

Minutes

Meeting name	Council
Date	Thursday, 8 February 2024
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor A. Hewson (Chair)

Councillors

J. Adcock	P. Allnatt
I. Atherton	S. Atherton
M. Brown	R. Browne
S. Butcher	S. Carter
R. Child	M. Clay
H. Cliff	S. Cox
P. Cumbers	C. Evans
A. Freer	M. Glancy
M. Gordon	M. Graham MBE
L. Higgins	S. Lumley
J. Orson	S. Orson
D. Pritchett	R. Sharp
A. Thwaites	T. Webster

Officers

- Chief Executive
- Monitoring Officer
- Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
- Director for Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)
- Director for Growth and Regeneration
- Assistant Director for Resources
- Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer
- Democratic Services Officer (CB)

Minute No.	Minute
CO50	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mason.</p>
CO51	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2023 were approved as a correct record.</p> <p>(For 25, Against 0, Abstentions 2)</p>
CO52	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>An other registerable interest in respect of Councillor J. Orson was noted as being on record for any matters which relate to the Leicestershire County Council.</p> <p>Councillor Carter declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number CO62, as he is a tenant of a Council-owned property.</p> <p>Councillor Gordon declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number CO61, as a family member owns a second property.</p> <p>Councillor Gordon declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number CO62, as she is a tenant of a Council-owned property.</p>
CO53	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Mayor read out a letter that he had sent to HM King Charles III on behalf of the Borough of Melton.</p> <p>The Mayor informed Council that, as Mayor he had attended the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 15 December 2023, Royal British Legion Christmas raffle draw • Saturday 16 December 2023, Scalford Christmas Concert • Monday 18 December 2023, Gretton Court Party • Monday 18 December 2023, Charnwood Christmas Carol Service • Wednesday 20 December 2023, Loros Christmas Concert • Saturday 13 January 2024, Eastwell History Quiz Night • Thursday 18 January 2024, Community Tree Planning • Tuesday 23 January 2023, Lord Mayor Charity all you can eat buffet <p>The Deputy Mayor informed Council that he had attended the following events on behalf of the Mayor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 19 January 2024, Mayor's Quiz Night • Saturday 27 January 2024, Holocaust Memorial Day Service
CO54	<p>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>In beginning his announcements, the Leader thank the Mayor and all Members for their support at the meeting in December when Councillor Cliff collapsed. He thanked all who rallied round calmly and quickly.</p>

The Leader informed Members that since the last meeting he had a number of meetings including with the MP, Alicia Kearns, and seven meetings about flooding.

Members were informed that in relation to the UKSPF, the current round of business and community grant allocations is complete. The Leader thanked the members of the panels, especially the external members from business and charity sector, as they made an important contribution to the professional assessments and ensured proper due process with no hint of favouritism or prejudice. The Leader stated that a full report would be made to the local area board, and to Scrutiny Committee. The Leader added that going forward, the task is to ensure that all money received from government is used on time and where it is needed.

In relation to the progress on the levelling up fund project and town centre regeneration, the Leader stated that the Council is working actively with partners in Rutland and thanked the MP Alicia Kearns for her continued interest and support, particularly over the future of Brooksby Melton college and the £2m investment in their theatre. The Leader stated that there is much activity behind the scenes on the problem and in due course he will invite Leaders of all groups to a full briefing on this matter.

Members were informed that work continues at the cattle market and that two information meetings with stakeholders have taken place. Following the statutory planning process including with the County Council highways department, construction work will start in the autumn after this season of key business and social events. All existing tenants are being encouraged to put forward their own particular needs during the transition period and proposals for their future business ambitions. The Leader stated that the Council are following due process and due diligence.

In regard to the town centre, the Leader expressed his gratitude to the contribution that the business improvement district (BID) board has and is making to the detailed proposals. The Council are pushing ahead with those elements, such as cleaning, greening and signage within existing budgets and UKSPF funding. Members were informed that some of this and other harder design elements are yet to be agreed but will set the tone for harmonising with the LUF development. The Leader thanked Councillor Butcher for all her attention to detail and the work of the Town Centre Working Group.

The Leader explained that in parallel with the developments, a new approach to car parking schemes would be developed this coming year. Currently the Council are waiting input from the BID board before going out to other stakeholders and interest groups.

In regard to the new leisure contract, legal and other preparatory work is proceeding, including attention to the needs and concerns of groups currently using MSV. The Leader thanked all Members for supporting the programme. He explained that he had prevented Waterfield from closing indefinitely and MSV for a very long period. Waterfield supports the curriculum of 19 schools, a vibrant swimming club, many swimming lessons, family fun and various groups in need of therapy and the fun of water activity. Currently annual visitor numbers across both sites is 374,000 visits per year. Most of these will be accommodated on the revamped sites, however, the Leader acknowledged that some are being

inconvenienced and some relocating to local secondary schools, whose support is greatly appreciate. The Leader also acknowledged that the Council did not do enough to consult with those groups some 18 months ago before being locked into tendering and commercial negotiations. Members all know that sport and recreation is vital for health and well being and it is also in the vanguard of efforts to combat anti-social behaviour and crime.

The Leader informed Members that he had set out a bold ambition to prepare for substantial improvements in sporting and recreational opportunities across the Borough, within the context of the new corporate strategy.

The Leader confirmed that this year, after work is completed at Waterfield and MSV, the Council will start to plan for the future, commencing with a consultative sport and recreation forum later in the year.

Members were reminded that they are aware of the considerable and justifiable upset within the parish of Redmile over the number of childrens' homes in one small location. The Leader thanked the chair of the parish council and others, together with Council Officers, for trying to grapple with this problem in a constructive way. The Leader also thanked MP Alicia Kearns for engaging with this matter thoroughly. The Leader explained that Ofsted had, in his opinion, washed their hands of the problem. They could do something about this right now and they should.

The Council had been challenged to do something through the routine planning process within the local plan and planning applications, when they are made. Councillor Glancy and the Leader met with the Deputy Chief Executive to reconsider options. The Leader did not make political promises about legal processes but stated that if the Council are given the tools, it would finish the job.

The Leader apologised to Council as he had previously stated that he had written to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) with a complaint, he explained that he had written but it was not sent. The Leader explained that events have since moved on and that he met with the PCC on 18 January 2024. The meeting was positive and he thanked the PCC for a very reasonable approach.

CO55

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions from the public had been received.

CO56

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Three questions from Members had been received and they were taken in the order that they were received.

Councillor I Atherton asked the Leader the following question:

In mid-January 2024, Arla announced a review of their business and, according to the article in the Melton Times, this review potentially puts the Arla Creamery, previously known as Tuxford and Tebbutt, at risk. The review is scheduled to conclude in April 2024. This creamery has been producing cheese since 1780 and is surely considered a focal point of Melton Mowbray's being the Rural Capital of Food. Although, publicly at least, Arla HQ in Leeds have yet to make a decision, it

would appear from press articles that they are seeking a buyer which may protect the Creamery, but this is far from certain. Given the current financial crisis that many families find themselves in, the potential loss of employment could be devastating not only for those employed by the Creamery, but also for those in its supply chain.

On hearing of this news, on Monday 22nd January I emailed the MBC Chief Executive to understand what support we can offer to those who might lose their jobs should the Creamery be closed. I did receive a response the same days stating that he had immediately offered support, in a number of ways, to assist their review, namely:

- Provision of an up-to-date assessment of Melton's growth potential re town expansion and infrastructure investment as they may see that growth making Melton a more attractive proposition
- Direct support from our growth and regeneration team re any economic development assistance
- A meeting with himself and the Leader to demonstrate our strategic support to their business and the employment it sustains.

Sadly, I've been informed that, at the time of this submission, Arla have not yet responded to this offer. I would hope that Arla looks on the offer favourably but would ask that the Craven Ward members be included in any further correspondence with Arla so that we can present a unified, well-informed approach to supporting them.

While I welcome the fact that we are offering support, it would appear that our support is limited to providing information to the Creamery and a demonstration of support meeting, whatever that might mean. This prompts the following questions:

- a) What representation have we made to Arla HQ in Leeds in support of the Melton Mowbray Creamery and to impress on them the impact of the potential loss of the Creamery to Melton Mowbray town centre and wider Borough?
- b) What further measures are we planning to practically demonstrate the Councils support to not only the Arla Melton Mowbray management but to the Arla Melton Mowbray workforce and its suppliers?

In responding, the Leader stated that the business is in his and Councillor Butcher's ward, however the employees may live elsewhere, and of course the co-operative owners are partly in Denmark.

The Leader explained that it is now week 3 of a 12-week consultation period. He had written to and secured a face-to-face meeting with Arla, this is being arranged together with Senior Officers of the Council. The Leader would impress upon them the effects on the place and people of the town and Borough.

The Leader explained that following the meeting, the Council would consider further measures to support the management and employees of Arla. If the business is determined to close, the Council are not empowered to subsidise them nor is there a budget for this. It was explained that even if the Council could suspend business

rates, he suspected that it would not even dent Arla's cost base. However, the Council would seek to advise employees through the transition.

The Leader explained that the Council are not in a position to assist the suppliers, either legally or financially.

The Leader added by informing council that he had opened up a dialogue with a potential purchaser of the site and the business. Council Officers would continue, as they do all the time, to scan for other possibilities.

Councillor I Atherton opted to ask a supplementary question and asked the Leader what success the Growth and Regeneration team have in attracting businesses to the Borough.

In response the Leader stated that he would provide a written response, this was to ensure the correct information is provided.

Councillor Browne asked the Leader the following question:

Can the Leader of the Council please specify what consideration he has made to responding to the consultation on Awwab's Law?

The Leader began his answer by stating that the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale as a result of exposure to mould in his home was tragic and was a wake-up call to the whole housing sector. As a landlord, health and safety is not a nice to have, it is a fundamental part of what the Council does. The Council should and would be held to account for keeping tenants safe. The Leader welcomed the increased focus and the Council would fully embrace these changes as a landlord.

It was explained that Awaab's Law, introduced in the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, requires landlords to investigate and fix reported health hazards within specified timeframes, and a government consultation on these proposals is underway. The new rules would form part of tenancy agreements, so that tenants can hold landlords to account by law if they fail to provide a decent home.

The Council had considered the proposed requirements in readiness for responding to the consultation ahead of the deadline in March 2024 with the Regulatory Compliance Lead and Housing Asset Manager due to present a report to the Housing Leadership Team and the Leader as Portfolio Holder in February. The report would outline the government's proposal, the contents of the consultation and the Council's consideration of the practical implementation of the requirements. The Council's response would be clear that it fully supports the principles of the Awaab's Law.

The Council would continue to be proactive, not only in responding to reports of damp and mould, but also to address these and address the root causes, whilst also following up with tenants to check that remedies have worked effectively. The Council have already implemented a damp and mould policy and preventative

measures such as increased ventilation in tenants homes are built into the repairs and capital programme.

The Council would publish it's response to this important consultation and will actively share this with tenants via the Your Choice group, as well as with all elected Members. The Council also have regulatory readiness as a work programme item on the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, where a second consideration of this topic is scheduled for April this year.

An initial review of the proposals suggests that some procedural changes would need to be made to current policy, processes and housing management system, for example, to embed the required response timescales and to ensure that every inspection or action is followed up in writing. At every stage, tenant circumstances and vulnerabilities would need to be taken into consideration. These procedural changes would not be made until the post consultation regulations are received. However, preparations are being made based on what Officers expect the requirements would be, to ensure that changes are implemented quickly when required. The Council's team are already well trained and would be fully briefed on any changes to the requirements.

Councillor Browne opted to ask a supplementary question and asked the Leader how many cases of mould and damp have been dealt with in the last 12 months.

In response, the Leader stated that nine cases have been identified in the last year.

Councillor S Orson asked the Leader the following question:

What does the Leader propose to ensure that going forward we address the risks to villages and areas of Melton Mowbray that have flooded and are at risk of flooding. One of my villages Long Clawson flooded recently with little response from Melton Borough Council. The doctor's surgery has previously only been an inch of water away from flooding, this being a very important asset of the area serving nearly 8000 people. Melton BC have been quiet, a token effort of 30 sandbags was delivered to Long Clawson only when the waters were receding, but MBC seems to have shunned any responsibility, past or present, and, what with climate change, what action will communities like mine get considering the increasing impact of flooding due to climate change?

In responding to the question, the Leader thanked Councillor Evans and Councillor Simon Orson for the practical help provided during both recent storm floods. He then explained that as it is an important topic he believed it is worthy of a full report and that all Members would have the opportunity to discuss and debate in Council before the end of the Municipal Year.

The Leader stated that spending £50,000 from reserves is not going to scratch the surface.

The Leader did reject some of Councillor Orson's assertions and explained some of the initiatives which are ongoing, that had taken place.

In respect to Waltham, during the storm flooding, the Leader was contacted by a local resident and he, in turn, contacted Severn Trent. The resident later contacted the Leader to thank him for getting involved and, also Councillor Sharp, and that the situation was now under control.

Looking at Hoby & Rotherby, the Leader met with the Clerk and Chair of the Parish Council and discussed future resilience including the location of additional bags and sand within the parish.

In respect to Frisby, Councillor Browne had requested that the Leader attended a Parish Council meeting to discuss the flooding events but because both he and Councillor Glancy were away, it was arranged for Councillor Thwaites to attend.

The Leader concluded by explaining his own personal experience of flooding and added that he had considerable empathy with events in Long Clawson.

Councillor S Orson opted to ask a supplementary question and asked the Leader. Can you explain in detail the meetings you have had with Severn Trent.

In response, the Leader stated that he would provide a written answer but did recall a meeting he has had with Severn Trent regarding prevention. Also he did note that Leicestershire County Council, which is the lead flood authority, was revising flood strategy.

CO57

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

No motions on notice had been received.

CO58

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - NEW CORPORATE STRATEGY: VISION 2036 AND CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN

The Leader introduced the report and moved the recommendation. The Deputy Leader seconded the motion.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- No mention of working with Housing Associations in order to deliver exception sites. This is important because going forward site viability will reduce the number of affordable homes becoming available.
- Overhead of being MBC dwarfs added value, with little mention on developing shared services. Although it was noted that regarding shared services, some partners are withdrawing from shared service arrangements.
- It was noted that the support hub which developed out of Me and My Learning wasn't mentioned.
- The comment was made that there was little on the rural area despite rural area contributing a significant amount in Council Tax, business rates and new homes bonus.

A suggestion was made that recommendation number three should be altered to include the words 'and Deputy Leader' after the words 'in consultation with the Leader'. The proposer accepted the suggestion and the recommendation was altered.

RESOLVED

Council

- (1) Approved the Corporate Strategy including the Vision 2036 and 4-year Corporate Delivery Plan.**
- (2) Approved the supporting documents; the refreshed Performance and Risk Management Framework (Appendix D) and the Communications and Engagement Strategy (appendix E).**
- (3) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, to update the Corporate Delivery Plan with any amendments required following consideration of the Budget reports, and to make any other minor operational amendments as required.**

(For 16, Against 0, Abstaining 11)

CO59

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR CORPORATE ASSETS

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources introduced the report and moved the recommendation. The Leader seconded the motion.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- The Plan is missing any previous Cabinet decisions and strategic direction.
- Whilst the Plan mentions assets for jobs, home and income, it was noted that community is missing, particularly as community centres is mentioned within the Plan. The Portfolio Holder accepted the comments regarding community centres but stated that the services located in those centres are declining. There is a desire to retain community buildings, however there is little budget to do so.
- The comment was made that the cost comparison formulae, which is used within the Plan, is only for commercial assets and not play areas, community centres etc.
- The report doesn't mention value, income, constraints or options.
- Slow to review leases and rents.
- The question was raised what strategic considerations had been given to selling community assets upon health impacts of the residents of the areas where the assets are located.
- The planned maintenance schedule was welcomed.
- It was noted that the assets and plan were discussed at the Asset Working Group and all parties were invited to participate.

RESOLVED

Council

- (1) Approved the Asset Management Plan for Corporate Assets as attached in Appendix 1.**
- (2) Noted the financial implications arising from the AMP have been incorporated into the 2024/25 budget proposals.**
- (3) Delegated to the Director for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, to make relevant amendments to the AMP.**
- (4) Delegated to the Director for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, to procure contractors for implementation of works as identified in the action plan.**

(For 16, Against 11, Abstentions 0)

CO60

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023-2028: GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2024/25

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources introduced the report and moved the recommendation. The Leader seconded the motion.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- In regard to the IT update, a query was raised on how the cost would be shared amongst the partners and how it was derived. Also, the risk if one or more partners withdraws was raised, however the Portfolio Holder stated that provision has been made for the scenario.
- Also relating to the IT update, the comment was made that there doesn't appear to be money set aside for maintenance costs. Although it was noted that there is an efficiency plan which will deliver the ongoing maintenance.

RESOLVED

Council

- (1) Approved the removal of the MMDR contribution, condition survey asset works and ICT programme item from the 2023/24 capital programme as referred to in para 5.2;**
- (2) Approved the General Expenses Capital Programme for 2024-28 as attached at Appendix B;**
- (3) Approved the sources of funding for the General Expenses capital programme for 2024/28 as set out in Appendix C;**
- (4) Approved the Special Expenses Melton Mowbray Capital Programme for 2024-25 and associated sources of funding as set out in Appendix D;**

(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 as referred to in para 5.6;

(6) Approved the Capital Strategy 2024-25 as attached at Appendix E.

The above resolution was considered through a recorded vote as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (16)

Adcock, Allnatt, Brown, Butcher, Carter, Clay, Cliff, Cox, Cumbers, Glancy, Gordon, Hewson, Higgins, Lumley, Sharp, Thwaites

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (11)

I Atherton, S Atherton, Browne, Child, Evans, Freer, Graham, J Orson, S Orson, Pritchett, Webster

CO61

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/26 TO 2027/28

At 7:58pm, prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor Gordon left the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources introduced the report and moved the recommendation. The Leader seconded the motion.

Councillor Graham proposed the following amendments. Councillor Child seconded the motion.

- 1) Requests a review into the Council's approach to tourism, in order to demonstrate impact and value for money.
- 2) Requests a review into the Council's approach to communications in order to demonstrate impact and value for money.
- 3) Commission an organisation to engage young people in Melton Mowbray and key rural villages to divert them away from risky behaviours and into other services and activities. Review whether alternate funding sources could be found beyond 1st year.
- 4) Make Community Coordinator role permanent and full time and increase focus on liaison with Parish Councils.
- 5) Establish a £50k Rural Flood grant scheme to support Parish Councils' ability to prevent and respond to flood events. Scheme to require match funding from Parish Councils.
- 6) Whilst the funding allocated to the Design Guide and the additional allocation of funding for the town centre is welcomed, the initial focus for the funding should be on establishing an approved Town Centre Masterplan,

setting out the long-term plan for the town layout and function. This should then be underpinned by the Design Guide, place branding and a 10-year asset management plan, which are owned and adopted by all relevant partners. The £20k (and associated UKSPF funding) allocated should be reserved until such time as these plans are in place and, where possible, the development of the Masterplan should be incorporated within the Local Plan Review.

- 7) Requests a review into the Council's approach to managing corporate property responsibilities, specifically in relation to ensuring an appropriate balance between the core in-house team managing day to day, and the requirement to support development projects with additional and specific expertise and capacity.
- 8) Requests a review of financial affordability over the medium term and consideration of options and opportunities for shared services to support long term sustainability.

In addressing the amendments, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources stated the following:

- The administration are not against increasing staffing levels but the increases must be affordable.
- Amendments 1, 2 and 7 were not accepted, as they had either been covered or there are more appropriate means of carrying out the work proposed.
- Amendment 3 was not accepted. It was noted that there had been a 77% cut in youth funding since 2010.
- Amendment 4 was not accepted, as the growth can't be supported as it isn't sustainable.
- Amendment 5 was not accepted, as it is a drain on the reserves.
- Amendment 6 was not accepted. It was highlighted that the grant is time limiting.
- Amendment 8 was not accepted, as the work is already being carried out.

As no amendments had been accepted by the proposer of the substantive motion, the Mayor opened the debate on the proposed amendments.

During the debate on the amendments, the following points were raised:

- The comment was made that the Council had a history of supporting youth services and that Members had a responsibility in tackling the issues faced by young people.
- It was noted that there wouldn't be any monies to remedy flooding and that Parish Councils can deal with flooding with a little financial assistance. Although a comment was made that the amount proposed for the flooding grant fund is a gesture and wouldn't make a practical impact in tackling the issue but it would make a big impact upon the reserves of the Council.
- It was noted that a lot of the causes of flooding are on private property where the owners won't allow the drains to be cleared.
- The comment was made that the Borough always had a flooding problem but that the Council had not done enough. Members were reminded that there are different reasons for the flooding and that it is incumbent on them to remind agencies of their responsibilities.

- A Member commented that if they thought £50k would solve issues then they would support the amendment, however the proposal isn't strategic. The amendment appears to threaten the structure of the budget for no apparent gain.
- The comment was made that the £50k for youth services is intended for a review of youth services.

Following the debate, Council voted on the amendments as proposed by Councillor Graham and seconded by Councillor Child.

Council voted against the motion and therefore it fell.

(For 11, Against 14, Abstentions 1)

The Mayor opened the debate on the substantive motion.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- It was noted that the Council does need a youth strategy and that there should be a discussion on it.
- The comment was made that Parish Councils know what they need. The Leader commented that the Council had been gathering a lot of information from Parish Councils and that the administration was not going to be rushed into drawing down reserves for little gain.

RESOLVED

Council

- (1) Approved the revenue budget subject to any amendment arising from the final settlement for 2024/25 for General and Special expenses, including proposed growth and savings items, as set out in Appendix A and D and summarised in section 4.5;**
- (2) Approved an overall Band D council tax increase of 2.99%, with the individual Band D council tax levels across each fund set out in para 4.5.7;**
- (3) Noted that the Council's employee establishment will be updated in line with any changes arising from approval of any of the growth proposals set out in Appendix A;**
- (4) Approved implementation of a 100% premium for properties that have been empty and unfurnished for longer than one year and a 100% premium for second homes as set out in para 4.5.5. The premiums will be implemented from 1 April 2025;**
- (5) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services, to increase resources required to meet the needs of the resettlement scheme subject to there being sufficient grant funding to meet the revenue costs;**

- (6) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services, to access the Corporate Priorities Reserve to fund any one off change and redundancy costs arising from the reconfiguration of the IT service provided by the Leicestershire ICT Partnership, as set out in para 4.5.6 (m);
- (7) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services, to access the Corporate Priorities Reserve to fund any one off costs associated with any potential future planning appeals;
- (8) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services, to access the Corporate Priorities Reserve to fund a permanent Environmental Programme Manager to support the introduction of food waste collection and other environmental projects until such time as the sufficiency or otherwise of the revenue grant funding is known and assessed;
- (9) Approved that any current year surplus/deficit on general expenses at 31 March 2024 be met by transfers to or from the Corporate Priorities Reserve in order to maintain the working balance at its agreed level of £1m;
- (10) Approved that any current year surplus/deficit for Special Expenses Melton Mowbray at 31 March 2024 be transferred to/from the Special Expenses Reserve thereby bringing the actual working balance back to the target £50k;
- (11) Noted the changes made to the risk categorisation of budgets as set out in para 4.8.1 and Appendix F.

The above resolution was considered through a recorded vote as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (15)

Adcock, Allnatt, Brown, Butcher, Carter, Clay, Cliff, Cox, Cumbers, Glancy, Hewson, Higgins, Lumley, Sharp, Thwaites

AGAINST THE MOTION (0)

ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (11)

I Atherton, S Atherton, Browne, Child, Evans, Freer, Graham, J Orson, S Orson, Pritchett, Webster

CO62	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2024/25: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)</p> <p>At 8:59pm, prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor Carter left the meeting.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources introduced the report and moved the recommendation. The Leader seconded the motion.</p> <p>Councillor Graham proposed the following amendment. Councillor Brown seconded the motion.</p>
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- 1) Establish a £50k hardship fund which utilises a platform like e-vouchers, facilitate a way in which tenants facing hardship could be supported with top ups for gas or electricity or essential food purchases.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources explained that the amendment was not supported because it would mean that low income families would be supporting other low income families.

During the debate on the amendment, the following points were raised:

- The comment was made that the Council needs to do the right thing to support those most affected and that the amendment was only asking to do what other Councils and the sector are doing.
- It was noted that the amendment would be diverting cash for a non-recurring item. There are other ways of supporting families which have already been started.
- Most Council tenants are not in arrears. Need to make sure there is help and advice for those tenants who can't manage.
- A comment was made that this is a one-off measure designed to assist tenants during the cost-of-living crisis.
- Amendment proposed only addresses social tenants and not others who may be struggling.
- £50k is not a huge amount of money and would impact little.

At 9:21pm, during the consideration of the item and in accordance with the Constitution (Chapter 3, Part 1, Procedure Rule 5.1), Councillor Graham proposed that the meeting continues beyond the three hour time limit. Councillor J Orson seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

Council agreed to continue the meeting beyond the three hour time limit.

(Unanimous)

The Mayor moved to a vote on the amendment proposed by Councillor Graham and seconded by Councillor Browne.

Council voted against the motion and therefore it fell.

(For 11, Against 12, Abstentions 2)

The Mayor opened the debate on the substantive motion. There were no comments therefore the Mayor moved to a vote.

RESOLVED

Council

(1) Approves the budget estimates for 2024-25;

- (2) Approves the average rent increase of 7.70% for all Council dwellings with effect from 1 April 2024;**
- (3) Approves that the Intensive Housing Management Service charges are not applied to rent accounts from 1 April 2024, pending the conclusion of the service review as referenced at paragraph 6.51 of Appendix 1;**
- (4) Approves the 2024-25 capital programme, and**
- (5) Delegates authority to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services and Portfolio Holder for Council Housing and Landlord Services, to approve virements within the HRA capital programme during the year to provide flexibility to meet emerging needs and maintain decent homes.**

(For 14, Against 11, Abstentions 0)

In accordance with the Constitution at Chapter 3, Part 1, Procedure Rule 17.6, Councillor Child wished for his vote against to be recorded.

CO63

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024/25

At 9:30pm, prior to the consideration of this item, Councillors Carter and Gordon returned to the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources introduced the report and moved the recommendation. The Leader seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

Council

- (1) Approved that the prudential indicators and limits are adopted as outlined in Appendix A section 2.**
- (2) Approved the Treasury Management Strategy as outlined in Appendix A.**
- (3) Approved that the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement which sets out the Council's policy on MRP as outlined in para 5.3 of Appendix 1.**

(For 25, Against 1, Abstentions 0)

At 9:32pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Evans left the meeting and missed the vote.

CO64

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND'S ELECTORAL REVIEW OF MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL'S BOUNDARIES - COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION PROPOSAL

At 9:35pm, Councillor Evans returned to the meeting.

The Chief Executive introduced the report. The Deputy Leader moved the recommendations and the Leader seconded the motion.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- A comment was made that the average amount of time a Member of the Planning Committee would spend per application could be in excess of 6 hours. It was noted however that the document refers to an average of 4 hours and above, which would include the 6 hours referred to.

RESOLVED

Council

- (1) Approved that the Council Size Submission Proposal, at Appendix A, is submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as the agreed position of the Council by 8 April 2024.**
- (2) Delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to make amendments to the Submission document in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment and Regulatory Services, following consultation with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.**

(For 26, Against 1, Abstentions 0)

CO65

APPROACH TO APPLYING ANNUAL UPLIFT OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2023/24

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report. The Leader moved the recommendations and the Deputy Leader seconded the motion.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- It was noted that the Conservative Group would be voting against the motion due to how it would be perceived during the cost of living crisis.
- A comment was made that the Council needs to encourage candidates from different backgrounds and the allowance is important in doing so.
- Members agreed to support the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel when it is carried out later in the year.

As per the Constitution, Chapter 3, Part 1, Procedure Rule 17.5b, Councillors Browne, Child and Graham requested that a recorded vote takes place.

RESOLVED

Council

- (1) Note the options for applying the annual 2023/24 uplift of Members' Allowances as set out at Paragraph 6;**

(2) Approves an increase in the basic allowance for 2023/24, backdated to April 2023, in line with that applied from the bottom of Band 14 of 3.88%, while the level of special responsibility allowances should be frozen; and

(3) Notes that the Members' Allowances Scheme is due to be reviewed later this year, and that the Independent Remuneration Panel will be asked to consider and recommend an appropriate formula for applying the annual increase of allowances, where the pay award is not stated as a simple percentage.

The above resolution was considered through a recorded vote as follows:

FOR THE MOTION (16)

Adcock, Allnatt, Brown, Butcher, Carter, Clay, Cliff, Cox, Cumbers, Glancy, Gordon, Hewson, Higgins, Lumley, Sharp, Thwaites

AGAINST THE MOTION (11)

I Atherton, S Atherton, Browne, Child, Evans, Freer, Graham, J Orson, S Orson, Pritchett, Webster

ABTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)

CO66

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources introduced the report and moved the recommendation. The Leader seconded the motion.

Other than the proposer and seconder, there were no comments from Members in relation to the report.

RESOLVED

Council

Approves the attached Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 at Appendix A.

(Unanimous)

The meeting closed at: 9.54 pm

Chair