

Minutes

Meeting name	Council
Date	Tuesday, 20 December 2022
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor A. Hewson (Chair)

Councillors

E. Holmes (Vice-Chair)	S. Atherton
R. Bindloss	R. Browne
S. Carter	P. Chandler
P. Cumbers	R. de Burle
C. Evans	A. Freer
M. Glancy	M. Graham MBE
L. Higgins	J. Illingworth
S. Lumley	J. Orson
P. Posnett MBE	R. Smith
T. Webster	J. Wilkinson

Officers

- Chief Executive
- Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
- Director for Corporate Services
- Director for Growth and Regeneration
- Monitoring Officer (via remote link)
- Democratic Services Manager
- Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer
- Democratic Services Officer (CT)

Pastor Neal Swettenham offered prayers

Minute No.	Minute
CO38	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Child, Douglas, Faulkner, Fisher, Pritchett and Wood.</p>
CO39	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2022 were confirmed.</p>
CO40	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>A personal interest in respect of Councillors Orson and Posnett MBE, was noted as being on record for any matters which related to the Leicestershire County Council.</p>
CO41	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Mayor informed Members that he attended the following events since the last Council meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal British Legion remembrance event at De Montfort Hall, Leicester. • Leicestershire County Chairman's remembrance event. • Charnwood Mayor's remembrance event. • Royal British Legion ceremony outside their premises. • Rutland remembrance event at Uppingham School. • Melton Remembrance Parade. • Multi-faith remembrance service at Leicester. • Performing Stars Awards held at the Cattle Market. • Christmas Lights switch on in Melton Mowbray. • Christmas Tree festival at St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray. • Visited Birchwood School. • Mayor's Carol Concert at St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray. • The Mayor's Staff Christmas Lunch at Parkside. • Ferneley School Carol Concerts • Attended a number of carol services throughout December.
CO42	<p>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Leader made the following speech:</p> <p><i>"Members, I begin by paying tribute to a former Councillor Brenda Smith, who died recently. Councillor Smith was elected as a Councillor to represent Egerton Ward at a by-election on 28 February 2002 and she served until 2008, when she moved away from the area. She was best known for her work with Residents Action Group Egerton and her role in securing new play equipment and the building of the Cove. I would like to echo the words of Matthew O'Callaghan and agree that she was an 'outstanding Councillor and true champion of the people of Egerton Ward.' On behalf of the Council I offer our sincere condolences to her family and friends.</i></p> <p><i>I want to now reflect on the events of yesterday. Firstly, the publication of the finance settlement which will inform the development of our budget. This sets out the funding we will receive from central government for the next year with some principles also announced for the following year.</i></p>

Whilst nationally this be the largest cash settlement local government has received for many years, for district councils the increase is only 5%, which is way below current levels of inflation and does not account for lost income streams still impacted by covid.

In reality, the total of the various grants received by MBC is actually £7k less than that received in 2022/23 and £37k less than that assumed in the draft budget which is disappointing. In better news, the finance team are still assessing the level of business rates we will be able to retain, but we expect this to be an increase over the amount assumed in the draft budget, although not enough to achieve a balanced budget without the need to draw on reserves. As a council we will still need to consider the savings that will be necessary to bring the budget into balance in a measured way.

Scrutiny will be holding a workshop in early January, followed by the more formal scrutiny meeting, prior to consideration by Cabinet and Budget Council in February. I look forward to working with all Members as we navigate this difficult time for the sector.

As you'll be aware, one of the ways we were hoping to manage our financial sustainability was through the establishment of a strategic partnership with Harborough District Council. Following a comprehensive debate on the subject last night, their Council chose, by 1 vote, to reject the recommendation from their Cabinet. This is extremely disappointing as it means we will no longer be able to access the considerable benefits that would have been available to us, our teams and our communities, had the partnership been established. As you will appreciate, based on the decision taken by Harborough, there was no option but to withdraw the item from tonight's agenda.

Having said that, I continue to believe that the case for working more closely with Harborough remains, and whilst this is a setback and a missed opportunity, it doesn't have to be a fatal blow to our aspirations. Building on the work done so far, and the strong relationships we have built, we will continue to explore opportunities with them, like the CCTV item on our agenda this evening. Clearly however, without the partnership framework in place, these opportunities will be more limited than would otherwise have been possible,

Since our last meeting, our £1.2m UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan has been approved by government. This is fantastic news and shows our plan, which had wide support from stakeholders, is credible and will deliver for our residents on cost of living, jobs and prosperity.

On Friday we had the fantastic news that despite the increasing costs, and some uncertainty over recent months, the MMDR north and east sections will go ahead, with work starting in March. This remains a massive achievement and will be huge

for our communities and our economy. We will continue to work with the County Council to ensure the southern section of the MMDR can come forward at the earliest opportunity too.

The road will deliver the homes and jobs that Melton needs, and at a time when more homes are being built in Melton than ever before, we await details on the recent ministerial statements on planning reform and housing targets. We would obviously support measures which give more power to local communities, but any changes must not choke off delivery or stifle growth. We will review the details of any proposals carefully and update members when more details are published.

After another busy year it is fitting that I reflect on all the good work which has been done. As part of this, I am delighted to confirm that we are in the process of making a submission to the prestigious LGC Awards 2023, in the category of Most Improved Council, and I wanted to share some of the key parts of our submission with you.

It's worth reflecting on the challenges this Council was facing when I became Leader and was joined by the Chief Executive a few months later. We had no corporate oversight of how we were performing, we had no scrutiny function, no clarity on how policy was developed, we had no housing officers, no enforcement capability, no legal team, no democratic services team, no regeneration team, no assets team. We were dysfunctional, with too few resources, devoted to too many priorities, and were sleep walking into some major failures.

It is easy to forget how far we have come over the last few years. We are not perfect, and nor will we ever be, but we are much improved and unrecognisable from where we were. That is because we made the changes necessary, built a fantastic team of officers, worked well together as members, and at key times, had the courage to make bold decisions, even when there were those who would still criticise us.

The improvements made are even more impressive when you consider that as a small district we have far fewer resources than the vast majority of other councils, and yet we continue to punch above our weight time and time again.

- The move to Cabinet and Scrutiny model, and adoption of a constitution in 2019 has created the platform for all the good work since. Roles have been clarified and there is far greater focus and accountability.*
- Our housing service was in a mess, but the Housing Improvement Plan, also agreed in 2019, has delivered a huge transformation, and ensures we are ready for the regulatory changes which are to come. We can now look forward, listening to our tenants, investing in their homes, and with the highest levels of audit assurance possible, demonstrate we are delivering our priorities.*
- We worked tirelessly during the pandemic, saving lives and protecting livelihoods, leading the covid response and recovery, and again, despite the*

unprecedented challenge, our efforts received the highest level of assurance possible.

- On the MMDR, we showed incredible resolve to negotiate a pioneering infrastructure funding deal which has helped secure the relief road, without jeopardising our financial future. This is transformational for this borough, and is something that many thought would never happen.*
- We have also influenced and worked positively with our health partners, who are now committed to work with us to deliver the second GP surgery for Melton.*
- On growth, with our partners, we launched the Stockyard at the Cattle Market, and have supported over 60 small businesses through the Food Enterprise Centre, as well as submitted an ambitious Levelling Up Fund bid to secure more investment for our town.*
- More homes have been built in Melton in the last year than at any time in the last 30 years, and the big improvements we made in land charges saw us shortlisted for the national awards for excellence.*
- We created an assets team who are actively managing our portfolio, generating capital receipts for things we no longer need, so they can be invested in those that we do, as part of our asset development programme.*
- We've built enforcement capacity, using powers to solve community issues not previously used in Melton; including Community Protection Notices, Closure Orders and securing prosecutions which have gained us international recognition and commendations from the Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency.*
- We demonstrated our continuing compassion and support to the most vulnerable, being the first council in Leicestershire to welcome Afghan refugees who supported our armed forces, as well as those fleeing from Ukraine.*
- On cost of living, we have a plan in place and quickly distributed energy rebate payments and have supported more of our residents to gain access to Household Support Payments than the other 6 districts in Leicestershire combined. The cost of living crisis will be felt for some time, and we will continue to do all we can to support our residents.*
- We were the first Council in the East Midlands to achieved Disability Confident Leader status and one of only 3 employers in Leicestershire to secure the Gold award in the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme this year.*
- And in another mark of our progress, resident satisfaction is up across the board compared to 2019, showing the things we are doing are appreciated by those we serve.*

There is no complacency of course and we will continue to be ambitious to do more, with the strong foundations we have built being so important to ensuring we can deliver. Today's agenda is an example of that, whether that is upgrading our CCTV and replacing cameras that are 26 years old or considering our housing asset management plan which is another tangible demonstration of the progress

	<p><i>we've made. I look forward to discussing these and the other items on tonight's agenda during the course of the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>I am very proud of all we do at Melton and want us to showcase our achievements at the LGC Awards next year. I hope all members will join with me in supporting our submissions and would like to thank members and officers for all their hard work in moving this council so far forward."</i></p>
CO43	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>No questions from the public had been received.</p>
CO44	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS</p> <p>No questions from Members had been received.</p>
CO45	<p>MOTIONS ON NOTICE</p> <p>No motions on notice had been received.</p>
CO46	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023 - 2028</p> <p>Councillor Browne, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services introduced the report and moved the recommendations. The motion was seconded by Councillor Smith.</p> <p>The continuity of positive progress in relation to the housing management function was noted by a number of members. Concern was raised regarding damp within a number of properties. In response Councillor Browne committed to viewing the issue for himself but assured Members that Officers will look to identify the cause of damp and find a remedy for it.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council:</p> <p>APPROVED the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Asset Management Plan 2023 – 2028 and associated action plan and agreed that they are used to inform the revenue and capital budget proposals for 2023/24.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO47	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL AND HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> <p>Due to the decision by Harborough District Council on 19 December 2020 not to proceed with the strategic partnership, this item was withdrawn by the Leader and not considered at the meeting.</p>

CO48	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - CCTV: MODERNISATION AND REVISED OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS</p> <p>Councillor Graham, Portfolio Holder for People and Communities (Deputy Leader) introduced the report and moved the recommendations. Councillor Browne seconded the motion.</p> <p>During the debate, it was clarified that the report related to the purchase and installation of 10 static cameras.</p> <p>A query was raised on whether the Council is confident that operators in Harborough would be able to easily identify places when required. Councillor Graham responded by stating he was confident as the cameras would be in fixed locations and there are maps for referencing the locations of the cameras.</p> <p>A Member commented that they thought What3words should be adopted. In response, Members were informed that this could be looked into, however there is a need to be cautious with What3words as if something is slightly wrong then a completely different location would be identified.</p> <p>The question was asked whether there could be monitoring facilities within Melton monitored by a volunteer, however in response it was explained that it has been difficult to find volunteers and so the Council have found a cost effective way of ensuring that CCTV is monitored professionally. In addition, it takes a while for a volunteered to be fully trained and all the security checks to be completed.</p> <p>In response to a query regarding ensuring a person from Melton is part of the team at Harborough monitoring the CCTV, Members were informed that they need to see how the arrangement works out and then address any issues if they should arise.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council:</p> <p>(1) APPROVED the capital investment to modernise the CCTV system, with the capital programme updated accordingly with £26,670 being allocated from the General Fund capital receipts and £17,770 being allocated from the HRA Regeneration and Development Reserve.</p> <p>(2) APPROVED that authority is given to collaborate with Harborough District Council for CCTV maintenance and monitoring arrangements.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO49	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2022/23</p>

	<p>Councillor de Burle, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources introduced the report and moved the recommendation. Councillor Orson seconded the motion.</p> <p>A query was raised in relation to the impact that increasing interest rates would have upon the Councils budgetary position with regard to the payment to the LCC for education infrastructure. In response the Director for Corporate Services stated that such movements would be accounted for within the medium term financial strategy but a more precise answer would be provided outside of the meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>(1) NOTED the mid-year position on treasury activity for 2022/23.</p> <p>(2) NOTED the mid-year position on Prudential Indicators for 2022/23.</p> <p>(3) APPROVED the proposed change to the Investment Strategy, as outlined in paragraph 5.2 of the report at Appendix 1, to increase the maximum investment period with Banks and Building Societies to three years.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO50	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING, 1 APRIL 2022 - 30 SEPTEMBER 2022</p> <p>Councillor de Burle, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Finance and Resources introduced the report and moved the recommendation. Councillor Browne seconded the motion.</p> <p>During the debate, some Members commented that it was pleasing to see that progress has been made.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>APPROVED the proposed virements and realignment of the HRA capital programme for 2022/23 as outlined in paragraph 5.8 of Appendix 1.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>
CO51	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES - AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT</p>

	<p>As the Audit and Standards Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman were both unable to attend the meeting, Committee Member, Councillor Posnett introduced the Annual Report of the Audit and Standards Committee and recommended that Council notes the report. Councillor Graham seconded the motion.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>NOTED the Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report for the year to 31 August 2022.</p>
CO52	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES - REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2022 - 2027</p> <p>In the absence of the Licensing Committee Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Chandler introduced report and moved the recommendation. Councillor Orson seconded the motion.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Council</p> <p>AGREED that the revised Statement of Licensing Policy 2022-2027 is adopted.</p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>

The meeting closed at: 7.45 pm

Mayor