

CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL
HELD IN
THE PRESTON ROOM, WOODGATE CHAMBERS, LOUGHBOROUGH
ON MONDAY, 30TH APRIL 2018

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor P. Ranson)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor C. Harris)

Councillor T. Barkley	Councillor M. Lowe
Councillor B. Bebbington	Councillor P. Mercer
Councillor I. Bentley	Councillor J. Miah
Councillor J. Bradshaw	Councillor J. Morgan
Councillor M. Brookes	Councillor K. Pacey
Councillor R. Campsall	Councillor B. Page
Councillor J. Capleton	Councillor A. Paling
Councillor M. Draycott	Councillor G. Parsons
Councillor S. Forrest	Councillor J. Poland
Councillor H. Fryer	Councillor C. Radford
Councillor D. Gaskell	Councillor R. Rollings
Councillor S. Gerrard	Councillor J. Savage
Councillor D. Grimley	Councillor B. Seaton
Councillor H. Hachem	Councillor R. Shepherd
Councillor L. Hadji-Nikolaou	Councillor M. Smidowicz
Councillor C. Hamilton	Councillor L. Smith
Councillor S. Hampson	Councillor D. Snartt
Councillor K. Harris	Councillor J. Sutherland
Councillor D. Hayes	Councillor J. Tassell
Councillor R. Huddleston	Councillor D. Taylor
Councillor R. Jones	Councillor J. Tillotson
Councillor R. Jukes	Councillor E. Vardy

Honorary Aldermen R. Shields and J.Tormey

90. COUNCILLOR DAVID SLATER

The Mayor informed Council of the recent death of Councillor David Slater. The Mayor stated that before Councillor Slater had stepped down in November 2017 he had been Leader of the Council for seven years, the longest term for any Leader since reorganisation in 1974. After leaving the Cabinet Councillor Slater had served as Chair of the Plans Committee.

The Mayor invited councillors to stand for a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Slater, after which the Mayor's chaplain, Reverend David Owen, said prayers.

The Mayor then stated that that the meeting was being recorded and the sound recording would be made available on the Council's website. In addition, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations people may film, record, tweet or blog the meeting and that was outside the Council's control.

91. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bokor, Cooper, Harper-Davies, Murphy and Parton, and from Honorary Alderman Stott.

92. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

The following disclosures of pecuniary and personal interests were made:

- (i) by Councillor Bentley – a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 9, Motion on Notice – Introduction of Universal Credit Full Service, as he received rental income from tenants;
- (ii) by Councillor Hadji-Nikolaou – a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 9, Motion on Notice – Introduction of Universal Credit Full Service, as he received rental income from tenants;
- (iii) by Councillor C. Harris – a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 9, Motion on Notice – Introduction of Universal Credit Full Service, as a private landlord;
- (iv) by Councillor K. Harris – a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 9, Motion on Notice – Introduction of Universal Credit Full Service, as his spouse was a private landlord;
- (v) by Councillor Miah – a personal interest in item 6.1, Capital Plan Amendment Report, as a member of Leicestershire County Council;
- (vi) by Councillor Miah – a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 9, Motion on Notice – Introduction of Universal Credit Full Service, as a private landlord;
- (vii) by Councillor Savage – a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 9, Motion on Notice – Introduction of Universal Credit Full Service, as he received rental income from tenants.

93. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 26th February 2018 were confirmed and signed.

94. ANNOUNCEMENTS

94.1 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made no announcements.

94.2 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Leader's announcements.

94.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chief Executive made no announcements.

95. PETITIONS

Councillor Bradshaw presented a petition signed by 94 residents asking the Borough Council to provide enclosed, dog-safe areas in the Borough.

96. BUSINESS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

To consider the following matters reserved to Council in accordance with Part 5 of the Constitution.

96.1 CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT

A report of the Cabinet, seeking approval for changes to the 2017/18 to 2018/19 Capital Plan and its financing, was submitted (item 6.1 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Barkley and seconded by Councillor Grimley:

1. That the £350k for the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park scheme currently included in the Capital Plan for 2017/18 be slipped to 2018/19.
2. That a £251k virement from HRA Charnwood Standard Kitchens to the following be approved: £5k to the Job Management System, £112k to Fire Safety and £134k to Charnwood Standard Bathrooms.

Councillor Draycott stated that she had two specific questions that she wished to ask but would submit them in writing on this occasion.

RESOLVED

1. that the £350k for the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park scheme currently included in the Capital Plan for 2017/18 be slipped to 2018/19;
2. that a £251k virement from HRA Charnwood Standard Kitchens to the following be approved: £5k to the Job Management System, £112k to Fire Safety and £134k to Charnwood Standard Bathrooms.

Reasons

1. To confirm the slippage of budget is approved to adhere to the Financial Procedure Rules on the scheme of virement.
2. To confirm that the HRA virement is approved to adhere to the Financial Procedure Rules on the scheme changes to the approved Capital Plan.

96.2 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

A report of the Cabinet, proposing amendments to the Constitution following the annual review, was submitted (item 6.2 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Poland, seconded by Councillor Taylor and

RESOLVED

1. that the changes to the Constitution, set out in appendices 1 and 2 to the report of the Monitoring Officer (attached as an Annex to the report of the Cabinet), be made;
2. that the implementation dates for the changes take effect on 1st May 2018.

Reasons

- 1.&2. To ensure the Constitution is kept up to date and fulfils its intended purposes.

96.3 ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2017/18

A report of the Scrutiny Management Board, enabling the Council to consider the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2017/18, was submitted (item 6.3 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Miah, seconded by Councillor Parsons and

RESOLVED that the work of scrutiny during 2017/18, as set out in the Annual Scrutiny Report 2017/18 attached as Appendix 1 to the report of the Scrutiny Management Board, be noted.

Reason

To report annually to Council on the workings of scrutiny bodies and the operation of the scrutiny function generally, in accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure 6.3(e) of the Council's Constitution.

96.4 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL IN RESPECT OF ALLOWANCES PAID TO MEMBERS OF CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR 2018/19

A report of the Chief Executive, enabling the Council to consider the findings and the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of allowances paid to members of Charnwood Borough Council and the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2018/19, was submitted (item 6.4 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

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

RESOLVED

1. that the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, submitted in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Chief Executive, be noted and that:
 - (a) the applicable period for the Scheme of Members' Allowances be to cover the financial year rather than the civic year;
 - (b) the allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be increased to £6,883 for the Mayor and £1,721 for the Deputy Mayor and included within the special responsibility allowances set out in the Scheme, and that future changes for these be linked to officer pay awards in the same manner as already agreed for other special responsibility allowances;
 - (c) the proposed Scheme of Members' Allowances for the 2018/19 financial year, as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Chief Executive, be approved and adopted as part 19 of the Council's Constitution;

2. that it be noted that the level of basic allowances included in Appendix B had been automatically increased by 2%, in line with the agreed NJC pay award for local government employees for 2018/19.

Reasons

1. To ensure compliance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
2. To inform Council of the increase that had been applied to basic allowances in accordance with the previous decision that increases be linked to officer pay awards.

Councillor Draycott stated that she wished it to be recorded in the minutes that she would be forgoing the increase in the Basic Allowance that had been agreed for 2018/19.

96.5 ELECTION FEES AND EXPENSES FOR 2018/19

A report of the Chief Executive, seeking approval for scales of election fees payable to the Returning Officer for any Borough or Parish Council elections during 2018/19, was submitted (item 6.5 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

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

RESOLVED

1. that the scales of election fees appended to the report of the Chief Executive be adopted for 2018/19 in relation to any Borough or Parish Council by-elections which may be required;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Head of Strategic Support to amend the specified fees payable to Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks should any changes be recommended by the Electoral Services Officer Group for Leicestershire.

Reasons

1. To ensure an approved scale of fees can be applied in respect of any Borough or Parish Council elections which take place during 2018/19.
2. To implement any recommended amendments that may arise as a result of changes to the national minimum wage.

97. CALL-IN REFERENCES

There were no call-in references from Scrutiny.

98. POSITION STATEMENTS

No position statements had been requested.

99. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Having disclosed disclosable pecuniary interests, Councillors Bentley, Hadji-Nikolaou, C. Harris, K. Harris, Miah and Savage left the meeting prior to the consideration of this item.

In accordance with Full Council Procedure 9.12, Councillor Draycott had given notice of a motion regarding the introduction of the Universal Credit full service (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was moved by Councillor Draycott and seconded by Councillor Tillotson:

1. That this Council notes that the planned introduction of the Universal Credit full service in Loughborough and Charnwood is scheduled for July 2018, and that there is a greater risk of tenants falling into rent areas during the transitional period associated with its introduction.
2. Therefore this Council calls upon all landlords in the Borough, both private landlords and registered providers, not to seek to evict any tenants for rent arrears that arise because of the transitional period.
3. That the Cabinet be invited to consider this motion in respect of the Council's role as a provider of social housing and their Executive responsibility for the Council's landlord functions.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Mercer and seconded by Councillor Barkley to replace point 3 with the following wording:

3. This Council welcomes that the Authority has put in place management and tenancy support teams to prevent and manage any rent arrears that may arise as a consequence of Universal Credit. This includes five income management officers, four tenancy support officers, two financial inclusion officers and a dedicated Universal Credit officer. The dedicated action plan seeks to ensure that our income is maximised and that prompt action is taken when rent arrears and debts are incurred, that those who are vulnerable are offered the appropriate support and advice and that we work closely with our partners in support of financial inclusion in our communities and neighbourhoods. This Council believes that the Authority has adopted a firm but fair approach and any eviction as a consequence of Universal Credit will only occur if all reasonable efforts have failed.

Councillor Mercer stated that he would circulate the rationale for the amendment to all councillors.

The amendment was carried.

A named vote on the motion as amended was requested by two councillors in accordance with Council Procedure 9.15(d).

For the motion – Councillors Barkley, Bebbington, Brookes, Capleton, Fryer, Gaskell, Gerrard, Grimley, Hachem, Hampson, Hayes, Jones, Jukes, Lowe, Mercer, Morgan, Pacey, Page, Paling, Parsons, Poland, Radford, Ranson, Rollings, Seaton, Shepherd, Smidowicz, Smith, Snartt, Sutherland, Tassell, Taylor and Vardy.

Against the motion – Councillors Bradshaw, Campsall, Draycott, Forrest, Hamilton, Huddleston and Tillotson.

RESOLVED

1. that this Council notes that the planned introduction of the Universal Credit full service in Loughborough and Charnwood is scheduled for July 2018, and that there is a greater risk of tenants falling into rent areas during the transitional period associated with its introduction;
2. therefore this Council calls upon all landlords in the Borough, both private landlords and registered providers, not to seek to evict any tenants for rent arrears that arise because of the transitional period;
3. this Council welcomes that the Authority has put in place management and tenancy support teams to prevent and manage any rent arrears that may arise as a consequence of Universal Credit. This includes five income management officers, four tenancy support officers, two financial inclusion officers and a dedicated Universal Credit officer. The dedicated action plan seeks to ensure that our income is maximised and that prompt action is taken when rent arrears and debts are incurred, that those who are vulnerable are offered the appropriate support and advice and that we work closely with our partners in support of financial inclusion in our communities and neighbourhoods. This Council believes that the Authority has adopted a firm but fair approach and any eviction as a consequence of Universal Credit will only occur if all reasonable efforts have failed.

100. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Councillors Bentley, Hadji-Nikolaou, C. Harris, K. Harris, Miah and Savage re-joined the meeting.

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

The Mayor suggested that, on this occasion, councillors may wish to submit any supplementary questions in writing and written responses circulated to all councillors after the meeting.

100.1 Councillor Seaton – Reducing Plastic Waste

Councillor Seaton thanked the Lead Member for the response and stated that she was pleased to read that the Council was considering further initiatives for reducing the use of plastics. She also stated that she hoped that the current focus on the issue nationally and locally was not a passing fad.

100.2 Councillor Draycott – Scrutiny Review

Councillor Draycott thanked the Lead Member for the response, which accepted that scrutiny at the Council was ineffective and needed attention. She urged all councillors to read a copy of the report prepared by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. She was pleased that an initial meeting had been arranged for 9th May 2018 to discuss the matter and hoped that the membership of that group would be widened considerably. She suggested that one way of improving scrutiny would be to have a list of topics for future scrutiny panels and that it was important that there were sufficient staff resources to support scrutiny. She asked the Cabinet Lead Member when there would be positive changes as a result of the review and how scrutiny would be involved in taking the matter forward.

Councillor Poland stated that he would respond to Councillor Draycott in writing.

100.3 Councillor Bradshaw – Houses in Multiple Occupation

Councillor Bradshaw thanked the Lead Member for the response as she knew that a number of councillors were concerned about the volume of this type of planning application. She stated that she had hoped that the figures for each year would have been provided separately and asked for information for 2016/17 and 2017/18 to be provided. She also asked, of the 76 properties, how many were occupied by young professionals and how many by students.

Councillor Vardy stated that he would respond to Councillor Bradshaw in writing.

100.4 Councillor Bradshaw – Provision of Facilities for Dogs

Councillor Bradshaw thanked the Lead Member for the response. She stated that she was aware that there were a number of areas in the Borough where people could go with dogs, but in many of those dogs

had to be kept on leads. She recognised that there were designated areas for children and families from which dogs were rightly excluded. There were significant benefits for health and wellbeing of having pets and exercising dogs. However there were currently no areas in Charnwood where dogs were able to roam freely. Other councils had established such areas. Councillor Bradshaw said she would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Lead Member to discuss the idea further, for example by identifying potential areas for such a facility.

Councillor Smidowicz stated that she would respond to Councillor Bradshaw in writing.

100.5 Councillor Snartt – Tourism Strategy

Councillor Snartt stated that he would submit his supplementary question in writing.

100.6 Councillor Hamilton – Gender Pay Gap

Councillor Hamilton thanked the Lead Member for the response and stated that he welcomed the fact that the issue had been recognised and that actions had been put in place. He stated that the matter was a reputational issue which could lead to difficulties in the recruitment and retention of female staff. Councillor Hamilton stated that he hoped that the Council would also consult with neighbouring councils which had reported a smaller gender pay gap so that the Council could learn from them.

100.7 Councillor Hayes – Housing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officers

Councillor Hayes stated that he would submit his supplementary question in writing.

100.8 Councillor Parton – Loughborough Shelthorpe Conservation Area

Councillor Parton had given his apologies for the meeting.

101. MINUTE REFERENCES

There were no minute references.

102. URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS EXEMPTED FROM CALL-IN

There were no urgent decisions taken by the Cabinet or urgent key decisions taken by an officer under delegated powers that were exempted from call-in.

103. USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROCEDURE FOR TAKING KEY DECISIONS

A report of the Leader, informing the Council that there had been no use of the special urgency procedure for taking key decisions during the last 12 months, was submitted (item 13 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

104. CHANGES TO THE DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

A report of the Chief Executive, informing the Council of changes to the delegation of Executive functions, was submitted (item 14 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

105. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

There were no proposals to consider.

After the close of the meeting, the Mayor invited councillors to remain in the Council Chamber to pay tribute to, and share memories of, Councillor Slater.

Note

These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of Council, which is scheduled for Monday, 21st May 2018.