



MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE BOROUGH OF MELTON

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

8 FEBRUARY 2017

PRESENT

Councillor D.R. Wright (Mayor)
P. Baguley, T.S. Bains, M. Blase, T. Beaken,
G.E. Botterill, P.M. Chandler, T. Culley, P. Cumbers,
J. Douglas, M. Glancy, T. Greenow, L. Higgins,
J. Hurrell, J. Illingworth, S. Lumley, J.T. Orson,
A. Pearson, P.M. Posnett, J.B. Rhodes, J. Simpson,
M.R. Sheldon, J. Wyatt

Chief Executive
Head of Central Services, Head of Communications
Central Services Manager;
Democracy & Involvement Officer

Rev Dr Nick Ashton from Melton Mowbray Baptist Church offered prayers

CO71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. de Burle, Graham MBE, E. Holmes, Hutchison, and Manderson.

CO72. MINUTES

Subject to an amendment to minute CO61 to correctly record the interest declared by Councillor Rhodes in respect of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme as:

a personal interest and an interest which could lead to a perception of bias

the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2016 were moved and seconded as a true record of the meeting by Councillor Posnett and Councillor Higgins and, following a vote, were signed by the Mayor.

CO73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

CO74. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor

(a) reported on a number of events he had attended since the last meeting of the Council in December which included several Civic Heads' carol services and the Christmas Staff luncheon at Parkside where a number of awards had been made to Council and Partner staff to recognise outstanding contributions throughout the year;

(b) referred to a recent visit to Charity Link in Leicester which had been hosted by the High Sheriff of Leicestershire. This charitable trust worked with a number of organisations, including this council, to help vulnerable people and those affected by poverty by providing everyday items and food. Last year they had helped 8,000 people of which 32 referrals were from Melton. The Mayor stated he had not been aware of this charity previously and was very interested in their work. He had therefore given an invitation to Charity Link to give a short presentation to Members and this would take place at 6pm before the next Full Council meeting on 23 February;

(c) mentioned the farewell presentation to Christine Marshall, former Strategic Director, that he had attended and thanked Councillor Bains for deputising for him at a number of events;

(c) reminded Members about his Mayor's Awards and encouraged all to put forward any individuals or groups they knew worthy of recognition. The closing date for nominations was 6 March. He also asked those Members who had not responded to the invitation to his Civic Dinner on 10 March to do so and expressed the hope that as many Members as possible would attend.

CO75. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader presented her report to Council, during which she

(a) began by referring to the busy start to the year with a Budget Away Day to look at the Council's strategic planning for the 2017/18 budget and the announcement by the Chief Executive of her decision to retire in July. This, along with other recent staff departures had provided an opportunity to consider restructuring resources to enable the work of the Council to continue to run smoothly;

(b) mentioned that the Council had been nominated for an award by the Local Government Chronicle. This was a really prestigious event and the Council should feel proud that as a small authority, it could demonstrate to larger organisations and continue to show the way;

(c) reported that the Council had now gone out for procurement for the Leisure Vision to see which companies were interested in that vision and would wish to work with the Council in designing, building and managing the facility. She also mentioned that the first pilot of a proposal to have Community Hubs in localities to help older adults in a way similar to Supporting Leicestershire Families opened in Melton this month. It would be based in Phoenix House with Me and My Learning and would be able to integrate services;

(d) advised Members that she had taken part on the Council's first Facebook Live chat on the Melton Local Plan which had been viewed by just under 200 people. Although initially anxious as to how this would go, a number of questions were asked and she thanked the officers who had helped her with the questions and working the camera. The Leader recommended that the Council should do more of these Live chat sessions;

(e) reported that Me and My Learning had been successful in being appointed as the Business Delivery Partner to "Business to Business" to deliver careers advice and guidance to those moving on to employment or training;

(f) provided an update on the Melton Lottery; the current number of supporters engaged was 270, selling 500 tickets per week with 29 good causes signed up. The Leader expressed her disappointment that some of the organisations the Council supported financially had not joined as the idea behind the lottery was that if the Council could no longer give financial support, there was an opportunity in place for them to raise funds. She asked Members if they knew of any properly constituted organisations to encourage them to join;

(g) concluded by referring to the budget process and thanked the Head of Central Services and her staff for their hard work in being able to achieve a balanced budget despite the many financial pressures facing the Council in 2017/18:

- The Leader was pleased to report some ongoing growth for the future replacement of Wheels to Work scooters, some growth in Business Rates, Cattle Market Income, planning and car park income. The efficiency savings achieved to date were all good news but the Council should not become complacent as it was still facing other pressures from reductions in Government Grant, recycling credits and recycling income; investment income was still low and homelessness costs were rising.
- It was therefore even more important that the Council focused on achieving its efficiency plan and growth agenda, and to complete the Local Plan which had costs attached.
- With the financial projections for these areas, the Medium Term Financial Strategy showed the Council could balance its budget in future years providing this focus was maintained. The risks were greater as there was a move away from fixed Government Grants to funding from areas such as New Homes Bonus and Business Rates. The move to 100% of business rates being retained by the local government sector also meant an uncertain future.
- The Council had healthy reserves but these might be required to accommodate anything unforeseen or if there was slippage in efficiency plans and to use non recurring invest to save/capital expenditure.

- Members were advised that the debate on the final 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement would not take place until shortly after Parliament returned from recess on Monday 20 February, and it was not known when the Department for Communities & Local Government would publish the final settlement. As this was later than in previous years, it may mean that the settlement information was not received before the scheduled Council meeting on 23 February and therefore the meeting would need to be adjourned to a later date to conclude this business.

CO76. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions submitted from members of the public.

CO77. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

CO78. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Community & Social Affairs Committee: 24 January 2017 – Revenue Budget Proposals 2017/18, Housing Revenue Account

Councillor Pearson moved the recommendation on the Order paper stating that this would have an impact on the Council's finances but as a Government initiative, there was no choice. Councillor Lumley seconded the motion. The Deputy Leader pointed out that this was the second year of the 1% reduction and there would be two further yearly rent decreases of 1%. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED: That an average rent decrease of 1% for all Council dwellings for 2017-18 be approved with effect from 3 April 2017 and then when a property is re-let the rent continues to be brought into line with the Government's formula rent.

CO79. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were no questions from Members.

CO80. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

There were no motions on notice submitted.

CO81. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017-18

Members had before them a report by the Head of Central Services (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Council's Capital Programme for 2017/18 for all funds and the sources from which that funding would be taken as proposed by the Strategic Planning Away Day held on 11 January 2017 and the Policy,

Finance & Administration Committee. Recommendations had been put forward on the projects for General Expenses to be funded in the Capital Programme for 2017/18 in addition to those which had already had funding approved. The impact of these recommendations had been incorporated into the revenue budget and prudential indicators being separately considered at this meeting.

The Leader highlighted the major project of funding the replacement of public conveniences and moved the recommendations contained in the Order paper. Councillor Higgins seconded the motion and thanked the Members who had contributed to this 'invest to save' project. A Member endorsed these comments adding that the project had been well discussed and would serve the community well into the future. He commended Members' diligence and commitment to this project. Accordingly, the motion was put to the vote which was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- (1) Funding for capital schemes in respect of General Expenses and the sources that funding will be taken from, be as set out in Appendix A of the report, 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 approved by the Community and Social Affairs committee and set out in Appendix B to the report.

CO82. REVENUE BUDGET 2017-18 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

In a report previously circulated which had been prepared by the Head of Central Services, Members were provided with information on the budget issues facing the Council in 2017/18 and beyond. The Council was accordingly asked to determine the level of the budget including growth and savings, and to agree the level of Council Tax for Borough Council purposes. The report set out the key issues in the Medium Term Financial Strategy which had previously been referred to in the Leader's announcements.

The Leader moved the recommendations contained in the Order paper and these were seconded by Councillor Higgins. Councillor Higgins pointed out that the proposed Council Tax increase for Melton Borough represented only 9.6p per week for a Band D property. The motion was put to the vote and carried. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.5(b), the vote on the above motion was taken by a recorded vote.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Baguley	√			
Bains	√			
Beaken	√			
Botterill	√			

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
Blase	√			
Chandler	√			
Culley	√			
Cumbers	√			
De Burle				√
Douglas	√			
Glancy	√			
Graham				√
Greenow	√			
Higgins	√			
Holmes				√
Hurrell	√			
Hutchison				√
Illingworth	√			
Lumley	√			
Manderson				√
Orson	√			
Pearson	√			
Posnett	√			
Rhodes	√			
Sheldon	√			
Simpson	√			
Wright	√			
Wyatt	√			
Totals	23			5

RESOLVED:

(1) Any increase or shortfall against the target working balance on General Expenses at 31 March 2017 be adjusted by transfers to/from the Corporate Priorities Reserve and for Special Expenses Melton Mowbray any surplus/deficit be transferred to/from the Special Expenses Reserve (paras 3.4.2, 3.4.4 and 3.5.4 refer);

(2) The proposals for General Expenses and Special Expenses Melton Mowbray as set out in Appendix B be approved for inclusion in the 2017/18 budget resulting in the estimates set out in Appendix C;

(3) The revenue budget for 2017/18 for General and Special Expenses as set out in Appendix C be approved resulting in an overall council tax increase of £5, 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 contribution to/from the Corporate Priorities Reserve as appropriate;

(5) To note the changes made to the risk categorisation of budgets as set out in para 3.6.3 and Appendix F.

CO83. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Leader reported that as chair of the Budget and Strategy Planning Working Group, Councillor de Burle was to have presented this item but was absent due to illness. Therefore the Leader advised:

(a) Members of the BSPWG had undertaken scrutiny on the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2017/18 on behalf of Full Council;

(b) As part of the legislative requirements Members were asked to approve the four key areas which were the prudential indicators, Minimum Revenue Policy (MRP), Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy;

(c) The Head of Central services had confirmed the Council had complied with this prudential indicators in the current year and did not envisage difficulties for the future;

(d) There was also an additional recommendation proposing that the group limits for counterparties within the same banking group be increased from £6m to £9m. This allows investments to be placed in the highest rated organisations and not reduce credit criteria to ensure sufficient allowance when investment levels are at their highest;

(e) Members would be pleased to note that operationally, following a recent internal audit of Treasury Management function, the audit team were able to provide a substantial level assurance that all processes and controls were operating affectively across all areas of the audit. In addition to this no issues or areas of improvement were identified.

The Leader then moved the recommendations contained in the Order paper and these were seconded by Councillor Higgins. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

(1) the prudential indicators and limits be adopted and approved;

- (2) the Treasury Management Strategy and treasury management prudential indicators be adopted and approved;
- (3) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement which sets out the Council's policy on MRP be approved;
- (4) Group limits for term deposits with counterparties within the same banking group be increased to £9m (para 3.1.6 refers); and
- (5) the Revenues Business Partner be authorised to be added as a signatory for banking activities (para 3.3.3 refers)

CO84. MEMBER ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2017-18

Members had before them a report prepared by the Head of Communications in which the officer advised that the Council is to make a Member Allowances Scheme for each year that the scheme relates. Accordingly, it was asked to consider a revised Member Allowances Scheme for the forthcoming municipal year 2017/18.

The report was presented to Members by Councillor Orson who made the following points:

- (a) the Member Allowances Scheme was last reviewed by the Independent Welland Remuneration Panel in the summer of 2016 and the Council approved the Panel's recommendations on 12 October 2016. During the review process, the structure of the Member Allowances Scheme document was considered by the Welland Remuneration Panel and changes were recommended to reflect a modernised model that was similar to that of Blaby District Council;
- (b) since then the document had been updated to reflect the Panel's comments and include legislative requirements. There had been no change made to any of the allowances whilst reviewing the document and it reflected the recommendations and monetary values approved by the Full Council in October 2016. Whilst reviewing the document, two items have been added which reflected previous decisions relating to the requirement for each Councillor to register as a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act;
- (c) it was proposed that in future years, the opportunity to 'make' a Member Allowances Scheme for the forthcoming Civic year would be included within the Revenue Budget Setting report at the early February Full Council meeting so that Members may review the scheme when setting the budget for the forthcoming year;
- (d) the Member Allowances Scheme must not rely on its NJC index for annual adjustment for more than a four year period before seeking a recommendation from an Independent Remuneration Panel on the application of such an index. This index was last reviewed by the Welland Remuneration Panel in October 2016, therefore Melton was next due a review of its annual adjustment index arrangements in 2020. As previously, all allowances remain index linked to the NJC pay award scheme.

Councillor Orson moved the recommendations contained in the Order paper and this was seconded by Councillor Wyatt. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- (1) the updated Member Allowances Scheme be approved to commence in the Civic Year 2017/18 as at Appendix A to the report;
- (2) the Member Allowances Scheme be included for consideration as part of the Revenue Budget Setting report; and
- (3) the Member Allowances Scheme contained at Part 6 of the Constitution be updated to reflect the scheme approved at this meeting with effect from the start of the new Civic Year 2017/18.

CO85. PAY POLICY 2017-18

In a report previously circulated, the Head of Communications sought approval from the Council for the 2017/18 Annual Pay Policy Statement so that it could be published in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. In addition, agreement was sought to implement changes to the Pay Policy from 2017/18 in relation to the Living Wage as recommended by the Budget and Strategic Working Group and approved by the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee.

The recommendations as contained in the Order paper were moved by the Leader and seconded by Councillor Higgins. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 be approved;
- (2) that HR procedures be applied to move forward the implementation of the National Living Wage to replace the Living Wage Foundation rate.

The meeting, which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 7.05 p.m.

Mayor

