

Minutes



Meeting name	Cabinet
Date	Wednesday, 11 December 2024
Start time	4.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor P. Allnatt (Chair)

Councillors M. Glancy (Vice-Chair) S. Butcher
S. Cox P. Cumbers

In Attendance Councillor A. Thwaites

Officers Chief Executive
Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
Interim Director for Growth and Regeneration
Assistant Director for Governance and Democracy (Monitoring Officer)
Assistant Director for Resources (Deputy S151 Officer)
Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer

Minute No.	Minute
45	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE No apologies for absence were received.</p>
46	<p>MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024 were confirmed.</p>
47	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Councillor Butcher declared an other registerable interest in relation to Minute Number 53, due to her involvement with heritage groups.</p>
48	<p>MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES In accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the following item had been referred from the Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>Scrutiny feedback on Social Housing Allocation In the absence of Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, the Director for Housing and Communities, Michelle Howard, introduced the report advising Members that the Scrutiny Committee has met on 28 November 2024 and considered the Social Housing Allocation report.</p> <p>In providing feedback, the Director for Housing and Committees stated that Scrutiny have commented on a number of policy areas, in which Officers would support the Cabinet when making improvements.</p> <p>Scrutiny recognised that the service is under significant pressure.</p> <p>Scrutiny Members were keen to maximise information sharing with residents and bidders to ensure they are fully aware of the process.</p> <p>In commenting the Leader stated that, as Portfolio Holder, he would be taking the feedback on board when making decisions.</p> <p>Cabinet AGREED to have regard to Scrutiny Committee’s feedback.</p>
49	<p>CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS REPORT FOR QUARTER 2 2024-25 The Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment and Regulatory Services, Councillor Glancy, introduced the report. Councillor Glancy moved the recommendation and Councillor Allnatt seconded the motion.</p> <p>Members made no additional comments.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p>

Cabinet **NOTED** the contents of the report and provide any observations or actions to the relevant officers accordingly.

(Non-key decision)

Reason for recommendation

Having established a new Corporate Strategy made up of Vision 36 and Corporate Delivery Plan in 2024, is it important the Council regularly receives and considers performance information to evaluate progress against its priorities. The Council's Corporate Performance Measures are used to focus on key priority services and projects and seek to help inform the Cabinet, Members and Officers with regard to the formation of policy and oversight of delivery.

50

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (ANNUAL REFRESH)

The Director for Housing and Communities, Michelle Howard, introduced the report. Councillor Allnatt moved the recommendations and Councillor Glancy seconded the motion.

It was commented that it was good that the Council would be utilising the space occupied by underused buildings. In one instance, an underused building is occupying enough space for three dwellings.

It was noted how positive it was that the business plan had smoothed out and it is no longer anticipated to be in deficit in year 10 of the plan.

RESOLVED

Cabinet:

- 1) **NOTED** the progress made on delivery of the HRA Asset Management Plan during 2024/2025 and updated trajectory for the HRA Business Plan.
- 2) **ENDORSED** the HRA Asset Management Plan refresh (2025-2030) and associated capital programme.
- 3) **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services and Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Landlord Services, authority to apply for, accept and implement investment in tenant's homes through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- 4) **APPROVED**, in principle, to convert the Fairmead Community Centre and Douglas Jane Community Room to enable the provision of three additional housing units, subject to financial viability being confirmed, and;
- 5) **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services and Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Landlord Services, authority to finalise the associated

business cases and delivery arrangements to compete the residential conversions.

(Key decision)

Reasons for recommendations

Refreshing the Asset Management Plan on an annual basis enables continued focus on investment in council homes and keeping tenants safe whilst taking account of the economic and regulatory context within which the council delivers its services and the long term trajectory for the Business Plan and financial health of the Housing Revenue Account.

The Asset Management Plan shows how the council will manage compliance with regulatory requirements and meet the decent homes standard across council housing stock. It also refreshes and sets out a clear action plan for future investment, responds to a changing regulatory context, reflects up to date operating costs and plans capital spend accordingly. It enables inclusion of key projects and programmes of work.

Having an Asset Management Plan in place helps to provide a good framework for capital investment planning and a framework through which the council can demonstrate progress and continued compliance and enables a short, medium and long term view on the financial sustainability of the HRA and any adjustments required.

Having a solid understanding of data on the condition of housing stock and plans to invest in and ensure homes meet the decent homes standard is an important regulatory requirement. The Council is in a robust position, evidenced by the recent regulatory inspection, and must continue to deliver on its plans and commitments.

51

TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

The Director for Housing and Communities, Michelle Howard, introduced the report. Councillor Allnatt moved the recommendations and Councillor Cumbers seconded the motion.

It was commented how well the tenants had taken to the new Tenant Engagement and Regulatory Compliance Lead.

RESOLVED

Cabinet:

- 1) **NOTED** the update and progress made, and;
- 2) **ENDORSED** the actions planned for the next year.

(Non-key decision)

Reason for recommendations

The report addresses the Council's responsibilities under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2024 and Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, along with regulations made under both. The 2008 Act allows the Regulator of Social Housing to set standards which the Council must meet in relation to its housing stock and tenants. The Council has been subject to proactive inspection by the Regulator which confirmed that it is largely compliant however, further actions were required to improve the level of compliance. The Council is continuing to engage with the Regulator to deliver on these actions.

52

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REFRESH

The Director for Housing and Communities, Michelle Howard, introduced the report. Councillor Allnatt moved the recommendations and Councillor Butcher seconded the motion.

Following a query regarding ensuring the right mix of neighbours, it was explained that the Council had a responsibility to allocate according to need, but are guided by the Housing Allocations Policy and the Lettings Policy.

In response to the question on who judges what is adequately housed, it was explained that there is banding criteria and framework which supports the decisions made. However, it was noted that there are occasional exceptions.

In circumstances where someone had too many bedrooms for their needs and how the Council persuades them to downsize, it was explained that the legislation doesn't allow the Council to force residents to move in those situations. Where the Council could intervene and provide assistance, is when the resident can't afford to live in their current property.

RESOLVED

Cabinet:

- 1) **NOTED** the changes made and approve the refreshed Melton Home Search Housing Allocations Policy, and;
- 2) **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Landlord Services to make minor amendments to ensure the policy remains up to date and in line with best practice.

(Key decision)

Reason for recommendations

The policy has been updated to bring it up to date, and to respond to learning and recommendations arising from casework, internal audit and complaints.

53

PROPERTY DISPOSAL REPORT

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report. Councillor Allnatt moved the recommendations and

Councillor Cox seconded the motion.

The Director for Housing and Communities outlined the asset of community value (ACV) process. A discussion ensued about the ACV process and ended with the Assistant Director for Governance and Democracy providing some legal advice on the process.

Following a concern raised about whether Historic England had been approached about a possible sale, it was noted that any prospective purchaser would be made aware of the historic significance of the building. It was suggested that the Council could write to Historic England and invite them to view the building.

Regarding the ACV process, it was noted that the building is not a registered ACV asset and therefore when the property is for sale, it would be on the open market. Community groups would be welcome to purchase the building but that they must have the funds to purchase and maintain the property.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that a process would be put in place to support the disposal of the property.

Members were informed that the principle of the report and the proposed disposal is to manage costs. Therefore, the longer the disposal takes, the more it would cost the Council.

The comment was made that the Council should take more notice of heritage.

RESOLVED

Cabinet:

- 1) **APPROVED** the sale of the Council-owned property at 5-7 King Street in line with the details as set out in this report, and;
- 2) **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** to the Director for Prosperity and Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources and the Director of Corporate Services, to dispose of 5-7 King Street, in line with the conditions as set out in this report to reduce the liabilities on the Council as soon as is reasonably possible.

(Key decision)

Reasons for recommendations

The existing tenant of the property has exercised the break clause in their lease effective from 23 October 2024. A temporary agreement has been entered into by the tenant to stay in the property until the end of 2024.

Due to this, officers are recommending that the Council start the process of disposal as a matter of urgency to ensure any liabilities that could be incurred between the existing tenancy ending and disposal of the premises are minimised.

At 5:01pm, prior to the commencement of this item and due to a declared interest, Councillor Butcher left the meeting and did not return.

The meeting closed at: 5.28 pm

Chair