

Minutes

Meeting name	Council
Date	Wednesday, 24 March 2021
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	By remote video conference

Present:

Chair Councillor M. Graham MBE
(Chair)

Councillors

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

Officers

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

The Reverend Kevin Ashby offered prayers.

Minute No.	Minute
CO79	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bains, Bindloss and Lumley.</p>
CO80	<p>MINUTES Councillor Evans wished to make a statement regarding his comments during the previous Council meeting (on 24 February 2021), concerning the Council's disposal of land at Lake Terrace. The comments had not been included in the minutes of the meeting but could be accessed via the YouTube recording of the meeting. He wished to make clear that in no way was he implying any failure upon the officers in the work that had been done in relation to the disposal. Clarification had now been provided that the County Council had regarded the disposal as a commercial opportunity, while this Council had viewed it as land for social housing, resulting in very different valuation estimates.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Mayor.</p>
CO81	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 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 CO89 : Pay Policy Statement</u> Councillor Browne declared a pecuniary interest, due to his wife being a Council employee and would leave the meeting during debate and decision on this item.</p>
CO82	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS The Mayor commented that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there had been very little to report under Mayor's Announcements for most of the 2020/21 civic year but he was hopeful that the Mayoral role would return more active in 2021/2022.</p> <p>St Mary's Church had held a Reflections and Renewal Service, under the guidance of Reverend Kevin Ashby. There had been some truly heartfelt messages given at the Service, which had impressed upon the Mayor the amazing Melton community, which had worked together so well during the past year. As part of the Service, the Mayor had planted a tree in the Country Park. He noted the work of all those involved in the tree planting, including the Council's Grounds Maintenance team and added that the tree, which had been blessed by Reverend Ashby would be an asset to the Country Park.</p>
CO83	<p>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS The Leader provided the following announcement:</p> <p><i>'I was delighted that the Council set its budget last month, balanced for the second year in a row and it can now get on with continuing to lead the COVID response</i></p>

and recovery, as well as delivering the priorities set out in its Corporate Strategy.

Yesterday was the anniversary of the first national lockdown. As the Council reflect and remember the many lives lost and the many lives impacted, I want to once again pay my own personal tribute to the incredible work done by this Council, over the last year, as well as all other key workers and volunteers who have supported our communities throughout this period. There has been a rise in Covid-19 cases in Melton over the last week. It is worth reminding ourselves that this rise follows some significant reductions over the last couple of months and that Melton has for most of this year been the area in Leicestershire with the lowest number of cases. However, matters have changed in the last week and although a number of the cases are linked to specific workplace outbreaks, broader transmission cannot be ruled out. All need to continue to play their part, follow the public health advice and not be complacent. If you are invited to receive a vaccine, I would encourage everyone to take it up.

Last month, I touched upon the disappointing conduct of Leicestershire County Council's Leader and its Cabinet at their meeting on 5 February 2021. I note Councillor Evans' comments about the relationship between this Council and the County Council and can assure that this Council would like to work with the County Council. However, their criticism of this Council in relation to a land deal they did not properly understand and that this Council was entitled to reach was a shallow and ill-judged attempt to destabilise, as this Council negotiate with them on the relief road infrastructure agreement. Subsequent leaks of inflated and unrealistic valuations made their tactics even more obvious and I was delighted this Council's position was vindicated through the independent professional assessment we obtained. I would again encourage the leadership of the County Council to focus on working to secure the required infrastructure for Melton, rather than playing games and wasting time.

In relation to the infrastructure agreement itself, this Council continue to negotiate with the County Council, alongside Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This Council has been completely consistent throughout this process. It remains committed to reaching an agreement, which supports the road but has made it absolutely clear that any agreement has to have appropriate legal and financial protections, so neither authority is exposed. This is both reasonable and entirely necessary and is something this Council and its legal team have repeatedly made clear to the County Council, as well as highlighting how this could be achieved. This Council stands ready to enter into any legally sound and financially sensible agreement but ultimately, it is for the County Council to listen to the advice they have received and to agree something that works for all parties.

Recruitment for the new Director for Housing and Communities has started and I am looking forward to meeting the candidates through the process. As this is Andrew Cotton's last Council meeting, I want to once again thank him for his hard work over the last year and wish him well for the future. While awaiting the new Director's arrival, I was delighted to support the recent recruitment for Interim

Assistant Director for Communities and want to congratulate Aysha Rahman on securing the role and also to welcome Craig Spence, as Assistant Director of Housing Management, who joined us only last week.

Earlier this month, the Chief Executive and I held one of our regular liaison meetings with regional and National Farmers' Union (NFU) representatives. The Council has a strong relationship with its farming community and we talked about the impacts of the sector relating to Covid-19 and Britain's exit from the European Union, how the Council is offering support and working together to tackle shared issues like fly-tipping. We also discussed the Council's work to support Covid-19 recovery and its launch of the Food Enterprise Centre and the Discover Melton website, something which the NFU are very keen to support.

Finally, as the Council enters the pre-election period from tomorrow, I want to offer a few words of support to our Elections Team, who will once again be facing an extremely busy period over the coming weeks. Running elections are a council wide operation with hundreds of people involved and particularly this year, the challenges of running a Covid-19 secure election are significant. I know the Council's team will do a great job to serve local democracy and I want to thank them for all their efforts.

CO84

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the Constitution, Members of the Council may answer questions from the public of which notice has been given.

(a) The following question was received from Kelly Davies:

'With a clear roadmap for leisure and hospitality industries in place and us moving closer to that restriction-free summer, what incentives and ideas does the Council have in place to help attract both locals and tourists to Melton's Purple Flag nightlife, to enable them to be in the best stead to recover and grow after the pandemic?

The Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity (Deputy Leader) provided a response as summarised below:

The local economy in Melton is dominated by sectors such as Tourism, Retail, Leisure and Hospitality which have been particularly adversely impacted by the restrictions that have been in place over the last year. Following the easing of each lockdown, the Council has undertaken a significant amount of collaborative work with the Business Improvement District (BID) as well as Melton Mowbray Town Estate (MMTE) for the safe reopening of various sectors of our economy including the town centre and evening economy.

Business grants:

A significant part of the Council's effort to support economic recovery has been the distribution of grants money provided by the Government in a timely way to the

businesses that needed it the most. Since November 2020 over £5m has been paid out across 8 schemes to over 600 businesses on top of the £10.7m given out during the first lockdown March-June 2020.

The Council has also looked at how it can support businesses during the recovery period and is currently looking at how it can introduce a comprehensive package of economic recovery related programmes and projects to support our economy over the next year. A report is due to be considered by the Cabinet in April 2021 to approve the package of wide ranging measures designed to support our local economy.

Just this week, the Council has been allocated £45,000 from the Government's 'welcome back fund' for initiatives in communities and high street. We will engage with the relevant stakeholders in spending this money in readiness to welcome back the visitors and shoppers in our town centre.

Town Centre:

In addition, the Council has allocated £50,000 for town centre enhancements. This funding will be used for working with partners to develop a long term vision for the town centre as well as undertaking environmental and public realm enhancements to make the town centre attractive in readiness for reopening later in the summer. We would like to explore the opportunities to animate the town centre by outdoor events, live music, open air cinema and such activities by working in partnership with BID and MMTE.

Support for the reopening of outdoor hospitality

Melton Borough Council will support measures in Step 2 of the Government's roadmap (no earlier than 12 April) - hospitality venues will be allowed to serve people outdoors and the measures to support the safe re-opening of hospitality businesses.

Al fresco dining:

The Council will continue the simplified route for pubs, restaurants and cafes to obtain a temporary pavement licence to place furniture including outdoor tables and seating on the highway. Melton Borough Council has decided to not charge the £100 fees for this and providing this free of charge. The process includes a streamlined 10-working day consultation and determination period. MBCs licences are granted until 30 September 2022, unless there are good reasons not to.

Freedom to use land for community events and outdoor hospitality:

The Council will continue greater flexibility for businesses to hold outdoor events such as summer fairs or motorsports on land without the need for a planning application for 56 days until 31 December 2021. Car-boot sales, or people or businesses such as pubs wishing to set up marquees will also be exempt.

Outdoor markets

The Council will exercise a new temporary right, extended to March 2022 that allows local authorities, either by themselves or by others on their behalf, to use

land to hold a market without having to apply for planning permission.

Takeaways

The Council will take measures to support restaurants, drinking establishments such as pubs and cafes to serve takeaway food when they were otherwise closed due to coronavirus restrictions extended until March 2022.

Tourism related activity/information

We want residents and visitors alike to explore and enjoy Melton's countryside, market town and villages, and to learn and enjoy Melton's rich heritage by establishing our core stories and to immerse its experiences. To support this the following initiatives and priorities are in place:

1. The Council works in partnership with town centre stakeholders to retain the Purple Flag status and support the evening and night time economy.
2. MBC will launch a new Place based website **Discover Melton** in April to promote and attract people to **visit, live and invest** and raise the profile of brand Melton 'The Rural Capital of Food' as a destination.
3. This will be supported by an **interactive map** listing tourism related businesses, visitor attractions, food & drink, experiences, events and places to stay etc. within the Borough. The map will be digital allowing us to update information accordingly with links to businesses websites and social media channels where possible. As the site develops MBC will **market cultural immersive experiences, themes and stories** brought to life through the people that run businesses and live in the community.
4. The Council is working in partnership with the County Council to support **Uncover the Story Campaign** to welcome visitors back, stimulate cultural curiosity by promoting our great stories around food, drink and the richness of our heritage.
5. Continue to working closely with our partners and support local businesses to **develop visitor experiences** and targeted itineraries, taking them to market effectively.
6. Continue working in close partnership with key partners for cross promotion & joint campaign. Visit Leicester, Place Marketing and neighbouring Borough's to extend our reach across Leicestershire.
7. Promote awareness of the range of **quality assurance schemes** for accommodation, attraction and restaurants - **We're Good to Go** industry standard & **WTTC SafeTravels Stamp**.
8. Support local event businesses, Melton BID, and Town Estate to develop a **robust plan for future of events** in the Town and Borough.

Through this work we will support both the delivery of Melton's Destination Management Plan and the wider Leicester and Leicestershire tourism Growth plan, ensuring there is greater cohesion by working together to support the wider area. This approach will ensure we help promote the work we are doing when promoting the area nationally and get Melton's messages out to a wider audience.

CO85	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS</p> <p>There were no questions from Members.</p>
CO86	<p>MOTIONS ON NOTICE</p> <p>There were no motions on notice received.</p>
CO87	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL : COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN</p> <p>Councillor Alan Pearson, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities introduced and moved the recommendations in the report, providing a summary and advising that the Community Safety Partnership consisted of a range of agencies, committed to the reduction of crime and antisocial behaviour and to addressing wider community safety issues (deprivation, vulnerability engagement and services etc.) The Council had an excellent collaborative relationship with the Partnership and also worked closely with Leicestershire County Council and the Police Service.</p> <p>Councillor Pearson highlighted that the Strategic Plan covered a number of areas (including antisocial behaviour and domestic violence) and promoted a cohesive community. It linked closely with the Council's Corporate Strategy and was based on a range of data and information (crime and disorder information and the strategic plans of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Leicestershire County Council).</p> <p>Councillor Pearson advised that the Partnership recognised the need to engage with communities and stakeholders effectively, using a narrative approach. A public consultation had been undertaken in January and February 2020, which provided a clear direction of focus for the Partnership's resource of five key areas (drug related crime, road safety, violent crime, cybercrime and communication). Upon approval of the Strategic Plan, an annual Community Safety Action Plan would be compiled and reviewed by the Partnership to allow focused action and resource deployment for the forthcoming year. Outcomes would be reported to Scrutiny Committee annually.</p> <p>Councillor Orson seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.</p> <p>(Councillor Smith here left the meeting.)</p> <p>During debate the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Plan had been considered at Scrutiny Committee on 2 March 2021, with Inspector Audrey Danvers, Neighbourhood Policing Area Commander Melton and Rutland in attendance. • Members were pleased that the results of audits and strategic assessments indicated that Melton was a safe place to live, with low crime and disorder levels. • Members noted that the Partnership was required to produce a community safety plan every 3 years and undertake an annual strategic assessment to

	<p>revise the plan and the community safety priorities, commenting that regular review was important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members were disappointed that there had been a recent increase in violent crime statistics in Melton but were pleased that a Violence Reduction network has been established to address issues across Leicestershire and specifically in Melton. • Cyber-crime was increasing and was an area of growing concern. Members were pleased that the Strategic Plan covered this and that there would be a focus on the young and vulnerable groups. • Members were pleased with the number of organisations working together to reduce crime and disorder (22 of these organisations were listed in the Strategic Plan). • Parish councils were sometimes unclear about where they could obtain support for issues such as drugs and fly-tipping. As one of these organisations working to reduce crime and disorder, it was vital that they were made aware of the resource available through the Safer Communities Partnership. • The Strategic Plan focussed on issues affecting the Melton community, as well as those of county-wide and national concern. • The Melton Learning Hub had facilitated premises for the Police Service to meet with young people and talk through issues of concern. Two schemes of note were related to knife crime and preventing offending and were a significant and accessible benefit to young people. • Leicestershire County Council worked well as Partnership lead, collating information and distributing it to district councils. • Melton Mowbray Young Farmers Club were commended for the initiative they had shown in continuing to meet and hold competitions remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic. • Organisations in Melton were proactive and worked well together to tackle issues of concern. This work should be highlighted and supported. <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>To APPROVE the proposed Community Safety Strategy 2021/24.</p>
CO88	<p>ANNUAL EQUALITIES REPORT</p> <p>Councillor Alison Freer-Jones, Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement introduced and moved the recommendations in the report, providing a summary and advising that the report provided an annual update to Council on the progress against equalities objectives and the work undertaken to meet public sector equalities duty.</p> <p>Councillor Freer-Jones highlighted that the Council published its Single Equality Scheme, which covered all legal duties as required by the Equality Act 2010 and set out the objectives and approach to advancing equality and diversity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. The current Scheme had been approved by Council in December 2019 (covering 2020</p>

– 2024) and any review in the last 12 months could not ignore the impact of Covid-19. The redirection of resources to respond to the pandemic had impacted on planned actions, although the Council had maintained good progress, not least in its commitment to undertaking equality impact assessments on services.

Councillor Freer-Jones advised that Covid-19 had also demonstrated the health inequalities that existed within the black and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. This highlighted the importance of the Council's work as a public body and community leader in addressing inequalities. In July 2020 the Council adopted an anti-racism motion, reaffirming its commitment to promoting equality and fairness for all and condemning any and all forms of racism. This motion would feed into this work. Significant and fundamental changes in delivery of equalities work, within the Government's new fight for fairness aims and principles with a move away from being the focus on protected characteristics and focus on freedom choice, opportunity, and individual human humanity and dignity was anticipated. Whatever the future developments, the Council would continue to fulfil its duties and responsibilities in a way that was sensitive to the needs of its communities.

Councillor Orson seconded the motion, reiterating that the pandemic had revealed inequalities and that the Council's anti-racism motion had been an important commitment to promoting fairness and condemning inequality.

During debate the following points were noted:

- Legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010 were adequately met.
- The Single Equality Scheme was vital in ensuring the Act was complied with.
- It was unfortunate that the pandemic had affected delivery of the actions in the Equalities Plan but progress had been made on most actions.
- Members were disappointed that hate crime had increased across Leicestershire, with a 33% increase in Melton and 62% being race related.
- Members were pleased with the implementation of the Equalities Steering Group, noting its responsibility for monitoring the Council's performance against the Single Equality Scheme .
- Members welcomed the Equalities Training to be included in the Member Development Programme for 2021/22.

RESOLVED

Council **NOTED** and **COMMENTED** as appropriate on the progress made in meeting the Council's equalities duties and commitments.

CO89

PAY POLICY STATEMENT

(Councillor Browne here left the meeting due to his disclosable pecuniary interest, as set out at Minute CO81 above.)

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 Council published its annual Pay Policy Statement (on its

	<p>website, by 1 April each year) in accordance with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. Guidance on the core requirements for the Statement was set out at Section 40 of the Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To show the method by which salaries of all employees were determined. • To detail the level of remuneration of the Council's most senior employees, the remuneration of the Council's lowest paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers, and those employees who were not Chief Officers. <p>Councillor de Burle highlighted that the Statement before members met all requirements and additionally demonstrated that the Council was committed to ensuring that its remuneration pay and benefits package was competitive, fair and equitable, in order to attract and retain the best staff and to deliver excellent services to the public.</p> <p>Councillor Orson seconded the motion.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To APPROVE the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22; 2) To APPROVE publications of the Statement on the Council's website.
CO90	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES There were no recommendations or reports from committees</p>
	<p>Councillor Joe Orson, Leader of the Council invited those Members who were interested in assuming the role of Deputy Mayor for 2021/22 to contact himself or Councillor Graham.</p>

The meeting closed at: 7.36 pm

Mayor