

# BECOMING A COUNCILLOR 2022

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## Borough of Melton



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# Thinking of becoming a councillor?



## If you are interested in becoming a councillor, then read on...

If you care about your community and are looking for a worthwhile and rewarding way to help, becoming a councillor may be the perfect choice for you.

This brochure will provide an outline on what you need to know about becoming a councillor and how to proceed once you have made the decision to stand for election.

“Anyone can be a Councillor and it’s important for our local democracy that we have people of all ages and from all backgrounds to represent a wide range of local views. As a democratically elected representative, councillors have a unique opportunity to make a real difference to people’s lives. However, being a councillor is also hard work; you can expect to have to balance the needs of your local area, your residents and voters, community groups, local businesses and the Council on a daily basis.”

Cllr Joe Orson  
Leader of the  
Council



“At Melton Borough Council we have 28 seats that are up for election on 4 May 2023. This offers you the perfect opportunity to stand as a representative of your local community and become a councillor (also known as an elected member). We hope that this document will be helpful for anyone who is thinking of standing for election and is interested in finding out about the role of the councillor. The local election process for Melton Borough Council begins in March 2023 when a Notice of Election will be published.”

Edd de Coverly  
Chief Executive



## What do councillors do?



Councillors are elected to represent a number of local residents in an individual geographical unit of the Council known as a Ward. The role of a councillor can be varied and it is up to each individual councillor how they work. Councillors have responsibilities to their ward, to the Council and to the community.

## Why are councillors important?

Councillors play a key part in the borough as they:

- are a voice for the community, representing local people and communities;
- are champions of those who use local services;
- help shape future services for the benefit of local people;
- work in partnership with other organisations such as:
  - o Police
  - o Voluntary and community sector
  - o Other public bodies
  - o The private sector
- play a major role in improving the quality of life for the people within the Borough of Melton.

## Why become a councillor?

People choose to become councillors for a variety of reasons:

- You may feel strongly about a particular issue or the well-being of your community as a whole and feel you would like the opportunity to influence decision making on these issues.
- You may see yourself as a good spokesperson for your community and feel you could represent the views of the people living in your area.
- You may want to pursue political beliefs.
- You may have specific skills and knowledge that you would like to use to benefit your community.
- You may already be part of local organisation and feel that becoming a councillor would be a natural progression.

Some see becoming a councillor as an extension of what they are already doing.

Maybe you are already active in a political party, trade union, or school governing body, and the next step for you is to become a councillor.

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## Who can become a councillor?

To stand for election, on the day of nomination, you must be:

- 18 or over,
- UK, EU or commonwealth citizen,
- registered to vote in the area or have lived, worked or owned property there for at least 12 months before an election.

You cannot stand if you:

- work for Melton Borough Council;
- hold a politically restricted post for another authority;
- are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
- have served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more within five years prior to the election;
- have been disqualified under any legislation relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

## Do councillors need any formal/educational qualifications?

No, you do not need any specific qualifications to become a councillor. Life experience is probably the best thing you can bring to the role.

## Do I have to belong to a political party or group?

You can either stand as an independent candidate or by joining a group or political party. If you are thinking of standing as a candidate for a particular political party then you will need to be a member of that party's local organisation. There is a link at the end of this brochure to the register of political parties.

## How much time is involved in being a councillor?

The time commitment will depend on your role within the council, the number of duties you decide to take on and the demands of your constituents. It could range from a few hours each week to a few hours each day at busier times but you should attend every committee to which you have been appointed.

Either way, your time as a councillor will be split between your two key responsibilities; your ward and the council.



WARD DUTIES	COUNCIL DUTIES
Dealing with queries and complaints and working with council officers to resolve complaints	Help form policy
Explaining Council policy and processes	Help develop the council's budget and agree the level of Council Tax
Attending Parish Council meetings within your Ward	Make or scrutinise decisions
Holding surgeries for local residents	Attendance at Council meetings and reading associated papers
Representing your Ward at meetings (for example, where decisions are being made which directly affect your local area, such as Planning Application)	Representing the Council on outside organisations/working groups

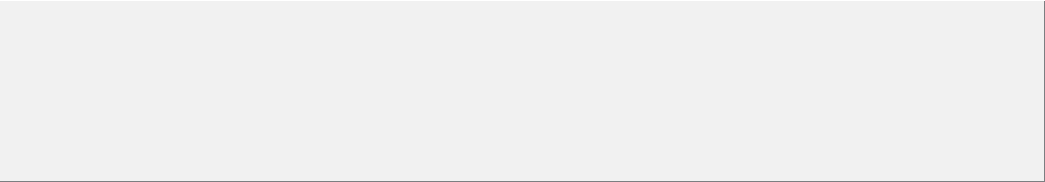
## What you may want to consider

These are just a few of the considerations you will need to make before you take on the responsibility of a councillor. You work for the people of your ward but you work for them in conjunction with the council and its officers.



### Member of a political party?

There will be additional calls on your time to attend political group meetings. Political groups require their members to attend group meetings in advance of council meetings and possibly training events/seminars organised by the political party.



How your role as a councillor will impact on any family and personal relationships – you will need their support and understanding as you may be spending a lot of your spare time on council business.



The people you represent will look to you for help in dealing with their problems. You are likely to receive a lot of post, emails and telephone calls, and not every caller will telephone at what you might think is a reasonable hour!




Most councillors hold at least one drop in surgery each month, some hold two or even three surgeries in this period. You may spend some of your time visiting constituents at their homes, or at the council offices, and you may also have to meet with officers of the council to help you with any issues.



**1-2 hours**

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The average length of a committee meeting. 

## 6 Full Council meetings a year

These are formal meetings that you will be expected to attend.

Most meetings start at 6.30pm and can last up to three hours, and sometimes longer.



You will be a member of at least one committee or be on The Cabinet. Nearly all committee meetings are held in the evenings from 6.00pm. Your meetings/commitments may not be evenly spread out over the cycle so some weeks you may be out more evenings than others.

## background reading

For most of the meetings you attend there will be agendas that you will need to read beforehand. These can be quite detailed and take time to read and understand.



## Will I get paid for my duties?

There is no salary for being a councillor. However, you will be paid an allowance to reimburse you for the time and expenses incurred whilst on council business.

Every councillor is entitled to a basic allowance which is paid into a bank account in 12 monthly instalments along with additional re-imbusement to cover all council related travelling and subsistence when carrying out 'approved duties'.

Some councillors are given an additional allowance to cover any special responsibilities such as Executive member, scrutiny chair/spokesperson, among others.

For more information about the members' allowance scheme please download the Council's constitution.

## Will I get time off work?

If you're working, by law your employer must allow you to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to perform your duties as councillor. The amount of time off will depend upon your responsibilities and the effect of your absence on your employer's business.

You should discuss this with your employer before making the commitment.



# The Borough of Melton

## Understanding Melton the place



Melton is a hidden rural oasis in the north-east part of Leicestershire and at the heart of the East Midlands.

There are around 70 small villages dotted around one of the oldest market towns within the UK.

Melton has a rich history rooted in farming and food, as well as a strong record of manufacturing success, being home to many award winning businesses. Melton is well known for its incredible town centre markets, with the livestock market being the biggest in the country and dating back 1,000 years.

Melton's history combined with its association with Melton Mowbray Pork Pies and Stilton Cheese has enabled Melton to gain recognition as the The Rural Capital of Food.



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# Melton Borough Council

## How our Council works

Melton Borough Council was formed in 1974, when the Melton Mowbray Urban District and the Melton and Belvoir Rural District merged together.



### **The Cabinet**

The Leader of the Council appoints a Cabinet selected from the elected councillors.

The Cabinet makes key decisions which are detailed in the Forward Plan. The Cabinet considers reports from the Scrutiny Committee and all policy and budgetary framework documents.

Made up of 6 members, including the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet is responsible for the most important decisions affecting the Council. It also makes recommendations to the Council regarding the annual budget and major plans.

### **Scrutiny Committee**

The scrutiny function of the Council scrutinises the Council's decisions and performance. It also assists in research and policy review and development, mainly through the work of Scrutiny Review Panels.

### **Regulatory Committee**

The regulatory Committees of the Council include Audit and Standards, Licensing and Planning.

These Committees all meet regularly and have specific responsibilities as set out in the Constitution.

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# Melton Borough Council

## What does Melton Borough Council do?

As a borough council, Melton Borough Council (MBC) provides a wide range of services that combine to make a real difference to residents' lives on a daily basis. As a borough councillor you will be involved in decision making, shaping policy and budget setting for these important services.

Here is an example of some of our services:

Waste Collection



Leisure Services and Parks



Housing



Planning



Melton  
Borough  
Council

Elections



Environmental Health



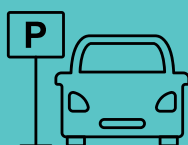
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Licensing



Car parks



Environmental Crime and  
Protection



Council Tax and Housing  
Benefit



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# Melton Borough Council

## Our Corporate Strategy

This is an overview of our Corporate Strategy which spans 2020-2024. The full corporate strategy is available to read [www.melton.gov.uk/corporatestrategy](http://www.melton.gov.uk/corporatestrategy)

### Our Mission

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### Our Values

#### We Care

Valuing others and developing ourselves; committed and passionate about what we do.

#### We Innovate

Ambitious, creative and resourceful; putting customers first and learning from feedback.

#### We Achieve

Taking responsibility and seeking excellence; always proud to serve.

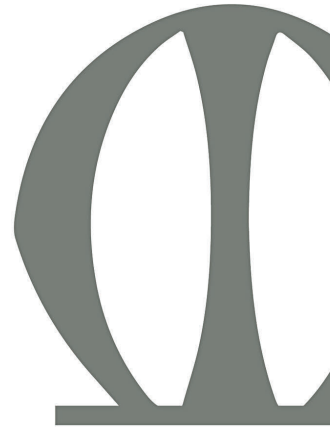
### Our Vision

We want to be a first class council: on the side of our communities and providing great services, where the customer comes first. We want to help people reach their potential, support the most vulnerable, and protect our rural environment. We want to provide more and better homes, create better jobs and regenerate the town. We want to ensure Melton prospers, benefitting those who live here and attracting others to visit and invest.



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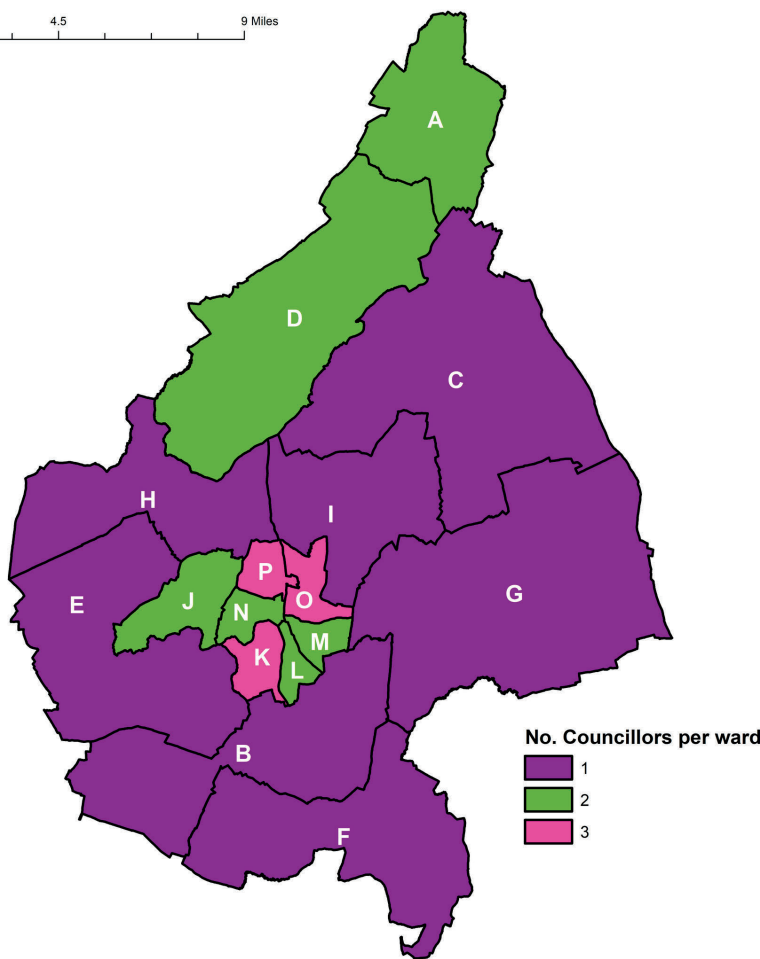
# Make-up of wards



## How many councillors per ward

(Effective from May 2019 reflecting final recommendations of Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Electoral Review)

0 2.25 4.5 9 Miles



Letter on map	Ward Name	No. of Councillors
A	Bottesford	2
B	Gaddesby	1
C	Croxtan Kerrial	1
D	Long Clawson and Stathern	2
E	Frisby-on-the-Wreake	1
F	Somerby	1
G	Wymondham	1
H	Old Dalby	1
I	Waltham-on-the-Wolds	1
J	Asfordby	2
K	Melton Dorian	3
L	Melton Warwick	2
M	Melton Craven	2
N	Melton Egerton	2
O	Melton Newport	3
P	Melton Sysonby	3



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# Ward responsibilities

As a councillor you should:

- listen to and represent the views of the residents;
- make sure services are delivered effectively in their ward;
- help out individual ward members on specific issues, known as casework.



You'll find that much of your time is taken up by contact with local people. This could be in the form of dealing with complaints or enquiries. Your role will be to listen, explain council policy and make sure that the policy has been carried out fairly according to official procedures.

You'll get help and support to deal with constituents' enquiries and complaints from officers in the council. As a ward representative you can represent views and issues associated with the council on constituents' behalf.

# Council responsibilities

You'll also help to:

- form policy.
- develop the council's budget and agree the level of council tax.
- make or scrutinise decisions.



Your role on the Council as a whole is to plan, run, monitor and develop council business.

Councillors are essential to deciding what is in the public interest amidst a range of conflicting issues and views.

As a councillor you'll be a member of the Council, and could also be on the Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee or the Regulatory Committee.

You'll meet with other councillors from all political groups, to debate and approve council business in a formal setting. Most meetings are open to the press and public.

There are written rules, which govern behaviour and procedures at these meetings included in the 'Council Constitution' and these enable councillors to take part effectively.

# What attributes does a councillor need?

You don't need to have any specific qualifications to be a councillor. Experience and knowledge gained through being an active member of local groups and organisations, raising a family or being a carer for a family member can equip you with valuable life skills which will be beneficial in your role as a councillor. If you do happen to have a specific area of knowledge or expertise this will be of benefit. It is important that the Council's councillors are able to represent the diverse communities that they serve and so a broad range of skills and experiences will be beneficial.

## Skills to help you fulfil the role

### Knowledge of the area



It is very important to understand the area in which you are standing for election so that you are aware of the facilities, the views of local residents and how the area might be improved.

### Confidence



Confidence - You will regularly meet new people from a variety of backgrounds and organisations. You will also be expected to speak in public forums such as Council meetings.

### Integrity



You will need to be honest and trustworthy so that the community you represent have confidence that you will do your best to deliver what you have promised. This will sometimes mean that you have to manage the expectations of your community and explain why it is not always possible to deliver things in exactly the way people want.



### Communication

You will be expected to communicate with a variety of people, through a variety of mediums. The ability to clearly communicate your own views and those of the people you represent is very important.



### Resilience

Local authorities are facing financial challenges and this sometimes means that there are difficult decisions to make regarding funding services that the council provides. These decisions will not always suit everyone and you need to be robust in your decision making and prepared to defend your stance on certain issues and provide sound and factual reasoning for why the council has made certain decisions

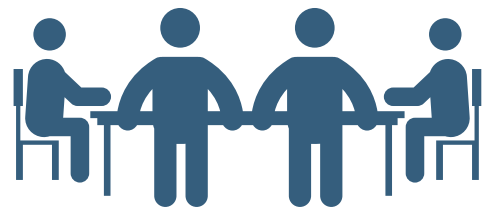
# Training and Development

As already mentioned, regardless of what skills and attributes you bring with you, it is likely you will have a lot to learn about the workings of local government. This is nothing to worry about as you will be supported through an induction programme and ongoing development plans to ensure that you have the skills and training you need to fulfil your role as a councillor.

Some of the training and development will be compulsory dependent upon your role and other training may be optional. You will receive regular updates and information on available training opportunities and you can choose the courses which you think will enable you to develop into your role as a councillor.

## Themes covered in induction

- Procedure for meetings
- Code of Conduct
- Committee training (Planning/Audit and Risk/Employment and Appeals)
- Corporate parenting and safeguarding children
- Chairing and facilitation skills
- IT training
- The role of scrutiny
- Working with the media



You will also be supported by councillor mentoring schemes. The Democratic Services team is responsible for member support, and they will always be on hand to support members with any queries they may have or direct them to the appropriate services.

Although it can seem daunting at first, the Council is here to support and help in any way we can. Remember, there is no expectation that you will automatically know how to be a councillor.



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# Elections and how they work



In England and Wales, over 19,000 people represent their communities by serving as councillors on a local authority. Councillors are elected to represent an individual geographical unit of the council known as a Ward (District) or Division (County). In the Borough of Melton, all councillors are elected once every 4 years. However, in some district councils a third of councillors are elected each year. Elections are held on the first Thursday in May, with the next elections due on 4 May 2023.

If a councillor resigns or dies whilst in office, a by-election is held to elect another person to represent the ward.

Councillors elected at a by election serve the remaining period of the 4-year term. However, where a vacancy occurs within 6 months of the date of the next election, the seat is vacant until the next election.



## Steps to being elected

To become a councillor, you will need to stand as a candidate in a local election. This involves:

- completing nomination forms to have your name included on the ballot paper;
- appointing an Election Agent to report your campaign finances after the election;
- running your campaign;
- canvassing electors for votes;
- producing election material in accordance with the election rules;
- conducting interviews with the press and media;
- attending key events;
- making an acceptance speech at the election count (hopefully).

Before every election we hold 'Candidate and Agent Briefing Sessions' to provide you with the key information that you will need and give you a step by step guide to the nominations process.



# Nomination Process

The nomination process involves completing a number of different forms. Copies and guidance for completing these forms can be downloaded from the Electoral Commission website: [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

## Forms you will need to complete:



**Nomination Form**

**Candidate's consent to nomination**



**Certificate of authorisation (if standing for political party)**

**Request for a party emblem (if standing for a political party)**



**Notification of election agent**



The nomination form must be endorsed by the signatures of two registered electors (known as subscribers) from the ward in which you are standing.

If you attend the 'candidate and agent briefing sessions' you'll be provided with a printed copy of the nomination pack. The nomination pack will include nomination forms, timetables and guidance notes.

## Next Steps

If you have made the decision to stand you will need to make sure you are officially nominated. You will need to request a nomination pack from the Elections Team (these will be available from 22 March 2023 by contacting [electionservices@melton.gov.uk](mailto:electionservices@melton.gov.uk), or calling 01664 502502).

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# Useful Contacts



If you are interested in other political parties-

Please visit the register of political parties, accessible via the Electoral Commission's website: [www.tinyurl.com/EP-register](http://www.tinyurl.com/EP-register)

## The Electoral Commission

Trevelyan House Great Peter Street London SW1P 2HW

T: 020 7271 0500 (switchboard)

W: [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

## Local Government Association (LGA)

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

T: 020 7664 3131

W: [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

## Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)

22 Upper Woburn Place, London, WC1H 0TB

T: 020 7554 2800

W: [www.lgiu.org](http://www.lgiu.org)

## Be a Councillor (Local Government Association)

[www.beacouncillor.org.uk](http://www.beacouncillor.org.uk)



## Contact us

### Melton Borough Council

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