

Melton

(DRAFT)

Annual Report 2010

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Our Vision

The Melton Sustainable Community Strategy has brought together the needs and hopes of local people and the organisations that work in the borough into a shared vision:

We want to enhance the quality of life for everyone in the Borough of Melton to achieve a sustainable, prosperous and vibrant community.... A place where people want to live, work and visit.

As a lead member of the Melton Community Partnership, we endorse this vision.

Our Values

We conduct our business in ways which deliver:

Customer Care

Openness

Honesty

Trust

Respect

Fairness

Courtesy

Ethos

Everyone working together to make a positive difference that our customers will notice

Aims

To do what we do well

This means having an action focussed culture with an attention to detail underpinned by professionalism.

To do what we do efficiently

This means giving value for money and measuring and reviewing our activities to ensure that we are efficient and effective. To do what we do efficiently and look after the finances of the Council.

To support those in need in our community

This means pursuing a course to encourage social justice, inclusion and review of our policies at all times to promote equality in access and service and proactively seek to help the more vulnerable members of our community.

MODERNISING HOW WE WORK

On Friday 30 May 2008, Melton Borough Council's offices on Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray were devastated by fire caused by an electrical fault.

The immediate aftermath of the fire was a traumatic time for council staff, councillors, our partners and the local community. The Annual Report 2009 included a section on the fire and the work underway to get council services fully operational from the town again.

We have continued with our ambitious programme to develop new ways of working and to provide purpose built offices in the town centre, having taken the decision to relocate to another site.

Flexible, paperlight working

The majority of staff now work flexibly but have access to a 'base' at either the refurbished wing of the Council Offices, branded Phoenix House, or the Melton Mowbray Building Society.

Work continues to minimise dependency on paper; provide electronic access to all documents and to provide the capabilities for electronic transactions. Many processes that were previously paper based are now done electronically. This helps us save time and money previously spent on sending and copying paper and allowed transactions to be made at any time of day. For example, most types of applications (e.g. planning, licensing etc) can now be made on line without having to wait for office hours or staff to be available to receive them. In addition, our staff can access the documents from wherever and whenever they are working, avoiding the need for specific trips to the offices. This also allows services to be delivered at a variety locations - in the rural areas and in customers own homes - by allowing full access to records, forms and other documents.

The move away from traditional office practices has a strong relationship with the amount of floorspace we require to provide our services. The former Council Offices provided around 19m² of floorspace per member of staff. The authorities two principal offices currently provide between 6m² of floorspace per member of staff (Melton Mowbray Building Society) and 8m² of floorspace per member of staff (Phoenix House). The National Average for Local Authorities is in the region of 15 sq m per member of staff. The amount of floorspace provided in the office accommodation affects both construction costs and the ongoing servicing and maintenance costs that the authority will face. Our commitment to modern flexible ways of working reinforces not only our desire to provide efficient services but also to reduce the financial cost to the authority.

Work to get us back in the town centre

During 2009 we took great strides towards our aim to provide modern, state of the art accommodation on a single site at Melton Mowbray. Planning permission has been granted for our new offices at Burton Street, a vacant site in the town centre which lies between the main shopping area and the railway station. The new Council Offices are part of our plans to regenerate the town centre. Preparation of the site has commenced in earnest with the demolition of redundant building being predominantly completed by the end of March 2010.

A huge amount of work remains to be done to re-house the Council's functions and staff. This work continues to be an obvious priority for the Council. Our careful project management of the process has ensured that we remain on time and in within budget to see completion of the new offices in May 2011.

Nevertheless, we will also continue to work on our existing priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. Future Annual Reports should show our continued progress on the priorities against the backdrop of recovering from the fire.

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2009/10 Highlights

Affordable Housing

In last years Annual Report we reported a really high figure of 114 new affordable houses delivered during 2008/9. During the downturn in the market the availability of grant funding for the delivery of affordable housing offered the security of a return for the development industry. This saw the affordable housing element of many schemes provided prior to the completion of the private market element. As a consequence 2009/10 has primarily seen completion of private market dwellings on those sites. Together with a lower number of schemes starting and a reduction in the activity on new projects for Registered Social Landlords the number of affordable houses delivered during 2009/10 was only 4 homes.

A small spatial area like Melton will have an uneven supply from year to year in the best economic conditions as figures are easily skewed by the building out of a single large site (which will increase affordable supply) or reduce if there is a larger proportion of smaller sites being developed (which do not have to make any contributions towards affordable housing).

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Recycling



Last year we were able to report an excellent recycling rate of 51.5%, the first time we had exceeded the difficult 50% threshold and a figure which placed us as one of the best recycling authorities in the country. Unfortunately, recycling is another area of work that has been affected by the global economic downturn.

Material for recycling is generated when people or businesses dispose of the goods they have purchased. During the downturn fewer goods were being purchased as people made do without or kept older goods for longer or did without. The market for recycled material is provided by the manufacturing industry which experienced a reduction in productivity during the downturn. This completed the shrinkage in the cycle from raw material to product through to recycling material.

We are in a better position than most authorities as a significant component of our recycling rate comes from the collection of household garden waste. We divert this material away from landfill by sending it to a local farmer for composting on our behalf. The amount of green garden waste that we collect has been considerably more stable during the downturn and that has helped us maintain an overall good recycling rate when compared to others nationally.

The net result of all these factors resulted in a recycling rate of 49.7%, a slight reduction compared to the previous year.

Signs of a slow economic 'recovery' are shown by a marginal increase in the tonnages collected in the early part of the year to be reported in next years Annual Report. However, our triumphant crossing of the 50% recycling rate is not likely to be repeated in the near future until the market recovers sufficiently although we are well placed to continue as one of the leading recycling authorities.

Children's Centres

Our three new children's centres and the services they provide continue to go from strength to strength. During the year an OFSTED inspection rated our Children's Centre Services as 'Good' The independent assessors found our work on to achieve value for money and a partnership approach as 'outstanding';

Over a £1m in external funding was successfully secured for the children's centres. The buildings themselves were developed through extensive community involvement to meet the community's needs and aspirations. Hailed as flagships centres, they provide an ideal opportunity to work with communities to deliver health, social & economic priorities.

We are very proud of this major achievement and delighted that our hard work has been recognised by independent assessors who have called our approach 'unique and innovative'.

Safer Communities

We have been working closely with partners to implement a programme of activities designed to create communities that are and feel safe. During 2009 all crime fell by 20.4% and reported Anti-Social Behaviour fell by 11.4%. Public Confidence levels in how Anti Social Behaviour and crime are dealt with are now the highest within the majority of our priority neighbourhoods. An example of how we achieved this is by reducing crime by around a quarter compared to the previous year in one of our priority neighbourhoods, Sysonby South.

We also work in partnership to enhance neighbourhood watch programmes throughout the borough, including providing grants to improve security. Our key indicators recorded the following reductions:

- Burglary Down 36%
- Burglary other than dwelling (e.g. business crime) down 36%
- Theft of vehicle down 37%
- Theft from vehicle down 31.5%

Town Centre

We continue our work to regenerate Melton Mowbray Town Centre with an extremely busy year of events backed up by our 'Think Melton Shop Melton' campaign. Events run in the town centre included a St. George's Day event, King Street Wedding Fayre', three continental markets, Melton By the Sea, The Melton Frost Fair, The Macmillan Largest Coffee Morning, The Grove Carnival, Charity Bike event & a full programme of Christmas events. The Frost Fair held the town's first ever Ski Slope and attracted good TV exposure on East Midlands Today. The Christmas Lights Switch on event was hosted by East Midlands Today, with the weather, followed by the actual switch on, filmed live with Des Coleman. Our Wedding Fayre also received television coverage

During the year we secured £30,000 funding to enhance the lighting and to improve signage in the town. A further £20,000 was secured to deliver the town centre's Business Improvement Grant Scheme and a Free website Scheme. The Sherrard Street Enhancement Scheme, an excellent example of multi-agency and partnership working, was completed.

Hosting the National Action for Market Town Awards was an excellent opportunity to showcase the successes of the town, via study tours and evening entertainment. We received excellent feedback from the event. We were also a finalist in the National UK Coach Awards, achieving a 'High Commended' in the category for 'Most Coach Friendly Local Authority'.

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How we work

We have 28 councillors representing 16 wards. The Conservative group led by **Cllr Malise Graham** the Council Leader, has 20 seats. The Labour group has 3 seats and is led by **Cllr Trevor Moncrieff**. There are 3 independent councillors led by **Cllr Allan Jackson** and a second independent group of 2 Members led by **Cllr Frank Moore-Coltman**.

The Mayor is **Cllr Elaine Holmes**.

Councillors represent the views of residents in their wards and play an active part in their communities.

The full Council of 28 Members is responsible for making decisions on strategic policy, council tax levels and our budget. We have three policy committees with specific responsibilities:

Policy, Finance and Administration Committee

Chairman: Cllr Malise Graham

Strategic direction
Policy Framework
Council Assets
Staff
Public Relations
Statement of Accounts
Performance
Risks

Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs

Chairman: Cllr Nigel Angrave

Transport
Waste
Economic and Environmental Wellbeing
Environmental Health
Emergency Planning
Cattle Market
Local Development Framework

Community and Social Affairs Committee

Chairman: Cllr Pam Posnett

Housing
Community Safety
Welfare
Allotments
Housing Benefit
Art, Culture, Leisure & Sport

Health and Safety

Our other committees are:

Overview , Scrutiny and Audit Committee

Chairman: Cllr Elaine Holmes

Standards Committee

Chairman: Mr. Martyn Mayes

Licensing Committee

Chairman: Cllr Ron Marks

Appeals Committee


Chairman: Cllr Colin Chapman

Development Committee

Chairman: Cllr Pru Chandler

Management

We have around 220 staff led by our Chief Executive, Lynn Aisbett. We have two corporate directors, and heads of service responsible for Customer Services, Finance, Human Resources and Communications, IT, Policy and Performance, Regulatory Services, Social and Economic Development, Street Scene and the Environment.



**Melton
Borough
Council**

Formed in 1974


Malise Graham



WYMONDHAM

Party: Conservative
Responsibilities:
LEADER of the Council
Chair of Policy,
Finance &
Administration
Committee

David Wright



BOTTESFORD

Party: Conservative
Responsibilities:
Deputy Leader of the
Council Vice
Chair: Policy, Finance
& Administration
Committee

Margaret Moore



DORIAN WARD

Party: Conservative
Responsibilities:
Mayor of the Borough
of Melton

Allan Jackson



CRAVEN WARD

Party: Independant
Responsibilities:
Leader of the
Independent Group

Trevor Moncrieff



EGERTON WARD

Party: Labour
Responsibilities:
Leader of the Labour
Group

Colin Chapman



NEWPORT WARD

Party: Conservative
Responsibilities: Chair
of the Appeals
Committee

Pam Posnett



NEWPORT WARD

Party: Conservative
Responsibilities: Chair
of Community & Social
Affairs Committee

Pru M. Chandler



BOTTESFORD

Party: Conservative
Responsibilities: Chair
of Development
Committee

Ron Marks



DORIAN WARD

Party: Conservative
Responsibilities: Chair
of Licensing
Committee

Elain Holmes



WALTHAM

Party: Independent
Responsibilities: Chair
of Overview & Scrutiny
Committee


Nigel Angrave



FRISBY ON THE WREAKE

Party: Conservative
Responsibilities: Chair
of Rural, Economic &
Environmental Affairs
Committee

Frank Moore-Coltman



CRAVEN WARD

Party: Independent
Responsibilities:
Leader of the
Independent2 Group

Matthew O'Callaghan



NEWPORT WARD

Party: Labour

Steve Dungworth



EGERTON WARD

Party: Labour

Pat Cumbers



DORIAN WARD

Party: Conservative

Rex Holt



GADDESBY

Party: Independent

Joe Orson



SYSONBY WARD

Party: Conservative

HONOURS


Audit Commission:

A fair and improving authority
Level 3 (performing well) for Use of Resources

Service Reviews:
Planning, Policy and Development Control Review (June 2001) A good (two star) service that will improve
Waste Management (October 2001) A good (two star) service that will probably improve
Revenue Services (May 2002) A fair (one star) service with promising prospects for improvement
Housing repairs and maintenance (Jan 2003) A poor (no star) service with uncertain prospects for improvements
Leisure Services (July 2003) A fair (one star) service that has promising prospects for improvement
Housing repairs and maintenance re-inspection (April 2004) A fair (one star) service that has promising prospects for improvement
Landlord Services (September 2006) A Fair (one star) service that has promising prospects for improvement
Cultural Inspection (August 2007) A Fair (one star) service with uncertain prospects for improvement

Investers in People (IIP)
Beacon Award in Reducing Re-offending

Norman G. Slater



WARWICK WARD

Party: Conservative

Michael Dean



ASFORDBY

Party: Independent

Mark Barnes



SOMERBY

Party: Conservative


Gerald E. Botterill



CROXTON KERRIAL

Party: Conservative

J. Byron Rhodes



LONG CLAYSON & STATHERN

Party: Conservative

Pamela Baguley



LONG CLAYSON & STATHERN

Party: Conservative


John Illingworth



SYSONBY WARD

Party: Conservative

John Wyatt



SYSONBY WARD

Party: Conservative

Alison J. Freer



WARWICK WARD

Party: Conservative

Diane E. Orson



OLD DALBY

Party: Conservative

Mal Sheldon



ASFORDBY

Party: Conservative

Becoming More Efficient

We are committed to being an efficient organisation. An efficiency saving occurs when the cost of an activity falls but its effectiveness is not reduced.

All Councils are required to measure and report the value of the efficiency savings they have achieved since April 2008. The table below shows the cumulative value of efficiency savings achieved by the end of March 2009 and forecast to be achieved by the end of March 2010 with the related targets:

	By March 2009	By March 2010
Saving	£430,000	£610,000
Target	£280,000	£560,000

This forecast level of savings to be achieved by March 2010 equates to £33.40 for the average band D dwelling for Melton Borough Council.

During 2010-11 we will be working with neighbouring Councils to deliver several important efficiency projects, which will enable significant improvements in service delivery.

Working in partnership

Melton Community Partnership

The Melton Community Partnership was set up in 2002. It aims to be a partnership of partnerships for Melton Borough to co-ordinate the better delivery of local services. Member organisations include a number of public, private, voluntary and community groups. The Chairman of the partnership is **Cllr Malise Graham**.

The Partnership approved the Melton Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out the needs and hopes of the community in 2008. The strategy allows organisations that work in the community and the community itself to work together towards a common goal to improve quality of life. The top three priorities are:

- Rejuvenate Melton Mowbray Town Centre
- Integrate the priority needs of the Borough with the services offered by our partners to better meet our customer's needs.
- Develop our approach to supporting and developing young people incorporating relevant education and skills in the Borough

Following a review of the Partnership in 2008 we have developed a new, innovative approach to partnership working that will ensure a better joined up and targeted delivery of services.

We decided to look at the needs of local people and focus our attention on what we can add real value to through working together. The proposed new partnership structure for the Borough of Melton is based around the themes, as set out in the Strategy, of People and Places.

Through working together, the Melton Community Partnership has had several successes:

Sure Start Children Centre Services

Our multi-agency 'Every Child Matters' work has been working really well in the new Children and Community Centres at Melton Mowbray. The centres and the services within them have grown to reach out to a number of families and children within the local area, providing access a wide range of services and support from parent classes, activity sessions to health care and information and advice on benefits, employment and housing- all under the one roof.

Melton Learning Hub

The Melton Learning Hub is a mix of both an outside garden and social and learning facility. Situated close to the town centre of Melton Mowbray, it is able to provide courses in areas such as mechanics, hair and beauty, animal welfare, and specialist courses in fisheries management.

We continue to expand the Melton Learning Hub. Throughout these changes the Hub has continued to remain a dynamic and innovative force, benefiting those who would otherwise be excluded or disengaged from the education system. It has worked hard to engage and support, on a long term basis, those who are not in education or employment and in some cases supporting those who were in need of one to one supervision.

The Hub ensures that students are given an opportunity to succeed in their studies through a mix of time spent at the hub and at school. The hub also offers activities during the holidays and encourages enterprise, and opportunities to work in real life situations.

Melton Environmental Action Partnership

The Councils Environmental Action Partnership is composed of a variety of partners who have an interest in and impact upon the environment. MEAP has identified priority areas of focus using the Governments Cleener Greener initiative to steer their thoughts and areas of activity. The Council has signed up to the WRAP good waste and recycling commitment and adopted an Environmental Statement, to supplement the signing of the Nottingham Direction, outlining the Councils mission in relation to managing environmental effects in aspects of its operations.

Melton Mowbray Town Centre Partnership

The Town Centre Partnership brings together a number of agencies and businesses to make improvements to the town centre as a commercial, thriving and economic hub in direct support of one of our key corporate priorities; improving the vitality and viability of Melton Mowbray Town Centre. The town centre work reported on page x is directly supported by the Town Centre Partnership.

Leicestershire Together

Leicestershire Together is the Local Strategic Partnership for Leicestershire. Melton Community Partnership is represented on Leicestershire Together by **Cllr Malise Graham**. Leicestershire Together has approved a county-wide Sustainable Community Strategy in 2008. The Sustainable Community Strategy outlines the issues that the people of Leicestershire see as a priority and the Local Area Agreement sets out how these issues will be tackled.

Local Area Agreement

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are a way for local authorities and their partners to use government funding to support the implementation of national and local priorities in local areas. They are agreements struck between government, the local authority and its partners in an area (working through the Local Strategic Partnerships such as the Melton Community Partnership) to improve public services.

The outcomes and targets set out in an area's Local Area Agreement will be their measure of success. The Local Area Agreement, now in its final year of delivery, is a key delivery plan for the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy.

Multi Area Agreements (MAA)

A multi-area agreement is designed to be cross-boundary local area agreement (LAA). The Leicester and Leicestershire MAA will focus on improving the economy, and will be a mechanism to deliver sub-regional priorities in order to improve economic performance.

Leicestershire Rural Partnership

The Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) provides a strategic framework in which Rural Leicestershire will be made up of thriving and sustainable, safe and secure, communities, towns and villages. It has been used to define rural Leicestershire and explains how key service centres such as Melton Mowbray can play a role in supporting their rural hinterland. Also, how the rural hinterland can provide significant strength and opportunities to their main 'urban centre'.

The Welland Partnership

The Welland is a partnership of choice, committed to giving a coherent voice to rural service issues, promoting the case for rural investment and through collaboration improving the services and quality of life for the 370,000 who live in the Welland Sub-Region. The Welland Sub-Region is: East Northants, Rutland, Melton, Harborough and South Kesteven.

Shared Services

We have a shared service arrangement for Internal Audit and Procurement with some of the other Welland authorities. Oadby and Wigston and Blaby district councils also take part in the Procurement Shared Service. We are also taking the opportunities arising from the fire to improve joint working with Leicestershire County Council and others. A strong working relationship is a key part of our new build office project, which is promoting partnership working and likely to include partnership presence on site.

Parish Councils

There are 26 parish councils in Melton. Parish councils are democratically elected to provide strong, confident leadership at the heart of their communities. As the tier of government that is closest to local communities, parish councils have a central role to play in community leadership and improving local quality of life in our rural areas. There is frequent liaison and working with parish councils.

Performance summary

Over the next few pages we review our performance for the last year (2008/08). We summarise how well we are doing at providing the best possible services and meeting the needs of all our customers: 49,200 residents and over 1,800 businesses.

How much did it cost?

On pages 17 to 20 we show how much money we have received and spent last year.

What did we deliver?

On pages 21 to 23 we tell you some of things we have delivered over the last year and our plans for 2009/10.

How well did we perform?

It is important not to forget that we are also here to deliver good services to our residents. The performance indicators on pages 24 and 25 are just one way we measure whether or not we are getting these services right.

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Performance highlights

4th out of 388 councils for the percentage of performance indicators improved in the last 3 years

77% of our performance indicators have improved in the last 3 years- well above the average for all district authorities (54-56)%

We recycled 49.6% of all the waste generated by households

'Good' OFSTED inspection of our Children's Centre Services

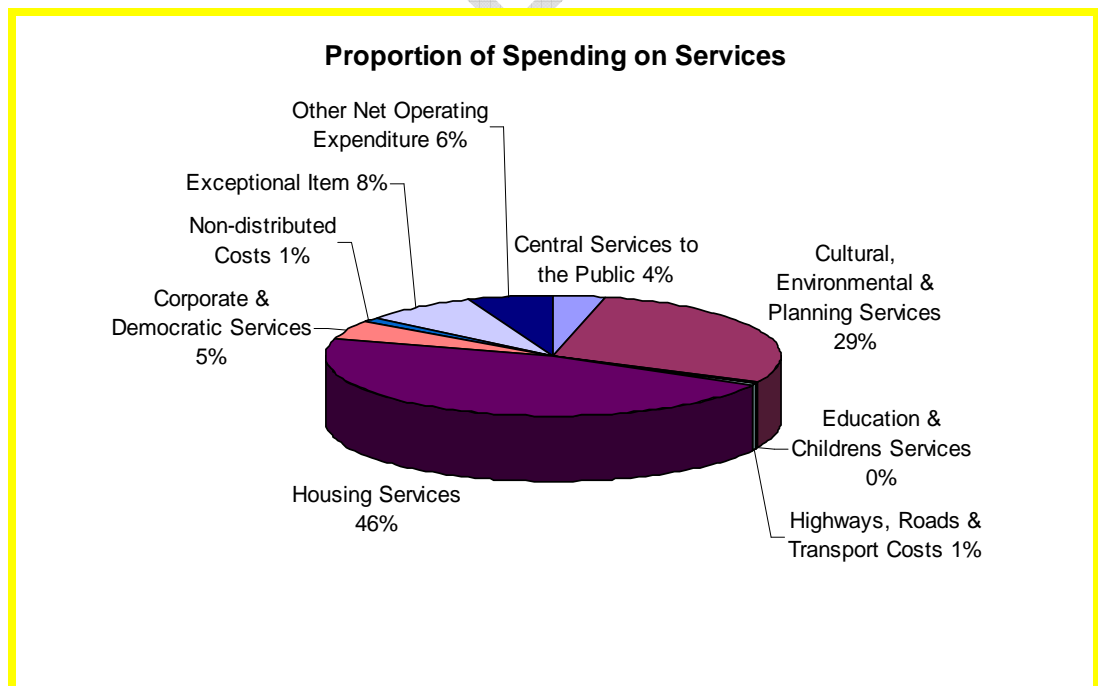
How much did it cost?

The Council produces an annual statement of accounts which is prepared in accordance with recommended accounting practice for local authorities and are audited by an auditor appointed by the Audit Commission. The purpose of the accounts is to report the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2009.

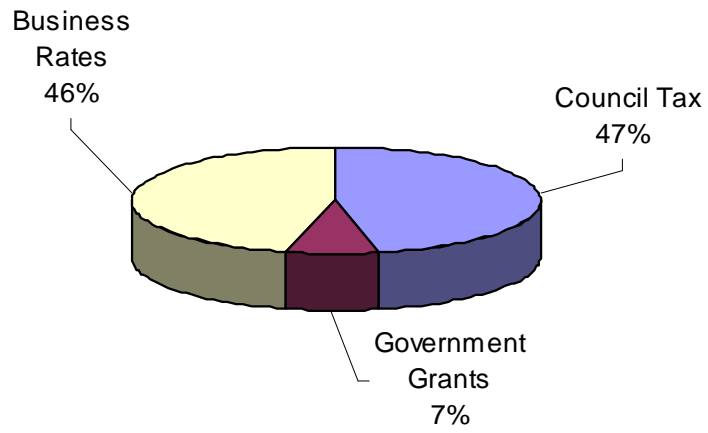
Revenue Budget

This includes the day to day running costs of services and costs incurred in managing the Council. The Council planned to spend £6.833m on providing such services excluding Council owned housing which is accounted for separately and reported below. The actual position at the year end showed an overspend of £154k which has been met from the Council's reserves to be used on expenditure of an unforeseen or of a non-recurring nature.

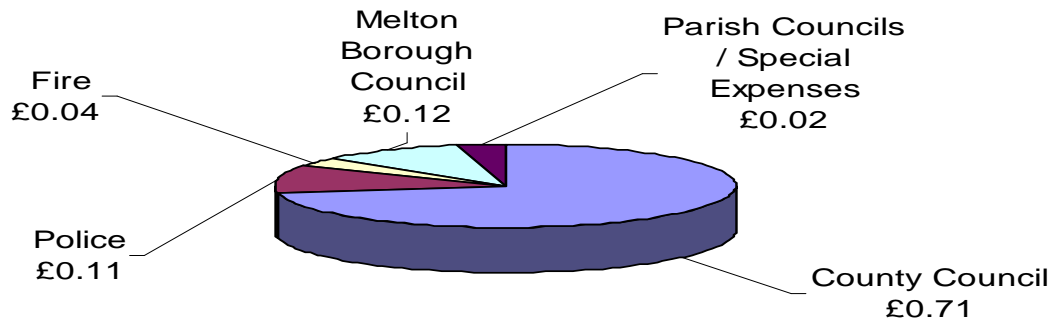
In addition to the above the Council budgeted for a deficit of £87k for the management and maintenance of its housing stock. The actual position showed a deficit of £241k due to monies being set aside to accelerate the Council's Decent Homes programme and this was met from the HRA Working Balance.



How our Net Cost of Services are funded



For every £1 of Council Tax we collect, it is distributed in the following way:



The Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet summarises all of the assets that the Council owns and the liabilities that it owes to others at 31 March 2009. It also shows how these net assets are allocated between usable resources, resources that have been set aside to finance Capital Expenditure, unrealised gains from increases in asset values and reserves needed to manage the complexities of Local Authority accounting.

	£'000
Assets	
Fixed & Long Term Assets	106,494
Money Owed to the Council	3,733
Cash, Investments & Stock	3,363
Total Assets	113,590
Liabilities	
Items Owed by the Council	7,881
Borrowing	7,125
Pension Scheme	8,265
Total Liabilities	23,271
Net Assets	90,319
Distributable Reserves	2,851
Non Distributable Reserves	87,468
Net Worth	90,319

Includes land and buildings, council dwellings, plant & equipment owned, etc

Spendable reserves and balances held for specific purposes or available to spend

Housing Revenue Account

This is a separate account which details income and expenditure relating to the provision of Council owned housing.

	£,000
<u>Income</u>	
Rents	5,576
Other Income	474
Total Income	6,050
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Repairs & Maintenance	1,880
Supervision & Management Costs	1,225
Subsidy Payable to Central Government	1,502
Other Costs	1,684
Total Expenditure	6,291
Deficit in Year	241

The Council owned the following types and numbers of dwellings at 31 March 2009:

Houses	901
Bungalows	284
Flats & Maisonettes	716
Total	1,901

There were no properties sold under the Government's Right to Buy Scheme during last financial year.

Capital Expenditure

In addition to expenditure incurred on the running of its day to day services the Council spent £6.786m on purchasing, upgrading and improving its assets. This was against an approved capital programme budget of £7.163m resulting in an underspend of £377k. A summary of the expenditure is shown below:

Capital Spend	£'000
Council owned Dwellings	1,912
Other Housing Services	431
Information Technology Systems	210
Council owned Assets (exc. Housing dwellings)	3,286
Community Centres	862
Community Enterprise & Grants	23
Other	62
	6,786

What did we deliver?

Communities that are safe and feel safe

Criminal damage, which is generally accepted as a good measure for anti-social behaviour continues to show a long term downward trend with a further 5% reduction over the last 12 months.

Some of the innovative work that we have helped drive forward includes:

- A pilot project working with the East Midlands Prison Service;
- A pilot for a Family Intervention Project (FIP) in the County; and
- Deployment of CCTV cameras in priority neighbourhoods (Egerton/Fairmead, Town Centre flats, South Melton).

A cleaner, greener environment

Waste reduction and recycling

During 2008/9 we recycled 51.4% of household waste, keeping us in the top 20 best recycling authorities in the country.

Environmental maintenance

The priority neighbourhoods have been a focus for improvements in environmental maintenance. Within all of these neighbourhoods we have run 'Pride in Weeks' which have included thorough clean ups of the whole area, information and family activity sessions for local residents, fun and sporting events, volunteering opportunities and adult education programmes.

Traffic congestion

Our Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options document was published in January 2008. It sets out our vision and planning strategy for the Borough to 2026. For many local people, the key decisions will be about where large-scale housing development will take place, and how that will relate to a bypass for Melton Mowbray. A special edition of the 'Melton Mail', public meetings and direct mail-outs encouraged over 3,000 representations.

Inclusive communities with a strong economy

Housing

In terms of meeting the decent homes standard for our own stock substantial progress has been made over the last few years. We remain on course to meet the decent homes standard ahead of the Government's 2010 target with the percentage of non-decent homes standing at 20%.

Last year, 114 new affordable homes were built, twice the amount built in 2008 and the most that have been built for many years. For the second year running the supply of new affordable housing has exceeded the loss of affordable housing. The economic downturn is likely to reduce the amount we can expect to see delivered in 2009/10, providing a challenge for us to return to high levels of delivery in the near future.

Business

In September 2008 the Council adopted an Economic Regeneration Strategy to address local economic needs based on a sound and robust evidence base. Some of the initiatives introduced within the last 12 months include:

- Melton Business Network – Skills & Training event aimed at raising awareness amongst the local business community of available support & schemes around work experience, work related learning, apprenticeships & workforce skills development
- E-commerce for Business Seminar – local business event to help businesses develop websites & sell-online, to help improve their performance and productivity

Town Centre

The Town Centre Partnership has continued to deliver against its 5 year Town Centre Business Plan 2007-12. During 2007/08:

- 'Think Melton Shop Melton' Campaign included the Melton bag, part funded by Mars, delivery of Shop Front Improvement Grants, Free business training seminars (Customer care, Window Dressing, Marketing & Selling & Website Development)
- Delivered and supported many town centre events including Egyptian Melton, Frost Fair, Continental Markets, Pork Pie Street Fair

- Secured a Town centre office to delivery face to face business advice & help and have an invaluable presence within the town itself

Young People

There have been a number of significant developments in relation to young people over the last 12 months:

- We have completed two new integrated children's and community centres in two of our priority neighbourhoods.
- During the last 12 months our second Young Mayor was elected and we have engaged with young people on a regular basis through the youth council.
- The Melton learning Hub has over 100 young people using its facilities for vocational based studies. At least 30 young people have remained in education who otherwise might have been excluded.

A well run Council

The fire at the Council Offices has presented us with a huge challenge in terms of delivering our day-to-day services. But it has also presented us with opportunities to re-think how we provide them.

Prior to the fire we had identified 8 priority areas for improvement. We have made progress on most of these, although we have made limited progress in our priority area of 'enhancing the rural character of the Borough'. Our priorities are set out in our new Corporate Plan which also sets out our goals and promises to 2013. However, recovering from the fire will be a big focus for some time to come.

How well did we perform?

Performance 2007/08

All councils are required by Government to collect performance information on areas such as waste, planning, benefits and housing and report them each year. This enables us to analyse our performance and compare it with other local authorities.

For 2006/07 we were able to directly compare 69 indicators with other district councils.

Below is just a snapshot of how we have performed in 2007/08. This is the last year we are required to report against the Best Value Performance Indicators as a new National Indicator set has been introduced from 2008/09.

Where we are performing well...

An average of 6.4 working days lost due to sickness absence
98.3% of Council Tax collected
98.9% of non-domestic rates collected
99.4% of the population served by a kerbside collection of recyclables (two recyclables)
49.6% household recycling and composting rate
80.3% of minor planning applications dealt with within 8 weeks
93.2% of other (not major or minor) planning applications dealt with within 8 weeks
9.9 domestic burglaries per 1,000 households
13.5 violent crimes per 1,000 population
0.3 robberies per 1,000 population
8.3 vehicle crimes per 1,000 population

Where we need to improve...

Household waste collection- an average of 454.9kg of waste was collected per household during 2007/08. We want to reduce waste and are working with other Leicestershire councils on a waste prevention and re-use plan.

Speed of processing housing benefit claims- it took an average of 34.6 days to process a new claim during 2007/08.

Our new strategy 2008-13

We need a council strategy to give us a clear direction that everyone - councillors, staff, residents, partners and auditors - understands, to help us prioritise, meet the national agenda and ensure we deliver on local priorities.

The strategy is based on the priorities that were agreed by the Council in October 2007. It has taken into account national priorities, local intelligence, partner's priorities, community views, internal requirements and future challenges.

Our new strategy sets out our joint vision for the district (see page 2). We've structured it around the following four priorities and for each set out how we want Melton to look and feel in five years' time.

Safer

Communities that are safe and feel safe

Stronger

Inclusive communities with a strong economy

Greener

A cleaner, greener environment

A well run Council

Good services that are value for money

Our priorities are underpinned by five-year goals, which express in more specific terms the outcomes we're seeking to achieve that will make life better for people. For example, tackling anti-social behaviour, and enhancing the vitality and viability of Melton Mowbray town centre.

The new National Indicators will be among the measures of success we use to track our progress with delivering the five-year goals.