

COUNCIL – 8TH NOVEMBER 2021

ITEM 10 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

10.1 Councillor Draycott – The Future of Staff Working from Home

When will findings of the Consultation on the future of staff working from home be published? Can Members be given a summary of the key findings?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

Throughout the development of the Agile Working Policy, consultation was undertaken with the following groups; SLT, CLT, Organisational Recovery Cell, the Agile Working Group, Staff Forum and the People Board.

The policy was also discussed in detail with the Trade Unions.

In November 2020, a full staff consultation was conducted and over 50 staff responded with comments and feedback. GMB and UNISON also provided written feedback as part of this exercise. The response to the consultation was circulated to all employees for information.

In February 2021, UNISON, GMB and UNITE confirmed their agreement to the Agile Working Policy in writing.

The Agile Working Policy was agreed by Personnel Committee on the 30th March 2021.

On a practical level, managers were asked to complete an Agile Working Plan in conjunction with their staff. This outlined how service delivery would be met through agile working and also allowed for flexible working approaches to be identified.

A follow up evaluation survey was completed with all staff to determine how involved they had been in this process. The results of this survey are outlined below;

a) All staff were invited to complete the online survey via One Charnwood in June 21. 80 completed it.

b) 64% of the respondents identified that they were able to attend their agile working plan team consultation meeting

c) 34.5% of those who couldn't attend their team consultation session were able to contribute at a later date.

d) Overall, 92% of respondents felt they were able to influence their team agile working plan

e) 87.5% of respondents identified a preference for home or hybrid working, whilst 7.5% identified a preference for office working

It has been recommended to managers that the Agile Working Plans are regularly reviewed and updated in conjunction with their teams.

10.2 Councillor Draycott – Retention of Staff and Vacancies

In view of the increasing numbers of staff leaving the Council voluntary to more attractive positions elsewhere, a) would it be wise to review the decisions in the last Budget to cut staff enhancements such as travel allowances etc? b) inform council of the number of vacant/frozen posts per department to date?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

The whole year turnover figure for 20/21 was 10.87%, for 19/20 was 11.76% and for 18/19 it was 15.22%.

The number of staff who have left the organisation in the current year is 45 – at the same point in 20/21 it was 41, in 19/20 it was 35 and in 18/19 it was 41.

There are a number of reasons for staff to leave an organisation. The Council does try to understand the reasons for officers leaving through exit surveys and exit interviews. These are optional, however between November 2020 and October 2021 28 were completed. The reasons stated for leaving are outlined below.

Reason for Leaving	
Career advancement/direction	15
Redundancy	2
Retirement	6
End of fixed term contract	1
Stress	1
Work-life balance	3
	28

In terms of part a) of the question – the Council are currently consulting on a revised Essential Car User Scheme. The Council have received feedback from staff and are meeting with the Trade Unions who are also consulting with their members.

Regarding part b) of the question – the Council do not have a policy on freezing posts. There are a number of vacant hours within the organisation which may be being covered by agency staff or because managers are considering their options.

10.3 Councillor Draycott – Bedford Square Gateway Project Preliminary Work

Would the Leader inform Council what preliminary tests/excavations/surveys were commissioned in advance of the Bedford Square Work starting, which is common practice to establish what utilities, water courses etc are underground?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

Wood Environment and Infrastructure UK Solutions UK Ltd (Wood) were commissioned by Charnwood Borough Council to provide design services in support of the Public Realm Improvement Scheme between Bedford Square and Devonshire Square in Loughborough town centre. As part of this work, Wood coordinated the works necessary to provide as much information as possible on the location and depth of underground utilities within the project area to inform design work prior to construction works starting on site, including:

- *A geophysical buried services survey of the scheme area undertaken by Leicestershire County Council in 2016.*
- *A PAS 128 quality level of 'B' survey undertaken by Wood by requesting information from utility providers whose assets have been identified in the site boundary and collating data on utility owners and their assets.*
- *A PAS 128 rated QL-B1P survey to identify and detect the presence of underground utilities.*
- *A PAS 128 quality level of 'A' survey via trial pits undertaken by Fitzgerald Contractors Limited prior to construction works commencing, to verify the location, depth and other attributes of underground utilities on site and cores to characterise and assess the existing carriageway and footway condition. The location of the trial pits and cores were specified in drawings (42288-WOOD-501-A-DR-OT-0003_S0_P02 and 42288-WOOD-501-A-DR-OT-0004_S0_P02), comprising of:*
 - *10 trial pits*
 - *8 carriageway cores*
 - *5 footway cores*
- *C3/C4 applications submitted by Wood to all Utility Providers to establish the extent of diversionary or protection works required and associated costs to facilitate the public realm improvements.*

10.4 Councillor Parton – Private Sector Rental Numbers

Please would the Lead Member provide council with the number of private sector rental properties that have indicated that they are willing to house those registered as homeless?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

CBC Lettings work with Landlords and Letting Agents to procure properties to assist the Council's in meeting its homeless statutory duties.

CBC Lettings are currently working with 21 Landlords and 9 Letting Agents to source suitable and affordable properties.

10.5 Councillor Parton – mental Health Reconfiguration in Charnwood

In the recent mental health consultation, Charnwood was praised for its work with the LPT. Now that reconfiguration is being planned, would the Lead Member outline what Charnwood is doing to assist in this vital work?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

In November 2020 Charnwood Borough Council was invited to be a partner in a local pilot scheme Getting Help in Neighbourhoods Pathway project which focused on supporting individuals struggling with Mental Health. Following the success and lessons learnt in Charnwood, this is now part of the long-term mental health strategy across the County and City and was launched at a countywide webinar 15th October 2021

In Charnwood officers;

- *continue to support the project and sit on both the Integrated Neighbourhood Team and the Multi-disciplinary Team working on specific individual case management*
- *help passport the monies to those VCS organisations commissioned to deliver support*
- *will take the lead to support more local VCS organisations gain access to the programme funding to help deliver their services*
- *sit on the Peer Support implementation group to support the local VCS organisations looking to host Peer Support workers in the area*
- *continue to co-ordinate and support the Charnwood Mental Health Forum*
- *support the local Crisis Cafés.*

10.6 Councillor Parton– Your Store

Please can the lead member provide an update on this excellent multi-agency initiative, rolled out in Loughborough?

The Leader or his nominee will respond:

Your Store opened its doors to the first customers at the beginning of October as part of the transition process from Food Bank to social supermarket.

- *Charnwood Community Action (CCA) food bank customers who felt that they were able to meet the weekly membership fee of £3 were the first to be moved to Your Store giving them the opportunity to come and do their weekly shop*
- *Those that are still in crisis and need to continue to access food bank, will be supported until the end of October and will then be referred to other local foodbanks*
- *120 households have now registered as members of Your Store*
- *The overwhelming response from the Your Store members has been very positive. Many have welcomed the opportunity to shop for themselves and make their own choices on how to feed their families.*
- *Each shop is made up of a range of different items including ambient, fresh fruit and veg, frozen and fridge alongside household items.*
- *Members can pre-pay for shops on their membership card when they receive their Universal Credit or wages ensuring that they can buy food for the month*
- *Referrals are now taking place from members of the Food Poverty Group, partners and other agencies. Self-referrals can also be made by individuals*
- *One to 1 assessments will start to take place with members to help identify areas of concern that they need help and support with*
- *Partners and agencies will provide the wrap around support to members, and this will include debt advice, benefit advice, fuel poverty support, access to job support, adult learning and wellbeing activities*
- *The shop is currently open 3 days a week and opening hours will be extended during November to 5 days including an evening opening on Wednesdays*
- *Two 'Pop Up' Your Store's are planned to open in late November at Mountsorrel and Shelthorpe. These will be initially one day a week hosted by local venues*
- *The shop is being supplied through FareShare deliveries, weekly donations from Samworth Brothers and regular community donations alongside purchased goods*
- *The shop is supported by a number of local volunteers, some who were originally volunteers for Loughborough Against Corona. It is hoped that more volunteers including Your Store members will join the team in the coming months.*

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE TO COUNCIL – PROCEDURE

- Councillors are required to submit a question on notice in writing by 12noon on the sixth 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.