

CABINET
21ST JANUARY 2010

PRESENT: The Leader (Councillor Preston)
The Deputy Leader (Councillor Bush)
Councillors Bokor, Fryer, Harley, Lewis, Osborne, Slater and Snartt.

Councillor Harper-Davies (Cabinet Support Member) was also in attendance.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Barkley and Wise (Cabinet Support Members).

133. DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures of personal interest were made.

134. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader made the following announcements:

New Council Houses

"I am pleased to announce that we have been advised by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) that the bid to build new council housing in the Borough has been successful despite this bidding round being oversubscribed by £240m. Charnwood is one of only 12 authorities in the East Midlands Region and 73 in England to be represented in this current round of the new build programme. Funding of £405,776 has been secured to support the provision of 9 additional homes to rent, at various locations in the Borough".

Choice Based Lettings

"I am also delighted to announce that the bid for funding the county wide Choice Based Lettings scheme, which was led by Charnwood, has also been successful. The total allocation made by Communities and Local Government Department in Round 5 was £562,000, and Charnwood received the largest allocation of £177,000. This scheme is a partnership between all 7 Leicestershire districts and Rutland County Council and will result in significant changes to the way council housing is allocated across the County".

135. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2009 were confirmed and signed.

136. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES 29(ii) AND 39

No Questions had been submitted.

137. REVIEW OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

A report of the Director of Housing and Health was submitted, which proposed revisions to the Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy by recommending increases to the maximum grant limits for Home Repair Assistance Grants and Partnership Grants, and introducing conditions of Nomination Rights and Lettings Agreements, linked to the value of the grant in respect of Partnership Grants (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED

1. that the maximum grant threshold for Home Repair Assistance (Wind Weatherproof and Safe) Grants be increased from £2,500 to £4,500;
2. that the maximum grant threshold for Home Repair Assistance (Essential Services) Grants be increased from £2,000 to £4,000;
3. that the maximum grant threshold for Partnership Grants be increased from £10,000 to £15,000;
4. that the conditions, in table I to the report of the Director of Housing and Health, of nomination rights and lettings agreements linked to the value of the Partnership Grant awarded be approved; and
5. that the Director of Housing and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Housing and Health, be given delegated authority to increase maximum grant thresholds for Home Repair Assistance Grants and Partnership Grants subject to budget availability and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.

Reasons

- 1.-3. To align the grant thresholds with the market prices of the qualifying works.
4. To introduce revised conditions in response to consultation to improve the take up of these grants thereby increasing the number of empty properties made decent and brought back into use.
5. To enable thresholds to be amended expeditiously in line with market prices in the future.

138. REVIEW OF SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

A report of the Director of Housing and Health was submitted, which proposed, and sought endorsement of, the order of priority and the timescales for detailed reports to be submitted to Cabinet on the options to address the long term sustainability of the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED that the Sheltered Housing Review Priority List and proposed timescales, set out in table 2 of the report of the Director of Housing and Health, for sequencing future reports on the schemes, be endorsed.

Reason

To ensure a strategic approach would be taken to prioritising sheltered housing schemes for further investigation.

139. PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREAS – ROTHLEY RIDGEWAY AND LOUGHBOROUGH EMMANUEL CHURCH

A report of the Director of Development, setting out proposals for the designation of conservation areas for Rothley Ridgeway and the Emmanuel Church area of Loughborough, was submitted (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED

1. that the Rothley Ridgeway Conservation Area be designated and the Character Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted; subject to the inclusion of all the properties on Westfield Lane within the designation area;
2. that the Loughborough Emmanuel Church Conservation Area be designated and the Character Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted;
3. that 11th February 2010 be set for the date of adoption; and
4. that delegated authority be given to the Director of Development, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make minor amendments to Rothley Ridgeway and Loughborough Emmanuel Church Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans prior to publication.

Reasons

1. To recognise that Rothley Ridgeway has special interest architecturally and historically, the character or appearance of which it would be desirable to preserve or enhance. To ensure that the character of Westfield Lane, particularly the trees, was protected from inappropriate development and would be enhanced.

2. To recognise that the area around Emmanuel Church, Loughborough has special interest architecturally and historically, the character or appearance of which it would be desirable to preserve or enhance.
3. To allow adequate time to organise the necessary notifications and advertisements to be arranged.
4. To allow the Director of Development to make minor amendments to documents before they were finalised for publication.

140. CHARNWOOD GRANTS – ROUND 4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANTS

A report of the Director of Governance and Procurement, in respect of an application (which exceeds £20,000 in value) for a Community Facilities Grant from Glebe House, was submitted (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED that a Community Facilities Grant of £30,000, for the conversion of part of the Old Magistrates Court building and to purchase IT equipment for an internet café, be awarded to Glebe House.

Reason

To provide financial support for a project that meets the criteria for an award and the aims of the scheme.

141. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2010/11 & SPECIAL EXPENSES

A report of the Director of Programmes and Resources, calculating the Council Tax Base in accordance with the Local Authorities Regulations 1992, was submitted (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Lewis added that Loughborough Councillors had met to be consulted on the proposed Loughborough Special Rate, which had been recommended by the Loughborough Special Rate Scrutiny Panel. This meeting had been useful in terms of discussing both the level of the rate and the provision of services specific to Loughborough.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council

1. that the amounts shown in the table, set out in the report of the Director of Programmes and Resources, be approved as the Council Tax Base for the year 2010/11 in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculations of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992; and

2. that the expenses incurred by the Council in performing in Loughborough a function performed elsewhere in the Council's area by a parish council or the chairman of a parish meeting be treated as special expenses for the purposes of Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Reasons

1. To set the Council's 2010/11 Council Tax Base.
2. To determine Special Expenses in Loughborough.

Notes

1. The decisions in these minutes, which are not in the form of recommendations to Council, will come into effect at 5.00pm on Friday 29th January 2010 unless called in under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13.
2. Subject to note 1 above, no reference may be made to these minutes at Council on 1st March 2010, which are not in the form of recommendations to Council, unless notice to that effect is given to the Head of Democratic Services by five members of the Council no later than 5.00pm on Friday 29th January 2010.
3. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of Cabinet on 18th February 2010.