

Minutes



Meeting name	Cabinet
Date	Wednesday, 13 October 2021
Start time	4.00 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor J. Orson (Chair)

Councillors R. Browne R. de Burle
A. Freer M. Graham MBE

In Attendance P. Cumbers (Scrutiny Chair)

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

Minute No.	Minute
195	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were no apologies of absence.</p>
	<p>The Leader welcomed Councillor Graham as Melton Borough Council's new Deputy Leader, highlighting that his wealth of experience would serve the role well.</p>
196	<p>MINUTES The minutes of the meetings held on 8 and 21 September were confirmed.</p>
197	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Councillor Freer declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 - Melton Mowbray Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal Ballot, as a member of the BID Board and confirmed that she would leave the meeting during consideration of this item.</p> <p>Councillor Orson declared an interest in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council, due to his role as a County Councillor.</p>
198	<p>MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES Response & Recovery Task & Finish Group (People) - Final Report</p> <p>Councillor Pat Cumbers, Chair of Scrutiny Committee introduced the report, advising that the Group had been established to consider 'people' issues resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and the Council's response, which was vital to the recovery process.</p> <p>Before Members were a number of recommendations proposed by the Group and the reasons for these recommendations, including evidence gathered (which could be viewed in full on the Council's website). Councillor Cumbers highlighted 2 of the recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2.2 - As soon as practicable, the Council and appropriate partners should host a Jobs Fair for people aged between 16 and 24. It is recommended that the jobs fair should include businesses, the DWP, Brooksby-Melton College, advice services and sign-posting – This age group was severely affected during the pandemic for a number of reasons (education was interrupted, more likely to be on zero hours contracts and less likely to have savings etc). • 2.2.6 - The Council should review existing processes for monitoring its treatment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents and ensuring that BAME residents are treated fairly. This should include looking to make improvements where required – the Group had not received as many responses to its survey as was hoped. Only 7 of those who had responded had described themselves as of the BAME community and when asked if they had been discriminated against by the Council or

any of its partners, 5 had indicated that they had been. It was important that the Council consider its policies and that officers ensure all residents were treated fairly.

The Leader commented that he valued the positive work undertaken by Scrutiny Committee and by this Group. The Group's recommendations would assist the Council's approach to support and empower people as the community emerge from the pandemic.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- Members thanked Councillor Cumbers, the Group and officers for the comprehensive and constructive work undertaken.
- On the suggestion to merge recommendations 2.2.2 and 2.2.4, and hold a joint jobs and volunteers fair to focus Council resources, Councillor Cumbers highlighted the importance of distinct and targeted focus on both areas individually.
- Voluntary work provided the opportunity for younger, less experienced people to gain work based knowledge and skills and could be the first step to paid employment. Having the voluntary sector involved in the jobs fair could be beneficial and may encourage employers to consider work experience initiatives etc.
- Every March the Council sent council tax invoices to all homes in the borough and this could be used as an opportunity to engage with the community by including feedback requests.
- Engagement with the community was vital to understand how well the Council had responded during the pandemic. However, It was difficult to make decisions based on the people survey results, as there had been a low number of responses.
- The Council had responded well during the pandemic, with officers acting quickly to support the community.
- Concerning recommendation 2.2.5, it was highlighted that digital exclusion was a cost to the Council and something it could and should tackle with its partner organisations.
- The newly formed Helping People Partnership Board was a useful partnership, which aimed to contribute positively to the community. It was vital that relevant partners be represented on the Board and that Councillors be updated on the progress of the Board.

Cabinet

- 1) **RECOGNISED** the work of the Task and Finish Group and **ACKNOWLEDGED** the contents of the report;
- 2) **APPROVED** the recommendations of the Final Report of the Scrutiny Response and Recovery (People) Task and Finish Group (Appendix A), as below:
 - i. That assurance be given to Scrutiny that the Council was proactive in identifying and putting measures in place to prevent people from becoming homeless, with a particular emphasis on encouraging people to seek housing advice and support prior to them becoming homeless. This should take the following form:
 - a) A proactive communications approach including a poster campaign

(public facing communications which emphasise the need for people to contact the Council for advice and support as soon as possible and not when they have already become homeless).

- b) A proactive communications approach which encourages landlords to contact the Council before they serve a notice, to see if we can work together to address any issues and stabilise the tenancy.
 - c) A proactive approach to engaging with landlords in the Borough (for example, through a landlords' forum).
 - d) Readily available information and guidance about how the Council can help and prevent homelessness from occurring to begin with (for example, negotiating with landlords, addressing underlying issues that have led to the tenancy being at risk, implementation of support to stabilise the tenancy).
 - e) An update report to the Scrutiny Committee in 12 months' time to demonstrate how successful the Council had been in preventing households from becoming homeless, and any lessons learned.
- ii. As soon as practicable, the Council and appropriate partners should host a Jobs Fair for people aged between 16 and 24. It was recommended that the jobs fair should include businesses, the DWP, Brooksby Melton College, advice services and sign-posting.
 - iii. Engagement with the lead officer for Communications in respect to future Scrutiny studies where consultation and engagement may be required is crucial to ensure there is clarity on expectations, timescales and visibility/reach of consultation exercise.
 - iv. We recommend that the Council host a Volunteer Fair to be held at Parkside with as much publicity as possible to encourage as many charitable companies, voluntary organisations and possible volunteers to attend.
 - v. The Council should review its existing processes to ensure that the digitally excluded have the same access to services as digitally competent residents have. In addition, the Council should work with partners (e.g. Age UK) to ensure that the digitally excluded have every opportunity to become digitally included if they choose. This could also be by increasing the help which the Council already provided in the computer suite at Phoenix House so that all residents, who wish, can obtain the necessary skills to access the internet. In addition, the Council should consider using the Government's Kick Start scheme, to employ a 16 to 24 year-old on Universal Credit or at risk of long-term unemployment, to help residents develop their digital knowledge (Age UK has a Digital Buddy training video which provides guidance).
 - vi. The Council should review existing processes for monitoring its treatment of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) residents and ensuring that BAME residents are treated fairly. This should include looking to make improvements where required.
 - vii. A refresh of the Helping People Partnership:
 - a) To ensure that the Helping People Partnership Board was representative of relevant partners who can deliver an effective and collaborative approach to health and wellbeing in Melton.
 - b) To ensure that the Helping People Partnership Board incorporates Covid recovery/insights, needs and trends as a standing agenda item to enable collective understanding and action planning, relevant to the remit of the partnership.
 - c) To ensure that the outcomes of the partnership were made available to Scrutiny Members with an update report in 6 months.

Reasons for the recommendations:

The Task and Finish Group produced the recommendations after gathering evidence and making conclusions based on the evidence, all of which are outlined within the Final Report at Appendix A.

At their meeting on 5 October 2021, the Scrutiny Committee approved that the report and recommendations should be forwarded to Cabinet for approval.

[Councillor Freer left the meeting]

199

MELTON MOWBRAY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) RENEWAL BALLOT

Pranali Parikh, Director for Growth and Regeneration introduced the report, in relation to the Council's votes in the upcoming ballot, following receipt and review of the Final Business Plan.

Ms. Parikh advised that the report before Members followed a deferral of the recommendation from Cabinet on 8 September 2021 and receipt of BID's final business plan. The Council's 17 votes in the ballot represented its 17 hereditaments, as detailed at paragraph 5.2 of the report. In readiness for the ballot on 28 October the BID had circulated ballot papers and the final business plan to all 487 participating businesses (this complied with suggestions that projects, activities and budgets be available to all businesses within the BID area regardless of the geographic location). The final business plan also included ballot rules, company structure and composition of the Board.

Ms. Parikh highlighted that the priorities and actions identified in the final business plan complied with the Council's corporate priorities, particularly for delivering sustainable growth within Melton and regenerating the town centre. BID was a valued partner organisation and if the ballot was successful, BID would collect approximately £170k levy collection each year to support the town centre and businesses within the BID area.

The Leader commented that the BID had an enthusiastic team who did excellent work. The ballot presented an exciting time for Melton as businesses in the town centre had the opportunity to vote for renewal of the BID. The Business Waste Collection Scheme was popular, as were events and markets organised by the BID. Although the relationship had often been challenging, the BID was a good partner to the Council and had helped to ensure the well-being of businesses in the town centre during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council and the BID shared aims and worked towards the benefit of the wider community. This was a great opportunity for our businesses to direct how the town centre functions and thrives for the next five years. The Council supports the BID and wishes it well in the ballot process.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- Members welcomed the opportunity for the Council to work collaboratively with the BID and businesses to encourage vibrancy in the town.

Cabinet **NOTED** the final business plan and **AUTHORISED** the Director of Growth and Regeneration to complete the ballot papers for all 17 hereditaments as identified in paragraph 5.2 on behalf of the Council in favour of the BID Proposal.

Reasons for the recommendation:

Priority 6 of the Council's Corporate Strategy (2020-2024), connected with and led by our community, focuses on reviewing and reinvigorating partnership structures and frameworks.

The BID is a key partner for the Council in delivering services and enhancing the benefits for levy payers in the town centre. BID levy raises approximately £160,000 each year resulting in the total spend of over £800,000 in five years to deliver the projects in addition to the Council's services and initiatives. This adds value to the Council's efforts, ambitions and resources which is especially important in post-COVID times.

[Councillor Freer returned to meeting]

200

DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

Jim Worley Assistant Director for Planning and Delivery introduced the report, the purpose of which was to seek approval to recommend adoption of the Design of Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to Council on the 16 December 2021.

Mr. Worley advised that the document addressed design in setting and context, including technological use of materials and sustainability techniques etc and aimed to be constructive, setting out parameters for good design and acting as a toolkit to provide a comprehensive package of guidance to prospective developers, which would be better placed to meet Council aspirations.

The Leader commented that officers had put much work into the document. This was guidance to compliment the Local Plan and aimed to improve design quality of development (a key aspiration of the Local Plan). It was a positive and constructive document, which would help developers understand expectations. Extensive internal and external consultation had resulted in a comprehensive document, assisting with all aspects of design.

Cabinet

- 1) **NOTED** the comments received during the consultation period and the amendments made to Design of Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as a result;
- 2) **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the final version of the Design of Development SPD be adopted as a formal Supplementary Planning Document.

Reasons for the recommendations:

Formal adoption of the Design of Development SPD is sought in order to support the Local Plan objective of securing improved quality of design. It provides additional guidance and information to help implement and interpret the design related policies in the Melton Local Plan. This includes but is not limited to the main design policy (D1). As design is a cross cutting theme, a number of other policies in the Melton Local Plan are also relevant to the SPD including those relating to environmental enhancements, character, heritage and transport / parking.

The six week public consultation from 10th June 2021 – 22nd July 2021 resulted in 30 responses which were generally positive with some useful additions and comments received. This feedback has been incorporated where possible within the Design of Development SPD to produce the final document.

It is considered that the finalised SPD will be a valuable tool towards achieving the aim and objective of raising the quality of design and development in the Borough.

201

MELTON NORTH SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD MASTERPLAN

Jim Worley, Assistant Director for Planning introduced the report, the purpose of which was to seek Cabinet approval of the Masterplan for the Melton North Sustainable Neighbourhood.

Mr. Worley advised that the Masterplan set out the scope of development (its content, schools, the road, housing and open spaces, narratives and expectations about phasing and delivery). The Masterplan also provided assurance to Leicestershire County Council (LCC) in respect of their infrastructure investment and the Housing Infrastructure Fund award.

The Leader thanked Mr. Worley and his team for their work, noting that the document was comprehensive and represented an important step to securing the housing growth and infrastructure needed in Melton. It provided a positive vision for the new sustainable neighbourhood (with nearly 2000 homes, schools, green spaces, community facilities, playing fields etc.) and it underpinned the significant development investment in the north and east of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road.

The Leader welcomed the collaborative work taking place between the Council, LCC and developers. If approved, the Masterplan would be subject to viability testing, which was important to ensure the Masterplan was deliverable.

Cabinet

- 1) **APPROVED** the Masterplan for the purposes of providing a framework to guide the consideration of future planning applications in the North Sustainable Neighbourhood area, subject to the receipt of a viability assessment that demonstrates its deliverability;

- 2) **NOTED** that the approval of the Masterplan would support the delivery of the north and east sections of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR) in particular;
- 3) **NOTED** that the adoption of the Masterplan was part of the package of works required to support Leicestershire County Council in accepting the Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) grant, as set out by their Cabinet on 20 July 2021.

Reasons for recommendations:

The Masterplan meets the main requirements of adopted Policy SS5, supporting the wider aspirations of the Local Plan for a high quality sustainable neighbourhood, and the delivery of homes and the infrastructure required to support them.

The Masterplan has been developed as a result of close collaboration between the Council and the landowners/developers, and represents a strong, positive and coherent approach to the continued development of the North Sustainable Neighbourhood.

The adopted Masterplan will provide the assurance as required by Leicestershire County Council to ensure the delivery of housing and associated infrastructure, giving them the confidence to proceed with and 'forward fund' the education requirements for the Borough and the MMDR project.

Viability assessment of the Masterplan is underway, and initial outputs are expected in mid-October 2021. The County Council is keen to see progress with the Masterplan, and agrees with the approach set out at recommendation.

That the Masterplan is adopted subject to viability assessment. The headline viability assessment and its final outputs will be shared with the County Council at the earliest possible opportunity, and the assessment will be subject to the scrutiny of both parties.

The Leader noted that Councillor Rob Bindloss would join the Cabinet as Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration. He commented that he looked forward to working with Councillor Bindloss, who had undertaken excellent work as Vice-Chair for Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting closed at: 4.50 pm

Chair