the wishes of the Conservative Group in making appointments to committees and to comply with sections 11.2(d) and 12.4(a) of the Council's Constitution.

Note:

These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Monday 20th January 2020.