

Minutes

Meeting name	Council
Date	Thursday, 27 July 2023
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor A. Hewson (Chair)

Councillors

J. Adcock	P. Allnatt
I. Atherton	S. Atherton
M. Brown	R. Browne
S. Butcher	S. Carter
R. Child	H. Cliff
S. Cox	P. Cumbers
C. Evans	A. Freer
M. Glancy	M. Gordon
M. Graham MBE	L. Higgins
S. Lumley	J. Mason
J. Orson	S. Orson
D. Pritchett	R. Sharp
A. Thwaites	T. Webster

Officers

- Chief Executive
- Monitoring Officer
- Deputy Monitoring Officer
- Director for Corporate Services
- Director for Growth and Regeneration
- Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer
- Democratic Services Officer (CB)

The Reverend Ruth Simpson offered prayers.

Minute No.	Minute
CO13	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor Pitt Miller.</p>
CO14	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2023 were confirmed.</p>
CO15	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>An other registerable interest in respect of Councillor J Orson was noted as being on record for any matters which related to the Leicestershire County Council.</p> <p>An interest in respect of Councillor M Gordon was noted as being on record as she is a member of the Waterfield Leisure Centre and a Council tenant.</p>
CO16	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Mayor informed Council that he attended the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loros Annual Lunch. • The opening of the Heritage Garden at Parkside with Melton in Bloom. • Birchwood School • The opening the Original Factory Shop. • IMEC • Gretton Court for a tenant's 100th birthday. • Dove Cottage Open Day. <p>Deputy Mayor informed Council that he attended the following on behalf of the Mayor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50th Anniversary of Ragdale Hall. • The Lion's 49th Charter Lunch. • Judging of the Puppy Show at Belvoir Castle. • Keep Melton Active Weekend.
CO17	<p>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>In beginning his speech, the Leader gave way to the Deputy Leader. The Deputy Leader then paid tribute to Jean Forbes of the Friends of Melton Country Park who had recently died.</p> <p>The Leader thanked the Deputy Leader for her tribute.</p> <p>The Leader informed Council that there had been a request from Jillian Milner to return the Millenium Quilt to public display and that work was underway to place it on public display in Parkside.</p> <p>Members were informed that on 26 May, the Council along with the Department for</p>

Work and Pensions hosted a successful recruitment day, where 140 people attended, 19 job applications were completed and five on the spot job offers were made.

The Leader informed Council that the Let's Get Moving Melton day was held in early July where over a thousand people participated with 40 different opportunities to try different sports and physical activities.

Members were informed that the Leader joined the Mayor at the annual Armed Services Day in June. The Leader then listed the following events for the diary:

- A charity football match will be held on 3 August, 7pm between Melton Borough Council and Leicester City Community at the All England Ground, Saxby Road. Monies raised will go to Lives versus Cancer.
- A service at St Mary's Church, Melton on 24 August for Ukrainian Independence Day.
- Melton District Money Advice Centre are hosting an open day on 13 September between 12pm and 3pm.
- The annual Battle of Britain Service will be held at St Mary's Church, Melton on 17 September between 10am and 12pm.
- The Summer Social event will be held on 7 September between 5pm and 7pm at Parkside.

The Leader then outlined the events and meetings he had attended:

- The Local Government Chronicle Awards, where the Council had been shortlisted as the most improved Council in the country.
- The Management Journal Awards, where the Chief Executive had been nominated as Chief Executive of the Year.
- Members Advisory Group, which is the county-wide strategic planning forum.
- Attended the Police and Crime Panel Annual General Meeting on behalf of Councillor Cox who was not able to attend.
- The East Midlands Council's Annual General Meeting.
- Along with the Deputy Leader, addressed staff at a specially arranged meeting.
- A meeting with the Harborough Council Leader.
- Attended a meeting with three local facility user groups.
- Along with the Chair of Scrutiny, met the manager of the Waterfield and MSV sites.
- Went on a walk around with tenants to view refurbishment and repair work in void properties.

The Leader also stated that he has responded to the East Midland Railways consultation on the proposed ticket office closure.

Members were reminded that it had only been two months since the Annual Meeting and that it had been an intense and hectic time for both Councillors and

staff. The Leader thanked everyone for their efforts at a time of adjustment and preparation for the future. The Leader reminded Members that the new administration would take time to analyse and address any issues. The new administration would seek to build on areas where useful and worthwhile work had been done and achieved in the past by previous administrations and also establish a more collegiate and collaborative approach.

The Leader informed Members that the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 received Royal Assent on 20 July 2023 and that Officers are preparing to implement the changes. The Leader thanked Councillor Browne for his input in this area.

The following were outlined as areas of focus for his administration:

- Climate Change Emergency
- Food waste recycling
- Response of statutory consultees in the area of planning.

In addressing the proposed doctors surgery at the Melton Sport Village, the Leader stated that this particular proposal did not pass best value or viability tests. There were two possible alternative sites, one of which was the Parkside building and that technical evaluation would begin soon.

Regarding converting a section of Parkside into a hotel, the Leader stated it was off his agenda, however the member working group on assets would be free to consider all options.

In relation to the governance arrangements for the Council, the Leader stated that his administration was committed to migrating away from the current strong leadership model of Cabinet and that a governance review had been commissioned. The Leader assured Members that whatever approach is taken, there would be clear accountability, transparency and clarity of action.

Members were informed that the process of developing the Corporate Strategy had begun and the report on the agenda sets out the approach and timescales for development. All Members would have an opportunity to contribute to shape the Council's priorities and focus for the next four years and that this would begin via the establishment of two policy development working groups.

The Leader informed Council that it is an aim that the community are more connected to the Council and to the decision-making process. A community co-ordinator will be recruited to help strengthen the relationship between the town and the rural parishes. A program of six patch walks for key locations across the Borough would be introduced and the parish liaison would be transformed by creating area-based forums. The Council would also work with communities to plant 500 trees and recognise and acknowledge the contribution of volunteers and community groups.

	<p>The Leader also committed to making Melton cleaner and greener. There would be a campaign to tackle fly tipping and the administration would also deliver targeted environmental enhancements and cleanups in five key locations. Council tenants who maintain their gardens will also be recognised.</p> <p>In addressing the issue of the swimming pool at Waterfield and its future, the Leader stated that it was clear it would need to be replaced, but that meeting the financial burden of any alternative provision would require the development of a feasible programme over the next eight to ten years. The Leader added that in the meantime the current pool would be maintained.</p>
CO18	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME No questions from the public had been received.</p>
CO19	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS There were two questions received.</p> <p>The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Malise Graham asked the following question:</p> <p><i>“The Leader was quite rightly proud to represent our Council at a recent award ceremony to acknowledge the achievements of the past Council. The mantra of the current Leader is a requirement for change. Can the Leader please advise the Council, what this means and what changes he envisages?”</i></p> <p>In responding to the question, the Leader stated that the change he is committed to make the Council more open and involve more Members before decisions are made.</p> <p>The Leader added that a change of direction regarding some projects, e.g. GP Surgery and the swimming pool, were required due to the funding position local government finds itself in. However, the Leader stated that the change of direction would benefit the community in the long run.</p> <p>Leader of the Opposition asked the following supplementary question.</p> <p><i>“Does the Leader realise that as a group we're unable to blindly support uncostered ideas and aspirations as they occur and it is unfair to ask us to do.”</i></p> <p>In responding to the question, the Leader stated that he agreed that projects have to be fully costed before implementation. That is why the doctor’s surgery proposal is being reviewed. The Leader acknowledged the proposal was reasonable at the outset but now recognises that it is not financially viable.</p> <p>The Leader also stated that approved existing budgets can be reallocated. The Council had also been awarded various grants and that money was being utilised.</p>

	<p>Councillor Ronan Browne asked the following question:</p> <p><i>During the election campaign a number of Labour and Independent candidates stood on a platform of stating that you would both change the Levelling up Fund monies that had been secured by the previous administration and monies would be moved to be more town centre focused (although the cattle market and theatre are part of the town centre).</i></p> <p><i>A number of candidates in both groups commented on Facebook at various times that they felt the cattle market investment was not something they could support, and monies should be spent in the town centre.</i></p> <p><i>Can you let the Council know what you are planning to change as per comments and commitments made to the public, businesses and can you confirm if you will be investigating investment in the cattle market as commented by some candidates during the May 2023 election campaign?</i></p> <p>In responding to the question, the Leader stated that the main issue he had with the Levelling Up Fund was the process whereby civil servants located in Whitehall are making decisions impacting localities before funds are released.</p> <p>In addressing the comments of whether monies would be taken out of the cattle market (Stockyard) investment, the Leader stated that the LUF funding was secured for a specific project and central government had imposed restrictions on how the monies were spent which would of course be complied with, but that the administration would ensure that the project works for the people of Melton.</p> <p>Councillor Browne asked the following supplementary question.</p> <p><i>“Just be absolutely clear, are you going to move forward to see the project through and we're going to put to bed all the negativity that's been had from any group around it around this issue and we're going to move forward.”</i></p> <p>The Leader confirmed that the project would proceed. There are some elements in the details that need to be reviewed and that Council would be informed of those deliberations at the appropriate time.</p>
CO20	<p>MOTIONS ON NOTICE</p> <p>The following motion was received from the Leader (Seconded by the Leader of the Opposition).</p> <p>The following motion was received from Councillor Allnatt (Seconded by Councillor Graham).</p> <p>Abuse and personal attacks on elected members is unacceptable and there is</p>

evidence that these experiences are forcing good councillors out of local politics and deterring others from running for election. Abuse and unfair criticism of officers fulfilling their duties on behalf of the council is equally unacceptable.

In 2022, the LGA found that seven out of 10 councillors had experienced abuse from the public in the previous year. Further research by the LGA in 2022 reinforced concerns that abuse in public life and public discourse is becoming normalised and seriously impacting civic life and local democracy.

The LGA has been working for some time to build a better understanding of the issue of abuse and intimidation of elected members and what individuals, local organisations and national government can do to reverse this trend. Their Debate Not Hate campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in their communities, encourage healthy debate and respectful challenge, and improve the responses and support for local politicians facing abuse and intimidation.

I request that Members join me in supporting the following motion:

That Melton Borough Council joins Councils across the country in supporting the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate campaign. In so doing, the Council is setting a clear and positive expectation regarding acceptable behaviour, both within the Council, but also from members of the Community, and wishes to make clear that abuse of Members or Officers, in any form, and directed to any person, is not acceptable.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- Debate is better than hate, including on social media. It is important that Members stand up to hate and call it out wherever it occurs.
- All Members have been elected and all Members must respect each other and their mandate. There has been too much nastiness over the last few years.
- Abuse can originate from any source but there must be no hiding place. Let's debate not hate.
- It is hoped that Members would stop 'liking' abuse of other Members on social media.

In pursuant of the General Procedure Rule 17.5b, Councillors Browne, Higgins and J Orson requested that a recorded vote takes place.

RESOLVED

Council

Has joined Councils across the country in supporting the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate campaign. In so doing, the Council is setting a clear and positive expectation regarding acceptable behaviour, both within

	<p>the Council, but also from members of the Community, and wishes to make clear that abuse of Members or Officers, in any form, and directed to any person, is not acceptable.</p> <p>FOR THE MOTION (27) Adcock, Allnatt, I Atherton, S Atherton, Brown, Browne, Butcher, Carter, Child, Cliff, Cox, Cumbers, Evans, Freer, Glancy, Gordon, Graham, Hewson, Higgins, Lumley, Mason, J Orson, S Orson, Pritchett, Sharp, Thwaites, Webster.</p> <p>AGAINST THE MOTION (0)</p> <p>ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)</p>
CO21	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2022/23</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources introduced the Treasury Management and Actual Prudential Indicators 2022/23 report and moved the recommendations. The Leader seconded the motion.</p> <p>In response to the question on whether the Council is looking to move investments into short dated government gilts, the Portfolio Holder stated that she would raise the suggestion with Officers who would then advise.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>(1) APPROVED the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2022/23.</p> <p>(2) NOTED the actual position on Prudential Indicators for 2022/23.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO22	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES - SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23</p> <p>Councillor Child introduced the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 and proposed that Council notes the report. The Scrutiny Committee Chairman, Councillor Mike Brown, seconded the motion.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>(1) NOTED the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23.</p>
CO23	<p>INQUORATE PARISH COUNCIL</p> <p>The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the Inquorate Parish Council report.</p>

	<p>The Leader moved the recommendations and the Deputy Leader seconded the motion.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>(1) APPROVED the Order attached at Appendix A, to appoint temporary Parish Councillors to Garthorpe and Coston Parish Council, so that the Parish Council is quorate and can continue to operate;</p> <p>(2) DELEGATED authority to the Returning Officer, in consultation with the relevant Ward Member(s) and Parish Clerk, to make such orders under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972, should a similar situation arise in future in respect of any Parish Council in the Borough area;</p> <p>(3) AUTHORISED the Monitoring Officer to make the relevant updates to the Scheme of Delegation, subject to approval of the delegation at 2 above; and</p> <p>(4) ADOPTED the procedure set out at Appendix B which shall be used by the Returning Officer when exercising the delegation set out above.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO24	<p>LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND - ELECTORAL REVIEW</p> <p>The Chief Executive introduced the Local Government Boundary Commission for England Electoral Review.</p> <p>The Leader moved the recommendations and the Deputy Leader seconded the motion.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>(1) NOTED the next steps and timetable for the Local Government Boundary Commission for England Electoral Review of Melton Borough Council as set out in the report and Appendix A.</p> <p>(2) NOTED the Constitution Review Working Group (as the appropriate Cross Party Working Group) will develop the Council’s submissions in relation to the review, such submissions to be approved by Council before being formally provided to the LGBCE.</p>
CO25	CORPORATE STRATEGY 2024-2028

The Leader introduced the Corporate Strategy 2024-2028 report and moved the recommendations. The Deputy Leader seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

Council

- (1) NOTED the process/timeline to produce the new Corporate Strategy 2024 - 2028.**
- (2) NOTED the terms of reference for the Member Policy Development Working Groups.**
- (3) NOTED and endorses the setting up of a governance review to consider the most effective decision-making structure and arrangements for the Council.**
- (4) APPROVED the commissioning of the Constitutional Review Working Group to oversee and support the governance review and agrees to the amendment to the terms of reference for the Constitution Review Working Group to increase the membership from 5 to 7 members.**

(Unanimous)

The meeting closed at: 7.48 pm

Mayor