

Minutes

Meeting name	Council
Date	Thursday, 24 February 2022
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor P. Faulkner (Chair)

Councillors

R. Bindloss	R. Browne
P. Chandler	R. Child
P. Cumbers	R. de Burle
J. Douglas	C. Evans
C. Fisher	A. Freer
M. Glancy	M. Graham MBE
L. Higgins	E. Holmes
J. Illingworth	J. Orson
P. Posnett MBE	D. Pritchett
R. Smith	M. Steadman
T. Webster	J. Wilkinson

Officers

Chief Executive (via remote link)
 Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
 Director for Corporate Services
 Director for Growth and Regeneration
 Assistant Director for Planning
 Deputy Monitoring Officer
 Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
 Democratic Services Officer (HA)

The Reverend Kevin Ashby offered prayers

Minute No.	Minute
CO55	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carter, Hewson, Lumley and Wood.</p>
CO56	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2021 were confirmed.</p>
CO57	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>A personal interest in respect of Councillors Orson and Posnett MBE, was noted as being on record for any matters which related to the Leicestershire County Council.</p> <p>Councillor Browne declared a personal interest in relation to Minute Number CO69, Pay Policy Statement, due to his wife being a Council employee.</p> <p>Councillor Orson declared a personal interest in relation to Minute Number CO68, Council Tax Setting 2022/23, as he is a Member of the Fire Authority.</p>
CO58	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Mayor commented that he had attended no events since the last meeting.</p> <p>Members agreed that the Mayor should write a letter on behalf of the Council to Matt Hampson, to congratulate him on his MBE.</p>
CO59	<p>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Leader provided the following announcement:</p> <p><i>“This evening, I start by reflecting on the shocking events we've seen emerging from the Ukraine throughout the day. I'm sure all Members will join me in wholly condemning the actions of the Putin-led government and the Russian invasion of a democratic sovereign state. It would appear this is only the beginning of what has the potential to become the most significant conflict in Europe since the second world war. I strongly urge our government and our allies to send a clear, united and unequivocal message to the Putin government that this action will not be tolerated. Locally Mr Mayor I have instructed our Officers to urgently review any suppliers or contracts that we have and to ensure we are not linked to any company or individual connected with Russia or banned individuals.</i></p> <p><i>Turning to the business of tonight, every year our meeting in February represents a crucial point in the Council's calendar, setting the budget is one of the most important responsibilities a Council has, particularly given the financial challenges local government has faced in the last 12 years. I look forward to Councillor de Burle introducing the budget proposals later in the agenda but I am delighted that once again, through extensive work by Members and Officers, we are in a position</i></p>

to set a balanced budget which protects services, maintains commitments to our corporate strategy and strengthens our financial resilience by putting money back into reserves. I'm also grateful for the extensive and constructive role of scrutiny in the budget development process both through the initial task and finish group and then the formal committee meeting held last month. I hope the budget will be one that all Members can support and look forward to the debate later in the agenda.

Mr Mayor, you will remember last time that we met we were in the grip of the omicron wave. It is pleasing that since then things have improved significantly and we now know this variant is less severe than delta. The government has set out a living with Covid plan and we are taking steps to review it and will provide further guidance and support to our communities as we move into this new phase.

January saw the publication of the long-awaited levelling up white paper and the confirmation that Leicestershire will have the opportunity to negotiate a county deal. This represents a great opportunity for Leicestershire and there is a huge amount that district and borough councils can contribute in relation to the 12 missions set out within the white paper. My fellow District Leaders and I have written to the leader of the County Council seeking assurances that we will play a full and active part in the development of the county deal and I look forward to working with them all to get the best deal for our residents. We continue to work with our neighbours Mr Mayor, exploring opportunities for collaboration and strategic alignment. As rural market town communities we share much in common with Harborough and Rutland, the Chief Executive and I recently had a productive discussion with our respective colleagues from both councils in the context of forming a county deal for Leicestershire. It is vital that this strong and united rural voice is heard and I look forward to continuing to explore ways in which we can do this more effectively.

Over the last few years I have been extremely proud of the steps we have taken to transform this Council, rebuilding and reshaping our governance system, introducing meaningful scrutiny for the first time in a decade and leading the local response and recovery from Covid.

I'm delighted to confirm that just last week, Melton Borough Council has been shortlisted in the local land charges awards for excellence. This is an area that historically had been under pressure but decisive action taken last year to strengthen resources and improve processes has delivered incredible results with searches now process in just a few days. Naturally I hope that we win but to be shortlisted is another reminder of what we are capable of at Melton Borough Council.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge that after nearly 18 years dedicated service to Melton Borough Council tonight is Jim Worley's last council meeting and his last day tomorrow before he takes early retirement. Jim's time at Melton included many notable achievements in particular the adoption of the local plan in 2018 and more recently to work to deliver a number of key SPDs and master plans to support the

	<p><i>delivery of the MMDR. Given all that has been achieved it is certainly a fitting time for Jim to reflect positively on his legacy and consider a new chapter in his life. To oversee the transitional period we welcome Paul Feehily, our Interim Assistant Director, who will support in shaping and establishing the longer-term arrangements for the planning service. On behalf of the whole Council, can I say a huge thank you to Jim for all he has done for the Council and for Melton and wish him all the very best for the future.”</i></p> <p>At this point, a presentation for Mr Worley took place.</p>
CO60	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME No questions from the public had been received.</p>
CO61	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS No questions from Members had been received.</p>
CO62	<p>MOTIONS ON NOTICE Equality Motion 2022 The following motion was proposed by Councillor Freer and seconded by Councillor Smith.</p> <p>Melton Borough Council is committed to promoting equality and creating a Melton community that is strong, safe, and inclusive for everyone.</p> <p>Social stereotypes and expectations can play a significant role in shaping attitudes and behaviour towards people with protected characteristics, including harmful behaviour.</p> <p>Melton Borough Council plays a crucial role in reinforcing behaviours that do not perpetuate such harmful stereotypes across our communities. As a public body, we must ensure the right balance is struck between the human right to freedom of expression that does not undermine or limit the rights of others to dignity and equality. We must therefore lead with integrity and as an exemplar of achieving that balance.</p> <p>We must stand together to promote and celebrate a Council that values and respects each individual and treats people with fairness and dignity. To do this we must actively stand against prejudice, stereotypes, inequality, and all forms of discrimination. This includes striving against conscious or unconscious use of outdated norms that have no place within our richly diverse workforce and communities.</p> <p>Cllr Freer requested that Members join her in supporting the following motion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reaffirm our commitment to equality and diversity, and creating a workforce and community that is strong, safe, and inclusive for everyone and an

accessible environment that values and respects every individual.

2. Endorse and reaffirm our commitment to meeting the objectives in our Single Equality Scheme Action Plan (2020-2024).
3. Ensure we foster an environment that gives people the confidence to actively challenge language, attitudes and behaviours that go against our principles of equality, fairness, respect, and dignity.
4. To ensure that Melton Borough Council continues to do everything in its power to build a Borough free from misogyny and violence against women and girls. This includes continuing to invest in vital services, listening and responding to women and girls about the action needed, and calling out misogyny and sexism wherever we see or hear it.
5. All Councillors commit to attending equality training.

During the debate, the following comments were made:

- Councillor Freer was thanked for bringing forward the motion.
- It was confirmed that inequality can not be tolerated and that Members need to set a high standard. It was recognised that Members can make mistakes but that they need to apologise as soon as they realise the mistake has been made.
- Equalities training is overdue but would be welcomed by Members.
- Councillor Cumbers commented that although she agreed with words of the motion she could not support the motion because it did not specifically cover BAME and disabled residents whereas it did specifically mention misogyny and sexism. Her view was that the wording gave the impression that the Council did not care about discrimination other than misogyny and sexism. Councillor Cumbers requested the motion be withdrawn and reworded. In response, Councillor Freer stated that the motion did encompass all the protected characteristics.

In accordance with Chapter 3 Part 1 of the Melton Borough Council Constitution, Procedure Rule 17.5(b), Councillors Holmes, Posnett and Smith requested that a recorded vote takes place on the motion.

RESOLVED

Council

- 1. Reaffirmed commitment to equality and diversity, and creating a workforce and community that is strong, safe, and inclusive for everyone and an accessible environment that values and respects every individual.**
- 2. Endorsed and reaffirmed commitment to meeting the objectives in the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan (2020-2024).**
- 3. To ensure that an environment, that gives people the confidence to actively challenge language, attitudes and behaviours that go against our principles of equality, fairness, respect, and dignity is fostered.**

4. **To ensure that Melton Borough Council continues to do everything in its power to build a Borough free from misogyny and violence against women and girls. This includes continuing to invest in vital services, listening and responding to women and girls about the action needed, and calling out misogyny and sexism wherever we see or hear it.**
5. **That all Councillors attends equality training.**

FOR THE MOTION (22)

Bindloss, Browne, Chandler, Child, de Burle, Douglas, Evans, Faulkner, Fisher, Freer, Glancy, Graham, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Smith, Steadman, Webster, Wilkinson.

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (1)

Cumbers

Simon Cole (Outgoing Chief Constable) Motion

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Graham and seconded by Councillor Orson.

The Chief Constable of Leicestershire, Simon Cole, is leaving his post in the spring after 12 years.

Councillor Graham requested that Members joined him in supporting the following motion:

That the Mayor writes, on behalf of the Council, to Mr Cole to formally thank him for the service he has provided to Melton and Leicestershire over the past 12 years.

(Unanimous)

CO63

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 TO 2025/26

Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources introduced the report and in doing so explained that it has been a challenging year for the Council. It was explained that there is expected to be a budget surplus in 2022/23 and that the surplus would go into the Regeneration and Innovation Reserve. Members were informed that the financial future remains uncertain beyond 2022/23.

Councillor Graham seconded the motion.

During the debate the following comment was made:

- The Council needed to be proactive in getting the £150 energy rebate to

those that were entitled to it.

RESOLVED

Council

- 1. Approved the proposals for General Expenses and Special Expenses Melton Mowbray as set out in Appendix B (i) and (ii) and summarised in section 4.5 of Appendix 1 be approved for inclusion in the 2022/23 budget resulting in the estimates set out in Appendix C;**
- 2. Approved the revenue budget for 2022/23 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 4.5.5 of Appendix 1;**
- 3. Approved that any surplus against the target working balance on General Expenses at 31 March 2022 is transferred to the General Expenses Working Balance and any shortfall is made up from the Corporate Priorities Reserve and for Special Expenses Melton Mowbray any surplus/deficit be transferred to/from the Special Expenses Reserve thereby bringing the actual Special Expenses Melton Mowbray Working Balance back to the target;**
- 4. Noted the changes made to the risk categorisation of budgets as set out in paragraph 4.6.2 of Appendix 1 and Appendix E;**
- 5. Approved that a new General Property Repair Fund be established using the residual balance on the Waterfield Leisure Centre Income Smoothing Reserve with delegation provided to the Director for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services to access the reserve to meet unexpected repairs and maintenance needs that arise during the year that cannot be met from existing revenue budgets.**

The above resolution was voted for as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (23)

Bindloss, Browne, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Evans, Faulkner, Fisher, Freer, Glancy, Graham, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Smith, Steadman, Webster, Wilkinson.

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)

CO64

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021-2026 - GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources introduced the report. Members were informed that the Council is required to produce a report

on the capital strategy and, by approving the programme, Members would be supporting the improvement of Council assets.

Councillor Freer seconded the motion.

During debate the following comment was made:

- In response to a question regarding the spend on the Waterfield Leisure Centre, Members were informed that the £77k spend was for remedial works on the existing facility.

RESOLVED

Council approved

- 1. the addition to the 2021/22 General Fund Capital Programme of £77k for works required at Waterfield leisure centre as referred to in para 5.2 of Appendix 1 to be funded from the Waterfield Leisure Pool sinking fund;**
- 2. the General Fund Capital Programme for 2022-26 as attached at Appendix B;**
- 3. the sources of funding for the General Fund capital programme for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix C;**
- 4. that delegated authority to be given to the Director for Corporate Services to amend the amount in the capital programme for Disabled Facilities Grants once funding confirmation has been received as referred to in paragraph 5.9 of Appendix 1;**
- 5. the Capital Strategy 2022-23 as attached at Appendix D.**

The above resolution was voted for as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (23)

Bindloss, Browne, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Evans, Faulkner, Fisher, Freer, Glancy, Graham, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Smith, Steadman, Webster, Wilkinson.

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)

CO65

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022/23, HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

Portfolio Holder for Council Homes and Landlord Services introduced the report. In doing so, Members were informed that rents would be increased by 4.1%, this is so that the Council is able to continue to invest in the housing stock, especially considering the current level of inflation. Also, it was stated that the Council would provide advice to tenants suffering hardship.

Members were informed that the Council would continue to meet and maintain the decent homes standard; improve the condition of homes and improve the environment of where homes are located. This would be done through engagement with tenants.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the HRA Business Plan would be considered by Scrutiny in March and then tabled at Council in April. The Portfolio Holder thanked all Officers who had worked on the budget and improving the performance of the service.

Councillor de Burle seconded the motion.

During the debate the following points were noted:

- The Leader stated his intention of supporting the recommendations of the report.
- The Portfolio Holder and the Director for Housing and Communities were congratulated on work done in improving the service.
- Councillor Evans noted that half the budget had not been spent and highlighted the importance of spending available funds on improving homes.
- Councillor Higgins stated that the budget should be spent wisely and directed to where it is most required and not just spent because it is there.
- It was noted that, through the work of Officers, the service had improved and a range of initiatives have been implemented, however the challenge now was to make further improvements and also to tackle fuel poverty. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council had a range of measures to tackle fuel poverty.
- The Scrutiny Committee Chairman informed Members, that Scrutiny had scrutinised both revenue and capital budgets. Members were reassured that Scrutiny would continue to address the underspend and would soon receive the HRA Business Plan to scrutinise.
- The visit to the Fairmead estate by the Leader, the Portfolio Holder and Officers was commended.
- A Member recognised that the Housing stock was improving.
- A query was raised in regards to the installation of electric showers and water metres in Council properties. The Portfolio Holder responded by stating that electric showers were being installed, however tenants were encouraged to consider the implications of installing water meters before doing so.

RESOLVED

Council

- 1. Approved the budget estimates for 2022-23;**
- 2. Approved an average rent increase of 4.10% for all Council dwellings**

	<p>for 2022-23 with effect from 1 April 2022;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Approved the working balance is maintained at the minimum balance of £750,000 and any residual amounts be transferred to the Regeneration & Development Reserve as approved in February 2020 when the budget was set for 2021-22; 4. Subject to an amendment to the estimates to allow for the freezing of IHMS charges, approved that any resulting reduction of income be funded by the Regeneration & Development Reserve in order to maintain the £750k working balance as detailed at 2.2.3 of the report at Appendix 1. 5. Approved the 2022-23 capital programme. <p>The above resolution was voted for as follows:</p> <p>FOR THE MOTION (23) Bindloss, Browne, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Evans, Faulkner, Fisher, Freer, Glancy, Graham, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Smith, Steadman, Webster, Wilkinson.</p> <p>AGAINST THE MOTION (0)</p> <p>ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)</p>
CO66	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2022/23</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources introduced the report and in doing so highlighted to Members the new prudential code that the Council would have to adhere to.</p> <p>Councillor Orson seconded the motion.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approved that the prudential indicators and limits are adopted as outlined in Appendix A section 2. 2. Delegated authority to the Director for Corporate Services to update the prudential indicators once the updated HRA business plan, as referred in paragraph 5.2 of Appendix 1, has been approved. 3. Approved the Treasury Management Strategy as outlined in Appendix A. 4. Approved the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement as outlined in paragraph 5.4 of Appendix 1. <p>The above resolution was voted for as follows:</p>

	<p>FOR THE MOTION (23) Bindloss, Browne, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Evans, Faulkner, Fisher, Freer, Glancy, Graham, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Smith, Steadman, Webster, Wilkinson.</p> <p>AGAINST THE MOTION (0)</p> <p>ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)</p>
CO67	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity introduced the report. Councillor Smith seconded the motion.</p> <p>During the debate the following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Committee Chair welcomed the document and stated that it read well and clearly outlined what the Council’s requirements were. It was noted that it would provide more certainty regarding requirements. • The document was important to the aim of achieving good quality design. • Members thanked the outgoing Assistant Director for Planning and Delivery, Jim Worley, for his contribution towards the document. • The previous Planning Committee Chair, Councillor Glancy, was also thanked for her contribution to the document. <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Adopted the final version of the Design of Development SPD, included as Appendix A, as a formal Supplementary Planning Document.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO68	<p>COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2022/23</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources introduced the report. Members were informed that when all the precepts are included there would be an average increase of 3.21%. The increase as a result of this Council is 2.35%.</p> <p>Councillor Orson seconded the motion and in doing so stated that the proposed increase of 2.35% is half of what inflation was at the time.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p>

	<p>Noted the calculations and set the Council Tax for the year 2022/23 in accordance with regulations set out in the Local Government Finance Act 1992.</p> <p>The above resolution was voted for as follows:</p> <p>FOR THE MOTION (23) Bindloss, Browne, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Evans, Faulkner, Fisher, Freer, Glancy, Graham, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Smith, Steadman, Webster, Wilkinson.</p> <p>AGAINST THE MOTION (0)</p> <p>ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)</p>
CO69	<p>PAY POLICY STATEMENT</p> <p>Pursuant to the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Mayor agreed to exercise discretion and allow consideration of the Pay Policy Statement as an urgent item.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources introduced the Pay Policy Statement. Councillor Orson seconded the motion.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Approved the attached Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 at Appendix A.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
	<p>Before closing the meeting, the Mayor announced that he had received a request from Councillor Higgins to make a statement at the meeting. The Mayor confirmed that he had taken advice on this request and understood that it was within his discretion to allow this statement, but that he had discussed with Councillor Higgins the specific parameters within which the statement could be made. The Mayor confirmed his intention to close the meeting immediately after the statement and that there would be no opportunity for discussion on the statement.</p> <p><i>(At 8:29pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors Posnett, Steadman and Webster left the meeting and did not return.)</i></p> <p><i>(At 8:30pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors Chandler and Child left the meeting and did not return.)</i></p>

Councillor Evans raised a point of order and questioned how the statement was being allowed when there was no item of business to allow any other business. In response the Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Mayor did have ultimate discretion over the meeting under common law and therefore could accept the statement. It was also confirmed that if the statement exceeded that which had been agreed and there was any risk that it could prejudice the outcome of any process or was inappropriate in any other way then the Mayor had been advised to intervene to protect the integrity of the Council and its processes.

Councillor Holmes stated that in a previous standards matter she had received advice not to mention the matter at any meeting of the Council. The Deputy Monitoring Officer reiterated her advice that the statement should not refer to any specific or ongoing standards process or investigation.

(At 8:38pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Evans left the meeting and did not return.)

Councillor Illingworth stated that despite his reservations, his overriding view was that the Council Chamber should be a place where Members were allowed to express their views and opinions.

(At 8:40pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors Bindloss and Browne left the meeting and did not return.)

The Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that any detail about the standards process and any ongoing investigation should be avoided. It was further confirmed that the statement that was to be made by Councillor Higgins may refer to an event but would not refer to, nor impact on, any ongoing process.

The Leader of the Council requested clarification regarding how many Members were required to maintain quoracy. It was confirmed that 14 Members were required to maintain quoracy.

(At 8:43pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Holmes left the meeting and did not return.)

Before Councillor Higgins made his statement, the Mayor confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Councillor Higgins made the following statement to Council:

"In the autumn of 2021, complaints were made relating to comments I made at the Best of Melton Awards on the 17th September 2021. My tribute is absolutely no way intended or otherwise to be offensive, on the contrary, I wanted to recognise and honour all in the room. I was mortified to learn that my acknowledgements and comments have been misinterpreted, as I did not intend to act in a way that risks

	<p><i>demeaning anyone or those present at those awards. For those who've made those complaints, I want to sincerely apologise for causing offence to them or to anyone else, something I unequivocally never intended to do. Thank you, Mr Mayor."</i></p>
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The meeting closed at: 8.45 pm

Mayor