

# Minutes

<b>Meeting name</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Wednesday, 24 February 2021</b>
<b>Start time</b>	<b>6.30 pm</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>By remote video conference</b>

## Present:

**Chair**                      Councillor                      M. Graham MBE  
(Chair)

**Councillors**

P. Faulkner (Vice-Chair)	R. Bindloss
R. Browne	S. Carter
P. Chandler	R. Child
P. Cumbers	R. de Burle
J. Douglas	C. Evans
A. Freer-Jones	M. Glancy
A. Hewson	L. Higgins
E. Holmes	J. Illingworth
S. Lumley	J. Orson
P. Posnett MBE	D. Pritchett
M. Steadman	J. Wilkinson

**Officers**

- Chief Executive
- Director for Housing and Communities
- Director for Corporate Services
- Director for Growth and Regeneration
- Assistant Director for Governance & Democracy
- Assistant Director for Planning and Delivery
- Democratic Services Manager
- Corporate Services Manager
- Democratic Services Officer (CR)

The Reverend Kevin Ashby offered prayers.

<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Minute</b>
CO64	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fisher, Pearson, Smith and Wood. Councillor Bains was also not present.</p>
CO65	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Mayor.</p>
CO66	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>A personal interest in respect of County Councillors Orson, Pearson and Posnett was noted as being on record for any matters which related to the Leicestershire County Council.</p> <p><u>Minute CO71 : Cabinet Recommendations To Council : Revenue Budget Proposals 2021/22 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</u></p> <p>Councillor Carter declared a pecuniary interest, as a Council tenant and would leave the meeting during debate and decision on this item.</p> <p><u>Minute CO74 : Council Tax Setting 2021/22</u></p> <p>Councillor de Burle declared a personal non-pecuniary interest, as Responsible Financial Officer, acting under delegation for Asfordby Parish Council and signatory to its precept.</p> <p><u>Minute CO75 : Special Urgency Decisions (T3 Business Grants December 2020)</u></p> <p>Councillor Browne declared a personal non-pecuniary interest, as Secretary for Frisby, Hoby and Rotherby Cricket Club.</p> <p>Councillor Child declared a personal non-pecuniary interest, as a member of Great Dalby Cricket Club.</p> <p>Councillor Graham declared a personal non-pecuniary interest, as Chairman of Sproxton Village Hall.</p>
CO67	<p><b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b></p> <p>The Mayor advised that since the last Council meeting, he had given a reading on 103 The Eye radio channel, at Christmas and he confirmed that Mayoral events and activities continued to be postponed during the Covid-19 pandemic. He congratulated and gave best wishes to Councillor Smith on the birth of her baby.</p>

**LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader congratulated Councillor Graham on undertaking nearly 3 terms as Mayor for the Borough and congratulated Councillor Smith and her family on the birth of her baby.

The Leader said

*'It remains a very busy time as we continue to provide support to our communities and our businesses impacted by Covid-19. I was delighted to see Leicestershire was leading the way in the proportion of over 70 year olds who have been vaccinated and I am sure this would have been helped by Melton having one of the first vaccination centres opened in the region. Our Community Support Hub continues to provide assistance to the most vulnerable in our community and our team has made nearly £2.3k separate business grant payments, totalling £4m since November 2020. This is on top of the £10.7m paid out to businesses earlier in 2020. I want to reiterate my thanks to all officers and Members for their incredible response and support to our communities during the pandemic.*

*We are now digesting the Prime Minister's announcement (on 22 February 2021) and preparing to support the easing of restrictions over the coming weeks and months. I do welcome the cautious approach and we must remain vigilant and maintain our commitment to public health guidance and regulations.*

*Tonight, we consider our budget and I am delighted that despite all we have faced this year, we have managed our finances well and are able to propose a budget that protects existing services and is balanced for the second year in a row. We are also still able to invest in key priorities to support our Corporate Strategy and recover from Covid-19. Key initiatives, include developing a new town centre strategy and master plan, along with a number of maintenance improvements, helping rural businesses through a £100k diversification grant scheme and supporting vulnerable residents through more council tax relief. We want to invest in our IT, our website and audio visual equipment, so we can continue livestreaming our meetings when we can once again meet in person. We want to repair the footstone bridge in our country park and with an array of national partners we will be developing a business case for rail improvements between Nottingham and Melton. All this alongside the ongoing and continued investment in council housing services, as part of our ambitious improvement plan. I look forward to discussing these proposals with all Members later in the meeting.*

*Following the recent Local Government Association (LGA) review, we are developing an action plan, which I will be keen to share with all Members shortly for wider review. One of the early actions has been setting up meetings for myself with ward Members to understand any local issues and consider how the Cabinet can assist. I've certainly found the discussions extremely useful and I hope those Members I have met with so far have too and I look forward to those continuing.*

*Concerning the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR), we continue to work with our partners, Leicestershire County Council, Homes England, and Ministry of*

*Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on seeing if an infrastructure agreement can be reached to secure the housing infrastructure fund. Yesterday we received a draft heads of terms from the County Council and we are now reviewing this and considering the legal and financial implications and risks associated with it. This is a crucial piece of work and as ever, we will do all we can to support delivery of the road but we must ensure any agreement is right for this Council and right for Melton. I will update Members on this shortly and again we are intending to formally consider the Council's position on this issue at our Cabinet on 17 March 2021. We have also shared our draft developer contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) with the County Council, which they have requested and to support their infrastructure investment being paid back and prioritised recovery of highways and education contributions above other things. We await their feedback and also are planning to bring the consultation draft to Cabinet at the 17 March meeting.*

*Whilst referring to the County Council, it is again regrettable that when we are negotiating on the most important infrastructure agreement for a generation, they chose to attack this Council, regarding the recent land disposal decision taken by our Cabinet in January 2021. I welcome the review being undertaken currently by our Scrutiny Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, as we believe any such review will show a reasonable basis for our decision and appropriate way we have conducted ourselves. Given the ongoing review, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to say too much at this stage but irrespective of the findings, the language used to attack this council and our officers was completely inappropriate and there was absolutely no justification for it. We, as ever will conduct ourselves in the right manner and I will have more to say at the appropriate time but until then, I look forward to receiving the findings of the review from Councillors Cumbers and Bindloss.*

*Finally, I was delighted to see we were recently successful in securing a £340k grant to improve the energy efficiency of our Council housing stock, through the Government's Green Homes Delivery Scheme. We will be matching this with a further £300k, to deliver improvement works to nearly 70 properties through either external insulation or fitting solar PV panels. This programme will help to support tenants who can find heating their homes expensive and will help to reduce fuel poverty. It also represents a positive step towards our commitment to become a carbon neutral council by 2030.'*

CO69	<p><b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b></p> <p>There were no questions from the public.</p>
CO70	<p><b>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL : CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/25 - GENERAL FUND AND HRA AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2021/22</b></p> <p>Councillor Ronnie de Burle, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Resources introduced and moved the recommendations in the report, providing a summary and advising that the forecast outturn for General Fund Capital Programme 2020/21 was expected to be £923k, against an approved budget of £1.315m, resulting in an underspend of £392k. This was due to a reduction in demand for disability facilities grants (£342k) and deferring £50k expenditure, which was</p>

planned on service vehicles, pending more information on environmental changes. The forecast outturn for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2020/21 was expected to be £3.589m, against the latest approved budget of £5.291m, resulting in an underspend of £1,702m, largely due to Covid-19 accessibility issues.

Councillor de Burle highlighted that the proposed Capital Programme for 2021/22 totalled £755k, covering key areas such as ICT investment, Disabled Facilities Grants and the management of key Council assets and community investment. A number of new key capital schemes had been proposed for approval, totalling £267k (Council Chamber audio visual equipment re-do, a replacement website system and the Melton Country Park bridgeworks).

Councillor de Burle confirmed that the content of the report had been consulted on with Scrutiny Committee, who drew attention to the need (as part of the Covid-19 recovery plan) for additional business support within the rural community and the Rural Business Diversification Grant scheme, valued at £100k had been incorporated.

Councillor de Burle advised that improving the Capital Programme would support the Council in managing its assets effectively and in ensuring that benefits of them were maximised for the Council and the community. These capital plans would support the effective delivery of Council ambitions and would ensure appropriate levels of capital expenditure and investment were in place to meet corporate priorities and objectives, whilst ensuring that plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Councillor Orson seconded the motion, commenting that he welcomed proposals for the Council Chamber audio visual equipment. Officers had worked to deliver value for money and procure the equipment needed at a competitive price. The equipment would facilitate hybrid meetings, enabling live streaming of public meetings to continue once they returned to the Council Chamber. Councillor Orson also spoke in favour of the refurbishment to the footbridge at Melton Country Park, which Councillors Glancy, Lumley and Posnett had lobbied for and of the £100k Rural Business Diversification Grant scheme.

During debate the following points were noted:

- Concern was raised over the proposed £80k expenditure to procure the Council Chamber audio visual equipment, stating that this was not feasible during the current economic climate.
- The Council needed to act with austerity during this period of great financial hardship and uncertainty.
- The existing Council Chamber audio system was inadequate. It had caused interruptions and disrupted meetings in the past and had been the subject of much complaint by Members, officers and members of the public.
- Many other councils used and enjoyed the benefits of the new equipment for public meetings and it would be an investment for the Council.
- The new equipment would enable the Council to operate in a professional, progressive manner and maintain and improve community engagement in the Council's decision making process, through the livestreaming of public meetings.
- The new equipment would facilitate hybrid meetings (enabling a combination of participants based in the Council Chamber and remotely).

- £80k was a considerable sum of money but was reasonable in relation to the equipment being provided and the corresponding benefits.
- The pandemic had changed the way councils, other organisations and businesses worked, revealing how the telecom industry had become ever more central to modern society. The Council needed equipment which was suitable for present and future times.
- The new equipment represented a complete replacement rather than an upgrade of the existing system.
- The Council had undertaken a thorough procurement process to obtain a suitable supplier, led by the Democratic Services Manager, with support from the ICT and Property teams and the Welland Procurement Unit.
- The Council had received 11 quotes and had rejected 5 of those, due to high costs. The preferred supplier was identified through their ability to meet the specification within budget parameters provided.
- The proposal to procure new equipment had been included in the Capital Programme and there had been consultation with Members through the budget setting process.
- Originally, procurement of the new equipment had been estimated at £100k but the Council had reduced this cost to £80k by moderating its requirements.
- Members wished to have relevant training to use the new equipment.
- Members were pleased with the proposal for the Melton Country Park bridgeworks as these were desperately needed.
- Members were pleased with the HRA Capital Programme.
- The purpose of the Rural Business Diversification Grant was to help diversify the offering and boost tourism.
- Members were pleased with proposals for funding to support businesses in the town and rural areas, helping those who were struggling.
- Members thanked business owners and employees for their work during the pandemic and highlighted that the Council was working in support of them.
- The Council engaged with Melton Business Improvement District (BID), the businesses which it represented and the Town Estate to understand how businesses operated and how grants would help them. They had been fundamental in helping the Council design the additional revenue grants for businesses were a valued partner.

### **RESOLVED**

#### **Council:**

- 1) APPROVED the General Fund Capital Programme for 2020-25;**
- 2) APPROVED the sources of funding for the General Fund capital programme for 2021/22;**
- 3) APPROVED the HRA Capital Programme for 2020-25;**
- 4) APPROVED the sources of funding for the HRA Capital Programme;**
- 5) 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;**

**6) APPROVED that spend on the Council Chamber Audio Visual Equipment capital scheme be incurred in 2020/21 if officers are able to commence the project earlier;**

**7) APPROVED the Capital Strategy 2021-22.**

The above resolution was voted for as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (21)

Bindloss, Browne, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Faulkner, Freer-Jones, Glancy, Graham, Hewson, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Lumley, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Steadman, Wilkinson.

AGAINST THE MOTION (2)

Carter, Evans.

ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)

CO71

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL : REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22 - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)**

(Councillor Carter here left the meeting due to his disclosable pecuniary interest as set out at Minute CO66 above.)

Dawn Garton, Director for Corporate Services introduced the report, providing a brief summary and highlighting the proposed rent increase of 1.49% average for all Council dwellings, which was in line with Government limitations placed on the Council as a social landlord. The budget maintained the working balance at the agreed level of £750k, progressing a number of the items that were agreed as part of the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP). Key to the Council's financial sustainability with regard to the HRA was work on development of the HRA business plan, (including stock condition surveys, which would indicate capital and revenue works needed and the draw on reserves to meet these needs), which would project forward over a 30 year period of likely rent increases, costs etc. Co-ordinating expenditure with income was an important part of the process and would improve the Council's position to understand the financial health of the HRA.

The Director for Housing and Communities highlighted that the adoption of the Council's Rent Setting Policy had provided a framework for this work and the proposed rent increase was consistent with the Policy. The increased transparency on service charges, with grounds maintenance and health and safety charges clearly identified on the rent increase notice to tenants. There were carry forwards in relation to the HIP works as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on contractors and the suspension of some works due to tenant vulnerability. The adoption of a Void Policy and improved reporting of void performance showed the Council's commitment to improvements in this area. Delivery of the HRA business plan would involve collating tenant views to help inform the Council's 30 year business plan, with a clear programme of works for the next five years to benefit tenants and the Council.

Councillor de Burle thanked the Director for Corporate Services and Director for Housing and Communities and moved the recommendations. Councillor Orson seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

During debate the following points were noted:

- Members supported the proposals, commenting that the work undertaken to improve the Council's Housing service was a good news story
- Members thanked officers and Scrutiny Committee for their work to improve the Housing service, particularly in relation to the voids management process.
- Improvements to the Housing service offered a learning opportunity to enhance other areas within the Council.
- Members were pleased that the Council was maximising its rental income and service charge income. This was important for financial stability and to enable improvement work to continue and tenant living standards to be maintained.
- Officers had implemented Members' service charge requests. Councillor Pearson had led on and been a key participant of the HIP & Councillor Orson had been heavily involved as well.
- Members noted the challenges faced as a result of the pandemic and future challenges due to carbon neutral requirements, regulator standards, landlord health and safety etc.
- Members noted the considerable work undertaken by the Chief Executive and Director for Housing and Communities.
- The bad debt provision of £373k was based on estimates (historic debt levels, the age of debts, their collection and recovery) and was in line with audit expectations. There was much uncertainty due to Covid-19 and how the end of support for those on furlough or the self-employed may change recovery levels.
- The good work undertaken by the Council at Westview, Somerby was noted.
- It was important to value affordable housing and work to reduce housing costs, expensive energy bills and debt, as this would create a healthy economy in Melton.

### **RESOLVED**

#### **Council:**

- 1) APPROVED the budget estimates for 2021-22;**
- 2) APPROVED an average rent increase of 1.49% for all Council dwellings for 2021/22 with effect from 1 April 2021;**
- 3) APPROVED that the working balance be maintained at the approved minimum balance of £750,000 and any residual amounts be transferred to the Regeneration and Development Reserve, as approved in February 2020 for the current year.**

The above resolution was voted for as follows:

#### **FOR THE MOTION (22)**

Bindloss, Browne, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Evans, Faulkner, Freer-Jones, Glancy, Graham, Hewson, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Lumley, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Steadman, Wilkinson.

#### **AGAINST THE MOTION (0)**

#### **ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)**

(Councillor Carter here re-entered the meeting.)



**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL : GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 TO 2024/25**

Councillor Ronnie de Burle, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Resources introduced and moved the recommendations in the report, providing a brief summary and highlighting that 2020 had been an extremely challenging year for the Council's finances. Much progress had been made since the pandemic started and since receipt of the first draft budget in November 2020. Hard work, innovative thinking and additional Government support through the spending review and finance settlement, had enabled the Council to balance the budget, without compromising core services. This was a considerable achievement, at a time where many councils were reducing services. He thanked the Director for Corporate Services, her team and all budget holders for their work.

Councillor de Burle advised that the work on the Financial Sustainability Programme would help plan and prepare the Council but there would be difficult times ahead. Future Government support was uncertain and the community would need support, as the nation moved into recovery. Ensuring that the necessary finances were in place was vital.

Councillor de Burle highlighted the proposal to work with other preceptors to set up a discretionary Council Tax Relief Fund to help support residents and proposals to improve town centre street furniture etc. to ensure the town centre remained attractive.

Councillor Orson seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

During debate the following points were noted:

- Members thanked the Director for Corporate Services, her team and Councillor de Burle for his work to achieve a balanced budget and noted the inclusion of a number of growth items.
- A concern was raised that revenue was not sufficiently directed to deal with the pandemic and its effect on the community.
- There was notable Council achievements as a result of public investment and the Council needed to ensure it maintained its high performance.
- Members noted the £515k sundry debtors reserve, commenting that there were historical debt collection issues and this may be worsened by the impact of financial hardship in the community.
- 2020 had been a period of great difficulty for many in the community. The Council had an obligation to produce a balanced budget and council tax increases were necessary to ensure the continued delivery of services, particularly critical services to the most vulnerable.
- Funding for the Planning service had been agreed in October 2020 (£26k one-off payment) and recruitment of staff (£12k to potentially £48k). The Planning Review considered how to improve the service for stakeholders and customers.
- The good work undertaken by the Regeneration Team (administering grants, promoting tourism, promoting farm shops and award winning businesses was noted.
- The Council had received praise and thanks from businesses for its administration of business grants.

**RESOLVED**

**Council:**

- 1) **APPROVED** the proposals for **General Expenses and Special Expenses Melton Mowbray** for inclusion in the **2021/22** budget;
- 2) **DELEGATED** authority to the **Director for Corporate Services** to release the funding for the growth items for town centre improvements, place survey and discretionary council tax support;
- 3) **APPROVED** the revenue budget for **2021/22** for **General and Special Expenses**, resulting in an overall council tax increase of **£5**;
- 4) **APPROVED** that any increase or shortfall against the target working balance on **General Expenses** at **31 March 2021** is transferred to/from the **Corporate Priorities Reserve** and for **Special Expenses Melton Mowbray** any surplus/deficit be transferred to/from the **Special Expenses Reserve** thereby bringing the actual balance back to the target;
- 5) **NOTED** the changes made to the risk categorisation of budgets.

The above resolution was voted for as follows:

**FOR THE MOTION (21)**

Bindloss, Browne, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Faulkner, Freer-Jones, Glancy, Graham, Hewson, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Lumley, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Steadman, Wilkinson.

**AGAINST THE MOTION (2)**

Carter, Evans.

**ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)**

CO73

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL : TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2021/22**

Councillor Ronnie de Burle, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Resources introduced and moved the recommendations in the report, providing a brief summary and advising that the report outlined the Council's Prudential Indicators for 2021/22 to 2023/24, set out the expected treasury operations for this period and fulfils 4 key legislative requirements:

- i. the reporting of the Prudential Indicators, setting out the expected capital activities.
- ii. the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy, setting out how the Council would pay for capital assets through revenue each year, as required by regulation under the Local Government Public Involvement in Health (LGPIH) Act 2007.
- iii. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, setting out how the Council's treasury management service would support the capital decisions taken, the day to day treasury management activity, and the limitations on

activity through Treasury Prudential Indicators, the key indicator being the authorised limit, which at £46m is considered the maximum amount of debt the Council could afford in the short term (but which would not be sustainable long term).

- iv. The Investment Strategy, setting out the Council's criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss. This Strategy was in accordance with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government Investment Guidance.

Councillor Orson seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED**

**Council:**

- 1) APPROVED and ADOPTED the prudential indicators and limits;**
- 2) APPROVED the Treasury Management Strategy;**
- 3) APPROVED the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement, which sets out the Council's policy on MRP.**

The above resolution was voted for as follows:

**FOR THE MOTION (23)**

Bindloss, Browne, Carter, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Evans, Faulkner, Freer-Jones, Glancy, Graham, Hewson, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Lumley, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Steadman, Wilkinson.

**AGAINST THE MOTION (0)**

**ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)**

CO74

**COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2021/22**

The Mayor confirmed that the recommendation was to note the calculations and set the council tax for the year 2021/22, made in accordance with regulations set out in the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Councillor Ronnie de Burle, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Resources introduced and moved the recommendations in the report, providing a brief summary and advising that as 'collection authority', the Council is required to set the council tax for the forthcoming financial year, which included the council tax set by parishes in the borough and preceptors Leicestershire County Council (LCC), the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Combined Fire Authority (CFA).

Councillor de Burle highlighted that LCC, PCC and CFA values had been confirmed (as detailed at paragraphs 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 of the report). The Council had sought to minimise the impact of inflation and this was reflected in the figures detailed within the table at paragraph 9.1 (2.41% average increase for the Council compared with 4.69% average increase for the whole area). The Council

recognised that some in the community would need support and additional help would be provided through the proposed Discretionary Relief Fund.

Councillor Orson seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

During debate the following points were noted:

- The Council acknowledged that this was a period of financial difficulty for many in the community. It was important to keep council tax as low as possible and any increase was necessary to maintain services.
- Member and officer collaborative working, review of plans and priorities and communication with the community was crucial.
- Lobbying the Government to influence decisions on local taxation reforms was suggested.
- Special Expenses Melton Mowbray was reducing and for 2021/22 would be at a level below that of 2017.
- Investment in the town centre was vital and linked to the income raised through council tax, specifically Special Expenses.
- The use of General Fund reserves for town centre improvements (£50k for street furniture) was noted.
- Members noted that the Council had a legal obligation to set its council tax before the 11 March deadline.

### **RESOLVED**

**Council NOTED the calculations and APPROVED setting of the Council Tax for the year 2021/22 made in accordance with regulations set out in the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**

The above resolution was voted for as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (22)

Bindloss, Browne, Carter, Chandler, Child, Cumbers, de Burle, Douglas, Faulkner, Freer-Jones, Glancy, Graham, Hewson, Higgins, Holmes, Illingworth, Lumley, Orson, Posnett, Pritchett, Steadman, Wilkinson.

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (1)

Evans.

CO75

### **SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS (Tier 3 BUSINESS GRANTS DECEMBER 2020)**

Councillor Leigh Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration (Deputy Leader) introduced and moved the recommendation in the report, stating

*'On 2 December 2020, the borough of Melton was placed into Tier 3 restrictions, following the end of the national lockdown. As a result of these new tiered*

*restrictions, the Government announced additional grant funding supporting measures , which local authorities would be responsible for giving out to their local business communities. The timescales involved in the release of the guidance and funding arrangements for Tier 3 grant schemes required an urgent decision in relation to the Council's approach to delivering the grants. It was not considered acceptable to delay the payments, due to the adverse effect this would have on eligible businesses (cash flow is all important to businesses). As a result, in consultation with the Scrutiny Committee Chair, Councillor Pat Cumbers, it was agreed that the decision could not be reasonably deferred. As Portfolio Holder, I reviewed and approved the decision notice on 14 December 2020. A notice of special urgency and decision was published on the Council's website. The decision was able to be implemented immediately, so that eligible businesses receive the grants before Christmas.*

*Today, the Chief Executive forwarded an email from MP Alicia Kearns' Office to myself and the growth and regeneration team, giving positive feedback received from a very appreciative source. It says they were very complimentary of the work that the Council were doing and that Melton had the least number of issues reported to them, regarding business grants. They were very complimentary about the efficiency of our approach and what we are doing. The Council has also sought those businesses, such as owner directors and self- employed people, who have recently set up businesses and have been left behind by some national schemes. Melton has taken a dedicated case by case approach and I would like to thank the Grant Panel (Director for Corporate Services, Revenues and Benefits Manager and Regeneration Manager). Today, I have been made aware of 2 people in receipt of grant funding, which has really helped their business to continue during the national lockdown.'*

Councillor Orson seconded the motion, commenting that the Council had undertaken tremendous work in administrating grant funding. He thanked Councillor Higgins and the Regeneration Manager for their work and noted that businesses and organisations were all very appreciative.

**RESOLVED**

**Council NOTED the decisions taken under Special Urgency Provisions.**

CO76	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS</b> There were no questions from Members.</p>
CO77	<p><b>MOTIONS ON NOTICE</b> There were no motions on notice received.</p>
CO78	<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES</b> There were no recommendations and reports from Committees.</p>

