

# Agenda

<b>Meeting name</b>	<b>Meeting of the Council</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Thursday, 27 February 2025</b>
<b>Start time</b>	<b>6.30 pm</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray LE13 1GH</b>
<b>Other information</b>	<b>This meeting is open to the public</b>

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

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

## Membership

<b>Councillors</b>	T. Webster (Chair)	J. Adcock
	P. Allnatt	I. Atherton
	S. Atherton	M. Brown
	R. Browne	S. Butcher
	S. Carter	R. Child
	D. Chubb	M. Clay
	H. Cliff	S. Cox
	P. Cumbers	C. Evans
	A. Freer	M. Glancy
	M. Gordon	A. Hewson
	L. Higgins	S. Lumley
	J. Mason	J. Orson
	S. Orson	D. Pritchett
	R. Sharp	A. Thwaites

**Quorum:** 14 Councillors

<b>Meeting enquiries</b>	Democratic Services
<b>Email</b>	democracy@melton.gov.uk
<b>Agenda despatched</b>	Wednesday, 19 February 2025

No.	Item	Page No.
1.	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
2.	<b>MINUTES</b> To confirm the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 February 2025.	1 - 16
3.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> Members to declare any interest as appropriate in respect of items to be considered at this meeting.	17 - 18
4.	<b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	
5.	<b>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	
6.	<b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> In accordance with the Constitution, Members of the Council may answer questions from the public of which notice has been given.  No questions were received by the deadline. All confirmed questions will be circulated after the deadline.  <b>Deadline for questions – Thursday 20 February, 12pm</b>	
7.	<b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS</b> In accordance with the Constitution, a Member may ask the Leader, a Portfolio Holder, the Chair of the Council or a Committee Chair, a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough.  No questions were received by the deadline. All confirmed questions will be circulated after the deadline.  <b>Deadline for questions – Thursday 20 February</b>	
8.	<b>MOTIONS ON NOTICE</b> In accordance with the Constitution, motions on notice must be signed by at least two Members and be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Melton Borough.  No motions were received by the deadline.	
9.	<b>COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2025/26</b> The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources is to provide the Council Tax setting report for 2025/26.	19 - 32

10.	<b>DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER</b> The Leader is to provide a report on the Devolution White Paper.	33 - 42
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# Minutes

<b>Meeting name</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Wednesday, 12 February 2025</b>
<b>Start time</b>	<b>6.30 pm</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray LE13 1GH</b>

## Present:

**Chair** Councillor T. Webster (Chair)

**Councillors**

J. Adcock	P. Allnatt
I. Atherton	S. Atherton
M. Brown	R. Browne
S. Butcher	S. Carter
R. Child	D. Chubb
M. Clay	H. Cliff
S. Cox	P. Cumbers
A. Freer	M. Glancy
M. Gordon	A. Hewson
L. Higgins	S. Lumley
J. Orson	S. Orson
A. Thwaites	

**Officers**

Chief Executive  
 Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)  
 Assistant Director for Governance and Democracy (Monitoring Officer)  
 Director for Corporate Services  
 Director for Place and Prosperity  
 Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer  
 Democratic Services Officer (HA)

The Reverend Dr Mary Barr offered prayers.

Minute No.	Minute																					
CO49	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Evans, Mason and Pritchett.</p> <p>Councillor Sharp was absent from the meeting.</p>																					
CO50	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>Councillor Gordon raised a query regarding how her vote was recorded for a motion to suspend Procedure Rule 13.7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules, in response Officers committed to ensure that her vote was accurately recorded.</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2024 were approved as a correct record.</p> <p>(For 22, Against 0, Abstentions 1)</p>																					
CO51	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>An other registerable interest in respect of Councillor J. Orson was noted as being on record for any matters which relate to Leicestershire County Council.</p> <p>Councillor Carter declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number CO59, as he is a tenant of a Council-owned property.</p> <p>Councillor Gordon declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number CO59, as a family member owns a second property, which they rent out.</p>																					
CO52	<p><b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b></p> <p>The Mayor provided Members with an update on events he has attended since the last Council meeting. The full list of events are outlined below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="300 1447 1417 2042"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="300 1447 676 1489">Date</th> <th data-bbox="676 1447 1043 1489">Event</th> <th data-bbox="1043 1447 1417 1489">Venue</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1489 676 1576">Friday 6 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1489 1043 1576">Opening of Robert Hudson Alme Houses</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1489 1417 1576">Burton Street, Melton Mowbray</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1576 676 1664">Saturday 7 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1576 1043 1664">Fatstock Show and Dinner</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1576 1417 1664">Stockyard, Melton Mowbray</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1664 676 1751">Tuesday 10 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1664 1043 1751">Harborough Civic Carol Service</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1664 1417 1751">Market Harborough</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1751 676 1883">Wednesday 11 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1751 1043 1883">North West Leicestershire Civic Carol Service</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1751 1417 1883">Coalville</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1883 676 1971">Thursday 12 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1883 1043 1971">Mayor's Carol Service</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1883 1417 1971">St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1971 676 2042">Friday 13 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1971 1043 2042">Collection of Petition</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1971 1417 2042">Birchwood School, Melton Mowbray</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Event	Venue	Friday 6 December 2024	Opening of Robert Hudson Alme Houses	Burton Street, Melton Mowbray	Saturday 7 December 2024	Fatstock Show and Dinner	Stockyard, Melton Mowbray	Tuesday 10 December 2024	Harborough Civic Carol Service	Market Harborough	Wednesday 11 December 2024	North West Leicestershire Civic Carol Service	Coalville	Thursday 12 December 2024	Mayor's Carol Service	St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray	Friday 13 December 2024	Collection of Petition	Birchwood School, Melton Mowbray
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	Saturday 14 December 2024	Hinckley & Bosworth Civic Carol Concert	Newbold Vernon
	Sunday 15 December 2024	Melton Santa Fun Run	Melton Country Park
	Wednesday 18 December 2024	Mayor's Staff Christmas Lunch	Parkside
	Wednesday 18 December 2024	Oadby & Wigston Civic Carol Service	Blaby District Council
	Thursday 19 December 2024	Air Training Corps Christmas Carol Service	St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray
	Wednesday 15 January 2025	Hinckley & Bosworth Pantomime	Hinckley
	Friday 17 January 2025	Mayor's Quiz Night	Parkside
	Thursday 23 January 2025	Charnwood Civic Service	Loughborough
	Friday 24 January 2025	Let's Get Melton Moving Awards	Stockyard, Melton Mowbray
	Monday 27 January 2025	Annual Holocaust Memorial Day	De Montford Hall
	Saturday 1 February 2025	Air Training Corps Annual Dining-in Night	Scraptoft Golf Course
	Monday 3 February 2025	Oadby & Wigston Charity Curry Night	Wigston

CO53

**LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader provided his announcements under seven themes.

**VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Leader reminded Members about the Council's VE Day 80th Anniversary small grant fund, which was previously announced by Councillor Pat Cumbers. The scheme will close at 11:59pm on 7 March 2025 and there is funding still available. A funding pot of £7,000 was allocated to support a range of community VE Day celebration projects. Eligible community groups, charities and parish councils organising events and projects can apply for funding between £70 and £700 to assist to make their local celebrations a success. The Leader added that information on grant funding, including eligibility criteria and allocations of payments, could be found on the Melton Borough Council website and that details of all the celebrations will be published on the Discover Melton website as they are confirmed. The Leader added that the Council had also made a grant award, as part of the Community Grants Scheme, to the Melton Mowbray 1940's weekend, which will have a focus on VE day too. The Leader then urged Members to not forget those who had sacrificed themselves, in particular the Polish and the Commonwealth citizens of all faiths and cultures, many of whom battled on towards VJ on the 14th August 1945.

### Children's Homes

The Leader informed Members of the unresolved problem around proposals to locate more than one children's home in small village communities, and the constraints, the Council had faced through the planning process alongside the absence of joined up policy at a national level.

The Leader stressed that the Council's aim had always been to enable and support the provision of children's homes but to do so in a way that also considered the needs of local communities. The Leader reminded Members that he wrote to Government about the Council's concerns, and that the Council's teams were proactive in engaging with departmental colleagues. In the recently updated NPPF, there are changes which reflect the requests made by the Council, particularly on the matter of establishing local need in respect of looked after children in policy making. This would enable the Council to consider if its own local policy can be reviewed and measures to manage the future development and provision of children's homes. The Leader thanked staff for their efforts with this.

### Changing Places

Members were informed that the Mayor and Councillor Glancy visited Birchwood School to be handed a petition. The Cabinet has now formally received the petition regarding toiletry needs and provision of changing places which create places of dignity, adequate space and safety for individuals, carers and families in their everyday lives. The Leader thanked the Mayor, the previous Head Teacher, and everyone at Birchwood School for raising awareness of this issue. Last spring the Leader was asked for help on this issue and immediately instructed that a changing place facility be included in the LUF development. Later the Leader informed Members that he also considered the possibility of using 5 King Street to serve the town centre but unfortunately the location and project wasn't suitable.

### Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Project

The Leader informed Members that he had circulated his answers to various questions tabled at the Council meeting on 5 December 2024, including on the LUF project. Planning permission for the project was received at a Planning Committee held on 5 February 2025. The Leader stated that he had received emails about why money from the LUF project cannot be diverted to pay for a doctors' surgery. The Leader stated that he asked if it is possible to divert some of the funding to a doctor's surgery, however it was confirmed that it isn't legally possible.

### Doctors' Surgery

Regarding the issue of the doctor's surgery, the Leader referred to the reply given to Councillor Alison Freer's question at Council on 5 December 2024. There is considerable activity on this important priority including the Leader's meeting the Secretary of State and an invitation for further dialogue. The Leader confirmed that the new surgery would be funded separately to the LUF programme. It is important to note that the LUF programme would not prevent a new doctor's surgery being



delivered. The Leader committed to continue to keep Members and the public informed.

#### Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

The Leader informed Council that he has now had 10 meetings and webinars, including with Ministers. The Leader stated that he wasn't going to rehearse the pros and cons of various issues as there would be a chance at the Council meeting on 27 February. Although, the precise format and agenda has not been finalised, however the essential ingredients would include:

- The public would have the ability to ask a question.
- Members may also ask questions, but they are likely to be referred to the open discussion.
- Officers would provide a factual report including a statement about the constitutional and governance rules.
- Recommendations would be tabled in accordance with advice from the Monitoring Officer.
- Consideration is being given to the fairest way the general public can express their views to Council.
- It is important to re-emphasise that while Leicestershire's seven District and Borough Councils, in partnership with Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and Rutland County Council may submit an interim proposal to Government by the 21 March, the final proposal is not required until 28 November.
- Also, Devolution and Local Government Reform are separate proposals.
- Other facts are that Leicestershire County Council has already proposed a single unitary council absorbing all seven districts and borough councils and also requested that the County Council elections to be cancelled. The latter has been refused, so those elections will take place on 1 May and present the opportunity for candidates and voters to reflect their views on Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution at that time.
- The question of whether or not the creation of a Town Council for Melton might be part of the process could be explored at the meeting on the 27 February.

The Leader added that he had received a copy of a letter from the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Mayor of Leicester and the Leader of Leicestershire County Council, which he would circulate to Members.

#### Flooding

The Leader thanked staff for all their efforts to help people at risk and needing support during the latest flooding event. He also thanked Melton and Oakham Waterways Society who removed debris from the town's water ways. The Leader also thanked the Minister, Emma Hardy, with whom he discussed his concerns with directly. Although the extra money for flood defences of £2.65bn across the country is welcome, the Leader confirmed that the Borough will probably not benefit much from the fund, as the funding formula for allocating money currently favours towards major projects taking many years, however, consideration is being given to

	<p>directing money to smaller prevention measures. The flood zone re-mapping exercise being carried out by the Environment Agency is due to complete soon and the Leader hopes this will better inform the Council's own planning decisions. For parishes and riparian owners, a degree of self help is good but can present problems if one community solves its problem and the water moves down stream to its neighbour. The Environment Agency issues a range of permits to allow works to be undertaken which are technically appropriate and legally sound. This is a process the Council are keen to promote with parish councils. The Leader of Leicestershire County Council has reiterated her concerns about the limited capacity and funding for Lead Flood Authorities. The Leader agrees with the assessment and surmised that perhaps it is a task more suited to the new strategic mayoral authority under devolution.</p> <p>At 6:53pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor S. Orson entered the meeting.</p>
CO54	<p><b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b></p> <p>One question had been received from Kelly Davies. The question was read out by the Mayor.</p> <p><i>Our after dark economy is one filled with businesses that truly reflect the community feel that Melton Mowbray prides itself on and if utilised correctly could be the difference between someone coming for the day or staying the night. With that in mind, how does the council plan to work with promotional bodies to help push Melton's after-dark economy out to the wider market?</i></p> <p>In responding the Leader stated that the Council is focused on boosting Melton Mowbray's town centre, including its night-time economy, by working with local and regional partners like Melton BID, the Town Estate and Leicestershire's Local Visitor Economy Partnership. Through campaigns and promotions, the Council aims to attract more visitors, supporting events, entertainment, hospitality and retail. The Discover Melton brand and website have been successful raising awareness and increasing visitors by over 40% through digital campaigns and partnerships with local businesses to help promote Melton's offer, including events, dining and accommodation. The Council is committed to supporting investment into the town to develop the Stockyard and town centre improvements, as well as attracting investment and funding to support businesses and promote Melton Mowbray, combining to make the town an appealing destination.</p>
CO55	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS</b></p> <p>Three questions from Members had been received and they were taken in the order that they were received.</p> <p>Question 1 Councillor Thwaites asked the Leader the following question.</p>

*The extra care facility Gretton Court used to be a jewel in the crown of services that MBC jointly delivered to our Borough elderly. Can the Leader please explain the planned increases to charges at Gretton Court and whether we will carry out a full and robust review of the services, costs and charges at Gretton Court before any increases are applied so that this Council can ensure it is providing the quality and value of service that we would wish to deliver at the correct price.*

In response, the Leader stated that Councillor Thwaites made a good point about the cost impact on our older residents to deliver an extra care service. There are legitimate costs for Gretton Court as a housing service and for the care residents receive.

Charges are reflective of actual costs to deliver services to Gretton Court. Influencing factors on charges to deliver these services include utility costs, cost of food and inflation. Following changes to the service offer commissioned by Leicestershire County Council, a review of support was undertaken, and a new wellbeing service was implemented last year. The Council's teams worked with partner agencies to design the wellbeing support offer and also sought the advice of an external specialist to ensure clarity and accuracy on the service elements that can be met by housing benefit for eligible residents. Feedback on the support provided by the staff is positive.

Separate to the budget papers, a review of charges and service provision of meals at Gretton court is ongoing. As this review has not yet concluded and will now form part of a wider review of options for older person housing in the borough, the Leader could confirm that he was considering two options on meal charges for 2025/26: either to cap the increase at 10% or to freeze it at 2024/25 levels. Both will have a financial impact on the HRA and would effectively mean that the HRA (and therefore tenants) would be subsidising these cost pressures. To cap the increase at 10% would cost just under £6,000 and to freeze it entirely would cost £23,000 in lost income. The Leader added that he would come to a conclusion on the best approach over the next few days and it will be dealt with by way of delegated decision as previously agreed.

The Council can continue to be proud of Gretton Court, but consideration must be given to a strategic approach to determine the most appropriate future arrangements to meet the needs of the Borough's ageing population.

The reality is that the Council cannot achieve the same economies of scale as much larger registered provider counterparts who deliver extra care housing at scale, and as such, a full review is necessary. Rather than looking at each aspect of the service in isolation, the Cabinet wish to see a full review of older persons housing needs to ensure that Gretton Court can continue to be a housing option of choice and one that is affordable to tenants and can support independence of older residents for many years to come. The Council's teams have commenced this work

with the support of a specialist external organisation with expertise in older persons housing.

Councillor Thwaites opted to ask a supplementary question and asked the Leader how can the Council guarantee that the meal provides value. In response, the Leader stated that the Council can assess this during the review and recognised that it is just as much about quality as it is about price.

#### Question 2

Councillor Thwaites asked the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources the following question.

*There has been a recent spate of anti-social behaviour (ASB) including burglaries of local businesses in town, damage and theft from vehicles in the Borough. Although it is not entirely the responsibility of MBC can you please update Council of MBCs involvement in dealing with crime. How are we MBC and the local Police working together and what measures and processes have we together implemented to prevent crime and ASB.*

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources stated that it is really disappointing that Melton had suffered a series of issues over recent months including the retail thefts in the town centre. These crimes had a significant impact not only on the town's local businesses but also on the feeling of safety and security across the community. Proactive action was taken including multiple arrests, and the Portfolio Holder stated that after determined work from Leicestershire Police, several offenders are now in custody.

The Safer Melton Partnership is proactive, effective and alert to the issues facing the community and businesses and as expected, the Partnership and Leicestershire Police work collaboratively not just to tackle issues of crime and ASB, but also on longer term protective and preventative measures.

In addition to encouraging and supporting businesses to access resilience measures such as CCTV and the DISC app, which are funded by Safer Melton Partnership, the Portfolio Holder explained that she recently chaired a meeting with local businesses affected by the recent break ins, alongside the Council's Safer Communities Team and the Local Police. This was very well attended, with many businesses expressing not only their fear and frustration about the crimes they had been victims of but a willingness and desire to access support, information and measures to prevent future break ins. The Partnership were able to extend an invitation to the PCC's Office and to the local MP, Ed Argar, and that he and the Deputy PCC were able to attend and hear the views and needs of businesses directly.

Through the Council's work with the Melton BID, many more businesses now have access to the SMART radio scheme, and the Council does all that it can to explore

	<p>what other support can be made available via the Safer Melton Partnership and Police and Crime Commissioners Fund. The Council have also made further changes and enhancements to the town's CCTV monitoring arrangements, with proactive monitoring being carried out by West Northamptonshire Council and a strong link between them and the police locally, enhanced further by the provision of a screen within the station itself and a direct communication link between them.</p> <p>Members would also be aware that the Council have had significant recent outcome with multiple closure orders on properties within the town that were linked to a county lines and associated drug and criminal activity. This is just one example so the work that takes place day in, day out to safeguard and support communities: something taken seriously and that communities are encouraged to report crime and ASB to the Council and the police.</p> <p>Members may also wish to note that the Scrutiny Committee has a specific role and remit to scrutinise our work on Crime and Disorder: as such, the work of the Safer Melton Partnership and the Council's teams is reported on an annual basis to the Scrutiny Committee, usually as a collaboration with Leicestershire Police. The Portfolio Holder is very happy to meet with and brief any Member separately on this work, and to provide a link to the most recent report and Scrutiny meeting where this was last discussed.</p> <p>Councillor Thwaites opted not to ask a supplementary question.</p> <p>Question 3 Councillor J. Orson asked the Leader the following question.</p> <p><i>Would the Leader agree that the Cabinet decision last November to amend the current Off Street Car Parking Order is beyond the powers granted under the Road Traffic Regulation Act (1984), The Traffic Management Act (2004) and all other enabling legislation, and that the proposed changes require a new Order to be made as they extend beyond mere changes to charging?</i></p> <p>In response, the Leader stated that he did not agree with the statement.</p> <p>Councillor J. Orson opted not to ask a supplementary question.</p>
CO56	<p><b>MOTIONS ON NOTICE</b></p> <p>The Mayor confirmed that there was one motion on notice received for the meeting.</p> <p>The motion was in relation to appreciation for Melton Borough Council colleagues, as outlined below and was received from Councillor Cox (Seconded by Councillor I. Atherton).</p> <p><b>Elected members wish to extend our thanks to colleagues employed at Melton Borough Council in the Housing, Legal and Safer Communities teams,</b></p>

**as well as to our critical partners in the police for their efforts in achieving the recent closure orders in Melton. Their diligence and dedication to joint working has sent a clear message to those criminals who think they can come into our community and deal drugs unnoticed and without consequence.**

**Elected members also note the bravery of residents who came forward to provide information and thank them for the vital role they have played in helping to keep our community safe.**

**The Council acknowledges that it is only through working collaboratively, with all stakeholders in our borough, that will lead to the results we need, and we reiterate our commitment to this approach moving forwards.**

During the debate, the following points were raised:

- Councillor Cox, Councillor Butcher and officers were thanked for their efforts.
- It was recognised that Housing Associations also need to do their bit to tackle the issue of anti-social behaviour in their housing stock.
- A Member commented they were with the Police effort and thanks were given to the Police and the Safer Community Team.
- Members were reminded that despite this Melton remains a safe place to live.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That Council**

**(1) Extends its thanks to colleagues employed at Melton Borough Council in the Housing, Legal and Safer Communities teams, as well as to the Council's critical partners in the police for their efforts in achieving the recent closure orders in Melton. Their diligence and dedication to joint working has sent a clear message to those criminals who think they can come into our community and deal drugs unnoticed and without consequence.**

**(2) Notes the bravery of residents who came forward to provide information and thank them for the vital role they have played in helping to keep our community safe.**

**(3) Acknowledges that it is only through working collaboratively, with all stakeholders in the Borough, that will lead to the results needed, and Council reiterates its commitment to this approach moving forwards.**

(Unanimous)

CO57

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/27 TO 2028/29**

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

During the debate the following points were raised:

- The Conservative Group confirmed that they could not support the budget because:
  - It is being propped up by the corporate priority reserve.
  - There is no allowance for the implementation of food waste collection.
- The Conservative Group also stated that the budget could be short in the future by £1m due to a shortfall of business rates and the budget will be short £73k on national insurance contributions.
- The Conservative Group suggested that the Council should live according to its means, recognise that it is an at-risk authority due to use of reserves and cut the use of consultants.
- It was recognised that the homelessness budget is a risk for the overall stability of the whole of the budget. This is because policies at a national level are causing homelessness to increase.
- A Member commented that the cost of the lack of planning compliance is an unseen cost, which risks destabilising the budget.
- A concern was raised that the current government want to fast track Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation and would starve District and Borough Councils of adequate funding and that the Council should probably focus on funding only the statutory services.
- The comment was made that the budget was a depressing budget and it demonstrates the financial challenges the Council are facing.
- The Deputy Leader commented that last year the opposition wanted to spend £150k more and that the administration didn't adopt the idea therefore meaning that the budget is in a better position this year.
- The Leader added that he had attended the Scrutiny Committee when the budget was discussed and that no alternatives were raised. He added that using reserves to support the budget are a legitimate use of funds. It was noted that the last administration also dipped into the reserves.
- There was a fear that via Local Government Reorganisation, budgets for District and Borough responsibilities (leisure, etc) would be absorbed by the adult social care, education and highways budgets.
- The Section 151 Officer was thanked for advising to put the income from the business pool into reserves.
- It was noted that the asset management group aims to identify ways to maximise assets for the Council.

**RESOLVED**

**Council**

- (1) Approved the revenue budget for 2025/26 for General and Special Expenses, including proposed growth, as set out in Appendix A, B, C and D and summarised in Appendix 1 section 4.4;**

- (2) Approved an overall Band D council tax increase of 2.99%, with the individual Band D council tax levels across each fund set out in Appendix 1 at paragraph 4.4.5;**
- (3) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services to access the Corporate Priorities Reserve to fund any of the approved growth items where UKSPF cannot be used due to not meeting the funding criteria;**
- (4) Delegated authority to the Director for Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services to access the reserves up to £100k to fund the one off costs of preparing for the implementation of food waste collection and recycling reforms;**
- (5) Delegated authority to Director for Corporate Services in consultation with the Director for Housing and Communities to approve a supplementary estimate to support any ongoing additional revenue costs of providing up to five additional waste collection vehicles and delivery of a food waste collection service;**
- (6) Noted that the Council's employee establishment will be updated in line with any changes arising from approval of any of the growth proposals set out in Appendices A and B;**
- (7) Approved that any current year surplus/deficit on general expenses at 31 March 2025 be met by transfers to or from the Corporate Priorities Reserve in order to maintain the working balance at its agreed level of £1m;**
- (8) Approved that any current year surplus/deficit for Special Expenses Melton Mowbray at 31 March 2025 be transferred to/from the Special Expenses Reserve thereby bringing the actual working balance back to the target £50k;**
- (9) Noted the changes made to the risk categorisation of budgets as set out in Appendix 1 at paragraph 4.6.2 and Appendix F.**

The above resolution was considered through a recorded vote as follows:

**FOR THE MOTION (15)**

Adcock, Allnatt, Brown, Butcher, Carter, Clay, Cliff, Cox, Cumbers, Glancy, Gordon, Hewson, Higgins, Lumley, Thwaites

**AGAINST THE MOTION (9)**

I Atherton, S Atherton, Browne, Child, Chubb, Freer, J Orson, S Orson, Webster

**ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)**

CO58

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024-2029 AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2025/26**



	<p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report and moved the recommendations. The Leader, Councillor Allnatt, seconded the motion.</p> <p>No comments were raised.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p><b>Council</b></p> <p><b>(1) Delegated authority to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services, to access additional funding from capital receipts to fund the purchase of up to five food waste collection vehicles;</b></p> <p><b>(2) Approved the General Expenses Capital Programme for 2025/26 and associated funding as set out in Appendix B;</b></p> <p><b>(3) Approved the indicative five year General Expenses Capital Programme for 2025-29 as set out in Appendix C;</b></p> <p><b>(4) Delegated authority to the Director for Corporate Services to amend the amount in the capital programme for Disabled Facilities Grants once funding confirmation has been received as referred to in Appendix 1 at paragraph 5.10;</b></p> <p><b>(5) Approved the Capital Strategy 2025/26 as attached at Appendix D.</b></p> <p>The above resolution was considered through a recorded vote as follows:</p> <p>FOR THE MOTION (15) Adcock, Allnatt, Brown, Butcher, Carter, Clay, Cliff, Cox, Cumbers, Glancy, Gordon, Hewson, Higgins, Lumley, Thwaites</p> <p>AGAINST THE MOTION (9) I Atherton, S Atherton, Browne, Child, Chubb, Freer, J Orson, S Orson, Webster</p> <p>ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)</p>
CO59	<p><b>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2025/26 FOR HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</b></p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report and moved the recommendations. The Leader, Councillor Allnatt, seconded the motion.</p> <p>During the debate the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Portfolio Holder and Officers were thanked for their good work.</li> <li>• Officers were congratulated on receiving the energy efficiency funding.</li> </ul>

- Members were reminded that rents in Melton are modest.

**RESOLVED**

**Council**

- (1) Approved the budget estimates for 2025/26;**
- (2) Approved the average rent increase of 2.70% for all Council dwellings with effect from 1 April 2025;**
- (3) Approved the 2025-26 capital programme, and**
- (4) Delegated authority to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services and Portfolio Holder for Council Housing and Landlord Services, to approve virements within the HRA capital programme during the year to provide flexibility to meet emerging needs and maintain decent homes.**
- (5) Noted that as part of the continuing focus on resourcing requirements for tenancy, income and engagement functions, a revised staffing structure is being developed and will shortly be considered by the Chief Executive under existing delegated powers and**
  - (5.1) That in support of the new structure, to delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services, authority to access the HRA Regeneration and Development Reserve for up to £200k in 25/26 to cover both the additional one off and recurring costs of the new structure and enable the resourcing plan to be implemented and**
  - (5.2) Noted that the recurring costs associated with the change of establishment will be built into the base budget from 26/27 providing the financial viability of the HRA is not undermined.**

(For 21, Against 0, Abstentions 1)

At 7:56pm, prior to the commencement of this item, Councillors Carter and Gordon left the meeting.

At 8:00pm, upon the conclusion of this item, Councillors Carter and Gordon rejoined the meeting.

At 8:00pm, upon the conclusion of this item, Councillor Higgins left the meeting and did not return.

CO60

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2025/26**

	<p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report and moved the recommendations. The Leader, Councillor Allnatt, seconded the motion.</p> <p>No comments were made.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p><b>Council</b></p> <p><b>(1) Approved that the prudential indicators and limits are adopted as outlined in Appendix A at Section 2.</b></p> <p><b>(2) Approved the Treasury Management Strategy as outlined in Appendix A.</b></p> <p><b>(3) Approved that the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement which sets out the Council's policy on MRP as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of Appendix 1.</b></p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO61	<p><b>PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26</b></p> <p>The Chief Executive introduced the report. The Leader, Councillor Allnatt, moved the recommendations and Councillor Glancy seconded the motion.</p> <p>During the debate the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that there are 182 full time equivalent staff, therefore the workforce is small.</li> <li>• Average pay of staff is low therefore staff are not over paid.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p><b>Council approved the attached Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26 at Appendix A.</b></p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>

The meeting closed at: 8.08 pm

Mayor

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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.**

## Council Tax Setting 2025/26

<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Nick Brown</b> , Senior Management Accountant nbrown@melton.gov.uk
<b>Chief Officer Responsible:</b>	<b>Dawn Garton</b> , Director for Corporate Services dgarton@melton.gov.uk
<b>Lead Member/Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	Councillor Sarah Cox - Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Ensuring the right conditions to support delivery
<b>Relevant Ward Member(s):</b>	All
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Council to calculate and set the Council Tax for 2025/26 as required under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the 1992 Act).

### 2. Recommendations

#### That Council:

- 2.1 **Note the calculations and set the Council Tax for the year 2025/26 made in accordance with requirement set out in the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**

### 3. Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 Under the 1992 Act the Council is formally required to set its Council Tax levels for the forthcoming financial year which covers all precepting bodies.

### 4. Background

- 4.1 The report will provide members with the precept levels for precepting bodies and outline the council tax base for 2025/26 in order to establish the Council Tax requirement for Melton. It will also outline the Band D charges for 2025/26 across all precepting bodies.

## **5. Main Considerations**

5.1 The following precept levels from the relevant precepting bodies have been received which are detailed below:

### **5.1.1 Parish Councils**

The Parish Council Precepts for 2025/26 are detailed in Appendix A and total £911,270. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Parish Councils is 8.96% and results in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £84.65 for 2025/26. Parish Councils are not currently subject to the requirements of the referendum rules.

### **5.1.2 Leicestershire County Council**

Leicestershire County Council met on 19 February 2025 and set their precept at £34,401,882. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £1,681.50. The actual payment will be adjusted by a contribution towards a Collection Fund deficit of £96,994 for 2024/25.

### **5.1.3 Police & Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire**

At the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police & Crime Panel meeting on 5 February 2025, the Panel resolved to support the Police & Crime Commissioner's proposal to set their precept at £6,142,425. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £300.23. The actual payment will be adjusted by a contribution towards a Collection Fund deficit of £17,334 for 2024/25.

### **5.1.4 Leicestershire Combined Fire Authority**

Leicestershire Combined Fire Authority met on 5 February 2025 and set their precept at £1,772,834. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £86.65. The actual payment will be adjusted by a contribution towards a Collection Fund deficit of £4,945 for 2024/25.

## **5.2 Council Tax Base**

The following amounts for the year 2025/26 are calculated in accordance with the regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011:

5.2.1 20,459.05 being the Council Tax Base for the whole Council area (Item T in the formula in Section 31B).

5.2.2 The Council Tax Base for dwellings in those parts of the Council's area to which a Parish precept relates. These being the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of the Council's area to which one or more special items relate (i.e. tax base for parish's including Melton Mowbray itself).



<b>Parish</b>	<b>2025/26 Band D equivalents</b>
Ab Kettleby	256.44
Asfordby	1,226.75
Belvoir	130.58
Bottesford	1,558.48
Broughton and Old Dalby	676.35
Buckminster	146.41
Burton and Dalby	462.11
Clawson, Hose and Harby	1,157.52
Croxtan Kerrial	237.57
Eaton	335.03
Freeby	122.93
Frisby	345.90
Gaddesby	163.59
Gaddesby (29)	218.14
Garthorpe	33.37
Grimston	134.40
Hoby with Rotherby	329.99
Kirby Bellars	160.31
Knossington & Cold Overton	157.19
Redmile, Barkstone & Plungar	397.74
Scalford	270.41
Somerby	412.82
Sproxton (Sproxton & Saltby)	179.59
Sproxton (Stonesby & Bescaby)	81.11
Stathern	340.42
Twyford and Thorpe Satchville	307.29
Waltham	580.29
Wymondham & Edmondthorpe	342.33
Area of Former Urban District of Melton Mowbray	9,693.99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,459.05</b>

5.3 The Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding Parish precepts) has been calculated at £237.76.

5.4 The following amounts are calculated by the Council for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the 1992 Act:-.

- (a) £22,943,234 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to the Council by Parish Councils (**i.e. gross expenditure including parish precepts**).

- (b) £17,167,609 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. **(i.e. gross income including government grants).**
- (c) £5,775,625 being the amount by which the aggregate at 5.8(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 5.8(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the 1992 Act). **(i.e. Council Tax requirement for general, special expenses & parish precepts).**
- (d) £282.30 being the amount at 5.8(c) above (Item R) divided by Item T (the amount at 5.6.1 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. **(i.e. Band D average Council Tax including general expenses, special expenses and parish precepts).**
- (e) £1,517,939 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. **(i.e. total Council Tax from all special expenses areas plus parish precepts).**
- (f) £208.11 being the amount at 5.8 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 5.8(e) above by Item T (5.6.1 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relate. **(i.e. Band D Council Tax for general expenses only).**
- (g) Part of the Council's Area  
 being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 5.8 (f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 5.6.2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate. **(i.e. Band D Council Tax including all special expenses and parish precepts).**

<b>Parish of:</b>	<b>£</b>
Ab Kettleby	249.06
Asfordby	329.21
Belvoir	353.61
Bottesford	299.05
Broughton and Old Dalby	265.77
Buckminster	254.21
Burton and Dalby	281.72
Clawson, Hose and Harby	311.78
Croxton Kerrial	281.04
Eaton	297.65
Freeby	233.03
Frisby	320.10
Gaddesby	263.12
Gaddesby (29)	293.66
Garthorpe	283.03
Grimston	292.19
Hoby with Rotherby	300.54
Kirby Bellars	273.97
Knossington & Cold Overton	333.84
Redmile, Barkstone & Plungar	321.25
Scalford	300.56
Somerby	302.58
Sproxton (Sproxton & Saltby)	238.80
Sproxton (Stonesby & Bescaby)	325.46
Stathern	309.46
Twyford and Thorpe Satchville	243.91
Waltham	289.02
Wymondham & Edmondthorpe	275.30
Area of:	
Former Urban District of Melton Mowbray	266.65

(h)

Part of the Council's Area

The amounts of attached schedule in Appendix B being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 5.8(f) and 5.8(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands. **(i.e. Council Tax across all bands for general and special expenses and parish precepts).**

5.5 That it be noted that for the year 2025/26 the major precepting authorities have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the 1992 Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

<u>Precepting Authority</u>	<u>Valuation Band</u>							
	<b>A</b> £	<b>B</b> £	<b>C</b> £	<b>D</b> £	<b>E</b> £	<b>F</b> £	<b>G</b> £	<b>H</b> £
Leicestershire County Council	1,121.00	1,307.83	1,494.67	1,681.50	2,055.17	2,428.83	2,802.50	3,363.00
Police & Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire	200.15	233.51	266.87	300.23	366.95	433.67	500.38	600.46
Leicestershire Combined Fire Authority	57.77	67.39	77.02	86.65	105.91	125.16	144.42	173.30

5.6 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.4(h) and 3.5 above, the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the 1992 Act, hereby sets the amounts of the attached schedule in Appendix C as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2025/26 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below: (i.e. fully inclusive Council Tax across all bands).

## **6 Options Considered**

6.1 It is a requirement for the Council to calculate and set the Council Tax for 2025/26 as required under the 1992 Act.

## **7 Consultation**

7.1 Consultation has not been undertaken.

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

8.1 Once approved the Council will be working on preparing the relevant Council Tax bills to be sent out to residents.

## **9 Financial Implications**

9.1 The above figures reflect the financial position as set out in the Council's budget for 2025/26 with the actual impact on the Band D Council Tax summarised in the table below.

	<b>2024/25</b> <b>£</b>	<b>2025/26</b> <b>£</b>	<b>Increase</b> <b>%</b>
Melton Borough Council (average for whole area excluding Parish Councils)	230.85	237.76	2.99
Leicestershire County Council (including 2% social care levy)	1,601.58	1,681.50	4.99
Police & Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire	286.23	300.23	4.89
Leicestershire Combined Fire Authority	81.65	86.65	6.12
Parish Councils (average for whole area)	77.69	84.65	8.96
Average for whole area (including precepts)	2,241.29	2,350.68	4.88

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

## **10 Legal and Governance Implications**

- 10.1 Section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the 1992 Act) stipulates that the council must set a lawful and balanced budget and Council Tax level for 2025/26 before the statutory deadline of 11 March 2025. In developing any proposals for budget changes, the necessary Equality Impact Assessments and any consultation processes will need to be followed.
- 10.2 The report sets out the calculations required under the 1992 Act as amended by the Localism Act 2011.
- 10.3 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new Chapter into the 1992 Act, which requires a referendum to be held if an authority proposes to increase its Council tax by an amount which exceeds principles determined by the Secretary of State. The Government passes regulations allowing Councils to raise Council Tax by a maximum amount. Any higher increase must be approved by a local referendum. The Council Tax levels proposed in this report do not exceed the amount, and if approved by Council, may be implemented without the need for a referendum.
- 10.4 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the S151 officer to report to Council when it is setting the budget and precept (council tax). Members are required to act prudently when setting the budget and council tax so that they act in a way that considers local taxpayers. The council must decide every year how much they are going to raise from council tax. The decision is based on a budget that sets out estimates of what is planned to be spent on services. Because the level of council tax is set before the year begins and cannot be increased during the year, risks and uncertainties that might force higher spending on services than planned must be considered. Allowance is made for these risks by making prudent allowances in the estimates for services; and ensuring that there are adequate reserves to draw on if the service estimates turn out to be insufficient.
- 10.5 Section 106 of the 1992 Act prohibits a councillor from voting on a calculation which might affect the calculation of the Council's budget if he or she has an outstanding council tax debt of over two months. If a member is present at any meeting at which relevant matters are discussed, they must disclose that section 106 applies and may not vote. Failure to comply with this provision is a criminal offence.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer.**

**11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications**

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

**12 Data Protection Implications (Mandatory)**

12.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks to the rights and freedoms of natural persons arising directly from this report.

**13 Community Safety Implications**

13.1 There are no Community Safety implications as a result of this report.

**14 Environmental and Climate Change Implications**

14.1 There are no environmental or climate change implications.

**15 Risk & Mitigation**

15.1 There are no specific risks associated with this report.

**16 Background Papers.**

16.1 There are no background papers.

**17 Appendices**

17.1 Appendix A - Parish Council Precepts 2025/26.

17.2 Appendix B - Council Tax Band Charges for General Fund, SEA's and Parishes 2025/26.

17.3 Appendix C - Council Tax Band Charges for all 2025/26.

## Parish Council Precepts

Parish	2024-25			2025-26			C Tax Increase %
	Tax Base	Precepts £	Council Tax at Band D £	Tax Base	Precepts £	Council Tax at Band D £	
Ab Kettleby	257.48	10,500.00	40.78	256.44	10,500.00	40.95	0.41
Asfordby	1,187.92	142,719.60	120.14	1,226.75	148,563.92	121.10	0.80
Belvoir	127.86	19,000.00	148.60	130.58	19,000.00	145.50	-2.08
Bottesford	1,551.28	136,295.00	87.86	1,558.48	141,725.00	90.94	3.50
Broughton and Old Dalby	651.81	35,200.00	54.00	676.35	39,000.00	57.66	6.78
Buckminster	148.45	6,750.00	45.47	146.41	6,750.00	46.10	1.39
Burton and Great Dalby	461.59	32,398.00	70.19	462.11	34,017.00	73.61	4.88
Clawson, Hose and Harby	1,130.88	93,500.00	82.68	1,157.52	120,000.00	103.67	25.39
Croxton Kerrial	237.03	16,500.00	69.61	237.57	17,325.00	72.93	4.76
Eaton	330.43	26,000.00	78.69	335.03	30,000.00	89.54	13.80
Freeby	122.41	3,064.00	25.03	122.93	3,064.00	24.92	-0.42
Frisby	341.80	13,250.00	38.77	345.90	13,250.00	38.31	-1.19
Gaddesby	164.18	8,359.47	50.92	163.59	8,999.53	55.01	8.04
Gaddesby (29)	218.80	11,140.53	50.92	218.14	12,000.47	55.01	8.04
Garthorpe	33.77	2,500.00	74.03	33.37	2,500.00	74.92	1.20
Grimston	135.52	10,830.00	79.91	134.40	11,300.00	84.08	5.21
Hoby with Rotherby	321.86	29,000.00	90.10	329.99	30,500.00	92.43	2.58
Kirby Bellars	160.58	10,300.00	64.14	160.31	10,558.00	65.86	2.68
Knossington & Cold Overton	160.72	17,980.00	111.87	157.19	19,764.00	125.73	12.39
Redmile, Barkstone & Plungar	397.10	24,096.00	60.68	397.74	45,000.00	113.14	86.45
Scalford	256.73	23,000.00	89.59	270.41	25,000.00	92.45	3.20
Somerby	408.42	32,079.00	78.54	412.82	39,000.00	94.47	20.28
Sproxton (Sproxton & Saltby)	179.28	5,447.38	30.38	179.59	5,511.01	30.69	0.99
Sproxton (Stonesby & Bescaby)	84.01	2,552.62	30.38	81.11	2,488.99	30.69	0.99
Stathern	327.89	31,500.00	96.07	340.42	34,500.00	101.35	5.49
Twyford and Thorpe Satchville	307.01	10,000.00	32.57	307.29	11,000.00	35.80	9.90
Waltham	562.12	50,176.00	89.26	580.29	46,953.00	80.91	-9.35
Wymondham & Edmondthorpe	338.78	19,800.00	58.45	342.33	23,000.00	67.19	14.96
<b>TOTAL/AVERAGE</b>	<b>10,605.71</b>	<b>823,937.60</b>	<b>77.69</b>	<b>10,765.06</b>	<b>911,269.92</b>	<b>84.65</b>	<b>8.96</b>

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COUNCIL TAXES 2025-26

APPENDIX B

Parish Precepts £	Special Expenses £	Tax Base	General Expenses £	Special Expenses £	Parish Precepts £	Council Tax at Band D £	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
		Parish of:												
10,500.00		256.44	208.11		40.95	249.06	166.04	193.71	221.38	249.06	304.40	359.75	415.10	498.12
148,563.92		1,226.75	208.11		121.10	329.21	219.47	256.04	292.62	329.21	402.36	475.52	548.68	658.42
19,000.00		130.58	208.11		145.50	353.61	235.74	275.02	314.31	353.61	432.18	510.76	589.35	707.22
141,725.00		1,558.48	208.11		90.94	299.05	199.36	232.59	265.81	299.05	365.49	431.95	498.41	598.10
39,000.00		676.35	208.11		57.66	265.77	177.18	206.70	236.23	265.77	324.82	383.88	442.95	531.54
6,750.00		146.41	208.11		46.10	254.21	169.47	197.71	225.95	254.21	310.69	367.18	423.68	508.42
34,017.00		462.11	208.11		73.61	281.72	187.81	219.11	250.41	281.72	344.31	406.92	469.53	563.44
120,000.00		1,157.52	208.11		103.67	311.78	207.85	242.49	277.13	311.78	381.05	450.34	519.63	623.56
17,325.00		237.57	208.11		72.93	281.04	187.36	218.58	249.80	281.04	343.48	405.94	468.40	562.08
30,000.00		335.03	208.11		89.54	297.65	198.43	231.50	264.57	297.65	363.78	429.93	496.08	595.30
3,064.00		122.93	208.11		24.92	233.03	155.35	181.24	207.13	233.03	284.80	336.59	388.38	466.06
13,230.00	25,487.00	345.90	208.11	73.68	38.31	320.10	213.40	248.95	284.52	320.10	391.22	462.35	533.50	640.20
8,719.53		163.59	208.11		55.01	263.12	175.41	204.64	233.87	263.12	321.58	380.05	438.53	526.24
12,705.47	6,663.00	218.14	208.11	30.54	55.01	293.66	195.77	228.39	261.01	293.66	358.90	424.16	489.43	587.32
2,580.00		33.37	208.11		74.92	283.03	188.68	220.13	251.57	283.03	345.91	408.81	471.71	566.06
11,300.00		134.40	208.11		84.08	292.19	194.79	227.25	259.71	292.19	357.11	422.04	486.98	584.38
30,000.00		329.99	208.11		92.43	300.54	200.36	233.75	267.14	300.54	367.32	434.11	500.90	601.08
10,700.00		160.31	208.11		65.86	273.97	182.64	213.08	243.52	273.97	334.84	395.73	456.61	547.94
19,764.00		157.19	208.11		125.73	333.84	222.56	259.65	296.74	333.84	408.02	482.21	556.40	667.68
45,000.00		397.74	208.11		113.14	321.25	214.16	249.85	285.54	321.25	392.63	464.02	535.41	642.50
25,000.00		270.41	208.11		92.45	300.56	200.37	233.76	267.15	300.56	367.34	434.13	500.93	601.12
39,000.00		412.82	208.11		94.47	302.58	201.72	235.33	268.95	302.58	369.81	437.05	504.30	605.16
5,511.01		179.59	208.11		30.69	238.80	159.20	185.73	212.26	238.80	291.86	344.93	398.00	477.60
2,488.99	7,029.00	81.11	208.11	86.66	30.69	325.46	216.97	253.13	289.29	325.46	397.77	470.10	542.43	650.92
34,500.00		340.42	208.11		101.35	309.46	206.30	240.68	275.06	309.46	378.22	446.99	515.76	618.92
11,000.00		307.29	208.11		35.80	243.91	162.60	189.70	216.80	243.91	298.10	352.31	406.51	487.82
46,953.00		580.29	208.11		80.91	289.02	192.68	224.79	256.90	289.02	353.24	417.47	481.70	578.04
23,000.00		342.33	208.11		67.19	275.30	183.53	214.11	244.70	275.30	336.47	397.65	458.83	550.68
		10,765.06												
		Area of:												
		Former Urban District												
0.00	567,490.00	9,693.99	208.11	58.54	0.00	266.65	177.76	207.39	237.01	266.65	325.89	385.15	444.41	533.00
911,269.92	606,669.00	20,459.05	208.11	29.65	44.54	282.30	188.19	219.56	250.92	282.30	345.01	407.75	470.49	561.68

MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given that the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 has set the following amounts of council tax for the year commencing 1st April, 2025, in respect of chargeable dwellings in each valuation band

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## COUNCIL TAXES 2025-26

Parish Precepts £	Special Expenses £	Tax Base	County Precept £	Police Precept £	Fire Precept £	General Expenses £	Special Expenses £	Parish Precepts £	Council Tax at Band D £	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £	
Parish of:																		
10,500.00		256.44	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		40.95	2,317.44	1,544.96	1,802.45	2,059.94	2,317.44	2,832.42	3,347.41	3,862.40	4,634.88	
148,563.92		1,226.75	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		121.10	2,397.59	1,598.39	1,864.78	2,131.18	2,397.59	2,930.38	3,463.18	3,995.98	4,795.18	
19,000.00		130.58	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		145.50	2,421.99	1,614.66	1,883.76	2,152.87	2,421.99	2,960.20	3,498.42	4,036.65	4,843.98	
141,725.00		1,558.48	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		90.94	2,367.43	1,578.28	1,841.33	2,104.37	2,367.43	2,893.51	3,419.61	3,945.71	4,734.86	
39,000.00		676.35	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		57.66	2,334.15	1,556.10	1,815.44	2,074.79	2,334.15	2,852.84	3,371.54	3,890.25	4,668.30	
6,750.00		146.41	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		46.10	2,322.59	1,548.39	1,806.45	2,064.51	2,322.59	2,838.71	3,354.84	3,870.98	4,645.18	
34,017.00		462.11	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		73.61	2,350.10	1,566.73	1,827.85	2,088.97	2,350.10	2,872.33	3,394.58	3,916.83	4,700.20	
120,000.00		1,157.52	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		103.67	2,380.16	1,586.77	1,851.23	2,115.69	2,380.16	2,909.07	3,438.00	3,966.93	4,760.32	
17,325.00		237.57	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		72.93	2,349.42	1,566.28	1,827.32	2,088.36	2,349.42	2,871.50	3,393.60	3,915.70	4,698.84	
30,000.00		335.03	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		89.54	2,366.03	1,577.35	1,840.24	2,103.13	2,366.03	2,891.80	3,417.59	3,943.38	4,732.06	
3,064.00		122.93	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		24.92	2,301.41	1,534.27	1,789.98	2,045.69	2,301.41	2,812.82	3,324.25	3,835.68	4,602.82	
13,250.00	25,487.00	345.90	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11	73.68	38.31	2,388.48	1,592.32	1,857.69	2,123.08	2,388.48	2,919.24	3,450.01	3,980.80	4,776.96	
8,999.53		163.59	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		55.01	2,331.50	1,554.33	1,813.38	2,072.43	2,331.50	2,849.60	3,367.71	3,885.83	4,663.00	
12,000.47	6,663.00	218.14	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11	30.54	55.01	2,362.04	1,574.69	1,837.13	2,099.57	2,362.04	2,886.92	3,411.82	3,936.73	4,724.08	
2,500.00		33.37	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		74.92	2,351.41	1,567.60	1,828.87	2,090.13	2,351.41	2,873.93	3,396.47	3,919.01	4,702.82	
11,300.00		134.40	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		84.08	2,360.57	1,573.71	1,835.99	2,098.27	2,360.57	2,885.13	3,409.70	3,934.28	4,721.14	
30,500.00		329.99	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		92.43	2,368.92	1,579.28	1,842.49	2,105.70	2,368.92	2,895.34	3,421.77	3,948.20	4,737.84	
10,558.00		160.31	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		65.86	2,342.35	1,561.56	1,821.82	2,082.08	2,342.35	2,862.86	3,383.39	3,903.91	4,684.70	
19,764.00		157.19	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		125.73	2,402.22	1,601.48	1,868.39	2,135.30	2,402.22	2,936.04	3,469.87	4,003.70	4,804.44	
45,000.00		397.74	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		113.14	2,389.63	1,593.08	1,858.59	2,124.10	2,389.63	2,920.65	3,451.68	3,982.71	4,779.26	
25,000.00		270.41	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		92.45	2,368.94	1,579.29	1,842.50	2,105.71	2,368.94	2,895.36	3,421.79	3,948.23	4,737.88	
39,000.00		412.82	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		94.47	2,370.96	1,580.64	1,844.07	2,107.51	2,370.96	2,897.83	3,424.71	3,951.60	4,741.92	
5,511.01		179.59	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		30.69	2,307.18	1,538.12	1,794.47	2,050.82	2,307.18	2,819.88	3,332.59	3,845.30	4,614.36	
2,488.99	7,029.00	81.11	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11	86.66	30.69	2,393.84	1,595.89	1,861.87	2,127.85	2,393.84	2,925.79	3,457.76	3,989.73	4,787.68	
34,500.00		340.42	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		101.35	2,377.84	1,585.22	1,849.42	2,113.62	2,377.84	2,906.24	3,434.65	3,963.06	4,755.68	
11,000.00		307.29	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		35.80	2,312.29	1,541.52	1,798.44	2,055.36	2,312.29	2,826.12	3,339.97	3,853.81	4,624.58	
46,953.00		580.29	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		80.91	2,357.40	1,571.60	1,833.53	2,095.46	2,357.40	2,881.26	3,405.13	3,929.00	4,714.80	
23,000.00		342.33	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11		67.19	2,343.68	1,562.45	1,822.85	2,083.26	2,343.68	2,864.49	3,385.31	3,906.13	4,687.36	
Area of:																		
Former Urban District																		
0.00	567,490.00	9,693.99	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11	58.54	0.00	2,335.03	1,556.68	1,816.13	2,075.57	2,335.03	2,853.91	3,372.81	3,891.71	4,670.06	
911,269.92	606,669.00	20,459.05	1681.50	300.23	86.65	208.11	29.65	44.54	2,350.68	1,567.12	1,828.31	2,089.49	2,350.68	2,873.05	3,395.43	3,917.80	4,701.36	

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## Devolution White Paper

<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Edd de Coverly</b> , Chief Executive edecoverly@melton.gov.uk
<b>Chief Officer Responsible:</b>	<b>Edd de Coverly</b> , Chief Executive edecoverly@melton.gov.uk
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All Corporate Priorities
<b>Relevant Ward Member(s):</b>	All wards
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No

### 1 Summary

- 1.1 On 16th December 2024 the English Devolution White Paper was published. The document sets out the Government's ambition to devolve powers and funding to the regions and establish Strategic Mayoral Authorities in all areas where they are not currently in place. Alongside plans for devolution, the Government has confirmed that it wishes to simplify local government structures below these new regional strategic authorities, and for two-tier areas, invite reorganisation proposals which facilitate unitary local government.
- 1.2 This report summarises the key parts of the White Paper in relation to devolution and reorganisation, and provides an opportunity for all members to engage in the process and share their views. The White Paper includes a number of other proposals, which are referenced in paragraph 5.22, but which are outside the focus of this report.

### 2 Recommendations

#### That Council:

- 2.1 **Notes the current position and the Council's initial response to the Devolution White Paper.**
- 2.2 **Notes the criteria and process set out by government for submitting and evaluating proposals for local government reorganisation, and the legal framework within which it operates.**
- 2.3 **Provide views on devolution and local government reorganisation such that they can be incorporated into the development of initial ideas and interim plans.**

### **3 Reason for Recommendations**

- 3.1 To inform members about the contents and implications arising from the Devolution White Paper and enable them to contribute to the process and share their views on devolution and local government reorganisation in relation to Melton.
- 3.2 To ensure the Council most effectively seeks to ensure that devolution and local government reorganisation are delivered in a way which best supports the council's communities, stakeholders and staff.
- 3.3 There is no decision required at this stage, and in accordance with the legal advice set out in section 10, negotiations on behalf of the council regarding devolution and local government reorganisation are an executive function. Nevertheless, this is a matter of profound significance and local interest and it is therefore important for members to have an opportunity to share their views in public and support and inform the Leader's continuing discussions with other local authorities, partners and government.

### **4 Background**

- 4.1 The [English Devolution White Paper](#) was published on 16 December 2024. The White Paper sets out the Government's aspirations to devolve powers and funding from central government to the new regional Strategic Authorities which would be overseen by a directly elected Mayor. The White Paper also confirms the Government's ambition to simplify local government structures by replacing existing two-tier structures of County and District councils with unitary councils which would deliver all council services.
- 4.2 This report summarises the contents of the White Paper and provides an update on the initial response and next steps as prescribed by government.

### **5 Main Considerations**

- 5.1 In relation to Devolution, the White Paper sets out an ambition for all regional areas to have a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA - formerly known as Combined Authorities)
- 5.2 This would enable all areas to benefit from being represented by a directly elected Mayor at the Council of Nations and Regions, as well as the potential to unlock significant funding for investment through a devolution agreement.
- 5.3 The sorts of powers and functions that would likely be held by an MSA would include:
  - a) Transport and local infrastructure
  - b) Skills and employment support
  - c) Strategic Housing and Strategic Planning
  - d) Economic development and regeneration
  - e) Environment and Climate change
  - f) Health, wellbeing and public service reform
  - g) Public safety
- 5.4 The White Paper sets out the principles by which all proposals for devolution and establishing an MSA would be considered including:
  - a) Scale – generally a population of 1.5m or more, but in some areas smaller geographies will be considered
  - b) Economics – strategic authorities must cover sensible economic geographies.

- c) Contiguity – where the external boundaries of an MCA must ultimately align with the constituent councils within it.
  - d) No devolution islands – areas cannot be left which are then too small to be involved in devolution.
  - e) Delivery – should ensure effective delivery of strategic planning, transport plans etc
  - f) Alignment – enable alignment with other public services (police, fire, health etc).
  - g) Identify – enabling residents to properly engage with devolved institutions
- 5.5 The Government will invite local areas (primarily upper tier authorities) to submit proposals for devolution, but as part of an anticipated English Devolution Bill, will seek to legislate for a ministerial direction to mandate areas that have, after due time has been allowed, been unable to agree a way forward.
- 5.6 In terms of establishing simpler structure for local government, or local government reorganisation (LGR) as it is often called, the Government has advised that they wish to address the long-standing structural funding issues within local government and create larger, more resilient organisations which would also deliver efficiency savings. They also assert that this would help to reduce workforce pressures and enable better alignment with other public services e.g. health, fire, police etc.
- 5.7 The Government has advised that it will not impose reorganisation but has been clear that it expects all two-tier areas to submit proposals for reorganisation, and that all should reorganise during the life of this parliament. Smaller existing unitary councils that are ‘struggling’ will also be invited to be part of this process.
- 5.8 **Initial Response since publication of the White Paper**
- 5.9 The Government provided an initial deadline of 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to hear from upper tier councils (existing unitary and county councils) who wished to be part of the ‘Priority Programme’ to facilitate fast-track proposals for Devolution.
- 5.10 Unanimous consent of all affected upper tier councils is a requirement for any Devolution proposals and therefore entry into the Priority Programme.
- 5.11 Those councils facing elections in May 2025 were also invited to submit requests for those elections to be postponed by the same deadline. This would be justified either through a request to enter the priority programme for devolution, or where reorganisation of local government is needed to enable devolution.
- 5.12 On Thursday 9th January 2024, Leicestershire County Council issued a [press statement](#) confirming that they had requested the Government to postpone elections planned for May 2025 on the basis that, in their view, reorganisation of local government was required to unlock or enable devolution.
- 5.13 On Friday 10th January 2024, the Leaders of Rutland County Council and the 7 Leicestershire District and Borough Councils issued a [joint statement](#) expressing concern about the proposal. A joint letter signed by the Leaders was also been sent to the Minister at MHCLG, setting out a number of points, including:
- a) That the opportunity to devolve power and funding to the regions is welcome.
  - b) That a Mayoral Strategic Authority should be proposed for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, but that this should be conditional on the right approach to LGR.

- c) That the councils are open to meaningful and productive discussions on structural change, but are concerned that any proposal for a very large council over a wide and diverse geographic area has the potential to be too remote and inaccessible.
- d) Any change should be based on evidence, a broad consensus and support from local communities and businesses. Accordingly any credible options should be given time to be explored further and properly assessed.
- 5.14 On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025, Cabinet received a [report](#) setting out the position at the time, and endorsed the action initially taken by the Council and delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to continue working with neighbouring local authorities. To support the council's initial response, a budget of £30k was allocated to undertake any work required to enable a full appraisal of options and implications, and to ensure an effective response to the White paper.
- 5.15 On 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the Secretary of State confirmed [which areas were to be included](#) on the Devolution Priority Programme and which areas would have their elections cancelled. As part of this process, it was confirmed that Leicestershire would not have its elections cancelled and that these would proceed as planned in May 2025. This meant that Leicestershire would not therefore be part of a fast-tracked process.
- 5.16 On the same day, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution [wrote to the Leaders of all 10 two-tier council and unitary council in and neighbouring Leicestershire](#) formally inviting proposals for reorganisation; setting out further details on the criteria and the timeline for the process.
- 5.17 The letter confirmed the following:
- a) An expectation that local leaders work collaboratively and proactively to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area.
  - b) That every effort will be made to work together to develop and jointly submit one proposal for unitary local government across the whole of your area; recognising that this may be for one or more new unitary councils and that they should be complementary to devolution plans.
  - c) Where, despite their best efforts, councils in an area are unable to jointly develop and submit proposals, this will not be a barrier to progress and the government will consider any suitable proposals submitted by relevant authorities.
  - d) Interim plans should be submitted before 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
  - e) Full proposals should be submitted by 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.
- 5.18 A decision as to whether implement a proposal is a matter for the Secretary of State, and the necessary legislation agreed by parliament.
- 5.19 Indicative timescales have subsequently been provided which suggest that following submission of proposals, the government would undertake formal consultation on proposals between January – April 2026, before making a decision May – August 2026 and then laying the necessary legislation. It is then assumed that Shadow elections for any new unitary councils would take place in May 2027, with the new unitary councils going live from April 2028.
- 5.20 The letter also set out guidance in relation to the criteria against which proposals would be evaluated; specifically proposals should:



- a) Be for a sensible geography and economic area which helps to increase housing supply and meet local needs.
- b) Be supported by robust evidence and analysis and demonstrate how it will be the right size to achieve efficiencies, and withstand financial shocks.
- c) Aim (as a guiding principle) for a population of 500,000 or more, whilst recognising there may be scenarios in which this figure does not make sense for an area (including on devolution), and this rationale should be set out in the proposal.
- d) Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens, demonstrating how they will improve service delivery and avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.
- e) Set out opportunities for wider public service reform leading to better value for money.
- f) Give consideration to impacts for crucial services like social care, SEND and homelessness.
- g) Demonstrate how councils have sought to work together and how their proposals are informed by local views; considering issues of local identity, and cultural importance.
- h) Support devolution arrangements and how this will be unlocked; ensuring there is a sensible population ratio between local authorities and strategic authorities.
- i) Enable stronger community engagement and deliver neighbourhood empowerment.

5.21 The letter confirms the following should also be taken into account:

- a) Boundary changes: district areas should be considered the building blocks for proposals, but more complex boundary changes will be considered where there is a strong justification to do so.
- b) Local leaders are expected to work together and share information, rather than developing competing proposals. Engagement with MPs and local partners, stakeholders and residents should also take place.
- c) Once a proposal has been submitted, it will be for the government to decide on whether to take a proposal forward and to consult as required by statute.

## 5.22 **Other elements of the White Paper**

5.23 The White Paper included a number of other aspects which will impact on the Council and which will also require a response. These are beyond the scope of the focus of this report and are not considered in detail, but merely noted below: They include:

- a) Reform of local external audit with a view to rebuilding the wider assurance framework
- b) Closure of the Office for Local Government (Oflog)
- c) Intentions to introduce a mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors and to reestablish a national body to deal with the most serious standards cases
- d) Empowerment of Councils to disqualify councillors if they are subject to suspension more than once
- e) Creating opportunities for elected members to attend meetings remotely and enabling proxy voting
- f) An intention to remove the legal requirement for an elected member's home address to be published.

## **6 Options Considered**

- 6.1 The report asks Council to note the contents, criteria and timescales regarding the development of proposals. There is no decision required at this stage and therefore no alternative options proposed.

## **7 Consultation/Engagement**

- 7.1 Initial written briefings on the White Paper were provided to all members and staff in December 2024. Verbal all staff and all member briefings took place in January 2025. This Council meeting provides an opportunity for members to express their views in public. Government guidance confirms that proposals will require widespread engagement and ultimately formal consultation. This will be taken forward as part of the process.

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

- 8.1 The Leader and Chief Executive continue to meet and work with colleagues from across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Efforts will be made to establish a consensus for the region in line with the expectations set out within White Paper and subsequent guidance. Where necessary, officer working groups and external expertise will be commissioned to support the development of any proposals.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The only direct financial implication to date has been the allocation of £30k from the Corporate Priorities Reserve which can be drawn down through a delegation to support the work required to enable an effective response to the White Paper. As proposals develop however it is likely that further direct funding may be required to work up more fully formed proposals. In addition to direct costs significant resources are already and will continue to be diverted to support the necessary work required to develop and evaluate options.
- 9.2 In the 5<sup>th</sup> February Ministerial Letter it states; “It is essential that councils continue to deliver their business-as-usual services and duties, which remain unchanged until reorganisation is complete... To support with capacity, I intend to provide some funds for preparing to take forward any proposal, and I will share further information later in the process.
- 9.3 Considering the efficiencies that are possible through reorganisation, we expect that areas will be able to meet transition costs over time from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.
- 9.4 The default position is that assets and liabilities remain locally managed by councils, but we acknowledge that there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices. Where that is the case, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation, and Commissioners should be engaged in these discussions. We will continue to discuss the approach that is proposed with the area.”
- 9.5 Whilst proposals are developed it is important to continue to operate the Council as a going concern and ensure continued prudent financial management of the Council’s finances.

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

## **10 Legal and Governance Implications**

- 10.1 The Local Government Act 2000 states that, unless a function is specified in regulations setting out how it is to be exercised, all functions are the responsibility of the executive of a local authority, i.e., for Melton Borough Council, the Cabinet. At present there are no regulations specifying that matters relating to devolution or reorganisation are not to be an executive function, meaning that they fall within Cabinet's remit.
- 10.2 It may be that, as the proposals set out in the White Paper are refined and passed into law, that legislation prescribes how the process of making formal proposals is to be discharged by local authorities, in which case the Council will ensure that amended decision-making process is followed. Unless or until that time the function will be the responsibility of the Cabinet and, in the absence of any delegation to other Cabinet members or officers to the contrary, the responsibility of the leader.
- 10.3 Whilst currently the function sits with the Leader, it is a lawful and reasonable for him to consult with the Council as a whole (and other stakeholders) and consider the views raised when making any decision in relation to this issue.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer**

## **11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications**

- 11.1 There are no direct equality and safeguarding implications arising from the recommendations in this report, though any proposals for devolution or LGR will require impact assessments to be undertaken

## **12 Community Safety Implications**

- 12.1 There are no direct community safety implications arising from the recommendations in this report, though any proposals for devolution or LGR will need to consider the impacts on community safety and demonstrate the obligations under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act continue to be met.

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

- 13.1 There are no direct environmental and climate change implications arising from the recommendations in this report, though any proposals for devolution or LGR will need to consider the impacts and ensure obligations continue to be met.

## **14 Human Resources Implications**

- 14.1 The White Paper represents the biggest proposed change to local government for 50 years. Any change to local government, and the organisational structures within it, will have significant HR implications. These will need to be set out and considered in detail in relation to any proposals which are developed. All staff will need to be properly engaged and supported through any changes and the Council must focus on ensuring continued delivery of services and projects and a business as usual approach until and unless such as a time any transition or change is required.

## 15 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	No consensus can be reached on the right approach for devolution and LGR across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, and the benefits of devolution locally are not realised.	Significant	Critical	Medium
2	Focus and resources diverted to support the development of devolution and LGR proposals lead to an inability to deliver existing corporate priorities.	High	Critical	High
3	Uncertainty relating to any potential changes leads to loss of key staff erosion of organisational integrity and effectiveness.	High	Critical	High
4	Perception from residents that any proposals will create organisations which are too remote from local communities and reduce accessibility	Significant	Marginal	Medium
5	Perception that any proposals will erode democratic accountability due to the reduction in elected members	Significant	Marginal	Medium

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

<b>Risk No</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>1</b>	A number of initial meetings have taken place between various local authorities within LLR and further meetings will take place. Officer working groups will be established as required to jointly develop and shape proposals.
<b>2</b>	Additional resources will be initially allocated to support the development of any proposals but a review will also need to be undertaken of existing priorities and some work may have to be de-prioritised. A further update will be provided on the impact of this as part of a subsequent report. The impact of the Devolution White Paper will be added to the Council's Strategic Risk Register.
<b>3</b>	An effective communications plan will need to be developed and within that the opportunities created for development and career diversification by any potential changes will need to be emphasised. The importance of engagement and opportunities for colleagues to shape any proposals will also be key as will the recognition that whatever the shape of local government in future, the services provided today will still be required. Visible, consistent and effective professional and political leadership will need to be maintained throughout.
<b>4</b>	Any proposals will need to consider the impact on community access and engagement and be able to demonstrate how services will continue to be tailored to local areas, even when delivered more remotely.
<b>5</b>	Any proposals will need to demonstrate how local democratic accountability and connection will be maintained

## **16 Background Papers**

16.1 Links provided in the report to:

- a) English Devolution White Paper
- b) Letter from Minister to Leaders of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

## **17 Appendices**

17.1 None

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