

# Agenda

<b>Meeting name</b>	<b>Meeting of the Cabinet</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Wednesday, 21 June 2023</b>
<b>Start time</b>	<b>4.30 pm</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH</b>
<b>Other information</b>	<b>This meeting is open to the public</b>

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

**Edd de Coverly**  
**Chief Executive**

## Membership

**Councillors** P. Allnatt (Chair) M. Glancy (Vice-Chair)  
S. Butcher S. Cox  
P. Cumbers

**Quorum:** 3 Councillors

<b>Meeting enquiries</b>	Democratic Services
<b>Email</b>	democracy@melton.gov.uk
<b>Agenda despatched</b>	Tuesday, 13 June 2023

No.	Item	Page No.
1.	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
2.	<b>MINUTES</b> To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 08 March 2023.	1 - 14
3.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> Members to declare any interest as appropriate in respect of items to be considered at this meeting.	15 - 16
4.	<b>MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny Feedback on Homelessness</li> <li>• Scrutiny Feedback on Income Collection and Debt Management, Progress Update</li> </ul>	17 - 22
5.	<b>COMPLAINTS UPDATE REPORT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT &amp; SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN, HOUSING OMBUDSMAN &amp; CORPORATE COMPLAINTS 22/23</b> Report by Leader of the Council to provide Cabinet with an update on Ombudsman complaints and Corporate Complaints for April 2022 to 31 March 2023.	23 - 30
6.	<b>LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE BUSINESS RATES POOL</b> Report by Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources to update cabinet on the latest position regarding the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Rates Pool and the funding allocated to the Council for the period 2020/21 to 2023/24	31 - 36
7.	<b>TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, ANNUAL REPORT</b> Report by Leader of the Council to provide an update on engagement activity, outcomes and associated improvements and service changes over the last 12 months.	37 - 54



# Minutes

<b>Meeting name</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Wednesday, 8 March 2023</b>
<b>Start time</b>	<b>4.30 pm</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH</b>

## Present:

**Chair** Councillor J. Orson (Chair)

**Councillors** M. Graham MBE (Vice-Chair) R. Bindloss  
 R. Browne R. de Burle  
 A. Freer

## **Observers**

**Officers** Chief Executive  
 Director for Corporate Services  
 Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)  
 Director for Growth and Regeneration  
 Regeneration Manager  
 Democratic Services Manager  
 Democratic Services Officer (CT)

Minute No.	Minute
70	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> There were no apologies for absence.</p>
71	<p><b>MINUTES</b> The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 February 2023 were confirmed as being correct.</p>
72	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> Councillor Orson declared an interest in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council due to his role as a County Councillor.</p>
73	<p><b>MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES</b> No items had been referred from Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules.</p>
74	<p><b>COST OF LIVING UPDATE</b> Director for Housing and Communities introduced the report, the purpose of which was to update Members of the current position. Including an overview of achievements to date, continued partnership engagement, ongoing activities and the work proposed over the next 3 to 6 months.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for People and Communities, Councillor Malise Graham was pleased to present the report showing how the Council has been proactive in supporting residents. He said there are no easy solutions, but the Council should be enabling prosperity in communities to reduce the risk and need for intervention in the future. He was delighted to confirm that on the 16 March together with our partners, the Council will be hosting a community support and information day for residents to drop into Parkside. It is hoped that the event will be repeated in a rural location, at later date.</p> <p>It was asked if all Members had been advised about the event, confirmation was given that members will be sent the information, along with a list of agencies supporting the event. Along with a social media campaign to promote the event.</p> <p>Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>NOTED</b> the actions completed to date to support communities with rising costs of living.</li> <li>2. <b>ENDORSED</b> the proposed actions for the next 3-6 months through a programme of work to mitigate the impacts of cost-of-living increases for households across the Borough.</li> <li>3. <b>DELEGATED</b> to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for People and Communities, authority to finalise a scope and progress procurement and project management arrangements to enable enhanced access to household provisions across the borough</li> </ol>

through a mobile solution funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

*Reason for Recommendations:*

*Cost of living increases are impacting households across the country, impacting financial resilience and wellbeing across communities. It is important that the council understands local needs and takes appropriate and proportionate action to support residents at a time of significant pressure on household finances.*

*Through a cost-of-living plan, a range of actions have been progressed / are in delivery. More actions and opportunities to support residents with their financial resilience and wellbeing are planned and / or due to commence. The Council will need to continue to be dynamic in its response in response to local need and impacts, and through a cost-of-living project group is overseeing a range of actions and interventions.*

*The rising costs of living and associated implications create both an immediate risk and a longer-term challenge. There are no easy solutions. The Council must do all that it can to support residents with their immediate needs, mitigate financial pressures for households, progress appropriate preventative solutions where possible to reduce household bills and costs, whilst also focussing on enabling prosperity in communities and reducing the risk and need for such interventions in the future.*

*The council was successful in its application for funding to support a cost-of-living project through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Feedback from residents and local partners has helped to guide focus on the need for enhanced access to household provisions across the borough through a mobile solution.*

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**DAMP AND MOULD POLICY**

Director for Housing and Communities introduced the report the purpose of which was to provide Members with assurance of the Councils approach and response to damp and mould across the rented sector, and as a local authority landlord.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services said that although this issue had recently been highlighted due to tragic circumstances, the Council had already been looking at the damp and mould issue as part of the Asset Management Programme. Officers are proactive and look out for this issue, not waiting for it to be reported. He gave assurance that procedures are in place to follow up on any reported issues. The Portfolio Holder receives quarterly reports on new cases and existing ones. This issue is in all wards and is taken seriously, because of the Councils response to this issue it will have a positive impact for our tenants and their families.

Cabinet:

1. **NOTED** the approach to preventing, assessing, and responding to damp and mould in the rented sector and action plan to further strengthen this approach.
2. **NOTED** the positive compliance position in relation to damp and mould in

Council Homes.

3. **APPROVED** the damp and mould policy for Council Homes.

*Reason for Recommendations:*

*Melton Borough Council has an important role to play in keeping tenants safe, including taking action to address hazards that occur and seeking to prevent hazards where possible. It is important that the Council is proactive and is transparent in its approach, and that as a local authority landlord and strategic housing authority, can demonstrate that the highest housing standards can be met. Scrutiny is an important part of this. Scrutiny committee comments and feedback are welcome to further develop work on damp and mould.*

*The Council has submitted formal responses to provide information and assurance to the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).*

*The Council's Scrutiny Committee considered a report on damp and mould in January 2023. Feedback from this meeting has been shared with Cabinet and has helped to shape a specific damp and mould policy for council homes. This policy is recommended for approval by Cabinet.*

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## **SERVICE LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION - WASTE, ENVIRONMENTAL MAINTENANCE AND REGULATORY SERVICES**

Director for Housing and Communities introduced the report the purpose of which updated Members of the proposed service leadership and collaboration arrangement with a neighbouring authority to improve resilience, achieve better use of resources and better enable a shared approach to preparations for legislative and regulatory change.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement said that the Council is committed to deliver excellent service but has to look at ways of being cost effective. This proposal to collaborate with a neighbouring authority will give a better use of services and resources and will enable us to use the expertise, knowledge and skills to give us more resilience in service delivery - This arrangement is initially for six months and will then be reviewed, regular updates will be given as to how successful it has been. The Council receives complimentary reports on the quality of our waste service collection particularly with our collections over holiday periods and bad weather, so it is important we still maintain the good service we deliver.

The Leader also commented on the good service we deliver and that the Council is judged by the service we deliver. This paper had been to Harborough District Council a couple of days previously to also agree to this collaboration.

Cabinet:

1. **APPROVED** a service leadership and collaboration arrangement between Harborough District Council and Melton Borough Council for delivery of Waste and Environmental Maintenance Services from 1st April 2023.

2. **DELEGATED** authority to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement, authority to:
  - 2.1. Determined and concluded the actions required to establish arrangements for a shared leadership post.
  - 2.2. Reviewed the shared leadership and collaboration arrangements for Waste and Environmental Maintenance Services within six months, to determine whether a shared approach is extended and to enter into required arrangements to enact this.
  
3. **APPROVED** a service leadership and collaboration arrangement between Harborough District Council and Melton Borough Council for delivery of Regulatory Services from 1st April 2023.
  
4. **DELEGATED** to the Director for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement, authority to:
  - 4.1. Determined and concluded the actions required to establish arrangements for a shared leadership post and any subsequent reviews.
  - 4.2. Agreed the terms of a reciprocal arrangement for mutual aid with Harborough District Council and record the same in a memorandum of understanding.
  - 4.3. Amended the establishments as identified in section 9.10 of this report and undertake recruitment to resource the teams fully.
  
5. **NOTED** the practical actions required to give lawful effect to the mutual aid arrangement.

*Reason for Recommendations:*

*Further to a vacancy management review and consideration of future delivery options, a service leadership and collaboration arrangement with a neighbouring authority is proposed for each of these key operational services.*

*This will improve resilience, achieve better use of resources, value for money and better enable preparations for legislative and regulatory change.*

*The proposed arrangements for Waste and Environmental Maintenance Services will be reviewed within six months, to ensure they are working effectively and to determine future collaboration options.*

*The proposed arrangements for Regulatory Services follow a successful period of informal collaboration.*

*The recommendations are in line with the principles of the Council's Workforce Strategy and vacancy management arrangements.*

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**RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Director for Corporate Services introduced the report, the purpose of which provided Members with an update on the risk management arrangements and

outlined the current significant risks that have been captured on the recent review of the Councils Strategic Risk Register by the Senior Leadership Team.

The Leader said that it can be difficult to influence some items on the risk register, in particular the NNDR, but some areas we can make significant differences as we have with the Housing Business Plan, this is a testament to all the hard work that has taken place. As we are an ambitious Council there will always be new risks taken, such as the Levelling Up Fund and UKSPF, we should not avoid these risks but recognise and take steps to manage the risks.

Cabinet:

**NOTED** the content of the report and the updated Strategic Risk Register and associated risk management action plan, as attached at Appendix A.

*Reason for Recommendations:*

*Whilst Risk Management forms part of the Audit and Standards terms of reference it is important that cabinet have oversight and awareness of the strategic risks that could impact on the Council and to review the risk management arrangements in place and the activities that are being undertaken to mitigate those risks.*

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### **LEVELLING UP FUND**

Director for Growth and Regeneration introduced the report the purpose of which provided Members with an update on the successful Levelling Up Funding programme, and the key Melton specific projects within it. It also sets out governance requirements, obligations and implications and seeking approval to commence the work for implementation.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity said that the relevance of the paper is about the governance of the funding, how it will meet the targets and the need to consider the risks involved and how we will be able to deliver and be accountable, Officers have worked hard along with Rutland County Council to ensure we are able to deliver, and the work will fit within the framework we already have. This funding will give great opportunity to the town and borough particularly when coupled with the UKSPF funding and will turn a vision into a reality.

During the discussion the following points were raised

- The Parish Councils need to be involved in the discussions regarding the local transport - Assurance was given that Parish Councils and Members will be involved with the decisions made.
- Determine which villages will be serviced by this proposed transport and is a map available - Members were advised that a conception map is available with the proposed transport services.
- As it is such a big project confirm that Audit and Scrutiny will be looking at



this project - this is being considered at the next Audit and Standards meeting.

- Ensure that increased building costs had been taken into consideration when submitting the bids - assurances were given that costs will be considered and reviewed during the project.
- It is hoped that Melton Borough Council will benefit from the increased prosperity with the success of the Stockyard – Confirmation was given that the new units will generate additional income.

The Leader gave thanks to the local MP for her hard work in respect to the funding. He also gave thanks to all the Officers involved as they had put a lot of time and effort in getting this bid ready.

Cabinet:

1. **NOTED** the successful outcome from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid.
2. **NOTED** that in line with prior approvals and the bid submission, that, subject to Rutland County Council (RCC) approval, RCC will be the 'Lead Authority' and accountable body for the funding and endorse their acceptance of the required grant agreements with DHLUC.
3. Subject to council approval of recommendation 4:
  - 3.1. **APPROVED** entry into the necessary and relevant legal agreements with Rutland County Council to enable Melton Borough Council to access its share of the Levelling Up Fund.
  - 3.2. **APPROVED** entry into an agreement with SMB Group to enable delivery of the theatre project as set out within the bid.
  - 3.3. **DELEGATED** authority to the Director for Corporate Services, in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity, to develop, finalise and sign any associated legal documentation in relation to the agreements set out in 2.3.1 and 2.3.2
  - 3.4. **DELEGATED** authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree any necessary amendments with DLUHC to enable the funding to be secured for Melton's projects, should Rutland County Council be unable to fulfil the accountable body role.
  - 3.5. **NOTED** that regular updates on progress on the LUF programme will be provided to the LUF Executive Board
4. **RECOMMENDED** to Council:
  - 4.1. The acceptance of Melton's proportion of the LUF funding and approval to enter the capital scheme for the Stockyard project totalling £11.1m to the capital programme for 2023/24 to enable its delivery.
  - 4.2. The Approval to provide match funding of £1m through capital receipts, and if not possible, fund through borrowing.
  - 4.3. That authority be delegated to the Director for Corporate Services to update the capital programme with the spend profile across the relevant financial years for the Stockyard project once the detailed budget plan has been prepared.

*Reason for Recommendations*

*In June 2022, the Cabinet approved the submission of a joint Levelling Up Fund bid with Rutland County Council. In January 2023, the Councils were advised the bid had been successful. The Councils now need to enter into the required agreements with the government and each other to enable the funding to be secured and the investment delivered.*

*Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton is a key priority in the Council's Corporate Strategy 2020-2024. The Levelling Up Funding bid is focussed on delivering the promise of Melton Mowbray being the 'Rural Capital of Food'. The interventions delivered through this grant funding will help regenerate the town centre, create a destination offer within the town, encourage inward investment, and create additional jobs in key economic sectors such as tourism and food production.*

*The projects to be delivered are part of the Town Centre Vision created by working extensively with local stakeholders and businesses and approved and adopted by the Council in 2022. These projects will contribute significantly to achieve the vision and objectives set out in this document.*

*The Stockyard site will be redeveloped for accommodating more food and drink production businesses and to improve the events infrastructure to enable Melton to expand existing and attract larger events such as food festivals all year around.*

*Improvements to the theatre will help hosting commercial productions to enhance the cultural offer for the town and also support the towns growing evening economy.*

*The demand responsive transport linking the key towns of Oakham and Melton will complete the offer by linking the towns and rural hinterlands to better enable access from more rural areas. This will help increase footfall and help attract new and repeat visitors.*

*Outcomes and outputs of this project will also contribute significantly towards achieving the objectives of the Council's Asset Development Programme.*

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**DISPOSAL OF CEMETERY LODGE**

Director for Growth and Regeneration introduced the report the purpose of which was to recommend to Members that the Council proceeds with the disposal of Cemetery Lodge at auction to generate a capital receipt.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity said that although the building was over 100 years old and was a fine looking building. Taking consideration of options for this building, sale by auction would be the most viable.

Cabinet:

1. **APPROVED** the freehold disposal of Cemetery Lodge in accordance with the Asset Disposal Policy.
2. **DELEGATED** authority for the Director for Growth and Regeneration to finalise and effect the legal documentation in relation to the conditions of sale and transfer of the property.

*Reason for Recommendations:*

*Taking a commercial approach to the management of our assets is a key area of focus under priority 3 of the Corporate Strategy 2020-2024.*

*The recommendation of disposal through auction is in accordance with the Council's Assets Disposal Policy (2020).*

*The sale of Cemetery Lodge would generate a much needed capital receipt for the Council to support the work in extending capacity of the current cemetery and future-proofing cemetery provision in the borough.*

*The disposal would remove the ongoing financial liability of the property in terms of repair and maintenance, property checks and inspections made by the caretaking staff and the on-going security risk.*

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#### **ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITY GRANTS 2023/24**

Director for Housing and Communities introduced the report the purpose of which was to seek approval from Members for the award of Community Grants (including those funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) for the financial year 2023/24.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement said that she had enjoyed awarding the community grants, this year we have received extra funding from the UKSPF which has enabled us to reach out further than previous years. Because of this extra funding from UKSPF the Council now have more robust and formal procedures in place, and this allows us to be more transparent when the grants are allocated. She was delighted to announce the one-off Coronation Grant scheme to help communities to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

Cabinet:

1. **APPROVED** the award of Community Grants in line with the Community Grants Policy as set out in the report and detailed in Appendix A.
2. **APPROVED** utilisation of allocated UKSPF funding to support additional community grant allocations as detailed in Appendix A.
3. **DELEGATED** to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement, authority to assess and award community grants for the one-off King's Coronation Grants Scheme with the remaining Community Grants budget (£8,796)

*Reason for Recommendations:*

*The Council invests in a Community Grants Scheme which supports communities*

*with delivering activities that benefit the residents of the Borough and bring positive social value. The grant supports the corporate theme of “Helping People” and the Council’s role both as supporter and enabler of community-based activities.*

*Utilising allocated UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies alongside the Council’s Community Grants budget has enabled the panel to assist as many requests as possible, achieve maximum value for money and create a one-off Coronation Grants Scheme to enable communities across Melton to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.*

*In 2022, the Council successfully extended the reach of the community grants budget to enable celebration of the Platinum Jubilee in communities across the Borough through a one-off grants scheme. As a community leader, it is positive that the Council can replicate this to deliver and award funds to eligible applicants through a one-off grant fund to mark the King’s Coronation.*

*Timely award of grants for the King’s Coronation is important, to enable community groups sufficient time to plan and prepare for their events in time for the Coronation in May 2023. Delegated authority to awards the Coronation grants will enable this.*

*The recommended allocations follow a robust assessment process by a panel consisting of the Portfolio Holder and lead officers. The Panel assessed the grants in line with the criteria set out within the approved Community Grants Policy.*

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#### **UKSPF INVESTMENT PLAN UPDATE**

Director for Growth and Regeneration introduced the report, the purpose of which provided Members with an overview of the work undertaken to date since the Council secured £1.19m of investment to delivery its UKSPF investment plan. They were advised that significant work has been undertaken to ensure the programme is ready to begin delivery to provide support to residents and local businesses.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity said that the UKSPF has come from the vision that partners, stakeholders and workshops held over the last two years, the benefits are now starting to be seen in the town centre and rural borough. The Council has significant responsibilities to meet the requirements and ensure we meet the agreed timelines. Monitoring is in place to ensure that all the requirements are met a local advisory board is being set up with local stakeholders and partners to evaluation delivery of the programme.

Members asked for clarification for members of the public that the funding will be used for investment in the town centre and rural communities. That business that are struggling with energy costs will be helped and there will be improvements for the street scene in the town centre.

Cabinet:

1. **CONFIRMED** commitment to delivery of the UKSPF Investment plan as previously submitted to Government.

2. **DELEGATED** Authority to Director for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity, to authorise spend and undertake decisions, approvals and awards of contract that ensure continued delivery of the UKSPF programme in line with the investment plan. This is to include, not only council led projects, but also where funding needs to be released for delivery by a third party (via grants, commissioning, procurement of services etc).
3. **DELEGATED** authority to Director for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity, to make amendments to the plan, as required, and to submit change requests to Govt, relating to the delivery of Melton's UKSPF programme, in accordance with the requirements of the fund.
4. **DELEGATED** authority to the Director for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Growth and Prosperity, to agree and implement the Council's Business Grant policy and to make any future amendments required to continue to deliver the UKSPF investment plan.

*Reason for Recommendations:*

*The UKSPF programme is an allocation made to the council to support its local communities and economy. Its successful implementation will directly support growth throughout the borough. Following significant consultation with partners across the borough, all with direct experience of the issues being faced by our communities and local businesses, the UKSPF programme interventions have been prioritised and selected precisely because they directly target and provide support where it is most needed.*

*The UKSPF programme is a package of interventions that will align with, and are complimentary to, the recently successful Levelling Up Fund submission to further support extensive growth within key sectors and key locations. The UKSPF will deliver key interventions that have been highlighted by our business community through direct feedback at UKSPF workshops but also through information collated through the adopted Town Centre Vision.*

*The UKSPF programme is a significant investment in our local communities and economy. The programme has clearly defined objectives and expectations regarding outputs and outcomes generated. There is also a very short timeframe for delivery and sets out the level of investment that must be made per year across the many different interventions.*

*Melton Borough Council as the accountable body for the programme has significant responsibilities to ensure the funding is spent in a timely and, more importantly, compliant manner. This will be managed internally but will require the council to be able to be flexible in its delivery approach to ensure it continues to deliver against these expectations and meets the targets it is responsible for delivering. This will require officers, in accordance with relevant local and national regulation, to be able to make decisions regarding project and programme delivery to ensure effective delivery of the proposed interventions.*

*Due to the fast-paced nature of these projects and the length of time for delivery*

*there is an ongoing need to ensure the programme can react to changing local needs and reflect the demands of our local communities and economy at any point in time. There will be a need to continually monitor outputs, engage with partners and assess how projects are delivering to identify any potential required changes. These changes then need to be agreed at the local level and a request made to government to secure their sign off to put these changes in place. This will be often a small-scale change and delegated authority is sought to retain flexibility to enable these changes to be made in a timely manner to enable ongoing delivery against original programme expectations.*

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## **LEISURE PROCUREMENT**

Director for Housing and Communities introduced the report the purpose of which was to update Members on the Leisure Procurement Framework and seek approval to commence the procurement of an operator for the Council's leisure facilities from 1st April 2024.

The Portfolio Holder for People and Communities said that leisure is a big part of people lives and huge benefit to both mental and physical health. The Council needs to ensure that good leisure facilities are available to our communities, and it is important for us to find a provider who will deliver both high quality and affordable facilities for our communities.

Members gave their thanks that this work is going ahead to ensure the town has the leisure facilities that it needs.

Cabinet:

1. **APPROVED** the Leisure Procurement Framework (Appendix A).
2. **DELEGATED** authority to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for People and Communities, to make minor amendments to the leisure procurement framework and to finalise the associated procurement documentation.
3. **DELEGATED** authority to the Director for Housing and Communities to commence a procurement process to seek a leisure operator for the Council's Leisure Facilities from 1st April 2024.

*Reason for Recommendations:*

*To maintain the provision of leisure facilities in Melton, a procurement process is required to seek and to secure an operator for Melton Borough Council's leisure facilities from 1st April 2024. This process will need to commence before the end of the current financial year. The current contract cannot be extended.*

*The leisure procurement framework has been developed with the support of sector experts and is informed by market engagement and workshops with a range of officers with experience and expertise in relevant areas (for example property, health and leisure, legal, finance, procurement). It has also been shaped through a workshop with the council's scrutiny committee and with Portfolio Holders.*

*The leisure procurement framework will directly inform the associated tender and*

*evaluation documents. Approval of the leisure procurement framework is required to enable conclusion of the preparatory work and commencement of the procurement process.*

*The leisure procurement framework seeks to achieve a balance between achieving the council's financial and social value requirements whilst also ensuring the opportunity is attractive to the leisure market. It provides an important opportunity for the council to test the market, and assess the viability, affordability and quality of proposals from the leisure sector before any decisions on contract award would be made.*

*Final decisions in respect of contract award would be reserved for Full Council through consideration of a preferred provider following the procurement process (recommendation from Cabinet).*

The meeting closed at: 5.40 pm

Chair

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## MEMBER INTERESTS

### Do I have an interest?

#### 1 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIs)

A “Disclosable Pecuniary Interest” is any interest described as such in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 and includes an interest of yourself, or of your Spouse/Partner (if you are aware of your Partner's interest) that falls within the following categories: Employment, Trade, Profession, Sponsorship, Contracts, Land/Property, Licences, Tenancies and Securities.

A Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is a Registerable Interest. Failure to register a DPI is a criminal offence so register entries should be kept up-to-date.

#### 2 OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS (ORIs)

An “Other Registerable Interest” is a personal interest in any business of your authority which relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority; or
- b) any body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or
  - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

#### 3 NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS (NRIs)

“Non-Registrable Interests” are those that you are not required to register but need to be disclosed when a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing or a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate that is not a DPI.

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**In each case above, you should make your declaration at the beginning of the meeting or as soon as you become aware. In any other circumstances, where Members require further advice they should contact the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.**

# Declarations and Participation in Meetings

## 1 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIs)

- 1.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which include both the interests of yourself and your partner then:
- a) you must disclose the interest;
  - b) not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter; and
  - c) must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

## 2 OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS (ORIs)

- 2.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests i.e. relating to a body you may be involved in:
- a) you must disclose the interest
  - b) may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter; and
  - c) must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

## 3 NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS (NRIs)

- 3.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting, which is not registrable but may become relevant when a particular item arises i.e. interests which relate to you and /or other people you are connected with (e.g. friends, relative or close associates) then:
- a) you must disclose the interest;
  - b) may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter; and
  - c) must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

## 4 BIAS

- 4.1 Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or 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):
- a) you should not take part in the decision-making process
  - b) you should state that your position in this matter prohibits you from taking part
  - c) you should leave the room.

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**In each case above, you should make your declaration at the beginning of the meeting or as soon as you become aware. In any other circumstances, where Members require further advice they should contact the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.**



To: Cabinet  
Date: 21 June 2023  
Report/Comments of: Scrutiny Committee  
Title: Scrutiny Feedback to Cabinet – Homelessness

## SUMMARY OF REPORT CONSIDERED

<b>Report Title:</b>	Homelessness
<b>Purpose/Description of Report:</b>	The report provides an update on the work undertaken by the council to prevent and relieve homelessness, and to assist households who experience homelessness across Melton.
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Cllr R Child, Scrutiny Committee Chairman
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr R Browne, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services

### 1. Introduction and Overview

The Scrutiny Committee met on 14 March 2023 to consider a report updating Members on the work undertaken by the council to prevent and relieve homelessness, and to assist households who experience homelessness across Melton.

The report covered the following: legal context; budget; temporary accommodation; cases, service demand and collaboration and general service challenges. The report was supported with a presentation from the lead officer.

### 2. Summary of Feedback/Recommendations for Cabinet Consideration

- Officers were thanked for the work they do and were told that the work is appreciated by partners and the community.
- A Member mentioned that in their experience of encountering residents who are homeless or facing homelessness, the feedback they have given regarding the response from the Council has been positive. In

the opinion of the Member, the actions that have been taken have been above and beyond what was expected.

- Concern was raised regarding the number of people living in temporary accommodation, however Members were informed that getting people out of temporary accommodation into permanent accommodation remains a top priority. Although Members were reminded that the permanent accommodation has to be suitable, and the Council believes someone is a priority need, then temporary accommodation will be provided until suitable accommodation is found, in order to discharge legal duties under the homelessness legislation.
- A comment was made by a Member that the Council is doing an exceptional job in regards to homelessness. The Member felt that the Council could get a better idea of what the level of need is through more engagement with food bank providers.
- It was queried whether the banding review (new allocations policy) has had an impact on homelessness, however Members were informed that the new policy was implemented over a year ago and that there have been few complaints as a result of the review. Officers were confident that the review had not impacted on homelessness rates and applicants impacted by the review had been encouraged to discuss their circumstances with the housing options team. Officers committed to providing some further information to the committee on how many people were negatively impacted by the new policy/banding changes.
- Members welcomed the clarification that Armed Forces Veterans are treated as a priority need when presenting as homelessness.
- The lack of supported accommodation in the Borough was raised as a risk.
- The concern of out of area people being housed within the Borough was raised. It was explained that the people would be isolated from friends and family and would not have the basics or access to services. Officers confirmed that they would always look at suitable properties in suitable locations relevant to each case and that availability of accommodation was a key consideration. It was also explained that in supporting homeless applicants into accommodation, referrals to charities and appropriate funds are made to help provide some household items. Officers confirmed that in temporary accommodation, the basics were provided.
- Concern was raised regarding the houses (private rented sector) that can't be brought up to standard due to new guidelines around energy efficiency. The Committee were informed that the Council are aware of the risk in this area. Officers advised that it hoped to increase engagement with landlords through a landlord forum.

- A Member stated that they do not think it is helpful to house a person in a property where everything has been stripped out, however it was noted that this is usually done for health and safety reasons.
- Complaints have been raised with Members regarding why some people seeking assistance do not receive a call back. Members were reassured that all people seeking assistance are registered with a duty officer and their case is processed in the appropriate manner.

**Written by: Scrutiny Committee Chairman in consultation with Members of the Scrutiny Committee**

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To: Cabinet

Date: 21 June 2023

Report/Comments of: Scrutiny Committee

Title: Scrutiny feedback on the Income Collection and Debt Management Progress Update report

<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT CONSIDERED</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Income Collection and Debt Management – Progress Update
<b>Purpose/Description of Report:</b>	To provide Members with an update on debts relating to council house rents, garage rents and sundry debts.
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Cllr R Child, Scrutiny Committee Chairman
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr R de Burle, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources

## **1. Introduction and Overview**

The Scrutiny Committee met on 18 April 2023 to consider a report on the management of debt owed to the Council.

The report provided a progress update on debts relating to council house rents, garage rents and sundry debts. The update was requested by Members following the consideration of the debt management update report at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 11 January 2023.

## **2. Summary of Feedback/Recommendations for Cabinet Consideration**

- A Member welcomed the progress made in recovering outstanding debt, especially considering some tenants find paying their debt very difficult due to low incomes or only receiving benefit payments, coupled with the impact of the increase in the cost of living.
- It was suggested that weekly direct debits could be offered to make it more convenient for some tenants to pay off debt. Officers agreed with

the principle of weekly direct debits as rent is charged weekly and accepted that in doing so would make the service more flexible and supportive.

- In relation to garage rent arrears, the overall debt has been reduced by 11% since January. A comment was made that if the tenant has had a warning, then the Tenancy Services Manager should take the garage off the tenant if arrears persist and then the tenant should be prevented from renting another garage, this option is included in the income management policy.

**Written by: Scrutiny Committee Chairman in consultation with Members of the Scrutiny Committee**



## Cabinet

21 June 2023

**Report of:** Councillor Pip Allnatt, Leader of the Council / Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services

### Complaints Update Report: Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, Housing Ombudsman & Corporate Complaints 22/23

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Service excellence in all we do and ensuring the right conditions to support delivery
<b>Relevant Ward Member(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Subject to call-in:</b>	No Not key decision

#### 1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an update on Ombudsman complaints and Corporate Complaints for April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

#### 2 Recommendation(s)

**That Cabinet:**

- 2.1 **Note the contents of the report**

#### 3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is a constitutional requirement for Cabinet to have strategic oversight of complaints data to support priority 1 – excellent services positively impacting on our communities and priority 5 – ensuring the right conditions to support delivery.
- 3.2 Receipt of regular complaints data also demonstrates good governance in line with the Governance Framework.

## 4 Background

- 4.1 The report provides the number of complaints and enquiries recorded and what decisions the Ombudsman has made for the period April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- 4.2 Corporate complaints data has also been provided for the period April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

## 5 Main Considerations

- 5.1.1 From 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 2 complaints were received by the LGSCO in respect of Melton Borough Council.

Planning & Development	Housing	Highways and Transport	Corporate & Other Services	Environmental Services & Public Protection
2	0	0	0	0

- 5.1.2 The above cases were closed after initial enquiries.

- 5.1.3 The cases are summarised in the table below:

Reference / Category	Decision	Summary / Decision Reason
22 006 389	07.09.22 – Closed after initial Enquiries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The complainant complains the Council has allowed a children's homes to open near to where he lives without planning permission. The Council accepts there is a change of planning class from residential home to residential institution. However, it insists there is no material change of use despite an increase in the number of cars.</li><li>2. The complainant says staff from the home park on the road causing congestion. And the children congregate outside unsupervised, intimidating local children with bad language and behaviour.</li><li>3. The complainant wants the Council to insist on planning applications for change of use.</li></ol> <p><b>Outcome:</b> The LGSCO will not investigate this complaint about the Council's decision that no breach of planning control is taking place at a children's home in the village where the complainant lives. There is not enough evidence of fault in the Council's actions.</p> <p>Link: <a href="#">22 006 389 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</a></p>

Reference / Category	Decision	Summary / Decision Reason
22 013 588	27.01.23 – Closed after initial Enquiries	<p>1. The complainant complains the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Has allowed a pre-school exclusive use of a piece of land without the correct planning permission since 2002; and</li> <li>○ has lied and misled him.</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcome:</b> The LGSO will not investigate this complaint about the Council’s decision not to take enforcement action against a pre-school which is using an outdoor area. This is because the complaint does not meet the tests in our Assessment Code on how we decide which complaints to investigate. The complaint is late and we have seen no reason to exercise discretion on this point.</p> <p>Link: <a href="#">22 013 588 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</a></p>

## 5.2 Detailed Investigations:

5.2.1 For the period April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 2 complaints were referred to the LGSCO, and no complaints were investigated.

## 5.3 Public Interest Reports:

5.3.1 Public interest reports are published where there has been significant injustice, systemic issues, major learning points and non-compliance with recommendations. Issuing public reports is one way that we help to ensure councils, and other organisations providing public services, remain accountable to people who use those services. No public interest reports have been issued by the LGSCO against Melton Borough Council in the last 10 years.

## 5.4 Housing Ombudsman (HO)

5.5 From 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 1 case was referred to the Housing Ombudsman. This was partially upheld and is detailed in the table below:

Reference	Category	Decision / Date	Summary/ Decision Reason
2021 250 91	Partially Upheld	March 2023	<p>The Ombudsman investigated a complaint about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landlord’s handling of the delays to repair the resident’s front and back doors</li> <li>• The landlord’s handling of the resident’s reports of a faulty boiler and his concerns about carbon monoxide emissions</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landlord's handling of the associated complaint</li> </ul> <p>The Ombudsman determined that:</p> <p>The landlord has offered redress to the resident prior to investigation which, in the Ombudsman's opinion, resolves the complaint about its handling of the delays to repair the resident's front and back doors satisfactorily.</p> <p>There was no maladministration by the landlord in its handling of the resident's reports of a faulty boiler and his concerns about carbon monoxide emissions.</p> <p>There was service failure by the landlord in its handling of the associated complaint.</p> <p>Melton Borough Council was required to:</p> <p>Pay £100 compensation.</p> <p>Publish self-assessment of its complaints policy</p> <p>Review staff training needs</p>
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## 5.6 **Service Improvements:**

- 5.6.1 Melton Borough Council has ensured compliance with the requirements of the Ombudsman. The timescale within which the complaint was acknowledged and treated by the council as a complaint (rather than a service request) fell outside of the Council's policy and Ombudsman requirements, leading to the complaint handling failure.
- 5.6.2 The recommendations below had already been actioned by the time the complaint outcome was received. The complaints policy has been reviewed, approved and published, along with a self-assessment in line with the Housing Ombudsman complaints handling code. Awareness raising of the new policy and requirements was covered in staff briefings as detailed below.
- 5.6.3 Key learning from this complaint is ensuring staff recognise what is a complaint and treating it as such in line with the council's complaints policy.

Reference	Category	Recommendations / Service Improvements
2021 250 91	Partially upheld	<p><b>Publish self-assessment of its complaints policy</b></p> <p>The Ombudsman has noted that the Council's <a href="#">Corporate Complaints Policy</a> was reviewed and refreshed in February 2023. The policy has been reviewed against the Housing Ombudsman complaints handling code to ensure it complies with the updated requirements of the Housing Ombudsman – confirmation has been received that it does. The self-</p>

		<p>assessment was also published to the councils website <a href="https://www.melton.gov.uk/complaints-handling-code-self-assessment">Complaints handling code self assessment (melton.gov.uk)</a>.</p> <p><b>Review staff training needs</b></p> <p>Key learning from this complaint is ensuring that staff recognise what is a complaint and treating it as such in line with the councils complaints policy.</p> <p>All staff who deal with complaints received a detailed briefing on the revised complaints policy and housing ombudsman complaints handling code on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023. The revised policy includes greater clarity on what is a complaint and what is a service request. The updated policy has also been discussed in housing team meetings and at the most recent housing away day on 15<sup>th</sup> March, with all housing staff.</p>
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## 5.7 Corporate Complaints:

- 5.7.1 To ensure strategic oversight by Cabinet, corporate complaints are reported bi-annually to Cabinet as part of the Council's standard performance reporting arrangements. In addition to this annual ombudsman report to Cabinet, specific, individual cases where there has been a significant finding of maladministration (usually by way of a formal Report) will be reported to Cabinet members on an as required and timely basis.
- 5.7.2 In addition, Scrutiny Committee receive Cabinet's performance reports for noting as part of their role to hold the Cabinet to account.
- 5.7.3 The Council's [Corporate Complaints Policy](#) was reviewed and refreshed in February 2023. The process comprises a two-stage internal process consisting of Stage One (Service Manager) and review by Directors if there is still dissatisfaction (Stage Two). The policy has recently been reviewed to ensure it complies with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman
- 5.7.4 The Senior Leadership Team receive quarterly reports which shows how many corporate complaints have been received. To ensure good governance, these are compared with performance data so that the organisation can analyse performance in services and identify any trends or areas where improvement is required.
- 5.7.5 The table below shows a breakdown of the number of formal complaints determined during the financial year 2022/23 and how many were determined by the Ombudsman in that quarter.

Period	Complaints received	LGSCO	HO
Q1	37		
Q2	43	1	
Q3	28		
Q4	62	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

## **6 Options Considered**

- 6.1 There are no alternate options as it is a constitutional requirement for Cabinet to have strategic oversight of complaints data.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 Statutory Officers and the Senior Leadership team have been provided with a copy of the report detailing the Councils performance for the year 2022/23

## **8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication**

- 8.1 To continue to ensure sufficient corporate oversight of complaints to enable service improvements to be made where appropriate.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising from the report, however it should be noted that complaints and the associated remedies can lead to direct financial implications as a result of compensation or the cost of rectifying poor service provision. The housing Ombudsman case set out at Para 5.5 resulted in £100 compensation being paid.
- 9.2 A log of compensation paid is maintained to provide an audit trail of the total cost in this area.

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Director For Corporate Services**

## **10 Legal and Governance Implications**

- 10.1 The Local Government Ombudsman's powers are defined by the Local Government Act 1974 as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Senior Solicitor**

## **11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications**

- 11.1 There are no direct equality and safeguarding issues arising from this report.

## **12 Community Safety Implications**

- 12.1 There are no community safety issues arising from this report.

## **13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications**

- 13.1 There are no environmental and climate change implications.

## **14 Other Implications (where significant)**

- 14.1 There are no other implications arising from the report.

## 15 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Full investigations undertaken by the Ombudsman resulting in a finding of fault	Low	Marginal	6

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High				
	4 Significant				
	3 Low		1		
	2 Very Low				
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	As recommended by the Ombudsman, a review of internal practices may be required if failings are identified

## 16 Background Papers

16.1 Bi-annual Ombudsman Update – Cabinet 16 June 2022

## 17 Appendices

None

<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Alison McKane</b>
<b>Report Author Contact Details:</b>	AMcKane@melton.gov.uk
<b>Chief Officer Responsible:</b>	<b>Dawn Garton</b> , Director for Corporate Services
<b>Chief Officer Contact Details:</b>	01664 502444 DGarton@melton.gov.uk

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## Cabinet

21 June 2023

**Report of:** Councillor Sarah Cox - Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources

### Leicester and Leicestershire Business Rates Pool

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Great council
<b>Relevant Ward Member(s):</b>	All
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes b) Making savings or generate income of £50,000 or more
<b>Subject to call-in:</b>	Yes

#### 1 Summary

- 1.1 To update cabinet on the latest position regarding the Leicester and Leicestershire business Rates Pool and the funding allocated to the Council for the period 2020/21 to 2023/24
- 1.2 Up until 2020/21 monies retained in Leicestershire through the operation of the business rates pool have been passported to the Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) who have allocated these through a bidding process. This is in line with the current agreement. In a recent announcement, the Government confirmed their intention to abolish Local Enterprise Partnerships which will necessitate a change to the Pool and in due course a revised agreement will be needed. As a result of these impending changes, from the financial year 2020/21, it has been agreed that the allocation should be determined via a formula between the various tiers and then between districts. This results in an amount due to the Council which will be used to support corporate and economic priorities and replenish reserves used to support previous and current expenditure.
- 1.3 In view of the changes in the status of the LLEP, the report also seeks delegated authority to vary the pooling agreement for later years should this be necessary following discussions with other partners.

## 2 Recommendation(s)

### That Cabinet:

- 2.1 **Notes the allocation of funding for the period 2020/21 to 2023/24 which, after allowing for interest paid, will be allocated to the Corporate Priorities Reserve.**
- 2.2 **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to exercise the Council's vote in reaching agreement for the allocation of funding for 2024/25 and future years.**
- 2.3 **Delegates authority to the Director for Corporate Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any future amendments to the pooling agreement.**

## 3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure there is transparency regarding the funding received by the council through the distribution of the business rates pool.
- 3.2 To enable sufficient flexibility to vary the business rates pooling agreement going forward by delegating this to an officer in consultation with the lead member.

## 4 Background

- 4.1 The council has been a member of the Leicester and Leicestershire Business rates pool, whilst it has operated, since its inception in 2013. Up until the financial year 2019/20 retained funding has been handed over to the LLEP and then bids made for the funding from those authorities in the pool. This is in line with the current agreement. From the financial year 2020/21, this money has no longer been distributed in this way and has been held pending agreement between Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicestershire district councils, as to how this is to be distributed both amongst the 3 tiers and then at district level.
- 4.2 Following the Chancellor's recent announcement that Local Enterprise Partnerships will be abolished, it will be necessary to amend the administration of the pool and following discussions, agreement has now been reached as to the most appropriate distribution of the funds collected to date. This report sets out the implications arising from this approach.

## 5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 Since the pool was set up the amount to be distributed has increased and for the 2023/24 year alone the total annual amount of £19m is estimated as being available for distribution. In addition there is the funding for prior years from 2020/21 also available to distribute.
- 5.2 Negotiations between all parties have been protracted but the final agreement is for a 3 way equal split between the districts, city and county. The districts have then agreed a hybrid model for distribution of the district third which includes a blend of equal share, level of contribution to the pool, the level of rateable value, the index of multiple deprivation, and population. This agreement is for the four financial years 2020/21 to 2023/24 only.

- 5.3 The pooling agreement requires that any funding is utilised for the purpose of economic activities and the Director for Corporate Services as the S151 officer will be required to testify to this. With the level of historic and annual spend in this area this is not considered an issue and records will be compiled demonstrating this requirement has been met.
- 5.4 Business Rates Pools continue unless any one or more member wishes to withdraw. The government will then dissolve the pool by revoking the designation by which it was set up. The pool, whilst needing the districts to enable the surpluses to be generated as they are tariff authorities, also needs the city and county as top up authorities to enable surpluses to be retained locally.
- 5.5 At the present time there is no agreement for the basis of distribution beyond the financial year 2023/24. There is a risk that some members of the pool may withdraw if an agreement is not reached which would result in the current pool being dissolved. An alternative pool could be formed, and an application made to the government at the appropriate time, however with the future uncertainty relating to business rates retention it is not certain that a reconfigured pool would be approved. This would result in considerable revenue currently retained within the Leicestershire area having to be returned to central government.
- 5.6 Regardless of the position within Leicestershire such funding will only be available whilst the current business rates system exists. The Government has discussed changes several times, but this does keep getting pushed further into the future.

## **6 Options Considered**

- 6.1 To not agree to the split and receipt of the allocated funding. This would delay the distribution of funding to all parties and it is unlikely any other option would gain the mutual agreement of everyone in the pool.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 N/A

## **8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication**

- 8.1 The Director for Corporate Services will ensure appropriate processes are in place to ensure spend on economic activities is in line with the level of funding received.
- 8.2 Finance Officers across the pool will continue to work on the necessary calculations to finalise the amount to be distributed and the distribution itself. It is anticipated that allocations from the earlier years should start to be distributed over the Summer with later years to follow as accounts are finalised.
- 8.3 Negotiations will continue with other members of the pool over the position moving forward in order to secure the most economic advantageous outcome as possible for the area and for this council.

## 9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The financial position of the pool and amounts available for distribution are determined by the year end business rates returns submitted to central government. These returns are then audited by external audit as part of the year end statement of accounts audit. Following any required adjustments payments are then made to/from the district councils as the billing authority to the various bodies. Retained pool funding is then held by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) as the accountable body for the pool before it was in the past passported to the LLEP when released for distribution. With such sizeable amounts involved LCC allocated interest to the pool to recognise the financial benefit of holding the sums involved.
- 9.2 Due to the widespread delays in finalising the audit of accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 funding that is due to the pool has been sitting with the district councils. Therefore, the council will need to allocate and pay over interest earned on these balances at the time the money is handed over for distribution in line with the agreed formula. This interest has not been budgeted and accounted for.
- 9.3 In addition, it should be noted that until audits are finalised for all members of the pool for the period 2020/21 to 2023/24 the final amounts for distribution are provisional and will be subject to variation.
- 9.4 Subject to these provisions the amount estimated to be allocated to the council for the 4 year period is £1.6m. This is likely to be paid in stages depending on the position regarding final accounts sign off with earlier years issued imminently and any adjustments from final audits adjusted in later years amounts.
- 9.5 It is intended that these amounts, less any interest payment, be added to the Corporate Priorities Reserve to replenish past expenditure incurred on economic priorities. This will then be available to use in line with the purpose and intention of the reserve which primarily is for non-recurring revenue or capital expenditure that meets the council's priorities.
- 9.6 The inability to reach an agreement on the 2024/25 and later financial years is disappointing as this means that until this is resolved any potential future funding stream is uncertain. As such the council's future financial sustainability is still uncertain as this funding stream cannot be budgeted for. Therefore, despite the potential for a large funding stream that could cover costs currently being incurred on economic priorities the medium term financial strategy still contains a sizeable resource gap that needs to be addressed.
- 9.7 The report seeks a delegation to enable officers, in consultation with the Leader, to negotiate on behalf of the council to secure an appropriate allocation going forward.

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate Services**

## 10 Legal and Governance Implications

- 10.1 The funding was allocated under the existing signed agreement.
- 10.2 Should the pool continue It is likely the agreement will be updated and therefore delegated authority is requested to enable any new agreement to be approved by the Director for Corporate services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Alison McKane, Interim Assistant Director for Governance & Democracy**

## 11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

11.1 None

## 12 Data Protection Implications (Mandatory)

12.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

## 13 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None

## 14 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

14.1 None

## 15 Other Implications (where significant)

15.1 None

## 16 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Failure to agree on new pooling arrangement results in business rates pool not continuing from 2024/25 resulting in loss of income to the area	Significant	Critical	Medium Risk
2	Pooling agreement reached for 2024/25 onwards results in minimal gain to the Council or gain too restrictive to support corporate priorities	High	Critical	High Risk

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High			2	
	4 Significant			1	
	3 Low				
	2 Very Low				
	1 Almost impossible				

<b>Risk No</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>1 and 2</b>	Will continue to represent the Council in discussion with partners to using appropriate data to support the interests of Leicestershire and Melton's position within it.

## **17 Background Papers**

17.1 None

## **18 Appendices**

18.1 None

<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Dawn Garton</b> , Director for Corporate Services
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## Cabinet

21<sup>st</sup> June 2023

**Report of:** Councillor Pip Allnatt, Leader of the Council / Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services

## Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement, Annual Report

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	<b>Providing high quality council homes and landlord services</b>
<b>Relevant Ward Member(s):</b>	All
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Subject to call-in:</b>	No Not key decision

### 1 Summary

- 1.1 Cabinet approved a revised Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Framework in 2022, which marked a change in the way the Council engages with and listens to its tenants and leaseholders.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on engagement activity, outcomes and associated improvements and service changes over the last 12 months.
- 1.3 Meaningful engagement with tenants and ensuring tenants voices are heard is an important responsibility for a landlord. This report seeks to provide assurance that the council takes this seriously and puts it into practice, and in doing so, that the council can meet its regulatory requirements and corporate commitment to providing high quality council homes and landlord services.

### 2 Recommendation(s)

**That Cabinet:**

- 2.1 **Notes the progress to date and endorses the approach taken to engage with Melton Borough Council tenants and leaseholders**



### **3 Background**

- 3.1 In November 2020, the Government released its White Paper; 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents'.
- 3.2 The White Paper aims to rebalance the relationship between social housing landlords and their tenants, and it sets out principles to underpin safe and decent housing, ensures that residents (tenants & leaseholders) are treated with dignity and respect and that social housing that is required, is provided for the future.
- 3.3 Though there is a clear section within the white paper which addresses the issue of engaging residents directly, there is a thread running through the whole document on the need to meaningfully engage with residents and leaseholders across housing services.
- 3.4 Specific national emphasis to strengthen the residents voice includes:
- An expectation that the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) will require landlords to demonstrate how they are looking at best practice and continuously improving their engagement with residents
  - Delivery of a new opportunities and empowerment programme for residents, giving them tools to influence their landlords, hold them to account and make engagement more effective
  - A review of professional training and development to ensure that residents receive a high-quality customer service
  - A commitment to ongoing ministerial engagement with social housing residents to listen to their concerns (although light on specific details of how this will be taken forward)
- 3.5 Tenant engagement is not new, but it is an area that requires continued focus and continuous improvement, and increased emphasis has been placed on this by the Government and Regulator of Social Housing. It is important that it is embedded, and that it is taken seriously and as such, is not seen solely as a standalone function.
- 3.6 In January 2022, Melton Borough Council implemented a [new framework](#) for tenant and leaseholder engagement. The framework recognised that the Council was at the start of a new phase of engagement, and one that required the council to respond proactively and confidently to the requirements of the Charter for Social Housing Residents.
- 3.7 This report provides an update on engagement activity, outcomes and associated improvements and service changes over the last 12 months and seeks to provide assurance that the council takes this seriously and puts it into practice.

### **4 Main Considerations**

- 4.1 The tenant and leaseholder engagement framework (approved in January 2022) initially set a series of actions. The actions were intended to broaden and improve meaningful engagement, whilst also creating solid foundations to make service changes and improvements in response to feedback, and to improve the Council's ability to demonstrate to the RSH that it takes this seriously.



4.2 The initial actions and progress against these are shown below:

Action	Rag Rating	Commentary
Publish details of the commitment to engage in a meaningful and proactive way with tenants and leaseholders	Complete	Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Framework completed and published. Included in tenant newsletters.
Publish annual tenant satisfaction survey results and recommendations	On Track	<p>The government consultation on Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) has concluded and the council is on track to collect the information required in 2023. Housemark has been commissioned to undertake the annual tenant survey for the next three years. The survey will commence in summer 2023.</p> <p>The feedback received will be shared with the RSH and with tenants and leaseholders. This will become an annual survey, enabling the tracking of progress. In addition to 12 standard questions, the council is exploring the focus for 3 additional questions.</p>
Arrange training for staff and stakeholders around the White Paper core values and the Tenant & Leaseholder Engagement Framework	On Track	<p>Staff have had internal briefing sessions on engagement and their role within delivering this.</p> <p>The staff away day in 2022 also focused on how roles and responsibilities will change as consultation and engagement forms part of every post within the Housing Department. The engagement activity tracker shows increased engagement activity across a range of housing service functions.</p> <p>Further detail on the requirement for senior officers to hold professional qualifications is awaited. A diagnostic of staff qualifications has been completed and future training and professional qualification requirements will be progressed via individual performance development reviews.</p>
Implement a programme of service improvement groups from February 2022	Complete (with ongoing review and development)	<p>The Council established the 'Your Choice' group in 2022. As part of this group, residents and council officers meet every 6 weeks. Work has included reviewing processes (such as the rent arrears management process) and provides an opportunity for residents to provide feedback and suggestions. Feedback is also provided. To increase reach, 'Your Choice' meetings are just one of the ways in which residents can get involved. Tenants and leaseholders can also comment / provide feedback via email or post (example: HRA business plan consultation).</p> <p>More bespoke engagement is carried out for specific projects and a consultation toolkit has been developed (shaped by resident feedback) to assist with this. It is currently being piloted.</p>
Engage with tenants to shape the development of the HRA business plan	Complete	A survey questionnaire was sent to all tenants, seeking feedback on priorities for investment. Over 350 responses were received. This feedback directly informed the development of both the HRA Business Plan and HRA Asset Management Plan. Positive feedback was received through an external review of the Council's Business Plan by Savills, who noted that tenant engagement in developing the plan was positive and meaningful.

Launch of a Tenant & Leaseholder Facebook Group	On Hold	A Tenant and Leaseholder Facebook Page has been developed. This action has been placed on hold for operational reasons and will be reconsidered in 2023.
Create a specific Tenant & Leaseholder Engagement webpage	Complete and ongoing (continuous improvement)	Created and available at <a href="#">Tenant and leaseholder engagement – Melton Borough Council</a> Further to resident feedback, a more bespoke housing / landlord services microsite is in development. This is a key action for 2023.
Develop and issue the next Homes for Melton newsletter end January 2022	Complete and ongoing	Two newsletters have been produced to date, with an aim to produce two per year plus an annual report (performance focussed) each summer.
Refine the proposed 'tenant offer' to guide communication between the Councils and tenant representatives	Complete and ongoing	Informed by tenant feedback, a tenant and leaseholder policy has been created which sets out the ways in which residents can get involved. This has been published to the council's website at <a href="#">Tenant Leaseholder Engagement Policy – Melton Borough Council</a> .
Understand requirements to achieve TPAS accreditation	On Track	The Council remains a TPAS member, enabling access to training, learning and best practice. Accreditation to be reconsidered in 2023. Priority has been given to Housemark and development of Tenant Satisfaction Survey at the current time.
Develop a communications plan	Ongoing	Communication with residents has improved.  Examples include improved communication through tenants newsletters, attendance at events / coffee mornings, implementation of tenant consultation toolkit, estate walkabouts and public facing messaging around commitments made within the HRA business plan.  The ways in which tenants can get involved are set out in the <a href="#">Tenant Leaseholder Engagement Policy – Melton Borough Council</a> .
Ensure that tenant engagement is embedded as a core strand of the remit of a new strategic housing officers' group (internal)	Ongoing	The Housing Leadership Team was established in 2022. This forms a key part of the considerations by the HLT at their meetings. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signing off consultation toolkit</li> <li>- Review of regulatory changes</li> <li>- Review of complaints, trends and learning</li> <li>- Development of new performance dashboard</li> <li>- Regulatory readiness diagnostic (underway)</li> <li>- Decision to commission Housemark to deliver tenant satisfaction survey</li> </ul>

4.3 Tenant engagement is becoming more readily embedded into the work of the whole housing team. An engagement tracker is maintained by the Housing Team to ensure activity is logged and that actions and improvements are clearly recorded.

4.4 Some notable achievements and improvements are listed below:

4.4.1 Signing up to **Housemark** benchmarking services. This will support the council's continued improvement by providing comprehensive cost and performance comparative information, with housing providers across the social housing sector.

This will also provide access to best practice forums and learning, in order to improve services.

4.4.2 The **Your Choice** platform has started to change in focus, momentum, and impact. As this mechanism has evolved, it has started to create a space in which tenants are genuinely shaping processes and approaches, and tenant feedback is shaping and improving services. Some key examples include:

- Development of a **Tenant Hardship Fund** – Tenant suggestions around criteria, level of support, and type of support shaped the offer that has been created. This fund will be launched further to due diligence on the proposed funding allocation and record keeping processes.
- Further to tenant feedback, a **housing microsite** (website) is in development. This will enable tenants and leaseholders to access relevant information more easily, without being embedded within the council's main website. Tenant feedback will continue to shape this piece of work.
- Through the Your Choice group, tenant representatives reviewed the Council's suite of **rent arrears** letters and have provided comments and feedback which are leading to changes in the way letters are written.
- A **Housing Asset Consultation Toolkit** was developed, to embed this into the Council's planned improvements programme for homes and communal areas. This includes providing choice (where possible and appropriate). Some examples of consultation in action include seeking tenants views on future options for outbuildings/ sheds and providing choice to residents on kitchen cupboards as part of a kitchen upgrade programme.
- **Estate Walkabouts** have proven to be beneficial, and a more structured programme is in development. Key to these visits is tracking actions taken to follow up on commitments made.
- The **Housing Asset Management Plan** was discussed with the Your Choice group, and key feedback was the need to make the plans 'real' to residents. Information on key commitments (pledges) has been provided via social media channels, and the newsletter to show that we have listened to customers and have used their initial feedback in the HRA business plan. We showed that their requests around replacing aluminium windows, upgrading all storages heaters, and focusing on kitchens and bathrooms was where the council would be investing.
- A recent positive example of collaboration and engagement took place is a recent coffee morning held by Bell Group before **fire improvement works** started at St Johns Court. The feedback on this was really positive.

## 5 Future Engagement Activity

5.1 As a landlord, we take tenant engagement seriously, and it is an area of continuous improvement. In 2023/24, key activities include:

- **Annual Report** in summer 2023: this will be an extended version of the tenant newsletter, in providing information to customers, but also incorporating information around performance of MBC as a landlord and also key information about the services we provide to customers.

- Complete an **annual survey of tenant satisfaction** in line with the Government's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM'S) and submit the outcome to the Regulator for Social Housing from 2024. Housemark has been commissioned to undertake this survey on behalf of the council for the next three years. Alongside 12 standardised questions, we can ask an additional 3 questions to tenants and leaseholders. This is a key programme of work.
- Launching a **digital engagement platform** for all customers to sign up to. The digital platform will be somewhere we can send surveys, request feedback, and provide information quickly, in order to shape and improve services.
- Finalise and launch the **housing microsite**, using the feedback from our customers on what they would want to see included, ensuring it is clear and user friendly.
- Review cases where it has not been possible to access to properties (for example, to carry out a stock condition survey) in order to engage proactively with residents and to understand any reasons for anxiety about enabling access. This often requires a case-by-case approach to build trust, ahead of (and to seek to prevent the need for) more formal action being taken.

5.2 An **engagement tracker** is in place to log engagement activity and outcomes. This is also key to being able to provide confidence and assurance on meaningful engagement and improvements made to tenants, officers, members and the Regulator for Social Housing. This also shows us what we have learned so that we can implement in future projects, processes and amend the ways we work. This is reviewed by managers on a quarterly period to check that its being managed and updated correctly with all engagements/ consultations we have undertaken.

5.3 Significant progress has been made in 22/23, but the Council is still on a journey of housing improvement and is not complacent. Our teams are committed to putting customers at the heart of what we do and continued focus and emphasis on tenant engagement – not as a nice to have but as a core responsibility as a landlord – will continue.

## 6 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no cost implications arising directly from this annual report. However, regulatory change in the social housing sector does create cost pressures for the council and at present, the availability of new burdens funding from central government is uncertain.

6.2 For example:

6.2.1 The cost for the **Tenant Satisfaction Survey** subscription in 2023/24 is £15,832 plus VAT. From 24/25 onwards, a procurement exercise will be undertaken to secure a longer-term contract to meet the emerging regulatory requirement [see Decision Notice Ref CEX295]

6.2.2 **Housing Services Benchmarking** via House Mark will provide a much-needed benchmarking facility and access to best practice in the sector which we can learn from to improve services for our tenants and leaseholders, whilst also enabling the council to best manage performance and value for money. The total cost for a three-year period (2023/24 to 2025/26 inclusive) is £13,755 plus VAT. A 3-year subscription has been paid upfront at £13,755+VAT with no CPI increase incurred. Year 1 £4435+VAT, year 2 and 3 at £4660+VAT [see Decision Notice Ref CEX288]

- 6.3 Finance and HR Implications:
- 6.3.1 Landlords await further clarity from Government regarding proposals to **professionalise the housing sector** through specific qualifications. Cost implications associated with the required training and development pathways will be considered when this information becomes available. It is so far suggested that any staff working at SLT level should have a level 5 qualification, and any manager responsible for a service a level 4. What is not clear yet is does it have to be a housing specific qualification, timeframes to meet the level required, and if any support for the sector will be available.
- 6.3.2 Officer time and resource across a range of teams contributes to fulfilling tenant engagement requirements effectively and to be able to report to the Regulator robustly. It is a core responsibility as a landlord.

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate services**

## **7 Legal and Governance Implications**

- 7.1 Regulatory change on the housing sector has been on the horizon for some time, and whilst details of legislation and regulations are still emerging, landlords are actively preparing for change.
- 7.2 The government has been explicit in its commitment to enhance consumer regulation in the social housing sector. This means the powers of the regulator to oversee the services provided to residents and intervene if they are not good enough. The legislation will also remove the existing ‘serious detriment test’, which currently sets a high legal bar on the Regulator’s power to intervene in any alleged service failures.
- 7.3 The Regulator of Social Housing has developed an implementation plan but bringing it into force requires legislation. This legislative change will be driven by the Social Housing Regulation Bill.
- 7.4 As a landlord, we are actively preparing for regulatory change. For example, we know the regulator plans to carry out routine inspections of social landlords with more than 1,000 homes and will check compliance with new consumer standards whilst also using tenant satisfaction measures (TSM) to track a landlord’s performance. A robust approach to this is key.
- 7.5 A requirement to undertake an in-depth self-assessment (IDA) based on the new regulatory and legislative requirements is expected in 2023.
- 7.6 Until the final bill is passed into legislation, some of the details and implications remain uncertain. However, the Council is clear that meaningful tenant and leaseholder engagement is at the heart of what is expected, and we will be expected to be able to demonstrate this when the time for an inspection is required.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Alison McKane, Assistant Director for Governance & Democracy and Monitoring Officer**

## 8 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Failure of in-depth assessment/ inspection	Low	Critical	Could lead to regulatory intervention
2	Customer feedback ignored or not acted upon, and lessons not learnt	Very Low	Marginal	Failure to follow policy and regulations
3	Unable to provide evidence to report on TSM's	Very Low	Critical	Regulatory requirement failing

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High				
	4 Significant				
	3 Low			1	
	2 Very Low		2	3	
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	Lead person named within MBC (Assistant Director for Housing Services) for ensuring compliance with regulatory changes and learning from other organisations through House Mark and other supporting posts within the organisation (Housing Regulatory Lead).
2	Tracker created and over seen by several leads within Housing Services to ensure we are on track with engagement/ consultations and that we are providing feedback to customer and learning from our experiences.
3	TSM provider signed up too and initial kick of meeting taken place, plan to go live with TSM survey in late Sept/ early Oct 2023 to provide plenty of learning and understanding from results and time to submit before summer 2024 deadline.



## 9 Background Papers

- 9.1 [Tenant and Leaseholder Framework \(melton.gov.uk\)](https://www.melton.gov.uk/tenant-and-leaseholder-framework)
- 9.2 [Melton Borough Council Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Policy](#)
- 9.3 Decision Notice: Housing Benchmarking Services
- 9.4 Decision Notice: Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- 9.5 Engagement Tracker (internal document)

## 10 Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix A: Homes for Melton, Tenant Newsletter August 2022
- 10.2 Appendix B: Homes for Melton, Tenant Newsletter March 2023

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TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS  
member 2021-2022



# Homes for Melton

Welcome to the **new look, newsletter**  
for our tenants and leaseholders.

Helping people | Shaping places

Homes for Melton | August 2022

## A QUICK LOOK INSIDE...



Supporting our  
Tenants and  
Leaseholders.



Thinking of Moving?  
Want to live to  
somewhere else?



Energy saving tips  
for tenants and  
leaseholders.

**Thank you to tenants and leaseholders for your feedback about our recent newsletters. We have listened and are pleased to share this new look newsletter. We'd love your feedback and ideas for future content too.**

We want to put our tenants & leaseholders at the heart of shaping how we deliver services. If you have suggestions on how we could do things differently or want to get involved, please let us know on: **01664 502502** or email: **housingconsultation@melton.gov.uk** and ask for the Tenant Engagement & Service Improvement Lead.



# Cost of Living: Supporting Our Tenants and Leaseholders

#Here4Melton

[www.melton.gov.uk/leisure-health-and-community/cost-of-living/](http://www.melton.gov.uk/leisure-health-and-community/cost-of-living/)

We know that many of our tenants and leaseholders will be concerned about higher fuel costs and increases in the costs of living. We are here to help. In this newsletter and on our website you will find useful information, and access to guidance and support.

We are aware that there will be tenants and leaseholders who depend upon their homes being warm, for health reasons and rely upon electricity to provide power for ventilation machines and electric wheelchairs. We also recognise that fuel costs for vehicles are also increasing on almost a daily basis and this we believe may have an impact on attending medical appointments, going to work and school or college.

We currently support our tenants and leaseholders through a number of ways, this includes your Housing Officer who can help with your tenancy, and the Case Management Team who can provide assistance with a range of issues, including additional support needs and debt issues.

**They can be contacted by phoning 01664 502502 or emailing**

**contactus@melton.gov.uk** We may be able to provide Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support and can help you to access and apply for various funds to assist you with your day-to-day living.



## What help is there?

**You may be able to apply direct to your electricity supplier for help if you:**

- Receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit
- Are on a low income
- Receive certain means tested benefits

You can find a list of these companies on the Gov.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/energy-suppliers>

- If you are on Universal Credit you can apply for a Broadband Social Tariff deal that some providers offer at a significantly cheaper amount. You can find a list of the providers if you go to the U.Switch website: <https://www.uswitch.com/broadband/guides/broadband-deals-for-low-income-families/>
- Severn Trent Water has a Big Difference Scheme and it could offer a reduction to your water bill, if your household income is below £16,480. If you think you may qualify and for more information please have a look at their website: <https://www.stwater.co.uk/my-account/help-when-you-need-it/help-with-paying-your-bill/big-difference-scheme/>

## Engaging with Tenants and Leaseholders

**As part of the new Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Framework, we're looking at different ways to engage with you.**

A small group of tenants and leaseholders already meet with us regularly and we are looking for more people to join them. The group looks at ways to improve the services that we provide you to be able to live in your home safely.

**It is an open forum for discussion. Your thoughts and comments are taken into account and acted upon.**

You will also be given the opportunity to look at policies and toolkits that are produced to assist us in our day-to-day work.

We would like to know new ways to engage with you. This could be by a digital platform, e.g.: Zoom; or us coming out to you in your community; or by meeting up Face-to-Face; or by letter.

If you would like to be involved, please **contact Customer Services on: 01664 502502** and ask for our Tenant Engagement & Service Improvement Lead **or email: Housingconsultation@melton.gov.uk**





# HOUSING REPAIRS

After recent discussions with some of our tenants and leaseholders, we were asked to change the way that we deal with how you report your repairs.

We have listened, from now on when you report a repair to us, you will be given the following information:

- A work order reference number
- The name of the contractor who will be coming to do the work
- The priority that the works order has been raised too
- The target date for completion of the works that you have reported

Please contact the **Tenant Engagement & Service Improvement Lead on 01664 502502** or email direct to [housingconsultation@melton.gov.uk](mailto:housingconsultation@melton.gov.uk)

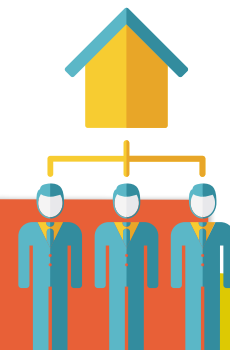


# Melton Home Search

In May 2022 we launched our new Choice Based Lettings scheme, called **Melton Home Search**, which has been built alongside the new allocations policy. The policy gives a greater priority to those with a housing need and a local connection to the Melton Borough.

<https://housingonline.melton.gov.uk/>

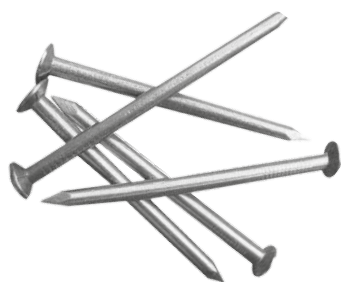
ARE YOU READY TO MOVE ON?



Are you struggling to maintain your current home, finding that it is too big for you, missing friendly faces and over 60 years old?

Do you think that you might want to move to somewhere smaller where you can meet and make new friends and receive support from us to live independently, but know that someone is there to help?

Have you considered moving to one of our older persons' schemes? **If you think that this is something that you might want to consider, please contact Customer Services on 01664 502502.**



## Garages



We know that some of you have been waiting a while to be allocated a garage.

We have now assessed the condition of our garages and are starting to allocate them to people on the waiting list. If you are on the list and waiting to be allocated a garage, please bear with us, we will be in touch with you when a garage is available.

**If you'd like to apply for a garage, please contact Customer Services on 01664 502502 or look at our website, [www.melton.gov.uk](http://www.melton.gov.uk)**









# Energy saving tips


for tenants and leaseholders



Melton Borough Council  
Helping people | Shaping places


-  **Do full laundry loads** – half load settings save very little energy, so a full load is much more energy efficient. Do fewer, but fuller, wash loads instead
-  **Don't use standby mode** – unless switched off at the wall, appliances like your TV continue to use energy, costing the average UK home £35 per year
-  **Unplug all your chargers** – Across the country, people are unnecessarily over-charging their mobile phones, laptops, iPads, and tablets. Instead, as soon as your device is fully charged, try to get into the habit of unplugging it. Not only will this save energy, but it also prolongs the battery life. If could also save you about £60 a year on electricity bills
-  **Don't overheat empty rooms** – If you are not using a bedroom or other spare rooms, you can turn the thermostat down on the radiator, to reduce your heating costs.
-  **Use LED light bulbs** – by fitting these in your lamps and ceiling lights, you could save around £40 a year
-  **Close your curtains at night** – In the day it's important to use as much natural – and free – heat (in the form of sunlight) as possible. When dusk falls, closing your curtains will help your home retain that heat. This helps keep warmth in the room – but try not to drape curtains over your radiators.

 MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL SHORTLY BE COMMENCING A REVIEW OF ITS SERVICE CHARGES

 DON'T FORGET TO ASK THE CONTRACTOR FOR THEIR ID, IF YOU ARE NOT SURE WHO THEY ARE

 ARE YOU STATE PENSION AGE? YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR PENSION CREDIT, PLEASE CONTACT US

 REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR GARDENS, HEDGES AND TREES MAINTAINED AS THEY ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

 REMEMBER IF YOU CLAIM UC, TO ENSURE THAT YOUR JOURNAL HAS BEEN UPDATED WITH THE NEW RENT INCREASE CHARGES

## Is there help if I am struggling with debt and other finances?

If you find yourselves struggling with debt there are organisations which may be able to assist you and provide you with advice and guidance.

The following is a short list:

### Melton Borough Council's Community Support Hub

Tel: **01664 502342**  
Email: **Here4melton@melton.gov.uk**

### MADMAC (in Melton Mowbray)

Web: **www.madmacmoney.co.uk/**  
Tel: **07775 942 046**  
Email: **help@madmacmoney.co.uk**

### Citizens Advice

Web: **www.citizensadviceleicestershire.org/acadp\_listings/citizensadvice-melton-mowbraybranch/**  
Tel: **0808 223 1133**

### StepChange

Web: **www.stepchange.org/**  
Tel: **0800 138 1111**

### MoneyHelper

Web: **www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en**  
Tel: **0800 138 7777**







TPAS  
TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS  
member 2021-2022



Appendix B  
Melton  
Borough  
Council

Helping people | Shaping places

# Homes for Melton

Welcome to your next  
**Melton Newsletter...**

Helping people | Shaping places

Homes for Melton | February 2023

## A QUICK LOOK INSIDE...



The HRA Asset  
Management Plan  
(HAMP)



Cost of Living:  
Supporting our Tenants &  
Leaseholders



How to  
prevent damp  
and mould

**The last 6 months have seen further hard work go on amongst your Housing Services Team who are always looking at ways to improve the services we provide to you.**

We continue to look at ways to get our customers involved in shaping our services and recently our "Your Choice" group of customers have been providing valuable feedback on several issues you will see in this newsletter. For example, on the HAMP, and our response to the damp and mould issues effecting the sector to engaging with us about what they'd like to see on our website for our tenants and leaseholders. They'll continue to help us shape our services and will be reviewing out arrears letters at the next session (21st of Feb 2023). If you want to learn more about these opportunities, then there's more inside. We hope that you enjoy these new and modern newsletters and find them informative, but as always, we would appreciate your feedback.





# The HRA Asset Management Plan (HAMP)

## Why do we have one and what is it for?

The Asset Management Plan explains how we manage the homes that you all live in. This includes, safety in our homes, how we use data to plan for the future and an explanation of what we define as a modern and safe home. We also show how we use tenants feedback to create the plan and prioritise work in your homes.



## What does it mean for tenants and leaseholders?

- It gives a clear commitment to investment in your homes over the next five years.
- We will be able to tell you when your property is due to have an upgrade.
- It identifies where we need further information, so that we can put plans in place for the future.
- The plan will be updated every year, meaning we will adapt to new challenges and requirements.

## Our commitments to you...

The plan makes a number of clear commitments to upgrade tenants homes, these include:

Over the next five years we'll upgrade:

- 408 Kitchens
- 238 Bathrooms
- 80 Heating systems
- 276 Properties windows
- Gretton Court will have a series of upgrades, including modern bathing

facilities and new windows.

- We will remove all of the aluminium windows that we are aware of and replace with UPVC over the next two years.
- We will upgrade all properties that have electric storage heaters so that they have gas heating where available, or a more efficient heating system where it is not.

## Areas where we will look at even more improvements

We would like to continue to respond to feedback and improve the service, some of our commitments on this are:

- **Garages / outbuildings** – Where do we need them and do they need improving?
- **Estates** – Thinking about any work we need to do to improve communal areas.
- **Energy Efficiency** – A key priority from tenant. We will show how will we improve our homes to be warm and affordable to live in.

## Cost of Living:

We are concerned about our tenants and leaseholders who maybe struggling with high fuel costs and increases in the costs of living, whilst on low incomes. With the recent energy costs having risen and the likely increase in the winter months, we believe that this will affect those who are already just about coping on a low wage, but do not receive any benefit help, that your lifestyles will change and may mean that you there is a risk to choosing whether to 'heat or eat'.

#Here4Melton

## SUPPORTING OUR TENANTS & LEASEHOLDERS...

### Are you worried about the rising cost of energy bills, food and transport?

We are aware that there will be tenants and leaseholders who depend upon their homes being warm, for health reasons and rely upon electricity to provide power for ventilation machines and electric wheelchairs. We also recognise that fuel costs for vehicles are also increasing on almost a daily basis and this we believe may have an impact on attending medical appointments, going to work and school or college.

We currently support our tenants and leaseholders through a number of ways, this includes being referred to our Case Management Team, who not only provide assistance with debt issues, but also a Tenancy Management Course. **To find out more about this, you can contact the Community Support Hub by phone 01664 502342 or email [Here4melton@gov.uk](mailto:Here4melton@gov.uk)**





## Getting involved



### TENANT & LEASEHOLDER DIGITAL PLATFORM

January 2022 saw the formation of the Tenant & Leaseholder Choice (TLC) platform and invited tenants and leaseholders to come along to sessions to, scrutinise and discuss policies, tool-kits and to look at different aspects of the landlord services that we provide. A small group of tenants and leaseholders have formed a Your Choice panel, which meets with officers regularly and we are looking for more people to join them. It is an open forum for discussion and their thoughts and comments are taken into account and acted upon. We'd like to invite you to come along and join the Your Choice forums and be an important integral part of how the council provides its landlord services to you.

**Melton Borough Council Tenants and Leaseholders - we need you!**

We would like to introduce a more robust digital platform, we offer attendance to the Your Choice sessions via Zoom if anyone is unable to come to the council offices, but we would also like to start sending out more newsletters, tenancy updates, planned maintenance and repairs updates by email, and offer online surveys, to understand how you believe we are performing.

**If you think that you can help make a difference please contact Customer Services on 01664 502502 and ask for our Tenant Engagement & Service Improvement Lead or email [Housingconsultation@melton.gov.uk](mailto:Housingconsultation@melton.gov.uk), to let us know, and to also provide us with your most up-to-date contact details, which might include your email address, this we would really appreciate.**

## How to prevent damp and mould

The best way to protect your home from damp and mould is to use preventative measures, such as:

- On dry days open some windows for ventilation.
- Keep lids on your pots and pans when you cook.
- Keep the doors to the bathroom and kitchen closed when you are bathing or cooking.
- Wipe excess moisture from windows.
- If you must dry your clothes on a clothes rack inside, do this in a well-ventilated room with doors closed to the rest of the house.
- Limit the number of pot plants in your house.
- Keep furniture away from outside walls to allow air circulation.
- On cold days try to keep indoor temperatures at least 18°C.
- Wherever possible, dry your clothes outside.
- If you use a tumble dryer, make sure that it is vented outside. to the rest of the house.

If you are following this guidance but still experiencing problems with damp or condensation in your home you should seek further assistance.

## Tenant your voice will be heard - Tenant Satisfaction Measures

You may be aware that the Regulator of Social Housing has introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures, TSMs for short. These measures are being introduced in a bid to drive up standards for social housing tenants and to give you a better understanding of how we are performing as a landlord. Tenants will be able to visibly compare our performance against other housing providers giving them greater clarity and ability to hold us to account. All social housing landlords will have to report on these measures – it's compulsory.

### The tenant satisfaction measures are split into 2 parts:

- 10 performance measures, that we collect through management performance information
- 12 customer perception survey measures that will have to be collected through surveying you directly.

### The TSMs cover the following key areas:

- Overall satisfaction
- Keeping properties in good order
- Maintaining building safety
- Safety checks | Respectful and helpful engagement
- Effective handling of complaints
- Responsible neighbourhood management

### So when will they start?

We'll start collecting data from April 2023 for the regulator, but we're not obligated to share this with them until the Summer of 2024. To help us gather this information, you will receive later in the Summer a survey for you to complete. This could be either by post or online, therefore we'd like to know how you'd like to receive this survey. **You can let the Tenant Engagement & Service Improvement Lead know by contacting Customer Services on 01664 502502 and ask for Lesley Armstrong or email [housingconsultation@melton.gov.uk](mailto:housingconsultation@melton.gov.uk)**



# Home Safety: Cooking...

**Many accidental fires in the home start in the kitchen and are caused mainly by cooking. These safety measures can help keep you safe.**

Take extra care if you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk.

- Avoid cooking when under the influence of alcohol.
- Avoid leaving children alone when cooking. Keep matches and sauce pan handles out of their reach to keep them safe.
- Take care wearing loose clothing – they can easily catch fire.
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.
- Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking



## Kitchen Electrics

- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water.
- Check toasters are clean and placed away from curtains and kitchen rolls.
- Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order. A build up of fat and grease can ignite a fire.
- Don't put anything metal in the microwave

## Deep Fat Frying

- Take care when cooking with hot oil – it sets alight easily. If the oil starts to smoke – it's too hot. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool.
- Use a thermostat controlled electric fryer. They can't overheat. If a pan catches fire, turn off the heat if it's safe to do so. Never throw water over it.
- Don't tackle the fire yourself.



## Gretton Court Update

**Here's an update regarding the progress we've made with Gretton Court following a press enquiry we had in May 2022 about there being around 20 flats vacant at that time.**

From that time till now the Assets and Tenancy Teams have worked tirelessly to address the issues of properties being left empty, a lot of the issues where a legacy issue caused by Covid and restrictions that had on being able to move people into this type of support setting, but covid also had an impact on the demand for these types of properties.

By August 2022 we still had 12 empty properties, and these consisted of: 2 three bed flats, 7 one bed flats, 3 bedsits

Since then we have also had further voids come through as people end their tenancies with us and since that period, we have had a further three more voids.

The Asset and Tenancy Teams have worked tirelessly to overcome this challenge and worked with our partners at Leicestershire County Council and Radis to address the vacancies we carried.

As at the time of writing this piece we are pleased to say that the hard work of all of those involved means that we have now only 4 current voids at this Gretton Court. 2 of these are being held back as part of the Asset Management Plan that has been agreed to carry out planned maintenance at the scheme. These will become "show flats" in time for our existing customers to be able to see what the flats look like once the improvement/ replacement kitchens and bathing areas are completed, and what they can expect in their homes in the future.

#TeamMelton



## Community Safety Partnership



**Melton Borough Council and Leicestershire Police are working together to tackle the issue of drug-related crime in the area. This collaboration aims to enhance community safety and reduce the harm caused by drug use.**

Both organisations are dedicated to finding effective solutions to this problem and working with local communities to raise awareness and promote healthy, drug-free lifestyles. With the support of local residents, they hope to create a safer and more secure environment for everyone in the borough.

