



PRESS RELEASE

Charnwood residents' planning concerns quashed by Labour/Green Coalition

At the Monday 6th November 2023 council meeting, the Labour/Green Coalition running Charnwood Borough Council pushed through three major undemocratic changes to the Council's Constitution, silencing residents and elected members at future Plans Committees. This came despite the Conservative Group - the largest party in Charnwood but without a majority - submitting three amendments to stop this from happening. Each amendment was voted down by the Labour/Green Coalition.

On the first constitutional change, the Labour/Green Coalition voted to reduce the time each speaker talks for at the Plans Committee from five to three minutes. The Conservative Group tabled an amendment to retain the five minutes. Given the change, residents and their council representatives now have less time to put their objections across. When a planning issue is complex, five minutes makes a difference.

On the second change, the Labour/Green Coalition handed power to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Plans Committee (both Labour held) to decide what planning applications are considered on the Committee's agenda when a local Councillor requests an application be heard due to residents' concerns. The Labour/Green Coalition voted themselves the right to decide if a resident's application is considered, politicising the whole planning process. For the next Planning Committee, an elected Councillor and their residents no longer have an automatic democratic right to address the Plans Committee.

On the third change, the Labour/Green Coalition failed to address the single-member ward issue (including Forest Bradgate, Loughborough Nanpantan, Loughborough Woodthorpe, South Charnwood and The Wolds). Councillors in these wards are still unable to request a planning application be heard at the committee when they have a declarable interest. The Conservative Group tabled an amendment to allow an elected member from another Ward to do this on their behalf, as other Leicestershire councils, like Blaby, allow. This amendment was also rejected.

Cllr Jenny Bokor, Leader of the Charnwood Conservative Group says: "This was a sad night for Charnwood residents. Sad, because they have been silenced by the Labour/Green Coalition, who are clearly working to politicise the planning process for their own gain and not for the benefit of our residents. The result will be more unsustainable homes built in Loughborough and the surrounding villages without any opportunity for residents to exercise their right to be heard. It is undemocratic and totally wrong."

For further information on the above, please contact:

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