

Agenda

Meeting name	Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee
Date	Monday, 14 June 2021
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 1GH
Other information	This meeting is open to the public

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are summoned to the above meeting to consider the following items of business.

Edd de Coverly
Chief Executive

Membership

Councillors	P. Cumbers (Chair)	R. Bindloss (Vice-Chair)
	P. Chandler	R. Child
	J. Douglas	C. Evans
	C. Fisher	J. Illingworth
	E. Holmes	M. Steadman

Quorum: 5 Councillors

Meeting enquiries	Democratic Services
Email	democracy@melton.gov.uk
Agenda despatched	Friday, 4 June 2021

No.	Item	Page No.
	<p>YOUTUBE Public Access: The meeting will be available to view at the following link.</p> <p>View Scrutiny Committee</p>	
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	<p>MINUTES To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 April 2021.</p>	1 - 4
3.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Members to declare any interest as appropriate in respect of items to be considered at this meeting.</p>	5 - 6
4.	<p>REVIEW OF DRAFT SCRUTINY WORKPLAN 2021/22 AND THE ANNUAL FORWARD PLAN To consider the Forward Plan and identify any relevant items for inclusion in the Scrutiny Workplan, or to request further information.</p> <p>A copy of the latest Forward Plan is attached and it can also be found on the website using the following link:</p> <p>Forward Plan</p>	7 - 22
5.	<p>THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRESENTATION The Leader of the Council is to provide a presentation to the Committee.</p>	
6.	<p>RESPONSE AND RECOVERY TASK AND FINISH GROUP (PLACE) - FINAL REPORT The final report of the Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place) is to be presented to the Committee.</p>	23 - 50
7.	<p>URGENT BUSINESS To consider any other items that the Chair considers urgent.</p>	

Minutes

Meeting name	Scrutiny Committee
Date	Tuesday, 20 April 2021
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor P. Cumbers (Chair)

Councillors

R. Bindloss (Vice-Chair)	R. Browne
R. Child	J. Douglas
C. Fisher	D. Pritchett
R. Smith	J. Wilkinson

Observers Councillor L. Higgins

Officers

- Director for Growth and Regeneration
- Planning Officer (LP)
- Democratic Services Manager
- Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer

Minute No.	Minute
102	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were no apologies received for this meeting.</p>
103	<p>MINUTES The Chair requested the following three amendments to the Minutes:</p> <p>Minute Number 99 – Delete the sentence ‘the council has begun working to provide a greater resilience on health and well-being and have delivered fitness programmes on Zoom’.</p> <p>Minute Number 99 – To add the words ‘in order to better understand resident’s issues’ to the sentence ‘the council had engaged with the NHS and local health leads across the county’.</p> <p>Minute Number 100 – Delete the paragraph ‘the presentation showed the committee what the CSP had touched on in the last 12 months. Having been heavily impacted with the effects of covid-19 it complimented the work the Scrutiny Task and Finish groups had done with regard to anti-social behaviour and the impact made on communities’.</p> <p>Subject to the amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021 were approved and authorised to be signed by the Chair.</p>
104	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.</p>
105	<p>REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORKPLAN 2020/21 AND THE ANNUAL FORWARD PLAN The Chair introduced the Scrutiny Workplan and the Cabinet Forward Plan. It was highlighted to the Committee that the 2020/21 Municipal Year is coming to an end and that consideration should be given for topics to be included on to the 2021/22 Scrutiny Workplan. In addition, the Chair stated that no topics would be formally added until the Scrutiny Workplan workshop with the Senior Leadership Team is held on an evening (date to be confirmed) in June 2021, however the Committee had already previously agreed to a task and finish group on asset management.</p> <p>The Committee had no comments regarding the Scrutiny Workplan 2020/21 or the Cabinet Forward Plan, however in regards to potential topics for 2021/22 Scrutiny Workplan the following was suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Green waste management in rural villages ➤ Recycling rates ➤ Climate change ➤ Delivery of affordable housing ➤ Rural recovery ➤ Update on Council housing services

- E-scooter schemes
- Waste Management – with a focus on reducing fly tipping in the Borough.
- Communication by the Council

A concern was expressed that some of the topics fall under the remit of Leicestershire County Council, however it was explained that all the topics affect residents of Melton Borough and that there are a number of ways to scrutinise an issue. The most effective way would be selected at the workshop.

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PLANNING SERVICE REVIEW

The Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity, Cllr Higgins, and the Director for Growth and Regeneration, Ms Parikh, introduced the report. The Committee were informed that the priorities identified within the report were contained within the Planning Service Review Implementation Plan which was approved by Cabinet in October 2020.

In addition to the report, Ms Parikh informed the Committee that a soft launch of the new planning application system would commence in May and that there will be a workshop for Members and Parish Councillors on understanding and using the system.

The Committee welcomed the report, the proposed initiatives, the progress that has already occurred and the new planning application launch. It was particularly noted that the number of deferrals at Planning Committee meetings have decreased, which was deemed a positive development by the Committee. Members asked to be kept updated on the Planning Service Review as progress is made.

In response to a question on how the Council would benefit from updated IT systems, the Committee was informed that the new IT systems would introduce a more self-service element which would allow the customer to find answers without the need to contact a Council Officer. From the Officer perspective, an improved IT system would remove wastage and therefore improve efficiency. It was also noted that the system would be programmed to provide timely and accurate information, which would improve the governance of the service. Planning Officer, Ms Parker, added that the system would allow for any Planning Officer to track the progress of any planning application and inform the customer of the application’s status, whereas currently that does not occur.

A discussion ensued regarding the weekly planning lists to Members, which are currently dispatched monthly. It was noted that, whilst the lists are dispatched monthly, the information is not always timely. The Committee was informed that it is difficult getting a balance in providing a list which allows Members to view planning applications by Ward but allows Officers or the Planning Committee Chair to highlight planning applications which are strategic and all Members should be aware of. Ms Parikh stated that this issue would be discussed by the Planning Reference Group at their next meeting.

In response to a question on whether the site visit document template was in response to the removal of the site visit bus, as a result of Covid restrictions, or

	<p>whether the site visit bus would be permanently removed, the Committee was reassured that, once restrictions allow, the resumption of the site visit bus would be considered by Officers. It was recognised that the document is useful and allows Members to undertake site visits individually, consequently allowing Members to schedule those site visits around their home and working lives.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the item, the Committee thanked Ms Parikh and Ms Parker for the report and the work that has been concluded thus far.</p>
107	<p>SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21</p> <p>The Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 was presented to the Committee. In introducing the report, the Chair thanked Democratic Services for the support provided to Scrutiny and for the work on the annual report.</p> <p>Members commented that they thought the report was very good and it was useful to see a summary of work Scrutiny has carried out over the course of the year. It was particularly noted that the Covid recovery task and finish groups have been interesting and worthwhile.</p> <p>It was stated that an area for improvement for next year's report could be that the 'Outcome' column, on the table listing the summary of items considered, could be more detailed.</p> <p>Another comment made was that Scrutiny could receive more Portfolio Holder presentations in the next Municipal Year.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Committee APPROVED the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21. 2. The Committee RECOMMENDED the report is presented to Council.
108	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no urgent business for discussion.</p>

The meeting closed at: 7.56 pm

Chair

Advice on Members' Interests

PERSONAL AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

If the issue being discussed affects you, your family or a close associate more than other people in the area, you have a personal and non-pecuniary interest. You also have a personal interest if the issue relates to an interest you must register under paragraph 9 of the Members' Code of Conduct.

You must state that you have a personal and non-pecuniary interest and the nature of your interest. You may stay, take part and vote in the meeting.

PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

If a member of the public, who knows all the relevant facts, would view your personal interest in the issue being discussed to be so great that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest and it affects your or the other person or bodies' financial position or relates to any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration then **you must state that you have a pecuniary interest, the nature of the interest and you must leave the room***. You must not seek improperly to influence a decision on that matter unless you have previously obtained a dispensation from the Authority's Audit and Standards Committee.

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

If you are present at any meeting of the Council and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting, if the interest is not already registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting. You must not participate in the discussion or the vote and you must leave the room.

You may not attend a meeting or stay in the room as either an Observer Councillor or *Ward Councillor or as a member of the public if you have a pecuniary or disclosable pecuniary interest*.

BIAS

If you have been involved in an issue in such a manner or to such an extent that the public are likely to perceive you to be biased in your judgement of the public interest (bias) then you should not take part in the decision-making process; you should leave the room. **You should state that your position in this matter prohibits you from taking part.** You may request permission of the Chair to address the meeting prior to leaving the room. The Chair will need to assess whether you have a useful contribution to make or whether complying with this request would prejudice the proceedings. A personal, pecuniary or disclosable pecuniary interest will take precedence over bias.

In each case above, you should make your declaration at the beginning of the meeting or as soon as you are aware of the issue being discussed.*

*There are some exceptions – please refer to paragraphs 3.12(2) and 3.12(3) of the Code of Conduct

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MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL SCRUTINY WORKPLAN 2021/22 - DRAFT (To be updated following Scrutiny Workshop 10 June 2021)

SCRUTINY REVIEWS

These are dealt with through a combination of specific evidence gathering meetings that will be arranged as and when required and other activities, such as visits. There should only be a maximum of three reviews considered annually and review topics may be changed throughout the year as topical issues arise. Once considered, these issues will be subject to further development and scoping.

Should there not be sufficient capacity to cover items which are brought to the attention of Scrutiny they could instead be addressed through a “one-off” item at a scheduled meeting of the Committee.

Suggested Topics	Officer and Member Lead	Date	Notes	Requested by (Member)/ Date agreed for addition by Scrutiny Chairman	Portfolio Holder/Chief Officer consulted on date of report
Response & Recovery Task and Finish Group – Helping People	Director for Housing and Communities Scrutiny Chairman	September 2020 – July 2021	Group to consider current and emerging issues in relation to the Covid-19 Pandemic impact in relation to unemployment, mental & physical health and wellbeing (including Director for Public Health Report on Covid-19 impact on BAME), homelessness, universal credit and debt. Group to look at response, evaluate outcomes and provide recommendations.	Scrutiny Workshop July 2020	SLT 4/8/20
Response & Recovery Task and Finish Group – Shaping Places	Pranali Parikh Director for Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny – Vice-Chairman	September 2020 – June 2021	Group to consider current and emerging issues in relation to the Covid-19 Pandemic impact in relation to town centre, retail, leisure centres, hospitality and tourism. Group to look at response, evaluate outcomes and provide recommendations.	Scrutiny Workshop July 2020	SLT 4/8/20
Melton Business Improvement District	Pranali Parikh Director for Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Chairman	Scoping - February Final Report – June/July 2021	The Group to identify the preferred standards of Governance for UK BID Companies and to make recommendations to the Melton BID company to consider their way forward, towards the Ballot in 2021. 2/3 members short focused review Put back to allow time for Response and Recovery T&F's 09/10/20 Agreed with PC Delay in BID Ballot resulted in final report being put back to June/July 2021 – agreed with PC January 2021	Scrutiny Workshop July 2020	SLT 4/8/20
Asset Development Programme	Pranali Parikh Director for Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Chairman	June 2021 - TBC	Review of the options and identification of objectives and projects which could be funded from capital receipts (e.g. Housing Company.) Review the social and economic benefits/impacts of any change (if any)	22 December 2020 meeting – Proposed by Chairman and approved by Committee	December 2020

ONE OFF ITEMS/FORWARD PLAN(PRE-DECISION)/ANNUAL ITEM

These are dealt with at scheduled meetings of the Committee. The following are suggestions for when particular items may be scheduled.

Suggested Topics	FORMAT	Portfolio Holder/Officer	Meeting Date	Notes	Requested by (Member)/ Date agreed for addition by Scrutiny Chairman	Portfolio Holder/Chief Officer consulted on date of report
(1) Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place) – Final Report	One off item – Final Report for Recommendation to Cabinet/Council	Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration Director for Growth and Regeneration	14 June 2021	To consider the findings and recommendations of the Response and Recovery Task and Finish group (Place)	Scrutiny Workshop July 2020	Yes
(2) Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (People) – Final Report	One off item – Final Report for Recommendation to Cabinet/Council	Portfolio Holder for People and Communities Director for Housing and Communities	1 July 2021	To consider the findings and recommendations of the Response and Recovery Task and Finish group (People)	Scrutiny Workshop July 2020	Yes
(3) Melton Business Improvement District Task and Finish Group	Final Report and Recommendations to the Committee	Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration Director for Growth and Regeneration	1 July 2021	Report of the Task and Finish Group established in November	Chair/Vice Chair review of Draft Work Plan Aug 2020	Yes
(4) Performance Report 2020/21 (Q4)	Quarterly Performance Report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Director for Corporate Services	1 July 2021	Details to be confirmed	Scrutiny Chairman Approval required	
(5) Performance and Risk Framework	One off item	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Director for Corporate Services	1 July 2021	Details to be confirmed	Scrutiny Chairman Approval required	
			2 September 2021			
			5 October 2021			
			2 November 2021			
(6) Budget	Annual item	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Director for Corporate Services	25 January 2022	Scrutiny of the Budget (All Members) One item only agenda	N/A	Yes

(7) Crime and Disorder	Annual item	Portfolio Holder for People and Communities Director for Housing and Communities	1 March 2022	One item only agenda	N/A	Yes
(8) Scrutiny Annual Report	Annual Item	Scrutiny Officer Chairman of Scrutiny Committee	5 April 2022	Report detailing the work of the Scrutiny Committee over the previous 12 months	N/A	Yes
(9) Task and Finish Group Report on Housing Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation	One off item – response to Scrutiny Recommendations	Portfolio holder for Housing and Communities Director for Council Homes and Landlord Services	2021/22 (Date TBC)	To provide a full report to the Scrutiny Committee on the recommendations approved by Cabinet in January 2020 including any evidence regarding the impact of improvements– agreed to move this item to April 2021 PC 26/01/21 Agreed to move to June re New Assistant Director 25.02.21 PC	Scrutiny approved the Task and Finish Group Recommendation	
(10) Melton Lottery	Report to inform Scrutiny of impact of recommendations from January 2020	Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement Director for Housing and Communities	2021/22 (Date TBC)	Further to the recommendation from Scrutiny Committee 7 January 2020 update report to be presented to Scrutiny Committee	Scrutiny 7/1/20 Cabinet approved review in June 2020	

PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL PRESENTATION– Topic to be confirmed in advance through Scrutiny Chairman

(1) Leader	Chief Executive	June 2021	Summary of delivery of the Corporate Strategy 20/21 and objectives for 21/22
(2) Portfolio Holder Questions- Corporate Governance Finance and Resources	Director for Corporate Services	July 2021 - TBC	Details to be confirmed
(3) Portfolio Holder Questions-Growth and Prosperity (Deputy Leader)	Director for Growth and Regeneration	September 2021 - TBC	Details to be confirmed
(4) Portfolio Holder Questions- Council Homes and Landlord Services	Director for Housing and Communities	October 2021 - TBC	Details to be confirmed
Portfolio Holder Questions- Climate, Access and Engagement	Assistant Director for Governance & Democracy	November 2021 - TBC	Details to be confirmed
(6) Portfolio Holder Questions-People and Communities	Director for Housing and Communities	March 2022 - TBC	Crime and Disorder

PENDING ITEMS These items are awaiting further discussion/addition to the work plan

Suggested Topics (One-off or Review Item?)	Officer and Member Lead	Date	Notes	Requested by (Member)/ Date agreed for addition by Scrutiny Chairman
(1) Empty Homes ONE OFF ITEM	Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity Director for Growth and Regeneration	TBC	To understand the extent and impact of empty homes in Melton and raise awareness. To identify the Council's priority objectives for tackling empty properties in Melton and whether these have been met. To identify what resources and funding is available to tackle empty homes in Melton. To identify best practice used elsewhere in tackling empty homes which can be used in Melton Included in Housing Strategy	
(2) Housing Allocations- Application of Process and Procedure ONE OFF ITEM	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities	TBC	To understand the role and purpose of social housing in Melton To understand the current position on housing allocations To ensure the criteria for the allocation of housing is clear and easy to understand, including a consideration of different ways of offering choice To consider types of tenure	Awaiting draft of Revised Allocations Policy
(3) Community-led Council Page 11	One off item	Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement Director for Governance and Regulatory Services	Post June 2021	Pre-development work to support approach to engagement and community involvement Engagement considered as part of Response and Recovery Task and Finish Groups – agreed to move this item to April 2021 PC 09/10/20 Delay n final reports from R&R Task and Finish – agreed to move to next Municipal Year 21/22 – PC 17/3/21

ADVICE ON WORKPLAN

What is a Work Plan?

The Scrutiny Work Plan outlines the areas of work which are expected to be scrutinised over the coming months/year by or on behalf of the Council's Scrutiny Committee and any Working Groups convened for review work.

Topics added to the work plan should have expected outcomes to add value to the services delivered by the Council and its partners and/or improve the quality of lives of Melton's residents.

It is recognised that there is a need for flexibility in the work plan so as to allow relevant issues to be dealt with as and when they arise.

Sources of Work Plan Ideas

Numerous sources of information can help to inform topic selection, including:

- Concerns that have been raised by the public relating to Council delivered services

- Issues of community concern – not necessarily services delivered by the Council
- Issues that have been flagged up by reviews, audits or inspections (past and present).
- Issues relating to Councils outcomes, objectives and priorities
- Consultations and interviews
- Underperformance
- “Stakeholders” concerns – raised by the Council’s partners or the users of services
- Partnership objectives
- Cabinet Members, Chief Executive or Directors presentations about the pertinent issues that are emerging and any opportunities or threats on the horizon
- Central government priority changes
- Improvement Plans
- Forward Plan
- Budgetary analysis.

Scrutiny is also encouraged to think about external Scrutiny and the monitoring of other public bodies, and how its activities will engage partner organisations, the media and the public.

Selecting a Work Plan Topic

The Scrutiny Committee should use effective processes to select topics that will contribute towards the best possible workplan for Scrutiny. This means looking at the sources of information that may help and using them to choose the right topics.

This involves:

- Drawing out and discussing what matters most to Councillors and to the community at large
- Finding out about any research that has been completed or that is planned
- Prioritising topics
- Considering what added value is expected as a result of Scrutiny involvement
- Considering whether the topic is already being reviewed elsewhere

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It is also important to note that Scrutiny has limited time and resources and therefore workplans need to be manageable. It is not possible to include every topic suggested by Members, Directors or the Public in the workplan. In addition Officer capacity may be diverted from projects if a review is added to the workplan without considering the impact on Officer resource and this should be a consideration in adding to workplans.

Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members will need to be selective whilst also being able to demonstrate clear arguments in favour of including or excluding topics.

Risks

A common pitfall for Scrutiny can be the inclusion of topics on the work plan that are unmanageable, of limited interest to the community, purely for informational purposes, have few outcomes and fail to ‘add value’ to the work of the Council or the wellbeing of the community. As such the selection and prioritisation of topics is critical to the effectiveness of Scrutiny as such processes can ensure clearer focus, particularly in poor or weak areas of performance or major issues of concern to the wider community.

MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL Forward Plan

FOR THE PERIOD May 2021 - September 2021

What is the Plan?

It is a list of the Key Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet during the period referred to above. The Council has a statutory duty to prepare this document, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended). The Plan is published 28 clear days before a meeting of Cabinet is to be held. The Plan is available to view at the Council's main offices in Melton, or on the Council's website, <http://www.melton.gov.uk>.

What is a Key Decision?

Definition of a key decision as detailed in the Council's Constitution is one which is likely to result in the Council:

- Incurring expenditure of £50,000 or more, or;
- Making savings or generate income of £50,000 or more, and/or
- Has a significant impact on two or more wards in the Borough and on communities living or working in those areas.

Who makes Key Decisions?

Under the Council's Constitution, Key Decisions are made by:

- Cabinet
- The Leader and Portfolio Holders
- Individual officers acting under delegated powers

Are only Key Decisions published on the Plan?

The Council has a statutory obligation to publish Key Decisions in the Plan. However, the Council has voluntarily decided to list non-key Cabinet decisions as well. To clarify matters, Key Decisions will be identified on the Plan with a Yes, non-key decisions with a No.

What does the List tell me?

The List gives information about:

- Upcoming Key and Non-Key Decisions (identified by Yes or No next to them)
- Whether the decision will be made in public or private.
- When decisions are likely to be made.
- Who will make these decisions.
- Who you can contact for further information.

Who are the members of the Cabinet?

The members of the Cabinet and their areas of responsibility are:

- Leader of the Council
- Growth and Prosperity (and Deputy Leader)
- Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources
- Climate, Access and Engagement
- Council Homes and Landlord Services
- People and Communities

What is the role of Scrutiny?

The Council's Scrutiny Committee's role is to contribute to the development of Council policies, scrutinise decisions of the Cabinet and hold them to account and to consider any matter affecting Melton Borough or its citizens. Dates of these meetings can be found on the Council's website.

Who do I contact, and how?

Each entry on the Plan indicates the names of the people to contact about that item. They can be contacted via the switchboard on 01664 502502

Request to view Background Papers

Should you wish to request copies or extracts of any documents listed under the column entitled 'Background Papers', for items which are considered to be Key Decisions, please contact Democratic Services at, Melton Borough Council, democracy@melton.gov.uk Please note that copies or extracts of documents which contain information of a confidential or exempt nature cannot be disclosed to the public.

Submission of Additional Documents

Additional documents which are deemed relevant to a particular Key Decision item may be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration. Copies of such documents may also be requested under the same process for requesting to view Background Papers.

Confidential and Exempt Information

This list may also include items to be considered which contain confidential or exempt information, but will not disclose any detail of a confidential or exempt nature. Such items will be identified with '(Exempt)' in the report title.

Report Title	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
<p><u>Acquisition through Right to Buy Receipts</u></p> <p>Purchase of property in Melton - UR006</p>		Portfolio Holder for Council Homes and Landlord Services	Not before 27th May 2021	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Council Homes and Landlord Services Lee Byrne, Regeneration Manager	Open
<p><u>Housing Improvement Plan Contractor - Electrical Works</u></p> <p>Authority to undertake a procurement exercise and appoint a contractor for Electrical Works required under the Housing Improvement Plan</p>		Portfolio Holder for Council Homes and Landlord Services	Not before 27th May 2021	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Council Homes and Landlord Services Julie Martin, Housing Asset Manager	Open
<p><u>Revenue and Capital Budget Carry Forwards from 2020/21 Budgets to be Taken into 2021/22</u></p> <p>There are some budgets items from both the Revenue and Capital budgets for a number of items from the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Special Expenses that are being requested to be carried forward into the next financial year for specific projects and items.</p> <p>This is being undertaken in accordance with section 10 of the Financial Procedure rules which specifies that Director for Corporate Services will coordinate the submission of requests for Cabinet approval.</p>		Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources	Not before 27th May 2021	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources David Scott, Corporate Services Manager	Open

<u>Report Title</u> and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
<u>IDOX Software Update</u> Procurement for the renewal of a suite of software maintenance.		Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources	Not before 2nd Jun 2021	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Jim Worley, Assistant Director for Planning and Delivery	Open
<u>Write Off of Irrecoverable Debt</u> Cabinet to consider a report recommending the write off of debts owed to the Council where recovery inappropriate.		Cabinet	9 Jun 2021	No	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Craig Spence, Assistant Director for Housing Management	Part exempt

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<p align="center">Report Title and Expected Decision</p>	<p align="center">Background Papers</p>	<p align="center">Decision Maker</p>	<p align="center">Date of Decision</p>	<p align="center">Key Decision?</p>	<p align="center">Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer</p>	<p align="center">Decision to be taken in public or private session?</p>
<p><u>Stock Condition Surveys and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan Development</u></p> <p>Stock condition surveys shall be conducted to enable an enhanced understanding of the condition of the Council's housing stock. They shall provide the information to support the HRA Business Plan. The surveys will capture important information to enable the planning of future capital investment programmes, such as kitchen and bathroom replacements.</p> <p>The HRA Business Plan is a plan that sets a broad context for financial planning and investment decisions over a thirty year period. The Plan must ensure that the Council's housing stock related priorities and programmes are supported and financially viable.</p> <p>To provide feedback from the Tenants Surveys to enable us to identify areas of strength and weakness as we endeavour to improve the service offered to our tenants.</p> <p>To approve the framework contract to enable us to undertake the programmes of work resulting from the HRA Business Plan and Stock Condition Surveys, reducing the time taken to complete works and increasing the decency of our housing stock.</p>		<p align="center">Cabinet</p>	<p align="center">9 Jun 2021</p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Council Homes and Landlord Services</p> <p>Craig Spence, Assistant Director for Housing Management</p>	<p align="center">Open</p>

Report Title and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
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<p><u>Bi-annual Performance Report</u></p> <p>To report corporate performance data and the current position with regard to delivery against the Council's priorities.</p>		Cabinet	21 Jul 2021	No	<p>Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources</p> <p>Martyn Bowen, Revenue Business Partner</p>	Open
<p><u>Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)</u></p> <p>Cabinet will review the proposed draft Developer Contributions SPD with a view to full public consultation commencing in March 2021. The SPD will provide advice regarding the priority that the Council will give to requests for the funding of various items of infrastructure where viability is an issue when determining planning applications.</p>		Cabinet	21 Jul 2021	Yes	<p>Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity (and Deputy Leader)</p> <p>Sarah Legge, Local Plans Manager</p>	Open
<p><u>Melton North Sustainable Neighbourhood Masterplan</u></p> <p>To accept as fulfilment of the Local Plan policy requirement (policy SS5), a masterplan promoted by the developers in the North Sustainable Neighbourhood. The masterplan aims to fulfil the main requirements of the policy to ensure that the services and facilities required to ensure a successful, planned development takes place during the plan period. Included will be a programme to ensure the timely delivery of the required infrastructure provisions.</p>		Cabinet	21 Jul 2021	Yes	<p>Leader of the Council</p> <p>Jim Worley, Assistant Director for Planning and Delivery</p>	Open

Report Title and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
<p><u>Design of Development Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) - for adoption</u></p> <p>To consider adoption of the Design of Development guidance as a formal Supplementary Planning Document to assist and inform the determination of planning applications.</p>		Cabinet	21 Jul 2021	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity (and Deputy Leader) Sarah Legge, Local Plans Manager	Open
<p><u>Five Year Housing Land Supply and Housing Trajectory</u></p> <p>To receive the results of the annual monitoring exercise and its implications for the housing land supply within the Borough and the 'housing trajectory' as set out in the adopted Melton Local Plan 2018.</p>		Cabinet	21 Jul 2021	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity (and Deputy Leader) Sarah Legge, Local Plans Manager	Open
<p><u>Update on Work to Support Leicestershire County Council Secure the Housing Infrastructure Fund</u></p>		Cabinet	21 Jul 2021	Yes	Leader of the Council Edd de Coverly, Chief Executive	Open
<p><u>General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/21 Provisional Year End (Including Q4)</u></p> <p>To provide Members with information on the provisional year end for the General Fund Revenue Account position, subject to External Audit approval for 2020-21 and provide information on the implications of the Councils balances and reserves.</p>		Cabinet	21 Jul 2021	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources David Scott, Corporate Services Manager	Open

Report Title and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
<u>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2020/21 Provisional Year End</u> To provide Members with information on the provisional year end for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) position, subject to External Audit approval for 2020-21 and provide information on the implications of the Councils balances and reserves.		Cabinet	21 Jul 2021	No	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources David Scott, Corporate Services Manager	Open
<u>Treasury Management and Actual Prudential Indicators 2020/21</u> summary of the Treasury activities in 2020/21 - also covering the actual position on the Prudential indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code.		Cabinet Council	21 Jul 2021 23 Sep 2021	No	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Carol King, Accountant (CK)	Open
<u>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring - Quarter 1</u> To inform on how the Council is performing against its revenue and capital budgets.		Cabinet	8 Sep 2021	No	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Carol King, Accountant (CK)	Open
<u>General Fund Budget Monitoring - Quarter 1</u> To inform on how the Council is performing against its revenue and capital budgets.		Cabinet	8 Sep 2021	No	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Barry Dryden, Accountant (BD)	Open

Report Title and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
<u>Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter 1</u> To inform on how the Council is performing against its revenue and capital budgets.		Cabinet	8 Sep 2021	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources Jasvinder Bassan, Accountant (JB)	Open
<u>Annual Ombudsman Report</u> To inform Members of the contents of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Report Letter and provide a summary of the complaints received by Melton Borough Council for the year ending 31 March 2021.		Cabinet	8 Sep 2021	No	Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement Kieran Stockley, Assistant Director for Governance & Democracy	Open
<u>Update on Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Tenant Survey</u> To receive an update on progress in the development of the HRA Business Plan and to agree the content of a survey to obtain tenant views on the priorities for the Council's landlord services.		Cabinet	8 Sep 2021	Yes	Portfolio Holder for Council Homes and Landlord Services Craig Spence, Assistant Director for Housing Management	Open

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Scrutiny

14 June 2021

Report of: Councillor Rob Bindloss – Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee

Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place) Final Report

Corporate Priority:	Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton Excellent Services positively impacting on our communities.
Relevant Ward Member(s):	N/A
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	N/A
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary

- 1.1 To present the final report of the Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place) along with recommendations which are presented for Scrutiny Committee approval and further recommendation to Cabinet.

2 Recommendation

That Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 **Approve and recommend to Cabinet the Final Report of the Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place) (Appendix A).**

3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Procedure Rules require that any Task and Finish Group will produce a report to be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee outlining details of the review process, evidence gathered, conclusions and subsequent recommendations.

4 Background

- 4.1 On 1 September 2020 the Melton Borough Council Scrutiny Committee approved the establishment of two Task and Finish Groups to review the response and recovery in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to both place and people based issues.
- 4.2 It was agreed that one Task and Finish Group would relate to Place issues and would be led by Cllr Rob Bindloss, Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee. The other Task and Finish Group would relate to People issues and would be led by Cllr Pat Cumbers, Chairman of Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.3 Members agreed that support for the local community during and in the wake of the pandemic would be critical to the recovery process and therefore it was proposed that Scrutiny evaluate and analyse the impact and the response of the Council and external organisations.

5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 The Task and Finish Group's scope and purpose was to collate and analyse evidence in order to identify lessons learnt and any areas of weakness in order to provide recommendations which might inform and improve the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and also provide a template for dealing in with any future similar emergency situation.
- 5.2 Full details of the scope, purpose and anticipated outcomes of the Groups were set out in the terms of reference and draft scoping documents approved at the [September Scrutiny Committee Meeting](#).
- 5.3 A scoping exercise was carried out for the Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place) and the Group agreed to focus on the following main themes:
- i. Town Centre
 - Retail and market
 - Café Culture
 - ii. Leisure and Tourism
 - Place branding and promotion
 - Destination management
 - Hospitality
 - iii. Employment
 - Skills/apprenticeships
 - Business Support

- 5.4 The timetable for the review can be found below:

Date	Actions
24 September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First meeting: Summary/Background• Review Terms of Reference• Agree timetable and scope of review

17 November 2020	Meeting to consider Town Centre and Employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail and market • Café Culture • Skills/apprenticeships • Business Support
28 January 2021	Meeting to consider Leisure and Tourism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place branding and promotion • Destination management • Hospitality
29 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To discuss format and content of final report
By email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To agree the final recommendations and report for Scrutiny Committee – Date
June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Scrutiny Committee • Review by Chief Executive • Report to Cabinet – July 2021 (Date TBC)

5.5 Over the last 9 months the Group has established an evidence base which includes feedback and responses to surveys/questionnaires, information collated through evidence sessions with partners and stakeholders and review of the Melton Borough Council Support Programme. A summary of the evidence considered is included in the report (Appendix A).

5.6 The Group have evaluated the evidence and translated their findings into a series of recommendations for consideration by Cabinet. The recommendations are included in full in the Final Report (Appendix A) and are summarised below:

5.6.1 To increase resources for project development.

5.6.2 To collaborate with key stakeholders to increase awareness of the town's waterways which are currently under used and encouraging their use for leisure and fitness purposes by highlighting the range of potential and current activities that are available.

5.6.3 To include the following key priorities in the formation of the Melton Town Centre Vision:

- Develop a greater range of activities for a diverse and captivating Melton town evening economy.
- Focus on attracting smaller retail outlets that are reactive to the needs of the shoppers
- Improve and increase signage and information
- Development of online portal/improved website to promote and showcase Melton's food, drink and historical heritage.

5.6.4 Any review of fees paid by taxi operators or taxi fares should have a specific focus on the impact of Covid-19 to ensure that this sector is provided with support to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

5.6.5 With any further tranches of funding, the Council should undertake additional forms of communication to promote the message and increase uptake e.g. drop in sessions, radio interviews or poster campaigns.

6 Options Considered

6.1 Once established the Task and Finish Group must report back to the Scrutiny Committee on their findings, there are no alternative options.

6.2 The Scrutiny Committee may approve the report and forward for Cabinet consideration, or they may approve the report subject to specified amendments/additions.

7 Consultation

7.1 A list of stakeholders and expert witnesses consulted is contained in the final report.

7.2 The Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity has been consulted prior to the publication of the report.

7.3 Some of the recommendations will require further consultation should they be approved and taken forward by Cabinet. Where appropriate this has been highlighted in the report.

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

8.1 Subject to the approval of the Scrutiny Committee the report will be presented to Cabinet on 21 July 2021.

9 Financial Implications

9.1 Any financial implications arising from the recommendations will be evaluated and further information will be provided to Cabinet in advance of consideration at the relevant Cabinet meeting.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Deputy S151 Officer

10 Legal and Governance Implications

10.1 The Scrutiny Committee is not a decision making Committee, but may provide recommendations for Cabinet and/or Council approval.

10.2 The remit and operation of Task and Finish Groups and reports from the Scrutiny Committee are set out in Chapter 2, Part 9 and 10 (Scrutiny Committee – Functions and Procedures) of the Melton Borough Council Constitution.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer

11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

11.1 Equalities implications arising out of the recommendations will be considered on a case by case basis.

12 Community Safety Implications

12.1 Any recommendations in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic response and recovery will be subject to regulations in place at the time of implementation.

13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

13.1 There are no environmental and climate change implications.

14 Risk & Mitigation

14.1 There are no risks associated with this report. The purpose of the Task and Finish Group was to complement the significant amount of work already being undertaken by considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and highlighting any areas for improvement in relation to the response and recovery.

15 Background Papers

15.1 Town Centre Survey – Response Data

15.2 Business Survey – Response Data

16 Appendices

16.1 Appendix A - Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place) Final Report

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Melton
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Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place)

FINAL REPORT



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Foreword - Chairman of Scrutiny Committee

In July 2020 when Scrutiny first discussed a review of the Response and Recovery in relation to the Covid-19 Pandemic we could not have foreseen that many months later we would only just be emerging from another form of lockdown and a second wave of the virus. Now more than ever, we must be assured that we are providing the best possible services and support to our community to assist with the economic recovery of the Borough.

During discussion of the Scrutiny Work plan at a member work shop in July it became clear that Scrutiny members were keen to look at the local impact of the current national crisis created by the Covid-19 Pandemic in relation to the priority themes set out in the Corporate Strategy.

On 1 September 2020 the Melton Borough Council Scrutiny Committee approved the establishment of two Task and Finish Groups to review the response and recovery in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to both place and people based issues.

One Task and Finish Group would relate to Place issues and would be led by Cllr Rob Bindloss, Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee.

The other Task and Finish Group would relate to People issues and would be led by Cllr Pat Cumbers, Chairman of Scrutiny Committee.

Members needed to establish if the current or planned response would meet the needs of the residents of the Borough and whether anything could be done differently or in addition to the current/planned response.

It was agreed that support for the local community during and in the wake of the pandemic would be critical to the recovery process and therefore it was proposed that the two Task and Finish Groups evaluate and analyse the response of the Council and external organisations.

Members proposed that the groups should collate and analyse evidence in order to identify lessons learnt and any areas of weakness in order to provide recommendations which might inform and improve the current response to the Covid-19 pandemic and also provide a template for dealing with any future similar emergency situation.

This report relates to the Review by the Task and Finish Group (Place) led by Cllr Bindloss.

Cllr Pat Cumbers

(Chairman of Scrutiny Committee)

Members of the Task and Finish Group



Councillor Rob
Bindloss
(Chairman of
Task and
Finish Group)

Councillor
Jeanne
Douglas

Councillor
Chris Evans

Councillor
Elaine Holmes

Councillor
Jacob
Wilkinson

Background and Introduction

On 24 September 2020 the Task and Finish Group met for their preliminary scoping meeting. The Group identified issues and areas that they would like to explore further and also agreed the timetable for the review. Some minor revisions were also made to the Terms of Reference.

It was agreed that the following topic areas would be included in the review:

- i. Town Centre
 - Retail and market
 - Café Culture
- ii. Leisure and Tourism
 - Place branding and promotion
 - Destination management
 - Hospitality
- iii. Employment
 - Skills/apprenticeships
 - Business Support

The Group agreed they would commence the review by establishing an evidence base which would include performance statistics, review of current policy and process and draw on the experiences of residents of the Borough, Officers and other stakeholders. Evaluation of this evidence base would clarify the issues and assist with the identification of the underlying causes. The Group, with Officer support, would then move on to consider options for improvement, feasibility of options for future delivery and the way in which outcomes could be measured and monitored. This would be translated into a set of recommendations to be presented to Scrutiny Committee for approval and following review by the Chief Executive, further recommendation to Cabinet in July 2021.

The Group were focused on doing a short and specific review and understood that timeframes would be demanding and that we would be looking at an ever changing picture. Over the last seven months the Group have collated and considered evidence in relation to the impact on the local economy and have asked members of the public and business owners to inform us of their own experiences by responding to survey questions. The Group have also considered the additional support and services put in place by Melton Borough Council and other organisations in response to the pandemic.

Members of the Group and supporting officers have worked hard to collate the information and evaluate evidence to highlight issues and possible solutions. I hope that the recommendations we have made will assist with the Response and Recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic and will address some of the issues and concerns we have highlighted through our research.

Cllr Rob Bindloss

(Scrutiny Vice-Chairman/Chairman Task and Finish Group (Place))

Process and Methodology

As detailed within the scoping document, it was agreed that the enquiry would take the form of:

- Desk-based review of evidence
- Observation
- Comparisons with other authorities
- Task and Finish group meetings to consider evidence collated between meetings
- Informal member meetings
- Questionnaire/surveys to Parish Councils/Ward Members/Stakeholders
- Remotely interview Officers of Council and External organisations
- Calling witnesses to provide evidence and information (Through remote means)

The Group heard evidence from a number of different sources including Melton BID and Town Estate, MBC Tourism and Events Manager, members of the public and business owners. A summary of the evidence collated can be found below.

Timetable

Date	Actions
24 September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First meeting: Summary/Background • Review Terms of Reference • Agree timetable and scope of review
17 November 2020	Meeting to consider Town Centre and Employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail and market • Café Culture • Skills/apprenticeships • Business Support
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By email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To agree the final recommendations and report for Scrutiny Committee – May 2021
June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Scrutiny Committee • Review by Chief Executive • Report to Cabinet – July 2021

Summary of Evidence Considered

A summary has been provided for each piece of evidence considered by the Group during the review.

Full details of any of the evidence listed can be obtained from democracy@melton.gov.uk quoting the Response and Recovery Task and Finish Group (Place) and the reference number detailed below.

Surveys

E1. Town Centre Survey

- A survey regarding this was launched in late October of 2020, the survey was open for six weeks, additionally discussions were held with members of BID and Town Estate regarding the town centre, Covid and the future of the town. The data collated from these valuable sources have been considered and subsequently the following conclusions have been compiled.

Who took part in the survey

The demographic spread of participants taking part in the survey was between 18yrs and beyond, most living and working within the town and its peripheral area although there was representation from the rest of the borough and beyond, the largest single group was female aged between 46 and 55yrs. Overall, there were 327 responses to the Place survey.

- **Evaluation of Survey Results**

Covid-19 Restrictions

In general a large number of the public visiting the town centre felt that appropriate measures had been taken to ensure that visitors felt safe and confident in relation to Covid 19.

Transport

Most of those visiting the town believed there to be adequate parking available although more believed that short stay parking was insufficient and the cost of parking in MBC car parks was too high.

Better cycling facilities in town are needed, namely cycling lanes leading into town and more secure parking for cycles. As a leisure activity more cycle routes available within the Borough particularly leading from town into the more rural areas.

Facilities

It was considered important that the town needed a wider variety of shops, cleanliness in the town centre and more seating could be improved and covered areas for seating and cafes.

Leisure

The borough has a diverse range of leisure activities ranging from horse riding and golf to shooting and fishing, many of these have seen modest gains in popularity during the last year, the most popular being the Melton Country Park. As expected indoor leisure activities have in general become marginally less popular throughout the pandemic however these will bounce back as the effects of Covid reduce.

Classic night time venues such as bars and pubs, restaurants and cinemas have also suffered from enforced closure during lockdown and a reduction in clients between lockdowns however these too will recover once the restrictions are lifted.

Town Centre visitors

The frequency of the public visiting the town has as expected been reduced during Covid, the outcome of this is that the daily trips into town or visiting a few times a week has reduced greatly and has been replaced with many more visits being made once a week or indeed once a month being common place, however the trend of concern is around those that now rarely visit town and needs to be proactively addressed.

Improvements to our town

Whilst some of those taking part in the survey wanted to see more restaurants (not coffee shops) and live music venues, the most popular area for improvement was a move towards a better retail offer with a greater range of smaller units particularly fashion outlets.

There was a clear popularity in special events such as themed days, vintage fairs and classic car events however the most popular was food fairs and a desire to see more of this type of day.

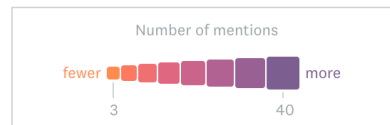
A changing town

Covid has accelerated a change in the town that was already underway and taking place namely "online shopping", this move away from the more traditional shopping experience has taken hold in town and city centres alike across the country. Whilst it effects retail of all sizes and types it is the larger shops such as Argos that are now moving away from the town centre and becoming more focused as online stores. The smaller more bespoke niche shops and services that cannot be transferred to the online market place such as delis and hairdressers, specialist outlets and shops unique to the area is where growth will be evident.

Promoting Melton to visitors from beyond the county is also an important part of the strategy we need to employ to help put our town on the tourism map and ways of successfully doing this should be proactively considered.

The Survey included an open text question asking “What is great about Melton?” – below is an infographic showing the most popular responses:

location encourage Rural facilities town centre restaurants Small town
 local heritage countryside community spirit country nothing used
 small close need many nice place visit country park
 cinema theatre market local food S Street Market
 community potential shops independent shops



E2. Café Culture

- Led by Cllr Jeanne Douglas, Cllr’s Wilkinson and Evans considered the impact that Covid had put upon the Cafes within the town centre and throughout our borough and the culture making cafes a part of our lives and also how this could benefit the town into the future.

The evidence was collated through visiting cafes and talking with the staff and the cafe owners in some cases about how they had been affected, what they had done to overcome the issues that they faced and how they are going to address the future.

- Summary of Evidence**

Whilst it has not been an easy challenge many of the town and boroughs cafes have managed through hard work to adapt to the restrictions put upon them by enforced closure for long periods throughout the last year.

Opening in a takeaway capacity and when allowed using the space outside with the aid of tables and chairs as an extension to what would otherwise have been an indoors facility has helped to weather this period. Using social media as a form of advertising has helped to gain customers. But its not been easy to achieve and the level of continuity and general uncertainty has meant some have closed their doors, like all businesses the cafes need to plan for the future and to return with maximum effect once the lockdowns are lifted.

We have the opportunity to have a stronger than ever café culture once the town re opens for business by helping them with enabling better use of outside space for their clients through furniture and canopies for example as well as a more flexible approach to their needs and ideas for the future.

E3. Business Survey

- The Business Survey was launched in Early March 2021 and remained open for 3 weeks. Melton Business Improvement District circulated the link to their members and it was also circulated through the MBC Business Support Hub Newsletter. 22 responses were received in total.
- The majority of responses were from other independent businesses with a range of part-time and full-time employees. Only 2 respondents employed trainees and apprentices. Not surprisingly over 80% of respondents reported that footfall had fallen for the period June – December 2020 and over 70% reported a decrease in financial forecast, though a small number reported an increase (13%). The impact on footfall and financial forecast was attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic by most respondents. Many respondents reported the need for skills to be adapted to respond to revised ways of working due to the pandemic. 77% of those responding were in receipt of business grants and 63% using the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme. Most businesses felt that the information provided by Central Government and Melton Borough Council was clear on how to operate during tiered and national lockdowns.

Evidence Sessions (Expert witnesses/stakeholders)

E4. Melton BID and Town Estate Meeting 25 January 2021

The meeting between members of the BID and Town Estate along with Cllrs Bindloss, Douglas and Evans was a productive one that sought to understand their concerns regarding the town throughout this challenging period and the impact that it has had and how best to support the town businesses as we move towards recovery.

The loss of some of the larger retail businesses in town and cities across the country has been accelerated due to Covid but the pressures of online shopping and a move away from town centres to address this had already begun before Covid struck.

The smaller bespoke retail shops have a better resilience and whilst some have been lost others will be starting up as there is a strong buoyant market for this type of retail unit.

These businesses need supporting by MBC and helped to flourish, consideration also needs to be given to the future of the larger empty units and

how they can be re let furthermore a high priority should be given to all vacant properties.

Opportunities for small starter retail such as arts and crafts in town were poor but could be improved through pop up shops in vacant properties by easy to lease offers for example.

A stronger collaboration between the Melton BID, the Town Estate and Melton Borough Council would help build a reactive town centre to address the needs for the future of a successful small market town shopping experience.

E5. Meetings with Growth and Regeneration Team

- Two meetings took place regarding this topic, firstly one in January of this year an informal meeting between Kirsty Campbell and Cllrs Bindloss and Douglas and a formal meeting in February with MBC officers Lee Byrne and Kirsty Campbell and Cllrs Holmes, Bindloss, Wilkinson and Douglas all attending.

- **Summary of evidence**

Making Melton an attraction for visitors and residents alike, Melton is currently underselling itself and needs to open for business, consideration needs to be made to improve the visitor experience.

Improving leisure in Melton

List of current attractions within the town and into the Borough was being collated so that they can be used in a new interactive attractions map, available through a dedicated website page.

Needed to make the most of Melton's historic past, contact needs to be made by officers to local historians to build a list of historic places of interest that could be part of this.

Better use of the sign posting of places of interest was required as well as keeping information boards up to date and relevant with seasonal activities along with a coach welcoming programme on busy days such as Tuesday would improve the visitors experience.

Melton Cattle Market

Throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic having visitors to the market has been challenging even when allowed to visit and as such the number of visitors has been greatly reduced.

The new vision for the market and the use of their own web site will help to address this post-Covid and bring figures back up. To maximise this further promotion by MBC through social media and through our own new Discover Melton website should raise awareness still further.

Parks in Melton

Query whether the central park still have its mini golf and miniature railway as these help to bring young families into the town. The country park is very popular and whilst the infrastructure of the park and its footpaths is being developed, more could be done with regards to amenities within the park and possible signage from town showing visitors how to reach the park.

Making the most of what's already popular, the cycles race visits Melton annually, we should do more to retain and captivate the groups of visitors that come to the town for this spectacle and make the most of their spending power for the town. Perhaps have mini fairs in the town centre the evening before the race for spectators to visit.

Walking and Cycling

More needs to be done to improve access to good quality walks and bicycle tracks locally as both leisure activities are now growing in popularity and safer tracks with more interesting routes some potentially leading to local villages would help link them with town.

Waterways

In many parts of England the waterways make up a great source of natural beauty and an ideal venue for walking, cycling and other linked pastimes such as canoeing and boating. Melton too has waterways with local interest and history attached to them but very little is currently made of them, our waterways need to be developed to become another important part of our historical heritage and as a venue for walking and cycling. A number of towns are now doing exactly this and we too should make this a part of our plan to expand upon Melton as a venue for tourism.

Evening Economy

More needs to be available for families to take part in at night in the town and for couples rather than just for groups of young men and women. A wider range of dining out, and other attractions such as cinema and theatre.

Reports/Other

E6. Place Recovery Report (Economic Recovery Support Programme)

The Task and Finish group received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity (Deputy Leader) on 13 May 2021 detailing the activities and support provided by the Council to enable economic recovery in response to the to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The report described the impact of the pandemic on the local economy, town centre and the hospitality, leisure and tourism sectors. Key impacts are recorded below:

- At its peak 6000 jobs were furloughed in Melton which account for almost 25% of the total jobs in the area.
- There is the risk of significant amount of redundancies now the Job Retention Scheme and Furlough scheme has come to an end.
- As of January 2021 the area's unemployment rate stands at 4.1% and has done since November 2020.
- The latest Job Seekers claims count comparable from November 2020 (released in Jan 2021) identifies a 120% increase on the same period the year before.
- The vacancy rate increased from 5.8% at the start of the pandemic (March 2020) to 7.9% in March 2021 (This is lower than the national average of 14%).
- The total business closures reported in the town centre were 15, compared to 11 new business start-ups, leaving a net of four business closures within the town centre area.
- Working from home has seen benefits in terms of the environment and productivity but may have an adverse effect on how our town centres function in the short to medium term.
- The evening and night time economy is seriously impacted by the pandemic along with the businesses that rely on these sectors, e.g. taxi businesses. Since the start of the pandemic over 30% of the licensed taxis operating in Melton have decided not to renew their license for the next year.

The report included detail regarding the way in which the Council had responded to the pandemic in order to provide additional support in the following areas:

Business Grants

- ✓ £10.7m in grant funding was distributed to over 800 eligible businesses during the first lockdown. To date over £7.3m have been paid out across 9 schemes to over 600 businesses since the second lockdown in November 2020.
- ✓ A Senior Economic Recovery Officer post was created within the Regeneration Team to support the delivery of grants scheme
- ✓ Creation of Business newsletter.

Despite the good progress being made to pay businesses the grants they are entitled to there is still, on average, 25.5% of the funding given to the Council that is yet to be claimed by businesses in the Borough.

Support for local businesses and town centre

- ✓ Covid Marshalls - working alongside police and partner agencies in the Town Centre as ambassadors in monitoring and engaging capacity, to provide visible presence on ground and reassure visitors of safe environment.
- ✓ Information and Guidance - All business premises were visited and advice was provided to all business owners to keep their premises open for customers to access in a safe way.
- ✓ Signage - a range of signage was installed in the town centre in accordance with the Government guidance.

Support for hospitality Sector

- ✓ Street Café culture - Council worked with Leicestershire County Council, the highways authority, to enable the cafes and restaurants in the town centre to be able to serve customers immediately outside their premises in highways land, while still maintaining accessibility and safety of passers-by.
- ✓ Outdoor dining - the Council worked with the BID and Town estate to identify suitable locations for providing outdoor seating space on Market Place. The take up was very low.

Support for leisure, tourism and sports centre

- ✓ Marquees and temporary structures - Council made a decision to take a supportive approach to planning enforcement regarding erection of temporary structures and marquees that allow the pubs and restaurants to extend their serving area into their gardens and car parks until the end of September 2021. The Council is in the process of extending this relaxation to 31 March 2022.
- ✓ Leisure and Sports Centres - the Council has negotiated an extension of the two contracts (Waterfield Leisure Centre and Melton Sports Village) for a period of 2 years up until March 2024.
- ✓ Tourism and events - A senior tourism and events officer post has been recruited to in the Regeneration team who is leading on a number of initiatives in order to welcome visitors back, stimulate cultural curiosity by promoting our great stories around food, drink and the richness of our heritage, as well as preparing a new website 'Discover Melton' for Melton to be explored as a place to live, visit and invest in.

The report also provided a wider context to the proposed support programmes and projects in the pipeline and the potential benefits they could bring to Melton's economy as part of the recovery process including:

- The Council has received £45,000 of Welcome Back funding to support the re-opening of the high streets in towns.
- The Council has allocated £50,000 for town centre to develop a long term vision and prepare for the Levelling Up Funding bid due to be submitted by mid-June 2021.
- To realise the vision to reinvent Melton's identity as the 'rural capital of food' (RCOF) the Council has received £100k funding from Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LLEP). A food technologist is to be appointed using this money to provide technical business support and advice to businesses involved in food and drinks production
- The Council has made a decision to utilise the remaining Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding to deliver a Comprehensive Economic Recovery Package

Conclusions

MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED	LINK TO EVIDENCE	PROPOSED SOLUTION (S)	RECOMMENDATION
1. There has been a decline in Melton's shopping lifestyle and leisure experience.	E1, E2, E3, E4, E6	Melton requires an ambitious response to support local business and the leisure and tourism sectors to help recover from the effects of Covid.	R1, R2
2. More resources are required in order to focus on project development in order to support place recovery and growth.	E1, E2, E3	To dedicate resource to funding opportunities and developing bids to increase opportunities for securing inward investment.	R1
3. The "Discover Melton" website is a good framework but needs to be kept relevant and current.	E5	Build upon existing data and keep improving and updating - Members, Officers and perhaps the public to be involved to drive this forward and raise profile of the site. To promote Melton borough as a vibrant place to live, work and visit.	R2, R3
4. The town centre requires new life blood in the form of smaller retail outlets that are reactive to the needs of the shoppers.	E1, E2, E3, E4, E6	To encourage inward investment and promote Melton as a vibrant and inclusive economy.	RR1, R3

MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED	LINK TO EVIDENCE	PROPOSED SOLUTION (S)	RECOMMENDATION
<p>5. The evening economy experience for families requires development. Entertainment needs to be more than just bars and restaurants as these are not broad and diverse enough to engage the wider community.</p>	<p>E1, E5, E6</p>	<p>Melton needs to draw a greater diversity of people into its town in the evening, the hosting of more special events such as the vintage car evenings or other creative arts events could be a way to do this. There is also the option that these could coincide with other day time special events such as the cycle race which provides a captive audience that would then take part in evening activities during their visit to Melton.</p>	<p>R4, R5</p>
<p>6. The national economy was already seeing a slowdown before Covid-19, reflecting Brexit uncertainty and world trade tensions and high street retail was already under pressure with changing consumer shopping habits reducing footfall in many town centres and increasing online trade. The impact of non-essential retail businesses being forced to close since 23 March 2020 has had a significant impact on vacancy rates and footfall in Melton Town Centre.</p>	<p>E6</p>	<p>Melton requires an ambitious approach to promoting its natural assets to encourage inward investment and enhance the town centre offer.</p>	<p>R1, R3, R5</p>

Recommendations

Following careful evaluation of the evidence, the Task and Finish Group believe that the following recommendations support the aims and objectives of the Council set out in the Corporate Strategy to respond to Covid-19 impacts and deliver sustainable and inclusive growth to supporting the local economy to recover and grow.

Over the last 12 months MBC manpower has been spent addressing the issues that have arisen due to the pandemic and large swathes of the day-to-day work by officers has been understandably focused upon this. Now as we hopefully move steadily beyond this period, we can now consider in a more focused way the future of the town and borough once again. Without question there already exists the desire and the will to return Melton to becoming a healthy and prosperous market town once more and in addition to develop it into a premium venue for tourism. In short, the “who and what” of this is well under way it’s the “how” that needs addressing.

The Town Centre Vision will be key to the development and growth of the Melton economy but there are still some key areas that should be considered for inclusion to enable a proactive response to Covid-19 impacts in order to increase vitality, vibrancy, footfall and spend in town centre.

Melton is a growing borough town and will during the next decade increase its population by approximately 15-20 % these new residents of the town and surrounding borough should be encouraged to become actively involved in it. Encouraging them to use the town to its full is essential and not just to become residents existing within it and thus using online shopping and out of town shopping centres as the norm. This would ultimately mean us losing valuable spending power to our shops and leisure facilities, it’s important to promote a sense of pride and ownership in residents old and new alike, a little like village life but on a larger scale. This would help to empower Melton and make it a desirable place to live with strong roots and wealth coming from within as well as from visitors, there is now a golden opportunity to increase the spending /purchasing power of the town from these new members of the borough.

The tools to achieve this rely upon us to react now by us providing the facilities and opportunities to make this happen.

A cohesive approach in working together as a town and borough is required in order to forge stronger working links with the key stakeholders to move these ideas forward, to ensure an open and reactive response to progressing towards the aims of the vision of Melton.

Recommendation 1 (R1)

To increase resources for project development.

Reasons for Recommendation (R1)

- To increase funding opportunities to the Borough and bring inward investment in line with Priority 3 of the Corporate Strategy to secure the economic viability of the Town Centre as part of the recovery plan.

Recommendation 2 (R2)

To collaborate with key stakeholders to increase awareness of the town's waterways which are currently under used and encouraging their use for leisure and fitness purposes by highlighting the range of potential and current activities that are available.

Reasons for Recommendation 2

- Promoting waterways in the town would attract visitors to the area which in turn would provide income for the local economy and support the recovery of the tourism sector in the Borough.

Recommendation 3 (R3)

To include the following key priorities in the formation of the Melton Town Centre Vision:

- Develop a greater range of activities for a diverse and captivating Melton town evening economy.
- Focus on attracting smaller retail outlets that are reactive to the needs of the shoppers
- Improve and increase signage and information
- Development of online portal/improved website to promote and showcase Melton's food, drink and historical heritage.

Reasons for Recommendation 3

- To provide a larger evening trade to the town by offering a wider range of activities for all, this will help to bolster and encourage more "weekend break" visitors as well as helping to retain those attending "one day events" such as the cycle race who may then increase their stay beyond the one-off event and take part in Melton's evening entertainment.

Recommendation 4 (R4)

Any review of fees paid by taxi operators or taxi fares should have a specific focus on the impact of Covid-19 to ensure that this sector is provided with support to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

Reason for Recommendation 4

- The evening and night time economy has been seriously impacted by the pandemic which has had a corresponding negative impact on taxi businesses.

Recommendation 5 (R5)

With any further tranches of funding, the Council should undertake additional forms of communication to promote the message and increase uptake e.g. drop in sessions, radio interviews or poster campaigns.

Reason for Recommendation 5

- Although the task and finish group recognised the excellent work that had been done to ensure that businesses had received the grants they were entitled to, there was still a proportion of funding that had yet to be claimed.
- It was important that businesses eligible for support received the funding as quickly as possible.

Acknowledgements

The Members of the Task and Finish Group wish to extend their thanks to all of those that provided evidence and supported the work of the Group including:

Shelagh Core (BID)

Leigh Freer (BID)

Billy Boulding (Town Estate)

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