



MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF MELTON

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

4 FEBRUARY 2015

PRESENT

Councillor J. Wyatt (Mayor)
P. Baguley; G.E. Botterill, G. Bush, P.M. Chandler,
P. Cumbers, R. de Burle, J.M. Douglas, A. Freer-Jones,
M. Gordon, M.C.R. Graham MBE, E. Holmes,
J. Illingworth, S. Lumley, V. J. Manderson, J. Moulding,
M. O'Callaghan, J.T. Orson, P. Posnett,
J.B. Rhodes, M. Sheldon, J. Simpson,
M.N. Twitney, D.R. Wright

Strategic Director (CM), Strategic Director (KA),
Head of Communications & Monitoring Officer
Head of Central Services, Head of Regulatory Services,
Central Services Manager, Local Plans Manager,
Democracy & Involvement Officer

The Reverend Kevin Ashby offered prayers

CO57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Horton, Hutchison, and Slater.

CO58. MINUTES

Subject to the following amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and authorised to be signed by the Mayor:

- Page 57, paragraph (b) to be amended as shown in italics: Councillor Gordon referred to Minute R48 concerning the Cattle Market regeneration and requested that consideration be given to providing a facility *within the Market* whereby farmers could have access to a counsellor *in order for them to be able to discuss* issues and problems they may be facing.
- Page 62, final paragraph to be amended as shown in italics: delete 'The Core Strategy which had approved the development in the town had impacted on the levels of traffic and cited as an example the busy Scalford Road junction, and replace with: *He pointed out that the Core Strategy approved by the*

Council in 2012 would have brought a huge increase in traffic to areas of our town yet this report showed in the 2011 figures that the Scalford Road junction at AM peak was already grid locked and the busiest junction in the town centre.

CO59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gordon declared a personal and pecuniary interest in item 8 on the agenda concerning the recommendation from the CSA Committee on the rent increase because she was a council house tenant but due to the exemption afforded under 13(3)(a) of the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor Gordon stated she would remain in the room.

Councillor Gordon declared a personal and pecuniary interest in item 12 on the agenda 'Revenue Budget 2015-16 and Medium Term Financial Strategy' recommendation 2.7 relating to the Council Tax Support Scheme as she was in receipt of Council Tax Support. Cllr Gordon indicated she would leave the room for this item.

Councillors Orson, Posnett, and Rhodes each declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Leicestershire County Council due to their roles as County Councillors.

Councillor Twitney declared a personal and pecuniary interest in items 15 and 16 on the agenda relating to the Melton Local Plan as his employer was a land owner. He indicated he would leave the room when these items were under consideration.

CO60. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor stated that since the last meeting in December:

(1) he had hosted the Mayor's Christmas lunch on 18 December for all Council and Parkside partners' staff and later that afternoon attended the Mayor of Charnwood's Community Carol Service. He was also invited to the Gretton Court Christmas Party;

(2) his first engagement in the New Year was at County Hall for the Chairman's Dinner for Unsung Heroes. All Civic Heads from the Leicestershire borough and district councils were invited to nominate three individuals from within their communities to recognise and thank them for their voluntary efforts. The Mayor and Mayoress had been joined by Mr Richard Angrave and his wife Teresa, Mr Glenn Main, and Allison Green. The Mayor advised Members on the community based work all his guests supported which had led to their nominations;

(3) The Deputy Mayor had also represented the Borough at several recent events: the Chairman of Blaby's Carol Service and the Bishop of Leicester's Christmas Reception. Councillor Douglas and her Consort also represented the Borough at the Mayor of Kettering's Holocaust Memorial Community Event on 25 January.

The Mayor reminded Members that the closing date for nominations for this year's Mayor's Awards is Monday 9 March 2015. There had been recent coverage in the Melton Times and there would also be an article in the forthcoming edition of the Melton Mail. He would be giving an interview this coming Sunday morning at the local radio station 103 The Eye about the role of Mayor and the Mayor's Awards.

Apologies for absence had been received from the Young Mayor and Deputy Young Mayor due to school commitments. In their absence, Councillor Posnett presented their reports:

The Young Mayor (Tara Dudhia) reported:

Hello everyone, I hope this message finds you well.

I apologise for my absence from today's meeting. Recently, I have taken part in a few interviews with the Melton Times expressing my positive thoughts towards being Melton's Young Mayor! I am really enjoying my role and I hope to continue to change the town for the better.

Soon I am hoping, along with Rebecca, to start up her initiative for a cleaner Melton, as after speaking to many people of different ages, it was a major concern for those who were not only young but the older generation too.

I hope I will be able to attend the next Full Council Meeting.

The Deputy Young Mayor (Rebecca Smedley) reported:

On Monday I met with Lucie [Browne] to discuss our plans for the future and any events Tara and I could go to in order to make ourselves more involved with the public, such as making the opening of the Premier Inn in Melton a grand opening with Tara and myself present.

In my meeting I proposed including Long Field Academy and MV16 in the yoga sessions and the stress/exam support scheme we are trying to set up, and also discussed further a '7 cups of tea' style of service for young people who would prefer to talk to an anonymous peer. I also proposed running the scheme all year round due to the fact that as an A Level student I know that students are under a lot of pressure all year round, and especially at Christmas as well as in the summer.

We also discussed the 'Clean up Melton' campaign featured in my manifesto and how to engage the community in brightening and tidying up the local area, and I thought it would be a good idea to make the campaign more appealing by asking for volunteers for an 'eco club' or a 'green society' like they have at certain schools. Another point I raised on Monday was a way to brighten and liven up the town parks, such as holding a landscaping competition where candidates enter their ideas/drawings for a section/area of a local park along with a set donation in order to help fund the scheme, as well as some fundraising. We decided it would be best to begin the actual landscaping in the summer in order to gain more support.

CO61. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, Councillor Rhodes introduced his report and covered the following matters:

(1) Melton Cattle Market: last week it was announced that £3.5M had been approved by the government through the LLEP for the project. The funds would be available from 2016/17. Together with the £2M which the Council had allocated from capital receipts, these funds would enable the project to go forward to completion. Activity was already being seen around the market as exploratory drilling and excavation works were carried out to ascertain what lay beneath the surface of the site. The Cattle Market Working Group, chaired by Councillor Orson, would be responsible for delivering the project.

(2) External interest in the Council: Members were reminded about a previous report in which the Leader had advised on the increasing interest in Melton Borough Council being taken by the government and other councils. Two weeks ago the Council had hosted a seminar on Me and My Learning for Blaby District Council and North Lincolnshire Council. Since then a request had been received from Newark & Sherwood District Council who were keen to see how Parkside worked. The Council would do all it could to help these councils and project the "Melton Way" on the national stage.

(3) Councillor Hutchison had joined the Conservative Group but had been unable to attend this evening's meeting due to business interests abroad.

(4) Devolution: The Leader referred to the current discussion around the devolution of powers and responsibilities from government to local government and the developments in Greater Manchester and the North East of England. There was also talk of Unitary Authorities and several counties were looking seriously at this model but Leicestershire was not one of them. Members were advised not to ignore the opportunity devolution could bring to Leicestershire and Melton in particular. The concept of Combined Authorities was finding favour; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire was considering this in order to take the devolved powers. If this idea caught on, Leicestershire should not be left behind. There was the possibility, for example, of Economic Development, Transport, and Strategic Planning powers being devolved. This would mean that decisions involving those matters would be made by local people not by the Westminster elite. The Leader stated he expected this to be a hot topic after the election, no matter who formed the new government.

CO62. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions received.

CO63. PETITIONS

There were no petitions received.

CO64. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Community & Social Affairs Committee: 21 January 2015 – Revenue Budget Proposals 2015-16 – Housing Revenue Account

Councillor Wright moved and Councillor Illingworth seconded the recommendation from the CSA Committee regarding the rent increase for Council dwellings. Following a vote when the majority of those voting supported the recommendation, it was

RESOLVED: That an average rent increase of 2.09% for Council dwellings for 2015-16 be approved with effect from 6 April 2015 and that when a property is re-let, the rent continues to be brought into line with the Government's formula rent.

CO65. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.5(a), the following question was received from Councillor J.T. Orson on 26 January 2015::

“Has the Council considered Solar PV for the roof at Parkside in order to reduce energy bills?”

The Leader responded:

Yes we have. It was considered at the planning stage for this building. At that time it was felt that the business case could not be made. That was reviewed again in 2012 and again the business case did not stand up. A further review will take place this year as technology is moving all the same and the cost of these things are changing; it may be that this year we come to a different conclusion.

Councillor Orson acknowledged that the Leader had pre-empted his supplementary question about technology moving on but asked if the Leader would consider asking officers to consider putting solar panels on Phoenix House as he felt it was a prime roof for this equipment.

The Leader replied that his was a good idea and was sure officers could consider this at the same time.

Councillor Bush asked if officers were going to look again at Parkside and Phoenix House, could they not extend this to all Council properties. Councillor Holmes stated she was an advocate of solar panels and as tariffs were reducing all the time, the Council should consider installing them on Parkside as it was an ideal building. She referred to their prevalence on the continent and urged the Leader to consider this again now, particularly for Parkside. The Mayor advised the member that the Leader had already indicated he had agreed to do this.

CO66. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no motions on notice received.

CO67. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015-16

The Head of Central Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated) the purpose of which was for the Council to approve its Capital Programme for 2015-16 for all funds and the sources from which that funding would be taken as recommended at the Strategic Planning Away Day held on 15 January 2015.

The Leader commended the report to Members stating that the proposals set out in the paper had been well considered at the Away Day. Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 3.5 of the report which itemised those schemes which had not been recommended for funding at this stage. Councillor Rhodes moved the recommendations contained in the report and this was seconded by Councillor Posnett.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) funding for capital schemes in respect of General and Special Expenses and the sources that funding will be taken from, be as set out in Appendices A and B to the report subject to the changes recommended at the Strategic Planning Away Day outlined in paragraph 3.2; and
- (2) funding for capital schemes in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the sources that funding will be taken from be as set out in Appendix C to the report subject to paragraph 3.4.

CO68. REVENUE BUDGET 2015-16 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Before consideration of the report, the Chief Executive advised that in order to accommodate Councillor Gordon's interest declared at the start of the meeting, the Mayor had agreed to take the item on the Council Tax Support Scheme separately and first.

[Councillor Gordon here left the meeting.]

Members had before them a report by the Head of Central Services which set out information on the budget issues facing the Council in 2015-16 and beyond, and sought a decision on the level of the budget including growth and savings and agree the level of Council Tax for Borough Council purposes.

Councillor Rhodes moved the recommendation pertaining to the Council Tax Support Scheme as set out in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Posnett.

Following a vote, it was

RESOLVED: that as recommended by the Policy Finance and Administration Committee, the Council approves that the Council Tax Support Scheme approved for 2014/15 (Year 2) remain unaltered for 2015/16 (Year 3) and applicable amounts (e.g. Single Person Allowance) to be adjusted for inflation in line with the Government's Adjudication and Operations Circular.

[Councillor Gordon here returned to the meeting.]

Councillor Rhodes introduced the remainder of the report by emphasising that the decisions taken at this meeting would affect all the work the Council undertakes. Money for local government continued to fall year on year. In 2015-16 the Revenue Support Grant from the Government to this Council would reduce from £1.421m to £1.02m, a drop of £401,000.

To partially compensate, the New Homes Bonus would increase and all of it would be required to meet current council expenditure. There would be a small increase in business rates income but overall expenditure would have to fall to match the falling resources. Inflation was also a factor; the Council's staff would receive a 2.2% pay increase for 2014-15 in accordance with the national pay settlement.

The Government had offered the Council a 1% freeze grant to keep the Council Tax at the same level as previous years. However, if the Council was to avoid cutting back on services this year and subsequent years, it must consider for the first time since 2010, an increase in the Council Tax. The current rate was £150.48 per annum for an average Band D property. An increase of 1.9% (the maximum was 1.99% without a referendum) moved that annual figure to £153.34 per annum which equated to less than £3 per year or 6p per week. The matter was extensively discussed at the Members' Away Day and at PFA Committee and the Leader stated that it was fair to say that Members had been reluctant to make the change.

He warned that if the Council Tax was not increased this year and the Council took the government's freeze grant instead, it would lose £22,000 in revenue in 2015-16 and subsequent years. There was also the added risk that a further £29,000 could be lost from 2016/17 onwards if the freeze grant was not consolidated into the formula baseline. In the past this has been the case and currently the Council received £151,000 per annum from this stream. However, the government had been silent this year on whether it would be added to the base this time. He warned that if this important source of revenue was lost the Council would face budget deficits or reductions in the service offered. On balance, he therefore recommended that members approve the rise so that the extra revenue could be used to maintain services and avoid cutbacks.

The Leader referred to the remaining recommendations set out in paragraph 2 of the paper: in relation to the question of whether to continue the Members' Away Day arrangement next year, he considered that this was appreciated by those who attended it and therefore it should be continued. However, he considered that there was a role for the PFA Committee to finalise the proposals before coming before Council, and accordingly the timetable for next year would require adjustment to fit in both requirements. With the clarification on the final recommendation, he moved the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Posnett.

Councillor O'Callaghan opened the debate by warning of economic storms ahead when looking to increase Council Tax. Government help in giving additional funding to prevent any increases in Council Tax was a falsehood as this money was collected by the government through income tax. Councillor O'Callaghan congratulated the Leader on his honesty and said he appreciated the situation he was facing. However, the Opposition would not be supporting the budget and had made its comments through committee and would again at a later stage.

Looking to the longer term, although the MTFs showed the picture for the next 2 to 3 years, he questioned what lay ahead beyond that. There was a stark choice: either the present government which was committed to pursuing cutting public services and using local government to implement those cuts or Labour who would pursue a slower level of deficit reduction at a rate that would help to maintain public services. The fear was that we may be getting back to 1930's level of public expenditure as a percentage of GDP. Councillor O'Callaghan expressed his concern for the future of local government, stating it would be hard for which ever party was in power but suggesting harder still under one particular party.

Councillor Holmes expressed her concern that whilst this increase would not affect those on benefits, for those who did pay council rent, a further increase on the Council Tax as well would be a double hit, particularly for the elderly.

The Leader replied that Council Tax was payable by everyone that occupied a property. The average increase would be only £3 a year and many council tenants were in property bands lower than band D so would pay proportionally less. Council tenants would get the benefit of the services which will be preserved through this increase. He acknowledged Councillor O’Callaghan’s remarks and his different approach to economic policy. It was not sustainable to continue with no increase on the Council Tax levy with the significant contraction on the rate support grant.

Councillor Freer-Jones stated that at the Away Day she had expressed her concern at the proposed increase and when she sat as a substitute on the PFA Committee she had voted against the motion. She therefore would not be supporting recommendation 2.3 although she was in agreement with the rest of the budget and the capital expenditure; she expressed the view that something more could have been done to hold the council tax rate for another year particularly since other precepting authorities were increasing their rate. As a point of information, Councillor Orson stated that the Police Authority had been replaced by the Police & Crime Commissioner who had put up their rate by 1.99%. The PCC was the first to announce the rate in case it was vetoed by the Police & Crime Panel which would mean another meeting had to take place.

Councillor Twitney indicated his support for the recommendations setting out his reasons for so doing. He appreciated that there were financial challenges for people but there was the real risk if future government income was reduced the Council would have to make cuts in services. He paid tribute to the officers of the Council who gave help and support to those people in financial difficulties. There were funds available to help and the officers worked hard to mitigate their problems. On the subject of the Away Day, he supported the Leader’s proposal as it was an important and useful opportunity for all Members to have an input.

Before moving to the vote, Councillor Gordon voiced her support for the 1.9% increase if the Council was to avoid service cuts. She stated it was important to prepare for the future having regard to the current situation in some parts of the world citing Greece as an example.

The Leader had nothing further to add therefore in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.5 (b) a recorded vote was then taken:

No.	Councillor	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
1.	Baguley	√			
2.	Barnes				A
3.	Botterill	√			
4.	Bush			√	
5.	Chandler	√			
6.	Cumbers	√			
7.	De Burle	√			

No.	Councillor	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
8.	Douglas	√			
9.	Freer-Jones			√	
10.	Gordon	√			
11.	Graham	√			
12.	Holmes			√	
13.	Horton				A
14.	Hutchison				A
15.	Illingworth	√			
16.	Lumley	√			
17.	Manderson	√			
18.	J. Moulding			√	
19.	O'Callaghan			√	
20.	Orson	√			
21.	Posnett	√			
22.	Rhodes	√			
23.	Sheldon	√			
24.	Simpson	√			
25.	Slater				A
26.	Twitney	√			
27.	Wright	√			
28.	Wyatt	√			
	Totals	19		5	4

RESOLVED:That

- (1) any increase or shortfall against the target working balance on General Expenses 31 March 2015 be adjusted by transfers to/from the Corporate Priorities Reserve and for Special Expenses Melton Mowbray any surplus be transferred to the Special Expenses Reserve and any shortfall be replenished from within the 2015/16 budget (paras 3.4.2, 3.4.3 and 3.5.4 refer);
- (2) the proposals for General Expenses as set out in Appendix A be approved for inclusion in the 2015/16 budget resulting in the estimates set out in Appendix B to the report;
- (3) the revenue budget for 2015/16 for General and Special Expenses as set out in

Appendix B to the report be approved resulting in an overall council tax increase of 1.9%, the individual council tax levels being as set out in para 3.5.5;

- (4) that delegated authority be given to the Head of Central Services to amend the estimates to account for any changes to the final Formula Funding amount over the provisional figure by adjusting the inflation contingency;
- (5) to note the changes made to the risk categorisation of budgets as set out in para 3.6.3 and Appendix E to the report;
- (6) to note the unanimous decision taken under delegated authority to remain in the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Rates Pool by all pool members for 2015/16, para 3.9.1 refers;
- (7) that the annual Strategic Planning Away Day be continued and the Policy Finance and Administration Committee provide the recommendations to the Council on budget proposals as per para 11.6.

CO69. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

In a report previously circulated, the Head of Central Services had provided Members with details of the Council's prudential indicators for 2015/16 – 2017/18 and set out the expected treasury operations for this period which fulfilled key legislative requirements. These policies and parameters provided an approved framework within which the officers undertook the day to day capital and treasury activities.

In moving the recommendations contained within the report, Councillor Rhodes stated that the paper was similar to several which had been received by Members in recent years. He highlighted the good financial health of the Council; the authority continued to be debt free on its General and Special Expenses Accounts with a satisfactory level of reserves. Councillor Posnett seconded the motion.

Before moving to the vote, Councillor O'Callaghan commented on the analysis of risks to the economic recovery as put forward by the Treasury consultants, expressing his concern that consumer spending was not the way to get out of a downturn. He quoted some of the forecasts and expressed the hope that the Council's investments would maintain themselves throughout this period.

RESOLVED: (unanimously)

- (1) That the prudential indicators and limits are adopted and approved;
- (2) The Treasury Management Strategy and treasury management prudential indicators are adopted and approved;
- (3) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement which sets out the Council's policy on MRP is approved.

CO70.CHANGE IN POLITICAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP – ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND LEADERSHIP OF THE OPPOSITION

Members had before them a report previously circulated by the Chief Executive concerning the implications of a change in the Council’s political balance following the transfer of Councillor Hutchison from the Independent Group to the Conservative Group. Arising therefrom, the Council was asked to appoint a Leader of the Opposition.

The Chief Executive drew Members’ attention to an updated version of Appendix A circulated at the meeting as a result of a late change in political balance arrangements. She had been advised that the Labour Group wished to take 2 seats on the Planning Committee and revert to 1 seat on the CSA Committee. Accordingly, the Single Independent Councillor would take the seat on the CSA Committee and not on the Planning Committee as proposed in the report circulated with the agenda. As the Labour Group had ownership of a second seat on the Planning Committee, she had been advised by the Group Leader that it was the Group’s wish that Councillor Freer-Jones of the Independent Group take this seat. Members were advised that this had been considered from a legal perspective and as this seat was in the gift of the Labour Group, the rules of political balance had been followed.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Rhodes, confirmed that his Group’s proposals remained as per the original report and in accepting the revised arrangements as reported by the Chief Executive, he moved the recommendations contained in the report. The motion was seconded by Councillor Posnett.

Councillor Holmes as Leader of the Independent Group stated it was her Group’s wish that Councillor Twitney be the nominated Substitute on REEA Committee not Councillor Freer-Jones as stated in the revised Appendix A. The mover and seconder of the motion accepted this change to the proposal. A vote was taken and it was

RESOLVED: (unanimously)

(1) To approve the political balance percentages and number of seats allocated to each political group as set out in the tables below:

Group	No. of Councillors	Percentage		Allocation of Seats over 6 Committees
Conservative	20	71%	(71.43)	40.47 = 41
Labour	4	14%	(14.28)	7.98 = 8
Independent	3	11%	(10.71)	6.27 = 6
Single Councillor	1	4%	(3.58)	2.28 = 2
Totals	28	100%	100.00	57 seats

2014/15	APP	CSA	PLNG	GOV	PFA	REEA	TOTAL
Conservative	3 (3.55%)	7 (7.10%)	8 (7.81%)	7 (7.10%)	8 (7.10%)	8 (7.81%)	41
Labour	1 (0.70%)	1 (1.40%)	2 (1.54%)	1 (1.40%)	1 (1.40%)	2 (1.54%)	8
Independent	1 (0.55%)	1 (1.10%)	1 (1.21%)	1 (1.10%)	1 (1.10%)	1 (1.21%)	6
Single Cllr	0 (0.2%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.44%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.4%)	0 (0.44%)	2
Totals	5	10	11	10	10	11	57

- (2) To note that in accordance with the political balance rules set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, S15-17 (as amended) political balance is to be achieved in total across all the Committees and within all individual Committees requiring political balance and to note also that political balance applies to Sub-Committees as required;
- (3) To note that as a result of the change in political group membership, there is no change to the Governance Sub Committees, Chairs, Vice Chairs, Forums, Partnerships, Outside Organisations, Lead Members and memberships of the Working Groups apart from the Cattle Market and the Melton Local Plan;
- (4) To note that as a result of the change in political group membership and being a group of 3 or less Members, the Independent Group is entitled to 1 substitute on politically balanced Committees of 10/11 Members;
- (5) To approve the changes in membership and substitutes of Committees, the Cattle Market and Melton Local Plan Working Groups as set out in the revised Appendix A and which are specifically as follows:-
- (a) Councillor Hutchison to take the additional Conservative seats on the Policy, Finance & Administration and Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committees and fill the Conservative Group vacancy on the Cattle Market Working Group;
 - (b) The non-aligned single Councillor, Councillor Gordon, be allocated 2 seats, these being on the Governance and Community and Social Affairs Committees;
 - (c) Councillor Bush to fill the Labour Group vacancy on the Melton Local Plan Working Group;
 - (d) The Labour Group to allocate its second seat on the Planning Committee to Councillor Freer-Jones of the Independent Group;
 - (e) The Independent Group has advised the following and this is reflected in Appendix A (as amended at (iv) in accordance with the Group Leader's notification at the meeting) :-
 - (i) Councillor Freer-Jones is to replace Councillor Hutchison on the PFA Committee and Councillor Twitney is the group's Substitute on that Committee

- (ii) Councillor Freer-Jones is to replace Councillor Hutchison on the Local Plan Working Group
 - (iii) Councillor Freer-Jones has been removed from the Planning Committee
 - (iv) Councillor Twitney is a Substitute Councillor on the REEA Committee
- (f) Substitute Councillors may be advised and the Chief Executive thereafter to exercise her delegated authority.
- (6) To approve that Councillor Bush, being the Leader of the Labour Group, be appointed the Leader of the Opposition due to the Labour Group being the largest opposition group in accordance with Paragraph 2.2(e), Key Roles, Part 2, Articles of the Constitution. The Leader of the Opposition payment be made to Councillor Bush of £670.94 per annum.

[Councillor Twitney here left the meeting.]

CO71. MELTON LOCAL PLAN – ROLE IN THE DELIVERY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

In a report previously circulated, the Head of Regulatory Services set out the challenges faced by delivering high quality sustainable development in the Borough and the risk of not doing so. The role of the Local Plan was highlighted in setting a clear direction of travel and assisting with bringing forward necessary development in the Borough. The report also explained the tests that would be applied by a Planning Inspector in assessing whether the Local Plan is sound. Member direction would be sought on the appropriate level of housing development to be planned for the Borough.

In commending the report to Members, Councillor Wright drew attention to the challenges identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 for the need for new homes in the Borough of between 195 and 245 dwellings per year. This range represented the Borough's most up to date assessment of housing need. He also highlighted that part of the report which set out the test of soundness to be applied by the Planning Inspector at the examination. The plan would need to show how the housing target would be met by specific sites. Councillor Wright moved the recommendation to note the contents of the report which was seconded by Councillor Chandler.

After Councillor Manderson referred to the challenges to develop sustainable development within the Borough to fulfil the housing need and commended officers for preparing the Council for this test of soundness, a vote was taken on the motion.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that the contents of the report on the Melton Local Plan and its role in delivering development in the Borough be noted.

CO72. MELTON LOCAL PLAN – ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION RESPONSE: SUMMARY AND PROPOSED APPROACH TO KEY POLICY AREAS

The Head of Regulatory Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated) which, in accordance with the previously agreed Melton

Local Plan Forward Plan, summarised the response received to the Melton Local Plan Issues & Options Consultation. The Council was asked to give strategic direction on the preferred approach to addressing a number of key issues which will shape the Local Plan and the application of resources within the Local Plans team.

In presenting the report, Councillor Wright drew Members' attention to two typographical errors: at recommendation 2.1 II, the recommendation should read

“To prepare the Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan) without undertaking a detailed review of the Borough's Village Envelopes.”; on page 10, paragraph 22.1 7th line down should read “here there is a risk that Member's do **not** resolve to support the Preferred Options”.

Councillor Wright then summarised the key points before moving the recommendations contained at paragraph 2.1. In seconding the motion, Councillor Chandler stated that although she had always been an advocate of village envelopes, she now recognised that they had come to the end of their useful life; they could lead to problems of dwellings being 'shoe horned' into gardens and it was an illusion that envelopes gave protection to villages. Councillor Chandler now felt that the best way forward for villages, and urban areas, was the preparation of neighbourhood plans.

A lengthy debate then followed during which a number of Members spoke either in support of village envelopes or on what they saw as the disadvantages. The disadvantages of village envelopes were cited as:

- They protected villages to the detriment of the urban areas;
- Exacerbated the mismatch of the population between the town and rural areas;
- Lead to the detrimental effect of infill development which spoilt the look of villages
- Fettered the growth of villages leading to loss of facilities like post offices and pubs;
- Development in villages would help to sustain public transport in rural areas;
- The development of villages unfettered by 'red lines' was essential for their sustainability and for the future of the Borough.

The points made in support of village envelopes were:

- They gave clear guidance to developers and saved officers' time in handling applications
- The majority of village residents supported them suggesting a clear mandate;
- They afforded a degree of certainty;
- Sustainable envelopes can ensure villages do not develop into urban sprawl;
- Whilst the envelopes needed to be reviewed, they did serve an important purpose and should not be done away with.

Further comments were made about the need to build more housing in the rural areas in order to meet the target over the 20 year period. The Council faced a difficult issue in drawing up a Local Plan that met the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework which had altered the planning rules beyond what was expected. Village envelopes would need to be replaced with a clear set of guidelines and as a planning authority, the Council would be judged on whether it

could apply a reasonable policy with regard to new developments. A further issue would be the split of new development between the town and the rural areas; more evidence would be needed to support that split but a significant proportion of the 5,000 houses would be in the villages. However, this had to be taken in the context that this development would be spread over a 20 year period. A Member then expressed concern about the second part of the recommendation to prepare the Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan) without undertaking a review of the Borough Village Envelopes. The Member also highlighted Question 68 of the consultation response regarding how village envelopes should be taken forward and commented that a review of the envelopes would be good whereby in certain circumstances, building could be allowed. In view of her concerns regarding the third part of the recommendation, the Member requested that each part of the recommendation be voted upon separately.

A point of order was raised that if the vote on the second part of the recommendation was lost, officers would have no steer on the next stage. An amendment to that recommendation would be needed. The Chief Executive accepted the point of order and the Mayor indicated that the vote on the recommendations would be taken en bloc.

A vote was taken and accordingly it was

RESOLVED: That the Council gives the following strategic directions to assist with developing draft policies in the Preferred Options (Draft Plan):

- (1) To prepare the Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan) on the basis of seeking to deliver a target of at least 245 new dwellings per annum between 2011 and 2036 informed by and subject to the most up to date objective assessment of need;
- (2) To prepare the Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan) without undertaking a detailed review of the Borough's Village Envelopes;
- (3) To prepare the Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan) to include Protected Open Areas and Areas of Separation which will involve a review of existing areas and considering the potential designation of new ones through the Local Plan process.

[Councillors Cumbers, Holmes, Sheldon and Simpson requested that their vote against the motion be recorded.]

The meeting, which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 8.10 p.m.

Mayor