

Vision 2036 and the framework for the new Corporate Strategy

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Lead Member/Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Pip Allnatt - Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services

Corporate Priority:	All Corporate Priorities
Relevant Ward Member(s):	All
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	N/A
Exempt Information:	No
Key Decision:	No
Subject to call-in:	No

1 Summary

- 1.1 With the Council's current Corporate Strategy due for a refresh, this report sets out the Council's aspiration to establish a longer-term vision for Melton up to 2036; with a number of strategic vision statements being proposed. This report seeks to confirm these proposed aspirations and authorise a period of public consultation, with a view to considering any feedback and finalising the Vision so it becomes the cornerstone of the new Corporate Strategy which will be considered by Council in February 2024.
- 1.2 The report explains why the Council is adopting this approach, and the process which has been followed.

- 1.3 It also confirms the next steps in terms of the development of the vision and the 4-year delivery plan which is currently being developed, alongside the planned route through which the new strategy will be considered and approved.

2 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 **Notes progress to date on developing the Vision 2036 for the Council and the framework for the new Corporate Strategy.**
- 2.2 **Endorses Vision 2036 and the eight strategic vision statements which set out the Council's long-term aspirations.**
- 2.3 **Approves a period of public consultation on the vision starting in December 2023 which will help inform the final version and framework of the new Corporate Strategy.**
- 2.4 **Notes the timescales for further consideration of the Corporate Strategy and associated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council in January and February 2024.**

3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 With the Council's current Corporate Strategy due for refresh, and as part of the establishment of the new Council post-election, a review has been undertaken with members which has considered local needs, issues and opportunities, latest data trends across a range of issues, the extensive residents survey feedback from 2022 and local aspirations debated during the local elections.
- 3.2 Through this process, the Cabinet have confirmed their desire to establish a longer-term vision for Melton, aligned to the current end date of the Council's Local Plan. The Council's proposed Vision 2036 seeks to establish long term, strategic aspirations which articulate the Council's ambition for the residents, businesses and visitors in Melton. These aspirations would create the framework for the Council's focus to improve the services, facilities and infrastructure provided by the Council and its partners. These aspirations are shown in paragraph 5.2 to 5.10.
- 3.3 Alongside this vision, this report sets out a framework which would establish the building blocks, through a four-year delivery plan, to enable the Council to start delivering against these long-term aspirations. Through the proposed structure of this plan and a set of new corporate priorities, the Council will ensure there is sufficient clarity and focus, as well as the required resources, at a time of ongoing significant financial pressures.

4 Background

- 4.1 The Council's current Corporate Strategy was approved in 2020 and runs until April 2024. This Strategy sets out the Council aspirations based on our mission of 'Helping People, Shaping Places'. Alongside our current vision and values, this approach has set out our key priorities and how we have set about achieving them. The current Strategy has six Priority Themes which are shown below:

Helping People

Excellent Services positively impacting on our communities.

Providing high quality council homes and landlord services.

Shaping Places

Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton.

Protect our climate and enhance our rural natural environment.

Great Council

Ensuring the right conditions to support delivery (inward).

Connected with and led by our community (outward).

- 4.2 Over the past three years the Council has had a plan of activity/projects/indicators that have been used to measure progress against the Strategy. This was aligned to the Council's Risk and Performance Management Framework and monitoring and oversight has been maintained by the Council's Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet on a regular basis. This information has also been shared with the public through regular reporting on the Council's website.
- 4.3 Following the Borough Council elections in May 2023 the process began to develop a new Corporate Strategy in order to consider what the priorities the Council should focus on over the short/medium/long term. The review is seeking to ensure that the new strategy is reflective of the borough's needs and aspirations and helps the Council to deliver against local, regional, and national challenges that are currently presenting.
- 4.4 As part of this development work, an all member, State of Melton debate was held on 20th September 2023. This enabled members to consider a range of data and insight on local needs, debate local issues and start to formulate the priorities for the new Corporate Strategy.
- 4.5 Over the last 6 months, officers have worked with members to develop the 2036 Vision and framework. This has been produced by using performance information, customer feedback, service analytics and considering the financial position of the Council. It is intended to address current and future challenges, whilst also seeking to maintain the delivery of our services to residents, businesses and visitors to the borough.
- 4.6 Our new Corporate Strategy will consist of our Vision 2036, and 8 strategic vision statements (set out in paragraph 5.2 to 5.10), supported by a 4-year Corporate Delivery Plan focussed on 6 corporate priorities (set out in paragraph 5.11). The more detailed and costed Corporate Delivery Plan, will be presented to Council in February 2024 following consideration by Scrutiny and Cabinet.

5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Council establishes a Vision up to 2036 and that this is summarised through 8 vision statements which are set out below. Subject to Cabinet approval, these would then be subject to a period of public consultation, prior to final consideration by Council.

5.2 **Our Proposed Vision 2036**

5.2.1 **By 2036, we want Melton to:**

5.3 **Statement 1: Have a new, single, custom-built leisure centre and swimming pool fit for the next generation, supported by wider recreation and physical activity facilities across the borough.**

5.3.1 Leisure facilities and their associated services have wide ranging health and wellbeing benefits and are important community assets, however they are expensive to operate, and care must be taken to ensure they can attract and retain customers to ensure financial viability and resilience.

5.3.2 The Council currently has two ageing leisure facilities, and the current Corporate Strategy identified the need for an affordable and sustainable future for leisure, however, the cost of building a new facility is significant and is currently unaffordable to the Council.

5.3.3 Despite this challenge, through a robust procurement process the Council is in the final stages of agreeing a new 10-year contract service contract that will seek to protect, preserve and enhance existing leisure facilities in Melton.

5.3.4 The anticipated investment and improvement being considered as part of the new leisure procurement would be a significant factor in creating time to develop credible and affordable plans for the longer-term vision for leisure. To achieve the aspiration of a new, single, custom-built leisure centre and swimming pool, the Council will work with private, public and government partners to identify appropriate funding sources such that this can be delivered by 2036.

5.3.5 The investment and focus in future facilities will include a degree of outreach into the wider community and by 2036 the intention is that this would include the development of other community facilities, such as fitness tracks suitable for families and individual training.

5.4 **Statement 2: Have greater access to healthcare services, increasing the availability of primary care, and to meet the needs of a growing population.**

5.4.1 In 2020 the Council identified the need for additional primary care and made lobbying for a second GP practice a corporate priority. Melton has one of the largest GP practices in the Country, and with significant housing growth planned in Melton, needs a strategic response from healthcare providers.

5.4.2 This expectation has been codified by the Council and its partners through an adopted Community Health and Wellbeing Plan and through close working with the Integrated Care Board, the Council has secured recognition of the need for additional primary care provision. Active discussions are underway to establish a fully costed business case for development of a second GP practice with opportunities for co-location within Council assets being explored.

5.4.3 Whilst this represents a very positive step, the Council continues to recognise that further healthcare infrastructure investment and provision will be required alongside the housing growth projected within our Local Plan. Accordingly, the Council will continue to work with health partners to ensure not only provision of sufficient, high quality, primary care services, but also the optimal utilisation of the Melton Hospital site and best provision of community facilities within the borough.

- 5.5 **Statement 3: Have more sustainable homes, that meet the needs of our communities, supported by the right infrastructure, including the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR) and adequate school places.**
- 5.5.1 In 2018 the Council adopted a new Local Plan. This set out a bold vision and framework for growth and one which would see over 6,000 new homes built in Melton Borough by 2036. This plan is working, and more homes have been built in the last couple of years than has been achieved in any of the preceding years for a generation.
- 5.5.2 Following considerable development and preparation work, in May 2023, construction for the long-awaited MMDR commenced. At this stage, funding and planning approval are only in place for the North and East sections. Rising construction costs has meant Leicestershire County Council has recently confirmed it is no longer able to accept the Housing Infrastructure Funding, with the Homes England grant previously secured to deliver the southern section now withdrawn. The mechanism for delivering the third leg of the road is therefore uncertain, though the County Council has confirmed their commitment to delivery remains.
- 5.5.3 Completion of the southern section remains integral to the Local Plan delivery strategy and therefore the Council must continue to work with all parties to identify a mechanism for affordable delivery. The Council remains committed to ensuring the infrastructure required to support the Local Plan is delivered, such that the homes needed to support our growing local communities are built. The Council now needs to strengthen work with other providers like Severn Trent Water and Western Power to ensure the right enabling infrastructure is in place now and for future developments.
- 5.5.4 The Council will also maintain its efforts to secure improved public transport access between Melton and Nottingham, with a continuing focus on securing commitment to improve rail connectivity and mitigating recent reductions in bus links.
- 5.6 **Statement 4: Have high quality homes, across all tenures, supported by accountable and enabling landlord services.**
- 5.6.1 Since 2019, the Council has embraced a significant journey of improvement and can demonstrate many areas of strong performance, assurance and improvement and some notable highlights on health and safety, decent homes and tenancy management. This work will continue. As a landlord, the Council still has a number of improvement and risk areas, and a continued focus on these, whilst also ensuring it is ready for the new regulatory regime continue to be important.
- 5.6.2 By 2036, the new regulatory regime as part of the Social Housing Act 2023 will be embedded, and the Council will have undergone a number of inspections and opportunities for reflection and continuous improvement. Throughout its work and improvement as a landlord, the Council will seek and respond to the voice of its tenants, and this is an area where the Council aspires to be able to demonstrate change and impact.
- 5.6.3 By 2036, the Council is committed to being able to demonstrate it will have moved beyond its initial improvement journey and is high performing in all regulatory aspects, with a financially resilient HRA, maintaining decent homes compliance, and confident in its role as a landlord within the wider housing sector.
- 5.6.4 The Council will also increase its work with registered providers and private sector landlords to ensure standards are improved across all tenures.

- 5.7 **Statement 5: Cement its reputation as the Rural Capital of Food, and be recognised as the Borough Market of the Midlands, with a thriving town centre.**
- 5.7.1 Melton enjoys widespread recognition as the Rural Capital of Food. Working with partners, the Council has been focussed on strengthening the local offer, such that this reputation is enhanced and developed, delivering greater prosperity to the borough. In 2023, the Council was successful in securing, with Rutland County Council, £23m of investment through the Levelling Up Fund. This will enable a number of projects to be delivered including development of the Stockyard proposition at the Cattle Market, investment in the town theatre, and development of demand response transport between Melton Mowbray and Oakham.
- 5.7.2 The funding offers an opportunity to establish Melton as a regional destination for food production, innovation and experience; the so called 'Borough Market of the Midlands'. Significant work is underway to ensure the investment strengthens and complements the high street offer and that a single coherent approach is established between the Stockyard and wider town.
- 5.7.3 The Council must ensure that it capitalises on this opportunity, delivering the required investment, whilst also ensuring a longer-term focus on high street enhancements, adaptation and diversification as consumer and community habits change. Strengthening the high street experience and regenerating and maximising the value of key sites like the Bell Centre and securing more private sector inward investment will be key.
- 5.8 **Statement 6: Cherish and celebrate our rural heritage, having secured investment in our villages and revitalised our waterways and canals.**
- 5.8.1 The Borough's rural heritage is key to its identity. Through the establishment of Area Forums, the Council is working to strengthen relationships with Parish Councils and rural communities. It is crucial that alongside investment in the town, infrastructure is delivered within local villages. Funding to deliver enhanced demand response transport between Melton Mowbray and Oakham is a start, as is the engagement underway with Severn Trent Water but more needs to be done to ensure our villages remain sustainable and have the infrastructure required to support any projected development.
- 5.8.2 Melton's rurality is an attractor both for quality of life and tourism and it is therefore important that the benefits of any rural assets are maximised. The Council is already working with Melton and Oakham Waterways Society and further work needs to be done to establish what is possible.
- 5.8.3 By 2036 the Council and its partners should be working to secure funding to revitalise key waterways and canals across the borough, such that they provide sustainable local assets, which aid both local biodiversity and the tourism sector.
- 5.9 **Statement 7: Harness new technologies, diversifying our business base, and securing more high skilled, higher paying jobs, creating a brighter future for young people.**
- 5.9.1 Melton has relatively low unemployment rate and enjoys a strong industrial base in manufacturing. Average salaries are lower than they should be and as the country contemplates ways to improve productivity and the emergence of new technologies, like Artificial Intelligence, the employment base needs to evolve and adapt to provide higher skilled, higher paying jobs.

- 5.9.2 The Council continues to work productively with local education providers like SMB College and it is important that this work continues, alongside current and future businesses to ensure an understanding of what future needs, future jobs and future skills will be required by 2036 so that plans can be established now to support them. A strategy to support and enable for opportunities for young people is also required.
- 5.9.3 The Council is working with its partners for investment in key infrastructure projects such as MMDR that will open access to key housing and employment sites, bringing the delivery of these sites forward. By 2036, the Council will have supported public and private sector partners in delivering high skilled jobs, supported by availability of quality employment sites, housing, education and leisure facilities.
- 5.10 **Statement 8: Be recognised as clean, green, and attractive; well on our way to becoming a carbon neutral borough.**
- 5.10.1 The Council made a commitment when it declared a climate emergency in 2019 to promote the cutting of emissions across the wider Borough alongside reducing its own organisational emissions. The Council pledges to become net zero in Scope 1 and 2 Emission which are direct emissions from activities owned, delivered or influenced by the Council, by 2036. Concurrently, it is proposed to work with our communities and businesses to raise awareness, share knowledge, exchange ideas and achieve reduction in emissions across the Borough by working together.
- 5.10.2 Considering the changes in regulations and legislation for waste collection, the Council will have either extended or procured a new contract for this key service by 2028. Working closely with the private sector service provider, the Council will have ensured increases in recycling rates and increased the levels of cleanliness of our town centre.
- 5.10.3 By making the town centre clean, green and attractive, we will achieve increase in footfall, decrease in vacancy rates and as a result increase in vibrancy and spend in the economy. Working collaboratively with partners such as Melton Business Improvement District (BID), Melton in Bloom (MIB) and Melton Mowbray Town Estate, the Council will strive to achieve Purple Flag and Green Flag status accreditations. This improved place will contribute significantly towards an increase in 'Pride in Place' in our communities.
- 5.11 **Establishing a 4-year Corporate Delivery Plan – Framework**
- 5.11.1 Alongside the Vision 2036, the Council is proposing to establish a 4-year Delivery Plan which would be underpinned by the strategic vision statements and the new corporate priorities. The Delivery Plan would be linked to the Council's MTFs. The framework for this is set out below and retains the existing themes of Helping People, Shaping Places and Great Council.
- 5.11.2 The new proposed framework for the 4-year Delivery Plan is set out below:
- Helping People:
- Priority 1: Healthy Communities and Neighbourhoods
 - Priority 2: High Quality Council Homes and Landlord Services
- Shaping Places:
- Priority 3: Tourism and Town Centre regeneration and vitality
 - Priority 4: Sustainable Growth and Infrastructure

Great Council:

- Priority 5: Right Conditions to Support Delivery
- Priority 6: Engaging and Connected Council.

5.12 **Supporting Documents**

- 5.12.1 Through the analytical process undertaken so far and discussions with members, the actions required to deliver these prioritised are being developed, and resource requirements being considered. This will include current plans, areas where we have committed to deliver activities or services or aspirational improvements for Melton. Any budgetary impacts or requirements for these will be considered by Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council as part of the budget setting process.
- 5.12.2 Alongside this activity, once the strategy is finalised and approved, a robust performance framework will be developed including performance measures and targets to monitor progress and ensure that the Council are on track to meet our commitments. The revised Performance and Risk Management Framework will accompany the final Corporate Strategy due to be considered in February 2024.
- 5.12.3 Alongside the new Corporate Strategy, a Communications and Engagement Strategy is being developed for the Council which will set out the approach for how the strategy will be effectively communicated. This will also accompany the final document in February 2024.
- 5.12.4 Following publication of the new Corporate Strategy in 2024 a review and refresh of the Council's Workforce Strategy will also be undertaken.

5.13 **Governance and Reporting**

- 5.13.1 Following the public consultation on the principles of these proposals the final draft 2036 Vision and Framework will be considered by Scrutiny alongside the budget proposals at the Scrutiny Committee on 25 January 2024.
- 5.13.2 Subject to Scrutiny feedback the final versions of Vision 2036 and Framework will be presented to Cabinet on the 7 February 2024 for consideration and ultimately recommendation to Council on the 8 February 2024 for approval and adoption.
- 5.13.3 The new Vision 2036 and Framework will be formally launched on the 1 April 2024 as the Council's new Corporate Strategy.

6 **Options Considered**

- 6.1 To continue with the existing Corporate priorities. This is not recommended as it will impede the Council's ability to meet its strategic aspirations and adapt to the current and future environment.

7 **Consultation**

- 7.1 These proposals have been developed alongside elected members both through State of Melton debate on the 20 September 2023 and two member working groups on Town Centre and Asset Development Programme which met in August/September 2023. Ongoing discussion and dialogue has taken place with the Cabinet throughout.
- 7.2 Future consultation is planned with residents in December 2023 and January 2024 to gain feedback and inform these current proposals.

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

- 8.1 Public Consultation will take place on the Vision 2036 and Framework between December 2023 and January 2024.
- 8.2 The new Corporate Strategy will come back to Cabinet following consultation alongside the budget proposals on 7 February 2024 for endorsement before going to Council on 22 February, ahead of its launch on the 1 April 2024. It is intended that the delivery plan will be refreshed each year. Financial Implications
- 8.3 Work is taking place with Finance to ensure that the Vision 2036 and framework for the Corporate Strategy is deliverable and that any priorities are funded accordingly to support the delivery of activities against them.
- 8.4 On completion the commitments made will be assessed and incorporated into the revenue and capital budget proposals and MTFS. These will be set out with the 4 year Corporate Delivery Plan which will also include, where appropriate, the continuation of existing commitments already made.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate services

9 Legal and Governance Implications

- 9.1 Cabinet has responsibility for providing strategic leadership to the Authority. It is therefore a Cabinet function to recommend the strategic direction contained within the Corporate Strategy for approval by the Council.
- 9.2 The Corporate Strategy forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework and therefore must be approved by Council.

Legal Implications reviewed by: **Interim Assistant Director for Governance and Democracy (Monitoring Officer)**

10 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 10.1 There will be an Equality Impact Assessment completed as part of the development of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2028. This will be taken to the Check and Challenge Group for approval and any implications will be highlighted as part of the final report.

11 Data Protection Implications (Mandatory)

- 11.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed for the following reasons because there are no risks/issues to the data collated for the purpose of this report.

12 Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 The development of the new Corporate Strategy will address the needs of all communities across Melton.

13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 13.1 The current Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2024 contains the priority theme ‘Protect our climate and enhance our natural environment’ which sets out our commitments to deliver on climate change.
- 13.2 Work on the new strategy will consider the commitments made and the climate change strategy which is currently in development.

14 Other Implications

14.1 None

15 Risk & Mitigation

15.1 There are no direct risks arising from this report, risk management will be an important part of the review process and the current corporate risk register will be used to inform the development of activity under the priority themes.

15.2 A new performance and risk management framework will be produced and aligned to the new Corporate Strategy 2024-28 when approved.

16 Background Papers

16.1 None

17 Appendices

17.1 None