

Minutes



Meeting name	Cabinet
Date	Wednesday, 11 September 2024
Start time	4.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor P. Allnatt (Chair)

Councillors S. Butcher S. Cox
P. Cumbers

In Attendance Councillor M. Brown, Scrutiny Committee Chair

Officers Chief Executive
Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
Director for Corporate Services
Interim Director for Growth and Regeneration
Assistant Director for Governance and Democracy (Monitoring Officer)
Housing Development Manager
Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer

Minute No.	Minute
17	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE An apology for absence was received from Councillor Glancy.</p>
18	<p>MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2024 were confirmed.</p>
19	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.</p>
20	<p>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ASSET DISPOSAL POLICY The Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive) introduced the report. The Leader moved the recommendation and Councillor Cumbers seconded the motion.</p> <p>Members had no comments to add.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Cabinet APPROVED the HRA Asset Development Policy which would confirm the Council's approach for the disposal of HRA assets.</p> <p>(Non-key decision)</p> <p><i>Reasons for recommendation</i> <i>Having a HRA Asset Disposal policy will assist in ensuring that property decisions are made with clarity and transparency.</i></p> <p><i>The HRA Asset Disposal Policy provides a framework through which the disposal of assets that are no longer meeting service needs or are no longer considered appropriate to retain within the HRA can be facilitated.</i></p> <p><i>It sets out the operational protocol for the process relating to disposals of HRA land and buildings.</i></p>
21	<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC RESOLVED</p> <p>Cabinet AGREED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
22	<p>ASSET DISPOSAL PROPOSAL The Housing Development Manager introduced the report. The Leader moved the recommendation and Councillor Cumbers seconded the motion.</p>

All queries raised were answered.

RESOLVED

Cabinet **APPROVED** the disposal of a HRA asset.

(Key Decision)

Reasons for recommendation

The option represented the best value for Melton Borough Council.

23

**READMITTANCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC
RESOLVED**

Cabinet **APPROVED** that the press and public be readmitted into the meeting.

24

**MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE
WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES**

In accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the following item had been referred from the Scrutiny Committee:

Scrutiny feedback on the Customer Journey Framework

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Brown, introduced the report advising Members that Scrutiny had held a workshop on the Customer Journey Framework on 27 June 2024.

In doing so the Scrutiny Committee Chair highlighted the following points for Cabinet:

- Scrutiny would welcome greater visibility of the face-to-face service that the team offers to residents.
- Welcomed that staff within the team have their duties rotated so that all staff know the different elements of the role.
- Recognised that elected Members have their role to play in customer service. Members should sometimes avoid signposting and be willing to engage more.
- It was noted that the graphic was too wordy and that jargon should be avoided.
- There were concerns on the out of hours service but noted that there is a commitment in the Corporate Strategy to review the service.
- Scrutiny commented that Officers should explore the development of an app, which could prove useful.

The Leader commented that he and the Chief Executive recently held an induction and that two new members of staff were from customer services.

It was commented that currently the out of hours service goes via Harborough but that there is a commitment within the Corporate Strategy to review the service.

Members confirmed that the feedback report would be referenced when reviewing the framework.

Cabinet **AGREED** to have regard to the Scrutiny Committee's feedback.

25

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2024/25 - QUARTER 1

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report. The Leader moved the recommendations and Councillor Cumbers seconded the motion.

Members had no comments to add.

RESOLVED

Cabinet:

- 1) **NOTED** the financial position on the HRA at 30 June 2024 and the year-end forecast for both revenue and capital.
- 2) **APPROVED** the increase of £60k to the 2024-25 Capital Programme for the improvement of the LAHF grant funded properties purchased in 2023-24.

(Non-key decision)

Reason for recommendations

The Council, having set an agreed budget at the start of the financial year, needs to ensure that the delivery of the budget is achieved. Consequently there is a requirement to regularly monitor progress so that corrective action can be taken when required, which is enhanced with the regular reporting of the financial position.

26

GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2024-25 - QUARTER 1

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report and moved the recommendation. It was noted during her introduction that planning income was falling.

Councillor Cumbers seconded the motion.

Members had no comments to add.

RESOLVED

Cabinet **NOTED** the year-end forecast and financial position for the General Fund and Special Expenses at 30 June 2024 for both revenue and capital.

(Non-key decision)

	<p><i>Reason for recommendation</i> <i>The Council, having set an agreed budget at the start of the financial year, needs to ensure that the delivery of this budget is achieved. Consequently, there is a requirement to regularly monitor progress so that corrective action can be taken when required, which is enhanced with the regular reporting of the financial position.</i></p>
27	<p>TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 1 REPORT 2024/25 The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report and moved the recommendations. The Leader seconded the motion.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) NOTED the Quarter 1 position on treasury activity for 2024-25. 2) NOTED the Quarter 1 position on Prudential Indicators for 2024-25. <p>(Non-key decision)</p> <p><i>Reasons for recommendations</i> <i>The Prudential Code requires the Council to monitor and report performance on Treasury Management activities at least quarterly. As a minimum full Council need to receive an annual report on the strategy and plan for the coming financial year, a mid year review and an annual report on performance of the treasury management function. In addition monitoring reports should be received at least quarterly alongside revenue and capital monitoring by the cabinet as the body delegated responsibility for treasury management functions.</i></p> <p><i>To facilitate the decision making process and support capital investment decisions the Prudential Code requires the Council to agree and monitor a minimum number of prudential indicators.</i></p>
28	<p>RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE The Director for Corporate Services introduced the report. The Leader moved the recommendation. Councillor Cumbers seconded the motion.</p> <p>The comment was made that it was a shame that the Council only received a C2 rating, however it was noted that the rating was the second highest and that no other local authority landlord has achieved a higher rating.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Cabinet NOTED the contents of the report and the updated Strategic Risk Register and associated risk management action plan, as attached at Appendix A.</p>

(Non-key decision)

Reason for recommendation

Whilst Risk Management forms part of 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, to review the risk management arrangements in place and the activities that are being undertaken to mitigate those risks.

29

CORPORATE STRATEGY REPORT - QUARTER 1

The Director for Corporate Services introduced the report. The Leader moved the recommendation and Councillor Cox seconded the motion.

In discussing the report, Cabinet thanked all Officers involved in the report. In addition, it was commented that Members trusted the information.

RESOLVED

Cabinet **NOTED** the contents of the report and provided any observations or actions to the relevant officers accordingly.

(Non-key decision)

Reason for recommendation

Having established a new Corporate Strategy made up of Vision 36 and Corporate Delivery Plan in 2024, is it important the Council regularly receives and considers performance information to evaluate progress against its priorities. The Council's Corporate Performance Measures are used to focus on key priority services and projects and seek to help inform the Cabinet, Members and Officers with regard to the formation of policy and oversight of delivery.

At 5:00pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Butcher left the meeting.

30

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and moved the recommendations. Councillor Cox seconded the motion.

In response to the query on whether the Council is aware of the possible risk regarding gas and electrical safety, it was confirmed that there are mechanisms to ensure the safety of our properties. There were fires in the past but Officers made sure that the reasons for the fires were recorded and that steps to prevent future fires were taken.

Regarding asbestos, staff who have to deal with it are adequately trained and there is an Asbestos Management Plan, which is followed when dealing with the substance.

With regard to the Grenfall report, Officers noted a couple of actions that the

Council needs to action.

A discussion ensued on defibrillators. It was mentioned that there is no signs to indicate the location of a defibrillator in Pheonix House. Members queried whether Officers had a map of locations for defibrillator, however it was noted that the procedure for using a defibrator is to ring 999 in the first instance and the operator would direct the caller to the nearest one.

Cabinet commended the report.

RESOLVED

Cabinet:

- 1) **NOTED** the contents of the report.
- 2) **NOTED** the key areas of focus in 2024-25 as in section 8.

(Non-key decision)

Reasons for recommendations

Health and Safety is taken seriously by the Council and this report seeks to provide assurance and confidence in the continued emphasis across the organisation.

The Council seeks to not only meet its statutory and regulatory requirements, but to enable a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

At 5:03pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Butcher returned to the meeting.

31

HOUSING INSPECTION UPDATE AND ACTION PLAN

The Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive) introduced the report. The Leader moved the recommendations and Councillor Butcher seconded the motion.

When the query was raised on whether the Board would be involved in follow up meetings, it was confirmed that no they wouldn't but that updates would come back to the Board.

The involvement of tenants was raised and it was clarified that tenants would be observers and then participants.

RESOLVED

Cabinet:

- 1) **NOTED** the Regulatory Judgement issued by the Regulator of Social Housing following a proactive inspection of Melton Borough Council.

- 2) **ENDORSED** the housing service plan which included the actions required to ensure continuous improvement to address the improvement areas confirmed as part of the inspection process.
- 3) **AGREED** that the Landlord Assurance Board will receive and be able to comment on progress updates, detailing continued progress in line with the action plan at each of its future meetings.

(Non-key decision)

Reason for recommendations

It is important that Cabinet formally note the outcome of the proactive inspection, and further actions required to ensure strong outcomes for tenants across all aspects of the Consumer Standards.

32

COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

The Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive) introduced the report. The Leader moved the recommendation and Councillor Butcher seconded the motion.

The policy outlines the process for reviewing what the amount should be and that there is a calculation formulae for Officers to use.

Following a query on whether there is an equivalent policy for non-housing items, it was confirmed that there wasn't. Compensation awards for non-housing cases is very rare and when it does occur, the Council would be guided by the ombudsman's schedule.

Regarding compensation for missed appointments, Cabinet were reassured that contracts would be updated to ensure the costs are covered by the contractors.

It was confirmed that Cabinet are content for a report to return outlining a threshold, with lower values delegated to Housing Officer and higher values reserved for the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED

Cabinet **APPROVED** the HRA Compensation and Reimbursement Policy.

(Key decision)

Reasons for recommendation

As a landlord, Melton Borough Council receives and investigates complaints from council tenants. These complaints are handled in accordance with the Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code. These have a clear focus on handling complaints fairly, proactively and transparently and to ensure that appropriate remedies are considered where the council is at fault.

The proposed Compensation and Reimbursement Policy will support the Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy and provide a framework for allocating fair and consistent amounts of compensation and reimbursement to tenants.

The proposed policy for the HRA is aligned with the principles of the Corporate Compensation Policy.

The meeting closed at: 5.25 pm

Chair