

# Minutes

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| <b>Meeting name</b> | <b>Council</b>  |
| <b>Date</b>         | <b>Wednesday, 12 February 2025</b>  |
| <b>Start time</b>   | <b>6.30 pm</b>  |
| <b>Venue</b>        | <b>Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street,<br/>Melton Mowbray LE13 1GH</b> |

## Present:

**Chair** Councillor T. Webster (Chair)

**Councillors**

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| J. Adcock   | P. Allnatt  |
| I. Atherton | S. Atherton |
| M. Brown    | R. Browne   |
| S. Butcher  | S. Carter   |
| R. Child    | D. Chubb    |
| M. Clay     | H. Cliff    |
| S. Cox      | P. Cumbers  |
| A. Freer    | M. Glancy   |
| M. Gordon   | A. Hewson   |
| L. Higgins  | S. Lumley   |
| J. Orson    | S. Orson    |
| A. Thwaites |             |

**Officers**

Chief Executive  
 Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)  
 Assistant Director for Governance and Democracy (Monitoring Officer)  
 Director for Corporate Services  
 Director for Place and Prosperity  
 Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer  
 Democratic Services Officer (HA)

The Reverend Dr Mary Barr offered prayers.

| Minute No.                 | Minute  |                                  |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------|-------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|---|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| CO49                       | <p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Evans, Mason and Pritchett.</p> <p>Councillor Sharp was absent from the meeting.</p>  |                                  |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
| CO50                       | <p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>Councillor Gordon raised a query regarding how her vote was recorded for a motion to suspend Procedure Rule 13.7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules, in response Officers committed to ensure that her vote was accurately recorded.</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2024 were approved as a correct record.</p> <p>(For 22, Against 0, Abstentions 1)</p>   |                                  |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
| CO51                       | <p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>An other registerable interest in respect of Councillor J. Orson was noted as being on record for any matters which relate to Leicestershire County Council.</p> <p>Councillor Carter declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number CO59, as he is a tenant of a Council-owned property.</p> <p>Councillor Gordon declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number CO59, as a family member owns a second property, which they rent out.</p>   |                                  |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
| CO52                       | <p><b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b></p> <p>The Mayor provided Members with an update on events he has attended since the last Council meeting. The full list of events are outlined below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="300 1444 1417 2042"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="300 1444 676 1489">Date</th> <th data-bbox="676 1444 1043 1489">Event</th> <th data-bbox="1043 1444 1417 1489">Venue</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1489 676 1574">Friday 6 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1489 1043 1574">Opening of Robert Hudson Alme Houses</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1489 1417 1574">Burton Street, Melton Mowbray</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1574 676 1659">Saturday 7 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1574 1043 1659">Fatstock Show and Dinner</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1574 1417 1659">Stockyard, Melton Mowbray</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1659 676 1744">Tuesday 10 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1659 1043 1744">Harborough Civic Carol Service</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1659 1417 1744">Market Harborough</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1744 676 1874">Wednesday 11 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1744 1043 1874">North West Leicestershire Civic Carol Service</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1744 1417 1874">Coalville</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1874 676 1960">Thursday 12 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1874 1043 1960">Mayor's Carol Service</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1874 1417 1960">St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1960 676 2042">Friday 13 December 2024</td> <td data-bbox="676 1960 1043 2042">Collection of Petition</td> <td data-bbox="1043 1960 1417 2042">Birchwood School, Melton Mowbray</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Date                             | Event | Venue | Friday 6 December 2024 | Opening of Robert Hudson Alme Houses | Burton Street, Melton Mowbray | Saturday 7 December 2024 | Fatstock Show and Dinner | Stockyard, Melton Mowbray | Tuesday 10 December 2024 | Harborough Civic Carol Service | Market Harborough | Wednesday 11 December 2024 | North West Leicestershire Civic Carol Service | Coalville | Thursday 12 December 2024 | Mayor's Carol Service | St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray | Friday 13 December 2024 | Collection of Petition | Birchwood School, Melton Mowbray |
| Date                       | Event   | Venue                            |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
| Friday 6 December 2024     | Opening of Robert Hudson Alme Houses  | Burton Street, Melton Mowbray    |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
| Saturday 7 December 2024   | Fatstock Show and Dinner  | Stockyard, Melton Mowbray        |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
| Tuesday 10 December 2024   | Harborough Civic Carol Service  | Market Harborough                |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
| Wednesday 11 December 2024 | North West Leicestershire Civic Carol Service   | Coalville                        |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
| Thursday 12 December 2024  | Mayor's Carol Service   | St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |
| Friday 13 December 2024    | Collection of Petition  | Birchwood School, Melton Mowbray |       |       |                        |                                      |                               |                          |                          |                           |                          |                                |                   |                            |   |           |                           |                       |                                  |                         |                        |                                  |

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|  | Saturday 14 December 2024  | Hinckley & Bosworth Civic Carol Concert    | Newbold Vernon                   |
|  | Sunday 15 December 2024    | Melton Santa Fun Run                       | Melton Country Park              |
|  | Wednesday 18 December 2024 | Mayor's Staff Christmas Lunch              | Parkside                         |
|  | Wednesday 18 December 2024 | Oadby & Wigston Civic Carol Service        | Blaby District Council           |
|  | Thursday 19 December 2024  | Air Training Corps Christmas Carol Service | St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray |
|  | Wednesday 15 January 2025  | Hinckley & Bosworth Pantomime              | Hinckley                         |
|  | Friday 17 January 2025     | Mayor's Quiz Night                         | Parkside                         |
|  | Thursday 23 January 2025   | Charnwood Civic Service                    | Loughborough                     |
|  | Friday 24 January 2025     | Let's Get Melton Moving Awards             | Stockyard, Melton Mowbray        |
|  | Monday 27 January 2025     | Annual Holocaust Memorial Day              | De Montford Hall                 |
|  | Saturday 1 February 2025   | Air Training Corps Annual Dining-in Night  | Scraptoft Golf Course            |
|  | Monday 3 February 2025     | Oadby & Wigston Charity Curry Night        | Wigston                          |

CO53

**LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader provided his announcements under seven themes.

**VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Leader reminded Members about the Council's VE Day 80th Anniversary small grant fund, which was previously announced by Councillor Pat Cumbers. The scheme will close at 11:59pm on 7 March 2025 and there is funding still available. A funding pot of £7,000 was allocated to support a range of community VE Day celebration projects. Eligible community groups, charities and parish councils organising events and projects can apply for funding between £70 and £700 to assist to make their local celebrations a success. The Leader added that information on grant funding, including eligibility criteria and allocations of payments, could be found on the Melton Borough Council website and that details of all the celebrations will be published on the Discover Melton website as they are confirmed. The Leader added that the Council had also made a grant award, as part of the Community Grants Scheme, to the Melton Mowbray 1940's weekend, which will have a focus on VE day too. The Leader then urged Members to not forget those who had sacrificed themselves, in particular the Polish and the Commonwealth citizens of all faiths and cultures, many of whom battled on towards VJ on the 14th August 1945.

### Children's Homes

The Leader informed Members of the unresolved problem around proposals to locate more than one children's home in small village communities, and the constraints, the Council had faced through the planning process alongside the absence of joined up policy at a national level.

The Leader stressed that the Council's aim had always been to enable and support the provision of children's homes but to do so in a way that also considered the needs of local communities. The Leader reminded Members that he wrote to Government about the Council's concerns, and that the Council's teams were proactive in engaging with departmental colleagues. In the recently updated NPPF, there are changes which reflect the requests made by the Council, particularly on the matter of establishing local need in respect of looked after children in policy making. This would enable the Council to consider if its own local policy can be reviewed and measures to manage the future development and provision of children's homes. The Leader thanked staff for their efforts with this.

### Changing Places

Members were informed that the Mayor and Councillor Glancy visited Birchwood School to be handed a petition. The Cabinet has now formally received the petition regarding toiletry needs and provision of changing places which create places of dignity, adequate space and safety for individuals, carers and families in their everyday lives. The Leader thanked the Mayor, the previous Head Teacher, and everyone at Birchwood School for raising awareness of this issue. Last spring the Leader was asked for help on this issue and immediately instructed that a changing place facility be included in the LUF development. Later the Leader informed Members that he also considered the possibility of using 5 King Street to serve the town centre but unfortunately the location and project wasn't suitable.

### Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Project

The Leader informed Members that he had circulated his answers to various questions tabled at the Council meeting on 5 December 2024, including on the LUF project. Planning permission for the project was received at a Planning Committee held on 5 February 2025. The Leader stated that he had received emails about why money from the LUF project cannot be diverted to pay for a doctors' surgery. The Leader stated that he asked if it is possible to divert some of the funding to a doctor's surgery, however it was confirmed that it isn't legally possible.

### Doctors' Surgery

Regarding the issue of the doctor's surgery, the Leader referred to the reply given to Councillor Alison Freer's question at Council on 5 December 2024. There is considerable activity on this important priority including the Leader's meeting the Secretary of State and an invitation for further dialogue. The Leader confirmed that the new surgery would be funded separately to the LUF programme. It is important to note that the LUF programme would not prevent a new doctor's surgery being

delivered. The Leader committed to continue to keep Members and the public informed.

#### Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

The Leader informed Council that he has now had 10 meetings and webinars, including with Ministers. The Leader stated that he wasn't going to rehearse the pros and cons of various issues as there would be a chance at the Council meeting on 27 February. Although, the precise format and agenda has not been finalised, however the essential ingredients would include:

- The public would have the ability to ask a question.
- Members may also ask questions, but they are likely to be referred to the open discussion.
- Officers would provide a factual report including a statement about the constitutional and governance rules.
- Recommendations would be tabled in accordance with advice from the Monitoring Officer.
- Consideration is being given to the fairest way the general public can express their views to Council.
- It is important to re-emphasise that while Leicestershire's seven District and Borough Councils, in partnership with Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and Rutland County Council may submit an interim proposal to Government by the 21 March, the final proposal is not required until 28 November.
- Also, Devolution and Local Government Reform are separate proposals.
- Other facts are that Leicestershire County Council has already proposed a single unitary council absorbing all seven districts and borough councils and also requested that the County Council elections to be cancelled. The latter has been refused, so those elections will take place on 1 May and present the opportunity for candidates and voters to reflect their views on Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution at that time.
- The question of whether or not the creation of a Town Council for Melton might be part of the process could be explored at the meeting on the 27 February.

The Leader added that he had received a copy of a letter from the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Mayor of Leicester and the Leader of Leicestershire County Council, which he would circulate to Members.

#### Flooding

The Leader thanked staff for all their efforts to help people at risk and needing support during the latest flooding event. He also thanked Melton and Oakham Waterways Society who removed debris from the town's water ways. The Leader also thanked the Minister, Emma Hardy, with whom he discussed his concerns with directly. Although the extra money for flood defences of £2.65bn across the country is welcome, the Leader confirmed that the Borough will probably not benefit much from the fund, as the funding formula for allocating money currently favours towards major projects taking many years, however, consideration is being given to

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|      | <p>directing money to smaller prevention measures. The flood zone re-mapping exercise being carried out by the Environment Agency is due to complete soon and the Leader hopes this will better inform the Council's own planning decisions. For parishes and riparian owners, a degree of self help is good but can present problems if one community solves its problem and the water moves down stream to its neighbour. The Environment Agency issues a range of permits to allow works to be undertaken which are technically appropriate and legally sound. This is a process the Council are keen to promote with parish councils. The Leader of Leicestershire County Council has reiterated her concerns about the limited capacity and funding for Lead Flood Authorities. The Leader agrees with the assessment and surmised that perhaps it is a task more suited to the new strategic mayoral authority under devolution.</p> <p>At 6:53pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor S. Orson entered the meeting.</p>  |
| CO54 | <p><b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b></p> <p>One question had been received from Kelly Davies. The question was read out by the Mayor.</p> <p><i>Our after dark economy is one filled with businesses that truly reflect the community feel that Melton Mowbray prides itself on and if utilised correctly could be the difference between someone coming for the day or staying the night. With that in mind, how does the council plan to work with promotional bodies to help push Melton's after-dark economy out to the wider market?</i></p> <p>In responding the Leader stated that the Council is focused on boosting Melton Mowbray's town centre, including its night-time economy, by working with local and regional partners like Melton BID, the Town Estate and Leicestershire's Local Visitor Economy Partnership. Through campaigns and promotions, the Council aims to attract more visitors, supporting events, entertainment, hospitality and retail. The Discover Melton brand and website have been successful raising awareness and increasing visitors by over 40% through digital campaigns and partnerships with local businesses to help promote Melton's offer, including events, dining and accommodation. The Council is committed to supporting investment into the town to develop the Stockyard and town centre improvements, as well as attracting investment and funding to support businesses and promote Melton Mowbray, combining to make the town an appealing destination.</p> |
| CO55 | <p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS</b></p> <p>Three questions from Members had been received and they were taken in the order that they were received.</p> <p>Question 1<br/>Councillor Thwaites asked the Leader the following question.</p>   |

*The extra care facility Gretton Court used to be a jewel in the crown of services that MBC jointly delivered to our Borough elderly. Can the Leader please explain the planned increases to charges at Gretton Court and whether we will carry out a full and robust review of the services, costs and charges at Gretton Court before any increases are applied so that this Council can ensure it is providing the quality and value of service that we would wish to deliver at the correct price.*

In response, the Leader stated that Councillor Thwaites made a good point about the cost impact on our older residents to deliver an extra care service. There are legitimate costs for Gretton Court as a housing service and for the care residents receive.

Charges are reflective of actual costs to deliver services to Gretton Court. Influencing factors on charges to deliver these services include utility costs, cost of food and inflation. Following changes to the service offer commissioned by Leicestershire County Council, a review of support was undertaken, and a new wellbeing service was implemented last year. The Council's teams worked with partner agencies to design the wellbeing support offer and also sought the advice of an external specialist to ensure clarity and accuracy on the service elements that can be met by housing benefit for eligible residents. Feedback on the support provided by the staff is positive.

Separate to the budget papers, a review of charges and service provision of meals at Gretton court is ongoing. As this review has not yet concluded and will now form part of a wider review of options for older person housing in the borough, the Leader could confirm that he was considering two options on meal charges for 2025/26: either to cap the increase at 10% or to freeze it at 2024/25 levels. Both will have a financial impact on the HRA and would effectively mean that the HRA (and therefore tenants) would be subsidising these cost pressures. To cap the increase at 10% would cost just under £6,000 and to freeze it entirely would cost £23,000 in lost income. The Leader added that he would come to a conclusion on the best approach over the next few days and it will be dealt with by way of delegated decision as previously agreed.

The Council can continue to be proud of Gretton Court, but consideration must be given to a strategic approach to determine the most appropriate future arrangements to meet the needs of the Borough's ageing population.

The reality is that the Council cannot achieve the same economies of scale as much larger registered provider counterparts who deliver extra care housing at scale, and as such, a full review is necessary. Rather than looking at each aspect of the service in isolation, the Cabinet wish to see a full review of older persons housing needs to ensure that Gretton Court can continue to be a housing option of choice and one that is affordable to tenants and can support independence of older residents for many years to come. The Council's teams have commenced this work

with the support of a specialist external organisation with expertise in older persons housing.

Councillor Thwaites opted to ask a supplementary question and asked the Leader how can the Council guarantee that the meal provides value. In response, the Leader stated that the Council can assess this during the review and recognised that it is just as much about quality as it is about price.

#### Question 2

Councillor Thwaites asked the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources the following question.

*There has been a recent spate of anti-social behaviour (ASB) including burglaries of local businesses in town, damage and theft from vehicles in the Borough. Although it is not entirely the responsibility of MBC can you please update Council of MBCs involvement in dealing with crime. How are we MBC and the local Police working together and what measures and processes have we together implemented to prevent crime and ASB.*

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources stated that it is really disappointing that Melton had suffered a series of issues over recent months including the retail thefts in the town centre. These crimes had a significant impact not only on the town's local businesses but also on the feeling of safety and security across the community. Proactive action was taken including multiple arrests, and the Portfolio Holder stated that after determined work from Leicestershire Police, several offenders are now in custody.

The Safer Melton Partnership is proactive, effective and alert to the issues facing the community and businesses and as expected, the Partnership and Leicestershire Police work collaboratively not just to tackle issues of crime and ASB, but also on longer term protective and preventative measures.

In addition to encouraging and supporting businesses to access resilience measures such as CCTV and the DISC app, which are funded by Safer Melton Partnership, the Portfolio Holder explained that she recently chaired a meeting with local businesses affected by the recent break ins, alongside the Council's Safer Communities Team and the Local Police. This was very well attended, with many businesses expressing not only their fear and frustration about the crimes they had been victims of but a willingness and desire to access support, information and measures to prevent future break ins. The Partnership were able to extend an invitation to the PCC's Office and to the local MP, Ed Argar, and that he and the Deputy PCC were able to attend and hear the views and needs of businesses directly.

Through the Council's work with the Melton BID, many more businesses now have access to the SMART radio scheme, and the Council does all that it can to explore



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|      | <p>what other support can be made available via the Safer Melton Partnership and Police and Crime Commissioners Fund. The Council have also made further changes and enhancements to the town's CCTV monitoring arrangements, with proactive monitoring being carried out by West Northamptonshire Council and a strong link between them and the police locally, enhanced further by the provision of a screen within the station itself and a direct communication link between them.</p> <p>Members would also be aware that the Council have had significant recent outcome with multiple closure orders on properties within the town that were linked to a county lines and associated drug and criminal activity. This is just one example so the work that takes place day in, day out to safeguard and support communities: something taken seriously and that communities are encouraged to report crime and ASB to the Council and the police.</p> <p>Members may also wish to note that the Scrutiny Committee has a specific role and remit to scrutinise our work on Crime and Disorder: as such, the work of the Safer Melton Partnership and the Council's teams is reported on an annual basis to the Scrutiny Committee, usually as a collaboration with Leicestershire Police. The Portfolio Holder is very happy to meet with and brief any Member separately on this work, and to provide a link to the most recent report and Scrutiny meeting where this was last discussed.</p> <p>Councillor Thwaites opted not to ask a supplementary question.</p> <p>Question 3<br/>Councillor J. Orson asked the Leader the following question.</p> <p><i>Would the Leader agree that the Cabinet decision last November to amend the current Off Street Car Parking Order is beyond the powers granted under the Road Traffic Regulation Act (1984), The Traffic Management Act (2004) and all other enabling legislation, and that the proposed changes require a new Order to be made as they extend beyond mere changes to charging?</i></p> <p>In response, the Leader stated that he did not agree with the statement.</p> <p>Councillor J. Orson opted not to ask a supplementary question.</p> |
| CO56 | <p><b>MOTIONS ON NOTICE</b></p> <p>The Mayor confirmed that there was one motion on notice received for the meeting.</p> <p>The motion was in relation to appreciation for Melton Borough Council colleagues, as outlined below and was received from Councillor Cox (Seconded by Councillor I. Atherton).</p> <p><b>Elected members wish to extend our thanks to colleagues employed at Melton Borough Council in the Housing, Legal and Safer Communities teams,</b></p>  |

**as well as to our critical partners in the police for their efforts in achieving the recent closure orders in Melton. Their diligence and dedication to joint working has sent a clear message to those criminals who think they can come into our community and deal drugs unnoticed and without consequence.**

**Elected members also note the bravery of residents who came forward to provide information and thank them for the vital role they have played in helping to keep our community safe.**

**The Council acknowledges that it is only through working collaboratively, with all stakeholders in our borough, that will lead to the results we need, and we reiterate our commitment to this approach moving forwards.**

During the debate, the following points were raised:

- Councillor Cox, Councillor Butcher and officers were thanked for their efforts.
- It was recognised that Housing Associations also need to do their bit to tackle the issue of anti-social behaviour in their housing stock.
- A Member commented they were with the Police effort and thanks were given to the Police and the Safer Community Team.
- Members were reminded that despite this Melton remains a safe place to live.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That Council**

**(1) Extends its thanks to colleagues employed at Melton Borough Council in the Housing, Legal and Safer Communities teams, as well as to the Council’s critical partners in the police for their efforts in achieving the recent closure orders in Melton. Their diligence and dedication to joint working has sent a clear message to those criminals who think they can come into our community and deal drugs unnoticed and without consequence.**

**(2) Notes the bravery of residents who came forward to provide information and thank them for the vital role they have played in helping to keep our community safe.**

**(3) Acknowledges that it is only through working collaboratively, with all stakeholders in the Borough, that will lead to the results needed, and Council reiterates its commitment to this approach moving forwards.**

(Unanimous)

CO57

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/27 TO 2028/29**

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

During the debate the following points were raised:

- The Conservative Group confirmed that they could not support the budget because:
  - It is being propped up by the corporate priority reserve.
  - There is no allowance for the implementation of food waste collection.
- The Conservative Group also stated that the budget could be short in the future by £1m due to a shortfall of business rates and the budget will be short £73k on national insurance contributions.
- The Conservative Group suggested that the Council should live according to its means, recognise that it is an at-risk authority due to use of reserves and cut the use of consultants.
- It was recognised that the homelessness budget is a risk for the overall stability of the whole of the budget. This is because policies at a national level are causing homelessness to increase.
- A Member commented that the cost of the lack of planning compliance is an unseen cost, which risks destabilising the budget.
- A concern was raised that the current government want to fast track Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation and would starve District and Borough Councils of adequate funding and that the Council should probably focus on funding only the statutory services.
- The comment was made that the budget was a depressing budget and it demonstrates the financial challenges the Council are facing.
- The Deputy Leader commented that last year the opposition wanted to spend £150k more and that the administration didn't adopt the idea therefore meaning that the budget is in a better position this year.
- The Leader added that he had attended the Scrutiny Committee when the budget was discussed and that no alternatives were raised. He added that using reserves to support the budget are a legitimate use of funds. It was noted that the last administration also dipped into the reserves.
- There was a fear that via Local Government Reorganisation, budgets for District and Borough responsibilities (leisure, etc) would be absorbed by the adult social care, education and highways budgets.
- The Section 151 Officer was thanked for advising to put the income from the business pool into reserves.
- It was noted that the asset management group aims to identify ways to maximise assets for the Council.

**RESOLVED**

**Council**

- (1) Approved the revenue budget for 2025/26 for General and Special Expenses, including proposed growth, as set out in Appendix A, B, C and D and summarised in Appendix 1 section 4.4;**

- (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 Appendix 1 at paragraph 4.4.5;**
- (3) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services to access the Corporate Priorities Reserve to fund any of the approved growth items where UKSPF cannot be used due to not meeting the funding criteria;**
- (4) Delegated authority to the Director for Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services to access the reserves up to £100k to fund the one off costs of preparing for the implementation of food waste collection and recycling reforms;**
- (5) Delegated authority to Director for Corporate Services in consultation with the Director for Housing and Communities to approve a supplementary estimate to support any ongoing additional revenue costs of providing up to five additional waste collection vehicles and delivery of a food waste collection service;**
- (6) 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 Appendices A and B;**
- (7) Approved that any current year surplus/deficit on general expenses at 31 March 2025 be met by transfers to or from the Corporate Priorities Reserve in order to maintain the working balance at its agreed level of £1m;**
- (8) Approved that any current year surplus/deficit for Special Expenses Melton Mowbray at 31 March 2025 be transferred to/from the Special Expenses Reserve thereby bringing the actual working balance back to the target £50k;**
- (9) Noted the changes made to the risk categorisation of budgets as set out in Appendix 1 at paragraph 4.6.2 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, Gordon, Hewson, Higgins, Lumley, Thwaites

**AGAINST THE MOTION (9)**

I Atherton, S Atherton, Browne, Child, Chubb, Freer, J Orson, S Orson, Webster

**ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)**

CO58

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024-2029 AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2025/26**

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|      | <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report and moved the recommendations. The Leader, Councillor Allnatt, seconded the motion.</p> <p>No comments were raised.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p><b>Council</b></p> <p><b>(1) Delegated authority to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services, to access additional funding from capital receipts to fund the purchase of up to five food waste collection vehicles;</b></p> <p><b>(2) Approved the General Expenses Capital Programme for 2025/26 and associated funding as set out in Appendix B;</b></p> <p><b>(3) Approved the indicative five year General Expenses Capital Programme for 2025-29 as set out in Appendix C;</b></p> <p><b>(4) 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 Appendix 1 at paragraph 5.10;</b></p> <p><b>(5) Approved the Capital Strategy 2025/26 as attached at Appendix D.</b></p> <p>The above resolution was considered through a recorded vote as follows:</p> <p>FOR THE MOTION (15)<br/>Adcock, Allnatt, Brown, Butcher, Carter, Clay, Cliff, Cox, Cumbers, Glancy, Gordon, Hewson, Higgins, Lumley, Thwaites</p> <p>AGAINST THE MOTION (9)<br/>I Atherton, S Atherton, Browne, Child, Chubb, Freer, J Orson, S Orson, Webster</p> <p>ABSTAINING FROM THE MOTION (0)</p> |
| CO59 | <p><b>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2025/26 FOR HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</b></p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report and moved the recommendations. The Leader, Councillor Allnatt, seconded the motion.</p> <p>During the debate the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Portfolio Holder and Officers were thanked for their good work.</li> <li>• Officers were congratulated on receiving the energy efficiency funding.</li> </ul>  |

- Members were reminded that rents in Melton are modest.

**RESOLVED**

**Council**

- (1) Approved the budget estimates for 2025/26;**
- (2) Approved the average rent increase of 2.70% for all Council dwellings with effect from 1 April 2025;**
- (3) Approved the 2025-26 capital programme, and**
- (4) Delegated 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.**
- (5) Noted that as part of the continuing focus on resourcing requirements for tenancy, income and engagement functions, a revised staffing structure is being developed and will shortly be considered by the Chief Executive under existing delegated powers and**
  - (5.1) That in support of the new structure, to delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services, authority to access the HRA Regeneration and Development Reserve for up to £200k in 25/26 to cover both the additional one off and recurring costs of the new structure and enable the resourcing plan to be implemented and**
  - (5.2) Noted that the recurring costs associated with the change of establishment will be built into the base budget from 26/27 providing the financial viability of the HRA is not undermined.**

(For 21, Against 0, Abstentions 1)

At 7:56pm, prior to the commencement of this item, Councillors Carter and Gordon left the meeting.

At 8:00pm, upon the conclusion of this item, Councillors Carter and Gordon rejoined the meeting.

At 8:00pm, upon the conclusion of this item, Councillor Higgins left the meeting and did not return.

CO60

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL - TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2025/26**

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|      | <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources, Councillor Cox, introduced the report and moved the recommendations. The Leader, Councillor Allnatt, seconded the motion.</p> <p>No comments were made.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p><b>Council</b></p> <p><b>(1) Approved that the prudential indicators and limits are adopted as outlined in Appendix A at Section 2.</b></p> <p><b>(2) Approved the Treasury Management Strategy as outlined in Appendix A.</b></p> <p><b>(3) Approved that the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement which sets out the Council's policy on MRP as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of Appendix 1.</b></p> <p>(Unanimous)</p> |
| CO61 | <p><b>PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26</b></p> <p>The Chief Executive introduced the report. The Leader, Councillor Allnatt, moved the recommendations and Councillor Glancy seconded the motion.</p> <p>During the debate the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that there are 182 full time equivalent staff, therefore the workforce is small.</li> <li>• Average pay of staff is low therefore staff are not over paid.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p><b>Council approved the attached Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26 at Appendix A.</b></p> <p>(Unanimous)</p>  |

The meeting closed at: 8.08 pm

Mayor