

Minutes



Meeting name	Cabinet
Date	Thursday, 6 February 2025
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 M. Brown, Scrutiny Committee Chair
Councillor A. Thwaites

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

Minute No.	Minute
60	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE No apologies for absence were received.</p>
61	<p>MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2025 were confirmed.</p>
62	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST No declarations of interest were received.</p>
63	<p>MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES Scrutiny feedback on the General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/26 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2028/29. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Brown, introduced the report advising Members that the Scrutiny Committee had met on 23 January 2025 and considered a report on the General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/26 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2026/27 to 2028/29.</p> <p>It was recognised by those present that a risk to the MTFS is that the southern section of Melton Mowbray Distributor Road may not proceed within the timeframe originally proposed, thereby putting the Council’s delivery of the Local Plan at risk..</p> <p>Cabinet AGREED to have regard to Scrutiny Committee’s feedback.</p> <p>Scrutiny feedback on the Capital Programme 2024-2029 – General Fund and Capital Strategy 2025/26. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Brown, introduced the report advising Members that the Scrutiny Committee had met on 23 January 2025 and considered a report on the Capital Programme 2024-2029 including the General Fund and Capital Strategy 2025/26.</p> <p>Members were assured that the UKSPF project would be adjusted so that cost remain on budget.</p> <p>In terms of asset maintenance, Members were informed that the Council couldn’t do everything it want to do and so would prioritise the most urgent tasks.</p> <p>Cabinet AGREED to have regard to Scrutiny Committee’s feedback.</p> <p>Scrutiny feedback on the Revenue Budget Proposal 2025/26 for Housing Revenue Account The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Brown, introduced the report advising Members that the Scrutiny Committee had met on 23 January 2025 and considered a report on the Revenue Budget Proposal 2025/26 for the Housing</p>

Revenue Account.

It was confirmed that the figures for energy efficiency related to the funding that have been received.

Cabinet **AGREED** to have regard to Scrutiny Committee's feedback.

Scrutiny feedback on Cleaner, Greener Melton: Collaboration to support environmental quality.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Brown, introduced the report advising Members that the Scrutiny Committee had met on 3 December 2024 and considered a report on Cleaner, Greener Melton, Collaboration to support environmental quality.

Members recognise the importance of volunteers but noted that the existing volunteers won't be around forever and therefore it is important to encourage new volunteers to come forward.

It was clarified that the service manager is producing service delivery performance indicators for both staff and contractors to be measured against.

It was highlighted that it would be useful to have a routine schedule of grounds maintenance works, so that Members can inform the public when questioned on when a particular set of works would be taking place.

Cabinet **AGREED** to have regard to Scrutiny Committee's feedback.

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CHANGING PLACES PETITION

Before the petitions was presented, it was noted that petitions would usually go to a meeting of Council but only if they met the required threshold. On this occasion, the threshold wasn't met and therefore it was decided that the Cabinet would address the petition on seeking to install a changing place toilet facility in Melton Mowbray that can be accessible at all hours of the day, seven days a week. It was clarified that a changing place toilet was a toilet which could accommodate a wheelchair and a carer.

Hannah O'Mara, Assistant Head Teacher at Birch Wood School addressed Cabinet and stated that through the petition, the signatories wanted to make a bigger impact upon access issues, with the biggest issue being having access to accessible toilets. Due to a lack of accessible toilets in Melton Mowbray, then trips into the community had to be time limited.

It was explained that currently, there are only two changing place toilets in the town, one at Carnegie Museum, which is only available when the museum is open and the other at Mencap, which is difficult to use as there are safeguarding issues. It is for this reason that the petition seeks the installation of a changing places toilet which can be accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Following a query raised regarding access, it was confirmed that the ideal solution would involve a secondary key, as radar keys are readily available. There would also need to be some education on how to access and use the facility.

Cabinet confirmed that since the petition had commenced, the plans for the Stockyard had been developed to include a changing places toilet. It was recognised though that additional locations for changing places toilet are required. Members hoped that the Town Estate would also provide a changing places toilet at the southern end of the town centre.

A discussion ensued regarding the opening time of the changing places toilet and it was confirmed that the facility should be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as shutting it at 6pm or 7pm would limit the ability of those who require such a facility to participate in society.

That Cabinet:

Received and **NOTED** the petition which seeks to install a changing place toilet facility in Melton Mowbray that can be accessible at all hours of the day, seven days a week.

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025/26

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

No comments from Members were received on this report.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- 1) **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the prudential indicators and limits are adopted and approved as outlined in Appendix A, Section 2.
- 2) **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the Treasury Management Strategy at Appendix A be approved.
- 3) **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement, which sets out the Council's policy on MRP is approved as outlined in the report at paragraph 5.3.
- 4) **NOTED** the linkages to the Capital Strategy due to the integral nature of how the Council manages its treasury finances to support capital development.

(Non-key decision)

Reasons for recommendations

The Treasury Management Code requires the Council to approve annually a

Treasury Management Strategy and to provide a mid-year update on Treasury Management activities to the Council. It is a requirement that Treasury Management is scrutinised during the year which falls within Cabinet's remit.

To facilitate the decision-making process and support capital investment decisions the Prudential Code requires the Council to agree and monitor a minimum number of prudential indicators.

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GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2025/26

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

It was confirmed that the growth for Planning Enforcement would assist with compliance enforcement.

A discussion ensued regarding homelessness costs and it was confirmed that costs in this area for the current financial year are unable to be contained within budget. The Council had received increased funding for homelessness for the next financial year, although there needs to be a structured solution outside the budget process in order to control costs in the long term.

Members are keen to take action regarding the Council's assets and changing the use of them.

It was recognised that the possible local government reorganisation (LGR) of Leicestershire would affect budgets of all Councils involved. Unitarisation would have a big impact upon future spending patterns, however there was a realisation that the big spending functions (e.g. social care, education, highways) cannot be allowed to subsume budgets on functions that are currently provided by District and Borough Councils. It was confirmed that the Council's relationship with the other District and Borough Councils is good and that the future challenge of LGR would be faced together.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- 1) **NOTED** the year end forecast and financial position for the General Fund and Special Expenses for 2024/25.
- 2) **RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the revenue budget for 2025/26 for General and Special Expenses, including proposed growth, as set out in Appendices A, B, C and D and summarised in the report at section 4.4;
- 3) **RECOMMENDED** that Council approves an overall Band D council tax increase of 2.99%, with the individual Band D council tax levels across each

fund set out in the report at paragraph 4.4.5;

- 4) **RECOMMENDED** that Council delegates 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;
- 5) **RECOMMENDED** that Council delegates 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;
- 6) **RECOMMENDED** that Council delegates 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;
- 7) **RECOMMENDED** that Council notes 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;
- 8) **RECOMMENDED** that Council approves 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;
- 9) **RECOMMENDED** that Council approves 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;
- 10) **RECOMMENDED** that Council notes the changes made to the risk categorisation of budgets as set out in Appendix 1 at paragraph 4.6.2 and Appendix F.

(Non-key decision)

Reasons for recommendations

The Council, having set a Budget at the start of the financial year, needs to ensure the delivery of this Budget is achieved. Consequently, there is a requirement to regularly monitor progress so corrective action can be taken when required, which is facilitated through regular reporting of the financial position.

The recommendations set the Council's General Fund budget and proposed level of council tax for the 2025/26 financial year which takes into account the proposals set out in the approved Corporate Strategy. The proposals take into account the net

expenditure that the Council expects to spend in the next financial year to deliver services to our residents. The report also includes details of the funding and income received to support these services to ensure a balanced budget is proposed, albeit utilising reserves.

The Council also holds a number of reserves which can be drawn upon to fund future expenses. The level of reserves is considered within this report, as is the future outlook for spending in the years ahead in order for the Council's future financial resilience to be considered as part of the proposals.

Cabinet and Council are required to consider and approve the General Fund Revenue Account budget proposals in order to set the budget and council tax for the forthcoming financial year.

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CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2025/26

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

A point was raised regarding capital spend, as opposed to revenue spend. It was recognised that not all Members and the public don't distinguish between the two and that the Council may need to monitor capital spend better in order to promote the good work that is being carried out.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- 1) **NOTED** the capital programme forecast outturn for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A.
- 2) **RECOMMENDED** that Council delegates 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;
- 3) **RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the General Expenses Capital Programme for 2025/26 and associated funding as set out in Appendix B;
- 4) **RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the indicative five year General Expenses Capital Programme for 2025-29 as set out in Appendix C;
- 5) **RECOMMENDED** that Council delegates 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;
- 6) **RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the Capital Strategy 2025/26 as attached at Appendix D.

(Non-key decision)

Reasons for recommendations

Approving the capital programme and capital strategy will support the Council in delivering its commitment to manage its assets effectively and to ensure the benefits from them are maximised for the benefit of the Council and community as a whole. These Capital plans will support the effective delivery of these ambitions and will ensure appropriate levels of capital expenditure and investment are in place to meet Corporate priorities and objectives whilst ensuring that plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. It is a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities to produce a capital strategy and for the Chief Finance Officer to report explicitly on the affordability and risk associated with it.

The Capital Programme for 2025-29 for General Expenses is attached at Appendix B. The Programme gives the total cost of each scheme, the spending profile, the amounts authorised to be spent and the stage each scheme has reached within the Capital Programme.

There are no items proposed for the Special Expenses capital programme.

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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2025/26

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

Members commented that it was pleasing to see how much the Council had reduced rent arrears. It was clarified that the Council is the best improved across the sector on the reduction of rent arrears.

It was noted that the neighbouring authorities, who the Council would likely merge with under LGR, also have Council housing stock too.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- 1) **NOTED** the financial position on the HRA as at 30 November 2024 and the year-end forecast for both revenue and capital.
- 2) **APPROVED** the increase of 5% to the Independent Living Service charge as outlined within the report at paragraph 5.25.
- 3) **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the budget estimates for 2025/26 be approved.
- 4) **RECOMMENDED** to Council that an average rent increase of 2.70% for all Council dwellings be approved with effect from 1 April 2025.

- 5) **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the 2025/26 capital programme be approved.
- 6) **RECOMMENDED** to Council that delegated authority be given to the Director for Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Director for Corporate Services and the 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.
- 7) **RECOMMENDED** to Council to note 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
- 7.1) **RECOMMENDED** to Council that in support of the new structure, to delegate 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
- 7.2) **RECOMMENDED** to Council to note 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.

(Non-key decision)

Reason for recommendations

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (the 1989 Act) requires the Council to produce and publish an annual budget, including the setting of rents, for the HRA which avoids a deficit. This report sets out the detail for Cabinet to consider prior to making recommendations to Council. It is a requirement that this be scrutinised prior to its submission which has been undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee in January 2025. The proposed rent increase is in line with Government policy and is the maximum increase allowed.

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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment and Regulatory Services (Deputy Leader), Councillor Glancy, introduced the report and moved the recommendations. Councillor Allnatt seconded the motion.

Members thanked the Local Plan Working Group and Officers for their hard work in delivering this scheme.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

- 1) **APPROVED** the publication of the updated Local Development Scheme,

superseding the 2023 version.

- 2) **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** to the Director for Place and Prosperity for the next 24 months to make minor updated to the Local Development Scheme in relation to the Melton Local Plan Update, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment and Regulatory Services.

(Non-key decision)

Reasons for recommendations

Having an up-to-date Local Development Scheme is a statutory duty. This update, which also establishes the scope and timetable of the Melton Local Plan Update, provides a more accurate timeline when compared to the current Local Development Scheme, which was approved in September 2023.

Delegation to further update the Local Development Scheme is sought to add flexibility to make changes to the timetable, and to align the delegation with the timetable for the adoption of the plan. Such changes may become necessary as the Local Plan Update progresses through Examination in Public. There is a pressing requirement for the Council to update the Local Development Scheme by 6th March which has arisen from a recent Government request in a letter to all local authorities dated 12th December following the publication of the updated National Planning Policy Framework.

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CORPORATE DEBT WRITE-OFFS

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

It was noted that out of all the Leicestershire Authorities, the Council is rated first in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates collection. In addition, it was clarified that arrears have been reduced.

It was clarified that the Council has a 99.5% collection rate for rent.

Following a query, it was clarified that the Council are assisting residents to ensure that Council Tax arrears don't become too high. Also, if a resident requires more holistic assistance, then the Council would refer them to Me and My Learning.

RESOLVED

That Council:

- 1) **NOTED** the action taken by the Council to recover outstanding debts.
- 2) **AUTHORISED** the Chief Finance Officer to write off the debts shown in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

(Key decision)

Reasons for recommendations

All recovery methods have been considered and where appropriate pursued, before recommending that debts are written off.

Officer time can be maximised on greater returns, focusing on debts where there is more realistic chance of recovery.

The meeting closed at: 5.26 pm

Chair