

Minutes

Meeting name	Council
Date	Thursday, 14 December 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
S. Atherton	M. Brown
R. Browne	S. Butcher
S. Carter	R. Child
M. Clay	H. Cliff
S. Cox	P. Cumbers
A. Freer	M. Gordon
M. Graham MBE	L. Higgins
S. Lumley	J. Mason
J. Orson	S. Orson
D. Pritchett	A. Thwaites
T. Webster	

Officers

- Chief Executive
- Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
- Director for Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)
- Director for Growth and Regeneration
- Monitoring Officer
- Assistant Director for Resources
- Assistant Director for Customers and Communities
- Strategic Lead for Healthy and Active Communities
- Strategic Lead for Connecting and Enabling Communities
- Team Leader of Community Support Hub
- Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer
- Democratic Services Officer (CB)

Pastor Neal Swettenham offered prayers.

Minute No.	Minute
CO39	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Atherton, Evans, Glancy and Sharp.</p>
CO40	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>Councillor Gordon stated that at the meeting on 28 September 2023 that she had left the meeting during the Leader’s Announcements when he spoke about the Waterfield Leisure Centre. She stated that she would like her exit from the meeting recorded in the Minutes.</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 were confirmed.</p> <p>(For 20, Against 0, Abstentions 4)</p>
CO41	<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 relate to the Leicestershire County Council.</p> <p>Councillor Gordon declared that whilst she recognises that she can participate in the item CO49, she stated that she will not participate and would withdraw when it is being considered.</p> <p>Councillor Adcock declared that he had a pecuniary interest in item CO49 and would therefore withdraw from the meeting and not participate.</p>
CO42	<p>MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Mayor informed Council that, as Mayor, he had attended the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sunday 1 October, Leicestershire County Council Service• Tuesday 3 October, Induction of Reverend Dr Mary Barr• Saturday 7 October, Ladies British Indoor Bowls Presentation• Saturday 7 October, 151/156 Parachute Battalion Reunion• Sunday 8 October, Trophy presentation at the Ladies British Indoor Bowls competition• Thursday 12 October, Melton in Bloom Schools Gardening competition• Sunday 22 October, Charnwood Civic Service• Saturday 28 October, Dedication of Remembrance• Sunday 29 October, High Sheriff of Leicestershire Justice Service• Wednesday 1 November, Hidden Gems Competition• Saturday 11 November, Royal British Legion service• Saturday 11 November, Fire Walk at Dove Cottage

- Sunday 12 November, Remembrance Parade
- Tuesday 14 November, Visit of High Sheriff of Leicestershire
- Friday 17 November, Blaby Charity Dinner
- Saturday 25 November, Frisby, Hoby and Rotherby Cricket Club presentation
- Thursday 30 November, Lets Get Moving Awards
- Friday 1 December, Christmas Lights Switch On
- Saturday 2 December, Fatstock Show and Dinner
- Thursday 7 December, Mayor's Carol Concert
- Tuesday 12 December, Mayor's Staff Christmas Lunch
- Tuesday 12 December, North West Leicestershire Chairman's Christmas Carol Service

Following the Mayor's announcements, the Assistant Director for Customers and Communities, Aysha Rahman; the Strategic Lead Connecting and Enabling Communities, Laura Swift; and Team Leader of Community Support Hub, Victoria Miller gave a presentation on the Community Support Hub.

In response to the presentation, Members thanked Officers for their hard work in ensuring the initiative is a success and assists those most in need. Also, both the previous and current administrations were congratulated in establishing and continuing the initiative and that the Council had a service it could be proud of.

The Leader proposed a vote of thanks to all the Officers involved with the Community Support Hub. Councillor Cumbers seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

Council agreed to thank the Officers involved with the running of the Community Support Hub.

(Unanimous)

CO43

LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader began his announcements by paying tribute to Jina Paterson who had recently passed away. He added that Jina was responsible for the idea of building a memorial garden in memory of her husband, George, and this is now looked after by the Council.

The Leader welcomed Councillor Margaret Clay, who was elected on 2 November. In doing so he repeated his best wishes for her predecessor, Charlie Pitt Miller. The Leader thanked Mr Faulkner for an election campaign conducted with honesty and integrity and confirmed that there would be no off-street parking charges.

The Leader informed Council that he would be publishing a document in January covering a wide range of Council business including the following:

- Outlining that the plan for a second Doctor's surgery at the Melton Sports Village has been abandoned and that the preferred location is Parkside. Discussions with the NHS are progressing well and soon a timetable for the creation of a second Doctor's surgery would be published.
- The new Leisure Services contract.
- An update on the Rutland and Melton Levelling Up Fund implementation.

The Leader held a meeting with the National Grid on 11 November and Severn Trent Water on 28 November. The meeting covered current problems and future plans and that a full report would be provided to Members and Parish Councils in January. Linking to this, the Leader said that flooding, sewage and electrical issues at Freeby Close, Melton Mowbray had occupied his time. The Leader would work with Officers and other agencies to establish an action plan building on work already undertaken.

Members were informed that the Leader attended the Remembrance Service on 12 November which isn't just a civic duty but a personal homage. He extended his thanks to Councillor Ian Atherton for his assistance on the day.

The Leader thanked the BID Manager, Shelagh Core; Councillor Sharon Butcher; Council staff; the Town Estate and many others for making the Christmas Lights switch on a success.

Council was informed that on 30 November, the Leader joined Councillors Pat Cumpers and Tim Webster at the Let's Get Melton Moving awards evening. The Leader was moved by the range of nominees, their ages, life experiences, endeavours and accomplishments. He thanked Officers for making the event a brilliant success.

The Leader informed Council that on 22 November he had attended a meeting of the Leicestershire Districts at Hinckley.

Members were informed that, on 5 December, the Leader had chaired the second Local Advisory Board overseeing the roll out of the programme for the UKSPF and that there would be a full update report in January.

The Leader stated that on 6 December he had met with Melton Brooksby college, a senior Regional Manager for the Department of Education and a Further Education Commissioner to discuss the status of their part in the Levelling Up Fund project. The Leader would report updates in due course.

Members were informed that the Leader had attended a webinar on 7 December with the new Minister for Local Government Finance. The Minister confirmed that the routine consultation on the annual settlement would be published on 18 December. The Leader stated that the lateness of the consultation has made the job of preparing the budget and council tax proposals more complicated.

	<p>The Leader also informed Members of the correspondence he has been involved with since the last Council meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence had been received from Ministers in the Ministry of Defence thanking the Council for its assistance in housing Afghan refugees and had requested further cooperation. • The Leader had written to the Police and Crime Commissioner to complain about statements regarding Anti-Social Behaviour and crime in Melton. • The Leader had written to Alicia Kearns MP to thank her for her interview with Andrew Marr and her statement in the House of Commons in relation to the attacks in Israel on 7 October.
CO44	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>One question had been received from Mr Peter Faulkner. He asked the Chair of Audit and Standards Committee, Councillor Higgins the following:</p> <p><i>“Following a code of conduct hearing against me in 2020 whilst I was a serving councillor, there were many procedural errors noted, which resulted in the Council commissioning an independent review into the whole procedure. Please can you give me a brief outline of the time taken to complete the review, the result of the independent review and the amount that this review cost the Council? Can you also confirm that I received a written apology from the Council?”</i></p> <p>In response the Chair of Audit and Standards Committee, Councillor Higgins stated that following a Standards Hearing in November 2020, and having received a number of concerns regarding the process followed, the then Monitoring Officer commissioned an independent review of the process used both in this case and when considering complaints against Members more generally under the Member Code of Conduct. The Review was completed in July 2021 and contained a number of recommendations for improvements to the procedure for handling complaints in line with best practice. He added that the Council paid the sum of £4700 in professional fees to the external solicitors who undertook the review. The review concluded that there were a number of flaws in the Council’s process for handling the complaint against Mr Faulkner which, taken cumulatively, could have resulted in the process being deemed to be unfair. Councillor Higgins stated that as a result of the findings, the Council’s Code of Conduct and associated processes and procedures were thoroughly reviewed and guidance was updated. The new Code of Conduct was adopted by Council in April 2022. The Council are currently in the process of further improving the hearings process in line with best practice. The Council sent Mr Faulkner a formal written apology in November 2021 acknowledging the flaws in the Council’s previous procedures. The apology issued to Mr Faulkner acknowledged the fact that the findings in the review could have entitled him to a fresh hearing, but that he had instead decided to accept the apology in light of the passage of time and the cost to the public purse of undertaking a new investigation and rehearing.</p>

	<p>Mr Faulkner asked a supplementary question in which he requested the Council publishes the independent review report. In response Councillor Higgins stated that he would seek guidance and respond to Mr Faulkner in writing.</p>
CO45	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS No questions from Members were received.</p>
CO46	<p>MOTIONS ON NOTICE The following motion was received from Councillor Butcher (Seconded by Councillor Higgins).</p> <p>This Council applauds the huge contribution that retail and supermarket workers have made in recent years in helping our local community, particularly during the pandemic and wishes to thank them for their hard work and dedication.</p> <p>Everyone should have the right to work in safety and free from violence and abuse especially when bravely tackling shop thefts or criminal damage to property. Especially in the run up to Christmas.</p> <p>It is alarming to hear directly from employees in the Melton area of such abuses being faced recently and this is not just a local issue but across the country as reported by supermarket CEOs.</p> <p>This Council condemns any abuse suffered by our retail workers and calls on all partners to ensure that retail and supermarket workers can have confidence that their reports of such behaviour are acted on swiftly and appropriately.</p> <p>And the Council tasks to the Leader and Deputy Leader to write to our partners: the Police Crime Commissioner, the Inspector of Melton Police Station and Youth Services at Leicestershire County Council to endorse this approach.</p> <p>Councillor Graham proposed the following amendment to the motion (Seconded by Councillor J Orson).</p> <p>That the following paragraph be deleted:</p> <p>And the Council tasks to the Leader and Deputy Leader to write to our partners: the Police Crime Commissioner, the Inspector of Melton Police Station and Youth Services at Leicestershire County Council to endorse this approach.</p> <p>And replaced with:</p>

And the Council tasks the Leader and Deputy Leader to write to the Chair of the Melton Safer Community Partnership, highlighting the issues in the paragraphs above and ask for a report on what the Melton Safer Community Partnership intend to do to be brought back to this Council in time for the Council meeting on 18 April 2024.

The proposer and seconder of the motion accepted the amendment, therefore the motion was changed to the following:

This Council applauds the huge contribution that retail and supermarket workers have made in recent years in helping our local community, particularly during the pandemic and wishes to thank them for their hard work and dedication.

Everyone should have the right to work in safety and free from violence and abuse especially when bravely tackling shop thefts or criminal damage to property. Especially in the run up to Christmas.

It is alarming to hear directly from employees in the Melton area of such abuses being faced recently and this is not just a local issue but across the country as reported by supermarket CEOs.

This Council condemns any abuse suffered by our retail workers and calls on all partners to ensure that retail and supermarket workers can have confidence that their reports of such behaviour are acted on swiftly and appropriately.

And the Council tasks the Leader and Deputy Leader to write to the Chair of the Melton Safer Community Partnership, highlighting the issues in the paragraphs above and ask for a report on what the Melton Safer Community Partnership intend to do to be brought back to this Council in time for the Council meeting on 18 April 2024.

During the debate, the following points were made:

- A Member noted that a lot of crime prevention work has been carried out, however there is still a huge problem.
- The amendment was welcomed as it was deemed that the Melton Safer Community Partnership was the most appropriate place to address the issue because all the key partners attend the partnership's meetings.

RESOLVED

Council

Condemns any abuse suffered by our retail workers and calls on all partners to ensure that retail and supermarket workers can have confidence that their reports of such behaviour are acted on swiftly and appropriately.

	<p>And tasks the Leader and Deputy Leader to write to the Chair of the Melton Safer Community Partnership, highlighting the issues in the motion and asks for a report on what the Melton Safer Community Partnership intend to do, to be brought back for consideration by Council at the meeting on 18 April 2024.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO47	<p>POLITICAL BALANCE AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer introduced the report on the Political Balance and Allocation of seats to Political Group.</p> <p>The Leader moved the recommendations and Councillor Higgins seconded the motion.</p> <p>During the debate the question was asked whether the appointment of Councillor Butcher to the Melton Business Improvement District Board posed a conflict of interest. In response Members were informed that so long as the individual properly manages conflict and declares an interest were relevant, then there is no reason why Councillor Butcher should not be appointed as the Council’s Representative on the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Approved the political balance calculation at paragraphs 5.1 – 5.2; (2) Approved the allocation of seats on Committees as set out in paragraph 5.3 and Working Groups as set out in paragraph 5.4.1; (3) Noted that the composition of the Constitution Review Working Group and the Climate Change Emergency Working Group remain unaltered; (4) Received nominations and made appointments to Committees and Working Groups as notified by Group Leaders and set out in Appendix A; (5) Authorised the Monitoring Officer to give effect to the wishes of the group in relation to adjustments to committee appointments where properly notified in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990; (6) Appointed non-aligned Members to their allocation of seats on Committees and Working Groups as set out in Appendix A;

	<p>(7) Appointed Councillor Marilyn Gordon to fill the vacancy on the Climate Change Emergency Working Group, and</p> <p>(8) Appointed Councillor Butcher as the Council's second representative on the Melton Business Improvement District Board.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO48	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT 2023/24</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources introduced the Cabinet recommendations to Council on the Treasury Management Mid-Year report for 2023/24 and moved the recommendations. The Leader seconded the motion.</p> <p>In response to question on whether the Council would allow residents to pay their Council Tax using cryptocurrency, it was confirmed that the Council are not looking to do this at this time.</p> <p>It was noted by the Portfolio Holder that the Finance Team do not tend to take risks and that the risk of the Council's investments is currently very low.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>(1) Noted the mid-year position on treasury activity for 2023/24.</p> <p>(2) Noted the mid-year position on Prudential Indicators for 2023/24.</p> <p>At 7:51pm, upon the conclusion of this item, the meeting was adjourned.</p> <p>During the adjournment, Councillor Cliff left the meeting and did not return.</p> <p>At 8:07pm, the meeting was reconvened.</p>
CO49	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - LEISURE CONTRACT: AWARD OF CONTRACT TO PREFERRED CONTRACTOR AND INVESTMENT PROPOSALS</p> <p>Prior to the commencement of this item Councillor Adcock announced that he could have a potential pecuniary interest and therefore he would withdraw.</p> <p>At 8:08pm, prior to the consideration of this item, Councillors Adcock and Gordon left the meeting and did not return.</p> <p>The Leader introduced the Cabinet recommendations to Council on the Leisure</p>

Contact: Award of contract to preferred contractor and investment proposals and moved the recommendations. Councillor Cumbers seconded the motion.

In introducing the report, the Leader thanked the previous administration for their efforts in the procurement of a new contractor. He highlighted the fact that the Council had recognised the concerns of the user groups. In addition, he stated that the Borough requires a swimming pool as 19 schools depend on it for swimming lessons.

The Mayor proposed the following:

That the Press and Public are excluded during the consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Deputy Mayor seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

Council

Excluded the Press and Public during the consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

(Unanimous)

A discussion was held in private session after which the Council agreed the recommendations that were moved during the public session.

RESOLVED

Council

- (1) Awarded the contract for the operation of the Council's leisure facilities from 1 April 2024, for a period of ten years (and with the option to extend for 5 years) to Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) (trading as Everyone Active);**
- (2) Delegated to the Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive) in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer, authority to finalise the contract and effect the contract award;**
- (3) Approved an allocation of £1.735m in the capital programme for 2024/25 for investment in improvement works to Waterfield Leisure Centre and Melton Sports Village.**

	<p>(4) Approved that the capital allocation is met by grant funding (subject to the outcome of current bids being confirmed), with any residual balance then being funded in the first instance by the Leisure Vision Capital Reserve, and any remaining balance being met from borrowing.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
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The meeting closed at: 8.19 pm

Mayor