



MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF MELTON

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

11 DECEMBER 2013

PRESENT

Councillors M. M. Gordon (Mayor)
P.M. Baguley, M. Barnes, G. Bush, P.M. Chandler,
P. Cumbers, J.M. Douglas, A. Freer-Jones, M.C.R. Graham MBE,
L. Horton, E. Holmes, E. Hutchison, J. Illingworth, S. Lumley,
V. J. Manderson, T. Moncrieff, J. Moulding, J.T. Orson,
P.M. Posnett, J.B. Rhodes, J. Simpson, N. Slater,
M.N. Twitney, D.R. Wright, J. Wyatt

Chief Executive, Strategic Director (CM), Strategic Director (KA)
Head of Communications & Monitoring Officer
Head of Central Services, Head of Regulatory Services
Revenues Business Partner
Democracy & Involvement Officer

Young Mayor, Ashleigh Evans
Deputy Young Mayor, Kelsey Mackie

The Reverend Kevin Ashby offered prayers

Before the start of formal business, the Mayor advised Members that this meeting would be recorded on a trial basis. The recording was via the microphone system and accordingly Members were reminded to use the microphones when speaking.

CO41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.E. Botterill, M. O'Callaghan, and M.R. Sheldon.

CO42. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 16 October 2013 were moved by Councillor Rhodes and seconded by Councillor Posnett.

The Mayor referred to the Mayor's Announcements at minute CO31, specifically the trip to Skegness for the East Midlands in Bloom Award Ceremony; she wished to make clear that although the driver for Manor Taxis had given his time free of charge, the cost of the mini bus had been met from the Mayor's budget. She asked that future Mayors consider meeting the cost of the minibus for this particular event.

A Member sought advice from the Chief Executive on the appropriateness of the Mayor advertising the services of a particular company. The Chief Executive replied that the Mayor was expressing thanks to a community group and a local taxi driver who gave his time for free. The Mayor had suggested to future Mayors that they consider paying for a minibus for this particular event, whichever company was used. It was therefore appropriate for the Mayor to thank people and companies who had helped her and community groups.

Councillor Moncrieff referred to minute CO39 concerning the Members' Remuneration Package and asked that the following be included before the recording of the amendment being seconded:

“Collectively we have a duty to ensure we have a fair, transparent and proper remuneration package that will stand public scrutiny. Not only do I believe that currently this is not the case, if this package is approved tonight I will certainly test this myself through our local news media.”

In support of this addition, Councillor Moncrieff stated he had made this statement and felt it should be recorded. He also wished to clarify any confusion around the fact that the Opposition Leader, Councillor O'Callaghan, when seconding the failed amendment voiced his concern that the Remuneration Panel had ignored his request to speak to them. Mr Cade, in responding, had said the Panel had not received such a request but Councillor O'Callaghan had found a copy of the email he had sent to the Panel.

Subject to the amendments to Minutes CO31 and CO39 outlined above, the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 16 October 2013 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Mayor.

CO43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Bush, Gordon, and Slater declared personal and pecuniary interests in minute CO48(d) concerning the localised Council Tax Support Scheme for Melton Borough Council as they were in receipt of Council Tax support.

Councillor Moncrieff declared a pecuniary interest in minute CO48(d) concerning the localised Council Tax Support Scheme for Melton Borough Council as he was a Parish Councillor. However, as this was an exemption covered under paragraph 13(3)(g) in the Code of Conduct, he would remain in the meeting and participate in the debate.

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.

Councillors Chandler, Orson, and Rhodes declared pecuniary interests in minute CO48(d) concerning the localised Council Tax Support Scheme for Melton Borough Council as they owned rented property.

Councillors Simpson and Holmes declared pecuniary interests in minute CO48(d) concerning the localised Council Tax Support Scheme for Melton Borough Council as they owned let and un-let properties.

Councillor Twitney declared a pecuniary interest in minute CO48(d) concerning the localised Council Tax Support Scheme for Melton Borough Council as he owned a second home.

CO44. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) The Mayor stated that since the last meeting of the Council she had attended 35 events and 136 events since she became Mayor in May 2013. The Mayor then briefly reported on some of the key events attended which included:

- a visit to the Lodge Trust at market Overton which was an excellent facility for those with learning disabilities and was expanding with the new flats;
- the Royal British Legion Re-dedication service at Egerton Lodge War memorial, the RBL Melton Branch Dinner and the Remembrance Day Service and Parade. She had also attended the Armistice Day 2 minute silence with the firing of maroons in the Play Close. All these had been very poignant events at which she had been proud to represent the community;
- an event to raise funds for her charity "Afternoon Tea with the Mayor" which had been very successful;
- the Melton Christmas Light Switch On;
- a visit to the Valley Christian Fellowship where she had given a talk on the role of Mayor and her faith;
- the St. Mary's Parish Church Christmas Tree Festival. Her tree had been on the theme of Revelations 22 1-5 to represent the New Jerusalem
- the Victorian Fayre which she had attended dressed as a maid
- the official unveiling of the Working Dog Sculpture at Parkside which the Mayor felt represented a very visual way of the town working together with the Defence Animal Centre;
- a visit by civic guests from the twin town of Sochaczew during which she had accompanied them to several events. The Mayor publicly thanked Councillor Posnett for helping to organise the itinerary and her Deputy, Councillor John Wyatt, for his assistance;
- the Melton Times Community Awards and commended the achievements of those from the local community who had been recognised.

(2) The Council then received a report from the newly elected Young Mayor, Ashleigh Evans. The Young Mayor was also supported by her Deputy, Kelsey Mackie, who also attended the meeting. The Young Mayor:

- introduced herself and explained she had been living in Melton for the past year and when she had heard about the opportunity to stand for Young Major she thought it would be a good idea for a new comer like herself to bring ideas from her past towns to Melton;
- stated she loved Melton as it was but felt there could be a few improvements made for young people, for example, having facilities set up for teenagers to do during the holidays or at weekends. Whilst there were various options already, such as Venture House and the Sports Centre, it was about getting

these facilities advertised;

- suggested that as well as the options already available, she would like to see new facilities such as a dance club or place for everyone to go and chat. With help from her Deputy she would like to set up a fundraiser to enable one of these ideas to be realised;
- said she had heard many people say that the skate park needed improvements but she was aware that this took time and money and was not a simple process. The Young Mayor felt that if teenagers knew this then they would understand what was happening a little more;
- explained her Deputy and her shared similar ideas and had already started to work together and hopefully would work with the Council too. If down the line, they felt their ideas were a bit too ambitious to achieve now, then they would come up with other ideas or even start a project for the next Young Mayor to finish;
- thanked the Council for giving her the opportunity to speak today and expressed the hope that she could work with everyone in the near future.

Before concluding this item, the Mayor mentioned her Christmas Carol Service which had taken place at St. Mary's Parish Church on 5 December 2013. She expressed her delight at the wonderful event and how each participating school's performance had been different in character. The Glee Club from the Brooksby College had also contributed to the service. The Mayor publicly thanked Reverend Ashby and all those involved with the church for their help in arranging the service, and to the Democracy and Involvement Officer for her organisational assistance.

CO45. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

In presenting his report, the Leader, Councillor Rhodes:

- congratulated the newly elected Young Mayor and her Deputy on their election and hoped they enjoyed and benefited from their time in office;
- referred to the recent visit of guests from the twin town of Sochzew. It was 10 years since the link had been formed and it had grown stronger each year thanks to the commitment of successive Mayors and Councillor Posnett;
- referred to the opening of the new Sainsbury's store which had taken on more than 200 residents as employees. He mentioned some issues with the road markings and timings of traffic lights outside the store and explained he had requested the Director of Environment and Transportation at County Hall to consider a modification to the road markings to make the left hand lane approaching the lights a left turn only and to look at the timing of the lights;
- advised that the New Homes Bonus would not now be top sliced and made over to the LLEP, at least until 2015;
- stated that the Skate Park in Prior's Close had been closed as it was worn out and acknowledged that this was disappointing news for the young skateboarders who had worked so hard to get it installed originally. The Council would do all it could to raise funds to get the equipment replaced and re-installed as soon as possible and called upon users of the skate park to help the Council raise the money;
- highlighted the unveiling of the first working dog sculpture outside Parkside and advised that proposals were now being brought forward to fund, make, and install the remaining sculptures of a Labrador and Springer Spaniel;

- spoke on the number of wind turbine planning applications being submitted, most of which were vehemently opposed by local people. He expressed concern that some members of the Government seemed oblivious to the concerns of local people and were thwarting attempts by minister such as the Rt Hon Eric Pickles to control the deployment of these turbines. He wished Planning Committee members well in considering the cases put forward by the applicants and those of local objectors;
- referred to earlier views he had expressed about the consequences of failure to achieve an agreed Core Strategy and Local Plan. His fears that such a failure would result in a planning void into which developers could move with multiple applications was coming true. Each of application would have to be decided on its own merits, not necessarily in the context of the wider housing and environmental needs of the Borough. Each application would have to be determined individually against the main test of the NPPF – sustainability. Not all of these locations would be where the Council and residents would wish to see development by they may pass the planning test anyway. The lessons to be drawn from this were that the Council and local residents must work together in harmony in the future.;
- stated he was pleased to see that the Reference Groups set up to advise the Council on the new Local Plan had got off to a good start and expressed the hope this would continue;
- wished all Councillors, colleagues, officers and residents of the Borough a happy Christmas and a prosperous and harmonious New Year.

CO46. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions received.

CO47. PETITIONS

There were no petitions received.

CO48. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Councillor Twitney stated that on the advice of the Monitoring Officer, he wished to declare a personal and pecuniary interest in part (b) of the following recommendation concerning the Melton Local Plan and would therefore leave the meeting. The Mayor agreed that vote on the two parts of the recommendation would therefore be taken separately. Councillor Twitney was absent from the room during the vote to approve the amended Terms of Reference of the Melton Local Plan Working Group.

(a) Governance Committee : 27 November 2013 : Constitution Update (Committee Report enclosed and the following is a recommendation within the report considered on 27 November 2013)

RECOMMENDED that Full Council be asked to approve the proposed items as detailed at paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4:-

- (a) *with regard to the Members' Allowances Scheme, annual budgetary inflation*

be added to the computer consumables allowance of £50 per year and the scheme be amended to read :-

'Members may claim for computer consumables such as printer cartridges and paper (on the production of a receipt) up to the value of £50.00 per annum per Member and this sum be subject to inflation.'

(b) the amended Terms of Reference of the Melton Local Plan Working Group as set out at Appendix A.

The Chairman of the Governance Committee, Councillor Graham proposed the recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Douglas.

RESOLVED: that

(1) with regard to the Members' Allowances Scheme, annual budgetary inflation be added to the computer consumables allowance of £50 per year and the scheme be amended to read :-

'Members may claim for computer consumables such as printer cartridges and paper (on the production of a receipt) up to the value of £50.00 per annum per Member and this sum be subject to inflation.'

(2) the amended Terms of Reference of the Melton Local Plan Working Group as set out at Appendix A in the report to the Governance Committee on 27 November 2013 be approved

[Following the vote on part (1) above, Councillor Twitney here returned to the meeting.]

(b) Governance Committee : 27 November 2013 : Member Code of Conduct – Complaints Process (Committee report enclosed and the following is a recommendation within the report considered on 27 November 2013)

RECOMMENDED that Full Council be asked to approve the guidance attached at Appendix A.

The Chairman of the Governance Committee, Councillor Graham proposed the recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Douglas.

A Member stated that the Opposition Group was concerned that the guidance before Members for approval was falling short in actual practice and might need strengthening at stage 2 of the process or between stages 2 and 3. The view of the Opposition Group was that by stage 3 when the complaint was shared with the 'subject Member', only complaints that violate the Code of Conduct were shared and considered and not general complaints of any other nature. The Member stated he was happy to support the proposal providing the Chairman of the Governance Committee would agree to reconsider this step of the procedure.

Following advice from the Monitoring Officer, Councillor Graham agreed that a report be prepared for the next meeting of the Governance Committee to clarify the situation and agreed, with the consent of his seconder, to amend his motion accordingly.

RESOLVED: That subject to a report from the Monitoring Officer to the next meeting of the Governance Committee to clarify the procedure when sharing complaints with the 'subject Member', the guidance in relation to the Member Code of Conduct – Complaints Process be approved.

(c) Governance Committee: 27 November 2013 : Equalities and Diversity Annual Report

The Governance Committee has requested that Full Council note the good work being undertaken by the Council in the area of equalities as reported to them in the annual report on equality and diversity. Of particular note was that following the examination by the Peer Review team and the award of the achieving level in 2012, the Peer Review team had not felt it necessary to re-visit the Council and check on progress. At the present time, the status would continue until March 2015 or until the Council was re-inspected.

Councillor Graham moved and Councillor Douglas seconded the recommendation as set out in the agenda and below.

Before moving to the vote, Councillor Orson stated he had proposed this recommendation should be referred to Full Council. He wished to raise his concerns about the equality of rights afforded to Members specifically in relation to advice he had received that as a land owner he should not take part in the development of the Local Plan. He had duly taken that advice on board and had decided to join one of the reference groups in order to have an input into the process. Further advice had suggested that to do so could place him in a delicate position and as a result he felt that he was fettered in being able to engage properly with his own rights. Several Members indicated they shared similar concerns.

RESOLVED: To note the report from the Governance Committee.

[Councillors Bush, Gordon, and Slater here left the meeting.]

The Deputy Mayor in the chair.

(d) Policy, Finance and Administration Committee: 3 December 2013: Local Council Tax Support (Committee Report enclosed and the following is a recommendation within the report to be considered on 3 December 2013)

RECOMMENDED: That

- (a) The scheme attached at Appendix A is adopted as the localised Council Tax Support Scheme for Melton Borough Council from 1 April 2014. (The maximum liability for people of working age is 88.0% as recommended by the BSPWG)).*
- (b) That the portion of the grant attributable to Parishes and Special Expenses is reduced in line with Melton's anticipated Revenue Support Grant being 25% in 2014/15 and is adjusted in line with anticipated reductions*

(increases) in Revenue Support Grant for future years.

(c) That no transition scheme is required following the approval of an increase in the CTS Liability Cap from 8.5% to 12%.

Councillor Rhodes introduced this recommendation and explained the effect of this was to change the arrangements for those in receipt of Council Tax Support. The Government had reduced the amount of support to the Council therefore this Council had to increase the CTS Liability Cap from 8.5% to 12%. However, Melton Borough Council still had one of the lowest levels in the county.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Rhodes and seconded by Councillor Posnett.

In thanking officers for the report, a Member criticised the Government for the effect its policies were having on the poorest and most vulnerable in society who could be faced with losing their homes. He acknowledged that this Council was aware of how many people were genuinely suffering but could do little when faced with delivering the Government's policies. For these reasons he stated he would not support the recommendations. Upon being put to the vote, there were 17 votes in favour, 3 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

- (1) The scheme attached at Appendix A be adopted as the localised Council Tax Support Scheme for Melton Borough Council from 1 April 2014. (The maximum liability for people of working age is 88.0% as recommended by the BSPWG).
- (2) That the portion of the grant attributable to Parishes and Special Expenses be reduced in line with Melton's anticipated Revenue Support Grant being 25% in 2014/15 and is adjusted in line with anticipated reductions (increases) in Revenue Support Grant for future years.
- (3) That no transition scheme is required following the approval of an increase in the CTS Liability Cap from 8.5% to 12%.

[Councillor Holmes requested that her abstention from the vote be recorded.]

[Councillors Bush, Gordon, and Slater here returned to the meeting.]

CO49. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

(a) In accordance with Procedure Rule 10.1, the Chairmen of Committees to respond to any questions upon items of reports of Committees when those items are received or are under consideration by the Council as follows :-

Policy, Finance & Administration Committee	7 October 2013
Planning Committee	17 October 2013
Rural, Economic & Environmental Affairs Committee	30 October 2013
Planning Committee	7 November 2013

Licensing & Regulatory Committee
Ad Hoc Planning Committee
Community & Social Affairs Committee
Ad Hoc Governance Committee

12 November 2013
12 November 2013
13 November 2013
21 November 2013

(b) The Mayor, the Leader and the Chairmen of Committees to answer any questions on any matters in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affect the Borough of which due notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.5

(c) Councillor Freer-Jones referred to public Minute C45 from the CSA Committee of 13 November concerning the Housing Related Support Contract – Tender Contract. She expressed her concern about the potential impact of the procurement process underway and although she acknowledged that the Council did not have control over this process, she asked that Members be kept informed. The Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Wright, undertook to do so.

(d) The exempt sets of minutes from the PFA, CSA and Ad Hoc Governance Committees were agreed at the end of the meeting.

CO50. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

(1) In accordance with Procedure Rule 11.1, the following motion was received on 29 November 2013 from Councillor Rhodes as proposer and Councillor Posnett as seconder:

Rewiring Public Services

Council,

noting:

- *that England is now widely recognised to be the country with the most centralised system of government in Europe;*
- *that devolution has brought decisions about tax and spending, and the quality of public services, closer to voters in Scotland and Wales, while English voters have not gained comparably greater influence over decision-making that affects their taxes and services; and*

considers:

- *that the likely scale of change in how public services are funded and provided makes it democratically unsustainable for those changes to be decided within the existing over-centralised model;*
- *that services need to be reformed and integrated across local agencies to enable them to prevent problems rather than picking up the pieces;*
- *that voters should be given back a meaningful say on a wider range of tax and spending decisions, through place-based budgetary arrangements, the abolition of the discredited Barnett formula and the reinstatement of fair financial distribution agreed among English councils, the re-creation of a municipal bond market, and the certainty of multi-year funding settlements for*

the life of Parliament;

- *that central government should enable that local decision-making by joining up and reducing size Whitehall departments in order to facilitate local place-based budgets, by reducing Ministers' powers to intervene in local decisions, and replacing bureaucratic tick-box inspection regimes with local service users champions; and*
- *that such a new more mature settlement between central and local government should be put beyond future revision by giving formal constitutional protection to local democracy; and*

resolves:

- *to support the Local Government Association's Rewiring Public Services campaign, which embodies these objectives;*
- *to ask the Borough's Member of Parliament to support the Rewiring Public Services campaign to improve local voters' influence over services, tax and spending; and*
- *to make the Council's position clear to the Secretary of State.*

In moving the motion, Councillor Rhodes stated that he had brought it before the Council at the request of the Chairman of the Local Government Association, Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell. Melton Borough Council had been an active member of the LGA since its formation in 1997 and the Leader and Chief Executive or a Strategic Director attended the Annual Conference. At this year's conference, the Chairman put forward a new prospectus for Local Government in England under the title "Rewiring Public Services". This proposal (which had been circulated to Members electronically and hard copies circulated at the meeting) had all party support across the LGA.

Councillor Rhodes outlined the theme of the proposal which centred around the almost total dependence of local government upon National Government with little freedom of action. Local government's funding was largely controlled centrally as is council tax and other funding sources were often ring fenced. However, over 100 years ago, many cities prospered through strong local councils who delivered and some created local services and undertakings. In rural areas, communities were ran together through networks of local people. In most other countries, local government is independent of the state and was highly regarded.

The LGA proposed a new deal:

- (1) to give people back a local say over their local taxes;
- (2) to bring local services together
- (3) to reduce bureaucracy by merging Government ministries into one: a Single England office; the six are CLG, Transport, Defra, Energy and Climate Change, DCMS and parts of the Home Office;
- (4) to scrap the Barnett formula which gives much more money to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland than England;
- (5) to restrict government ministers' powers to interfere in local democracy, boundaries, and decisions;
- (6) to end tick box inspections;

- (7) to recreate municipal bonds so councils can fund their capital projects more freely;
- (8) a multi-year funding settlement each parliament to provide stability
- (9) a constitutional settlement which embeds the structure of local government independence in law.

In summing up, Councillor Rhodes stated that not all of these objectives were important as individual measures to Melton Borough Council but taken together they would enable us with partners to have the freedom to shape services and structures in this borough in a way people wanted. If people knew that their local council had power to make things happen then more would get involved and stand for election. It might also see election turn outs increase above the current average turnout of 330% or less. If the Council supported this motion, the Leader stated he would let the Secretary of State know that Melton Borough Council supported the LGA's stand.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Posnett who reserved her right to speak.

Several Members spoke in support of the motion and a comment was made that the good work of the LGA would help to ensure that future decision making would be far more influenced by the people to whom these decisions really matter and affect.

Councillor Posnett expressed her delight that all Members would stand together and support this motion. The freedom to shape services in the way the community wanted would help to revitalise the local economy, enable better integration with health and social care, and support better services for all. Councillor Rhodes stated he was very encouraged by the response and following a vote, it was (unanimously)

RESOLVED: That the Council

(1) noting:

- that England is now widely recognised to be the country with the most centralised system of government in Europe;
- that devolution has brought decisions about tax and spending, and the quality of public services, closer to voters in Scotland and Wales, while English voters have not gained comparably greater influence over decision-making that affects their taxes and services; and

(2) considers

- that the likely scale of change in how public services are funded and provided makes it democratically unsustainable for those changes to be decided within the existing over-centralised model;
- that services need to be reformed and integrated across local agencies to enable them to prevent problems rather than picking up the pieces;
- that voters should be given back a meaningful say on a wider range of tax and spending decisions, through place-based budgetary arrangements, the abolition of the discredited Barnett formula and the reinstatement of fair financial distribution agreed among English councils, the re-creation of a municipal bond market, and the certainty of multi-year funding settlements for the life of Parliament;

- that central government should enable that local decision-making by joining up and reducing size Whitehall departments in order to facilitate local place-based budgets, by reducing Ministers' powers to intervene in local decisions, and replacing bureaucratic tick-box inspection regimes with local service users champions; and
- that such a new more mature settlement between central and local government should be put beyond future revision by giving formal constitutional protection to local democracy; and

(3) resolves:

- to support the Local Government Association's Rewiring Public Services campaign, which embodies these objectives;
- to ask the Borough's Member of Parliament to support the Rewiring Public Services campaign to improve local voters' influence over services, tax and spending; and
- to make the Council's position clear to the Secretary of State.

(2) In accordance with Procedure Rule 11.1 the following motion was received on 2 December 2013 from Councillor TWITTEY as proposer and Councillor HUTCHISON as seconder.

This Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its workings. To improve the openness and transparency of Council meetings, and to enable more local residents to hear their elected representatives, this Council requests that officers record and promptly publish on the Council website, audio recordings of all Full Council meetings which are open to the public and press, on a trial basis.

This Council requests that minimal additional costs are incurred in this trial.

This Council requests that the trial begins with the first full meeting of 2014 and concludes with the recording and publishing of the October 2014 meeting of the Council (or first thereafter).

This Council requests that officers produce a report to be brought back to the October 2014 Full Council meeting (or first thereafter) to review the trial and provide options and costs for the continuance and potential expansion of the scheme.

This Council requests that these options and costs are to include the possibility of video recording and live streaming Full Council meetings (as Leicestershire County Council has done since 2006) as well as expanding the scheme to cover other committee meetings of the Council.

In moving his motion, Councillor Twitney said he was delighted that the meeting tonight was being recorded on a trial basis. He recalled that when he was first elected to the Council had had asked that meetings be recorded and this was

request was declined. This move demonstrated a commitment to more transparency and openness and more engagement with local people. Such steps attracted national support and Councillor Twitney referred to a recent press release by the Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who had announced new legislation to give the press and public more rights to record meetings. His motion proposed a first step on a trial basis with minimum costs. To those who might be concerned at meetings being recorded, he referred to the broadcasts of the House of Commons debates and the fact that the Leicestershire County Council had webcast its meetings for the last 8 years. He commended the motion to Members stating it would improve collective accountability and accessibility for electors and accordingly be a positive step for this Council to take.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Hutchison stated that as well as enhancing transparency it would assist officers with the accuracy of the minutes.

An amendment (copies of which were circulated at the meeting) was moved by Councillor Rhodes and seconded by Councillor Lumley that:

“This Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its workings.

To improve the openness and transparency of Council meetings and to enable more local residents to hear their elected representatives, this Council requests that officers look into the feasibility of recording and publishing audio recordings of full Council meetings and other meetings of the Council and its committees on the website on a trial basis and bring a report containing the costings and other implications to the next meeting of the Council after the Budget meeting in February.

The Council also requests that officers compile a report, also to be brought to the next meeting of the Council after the budget meeting or the next convenient meeting after that, setting out the feasibility and costings of videoing and webcasting council and committee meetings.”

Councillor Rhodes stated that this matter had been discussed in the Conservative Group and Members were now less cold towards the concept than previously. He acknowledged that times had moved on and it was important that this was done in a professional, competent way that did not bring the Council into disrepute.

Following this evenings recording, the results would be analysed to check all microphones were working correctly and the equipment performing properly. Further work would be needed on how meetings were to be conducted if they were to be broadcast, for example, how would the viewer know who was speaking. It was important to understand the ramifications in order to ensure that the Council got it right. It might be necessary to have a technician on hand at meetings and this would have cost implications. His amendment to the motion therefore asked officers to prepare a report on the costings and other implications. His own personal view was that webcasting should be the preferred option but this would be more expensive. The motion was seconded by Councillor Lumley.

An Opposition Member spoke in support of the motion as amended, stating that as Parliament was recorded and Leicestershire County Council had been webcasting

since 2006, then this Council should not be any different. Minutes were a legal record and a recording would, he had no doubt, prove useful in the future when referring to key points of debate. Whilst acknowledging that minutes were not a verbatim record, it would be useful to have a full recording kept for reference. Openness and transparency were not just 'buzz words' but highly important standards to aspire to, especially when so many people were turning their backs on the democratic process. He urged all Members to support the motion as amended.

Several other Members spoke in support of the amendment during which a comment was made that Council and committee meetings were recorded in the past. Members who were also County Councillors referred to the extension of the types of meetings now recorded and broadcast on the website and pointed out that it did impact on the participants' behaviour and the length of meetings. As County Councillors, Members were given feedback on their performance but observers, including members of the public, should also be self-aware as they would also be included in the broadcast.

A question was raised about coverage of exempt items and advice given that recordings would stop when confidential matters were discussed. A vote was taken on the motion as amended and it was (unanimously)

RESOLVED:

- (1) This Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its workings;
- (2) To improve the openness and transparency of Council meetings and to enable more local residents to hear their elected representatives, officers look into the feasibility of recording and publishing audio recordings of full Council meetings and other meetings of the Council and its committees on the website on a trial basis and bring a report containing the costings and other implications to the next meeting of the Council after the Budget meeting in February;
- (3) That officers compile a report, also to be brought to the next meeting of the Council after the budget meeting or the next convenient meeting after that, setting out the feasibility and costings of videoing and webcasting council and committee meetings

CO51. MID YEAR REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2013-14

Members had before them a report prepared by the Head of Central Services in which she explained that revisions to the regulatory framework of Treasury Management during 2009 introduced a requirement that the Council received a mid year treasury review in addition to the annual report and strategy on treasury management. The report before Members met the requirement and incorporates the needs of the Prudential Code to ensure adequate monitoring of capital expenditure and the Council's prudential indicators (PI's). The treasury strategy

and PI's had been previously reported to Council on 6 February 2013. Revisions to future years were provided where required.

The Leader commended the report to Members and moved the recommendations contained therein. The motion was seconded by Councillor Posnett.

A Member, in welcoming the mid year treasury position, also expressed concern at the slow pace of economic recovery and modest pace of the increase in employment. He criticised the Government for the impact this was having on those on low pay and poor conditions, particularly those employed on zero hours contracts. The Member also referred to modest house sales and made the point that many new house purchases were not from first time buyers but from those who could afford second or third homes to rent.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion as moved and seconded was (unanimously)

RESOLVED:

- (1) the mid year position on treasury activity for 2013-14 be noted;
- (2) the mid year position on prudential indicators be noted and approved.
- (3) reference to the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) be removed from the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as this project is no longer proceeding.

CO52. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Members had before them a report by the Head of Communications which sought approval for the Council's Pay Policy Statement. The Statement articulated the Council's approach to a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce and was a requirement of the Localism Act 2011. The Pay Policy Statement, as circulated, was moved by Councillor Rhodes and seconded by Councillor Posnett. Following a vote, it was (unanimously)

RESOLVED: to approve the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2013/14 as circulated with the Head of Communication's report.

[Councillor Orson and Councillor Twitney declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item by virtue of being land owners and here left the room.]

CO53. LOCAL PLAN REFERENCE GROUPS

The Head of Regulatory Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously circulated) which had informed the Working Group of the current status of each of the Reference Groups and invited the Council's authority to proceed on the basis proposed by the Melton Local Plan Working Group.

Councillor Wright commended the report to Members explaining that the first three Reference Groups had met already and the fourth was to meet next week. He

proposed an amendment to the officer's recommendations as he had received notification that, due to work commitments, Councillor Lumley had stood down from Melton Local Plan Working Group and it was proposed that Councillor Douglas should take his place. Councillor Wright moved the recommendations as set out in the report with this addition. This was seconded by Councillor Chandler.

RESOLVED: (unanimously)

- (1) to combine the Employment and Town Centre Reference Groups;
- (2) to proceed with the 'Special Interest Group' in its current form;
- (3) to agree that the approach to the engagement with young people will differ from the remaining groups and proceed with these arrangements;
- (4) to agree that Councillor Douglas replace Councillor Lumley on the Melton Local Plan Working Group.

[Councillors Orson and Twitney here returned to the meeting.]

Before closing the meeting, the Mayor invited those present to join her for drinks and light seasonal refreshments after the meeting.

The meeting, which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 8.00 p.m.

Mayor