



Melton Borough Council

Melton Local Development Framework

**Draft
Revised Melton Statement of Community
Involvement**

May 2011

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This document can be made available in large print or other formats

Background

The Melton Local Development Framework will provide the context for planning and investment decisions in Melton until 2026. We believe that our community, from the individual to families and groups; and from the entrepreneur to businesses who invest in the area, should be given the opportunity to actively influence the plans that are put in place.

The Melton Statement of Community Involvement defines our commitment to active participation and sets out how the community will be engaged as we prepare the documents that make up the Melton Local Development Framework. It also sets out our expectations for public consultation on applications for planning permission.

For these reasons, the Melton Statement of Community Involvement is as important a part of the Melton Local Development Framework as the documents which propose and define the policies that provide the future direction for planning and investment opportunities.

The Melton Statement of Community Involvement should be read alongside the Melton Local Development Scheme; our programme for preparing and publishing the policy documents of the Melton Local Development Framework.

This is our second Melton Statement of Community Involvement. The first Statement was published in October 2006 following an independent assessment in April 2006 by an Inspector appointed by the Government to examine the 'soundness' of the statement.

The 2006 Statement has provided the context for community involvement in the Melton Local Development Framework since we commenced our plans. However, since 2006 there have been a number of changes to the planning system, including changes to the way Local Development Frameworks are prepared and the anticipated abolition of Regional Planning.

Our work since 2006 has focused on the Melton Core Strategy; by 2008 we had reached 'Preferred Options' stage as prescribed by, and in accordance with, the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

The Regulations guiding our work on the Core Strategy have been amended by the publication of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009.

As a result our 2006 Statement is now no longer representative of the stages we need to undertake when preparing our plans. We have taken the opportunity in this Statement to reflect the changes within the system and to set out how we will provide for and encourage the involvement of our community in the development of our plans.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement describes how we will engage the community when preparing the Local Development Framework and also when dealing with strategic planning applications. Our proposals for community involvement have been set out following the approach contained in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: Local Spatial Planning, see Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Whilst we continue to prepare the development plan under the framework provided by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 there have been changes to the regulations which underpin the Act with the publication of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009. This Statement builds upon and replaces the strategy for community involvement set out in the Melton Statement of Community Involvement 2006.
- 1.3 The planning system provided by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated amendments and regulations is designed to increase the involvement of the public and stakeholders in the process of producing plans. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is part of our Local Development Framework. It describes how we intend to engage the community and carry out public consultation arrangements when preparing our plans and dealing with planning applications.
- 1.4 The planning system operates within a legal framework that involves a variety of documents and terms. Appendix 2 contains a glossary that describes the terms used in this document.
- 1.5 The SCI should ensure that stakeholders and all sections of the community, including local groups and organisations, are actively involved throughout the process of consultation.
- 1.6 This Statement sets out the standards we want to achieve and have already undertaken when involving the community throughout the whole process of preparing the Melton Local Development Framework (MLDF). It identifies the methods we will use and the key opportunities for community engagement. It also describes how we will involve the community when we consider planning applications.

Local Development Scheme

- 1.7 We have published a programme for the plans we intend to prepare in the Melton Local Development Scheme (LDS). The current LDS was published in 2011 and covers a three-year period. It sets out the documents that make up the MLDF and the timescales for the preparation and adoption of each one. It also identifies consultation arrangements, key milestones and the resources required to prepare the documents. It can be downloaded from the melton.gov.uk website at:-
http://www.melton.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/planning_policy/local_development_scheme.aspx

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 We believe that our entire community, from the individual to families and groups, and from the entrepreneur to businesses, who invest in the area, should be given the opportunity to actively influence the plans that are put in place. We want to strengthen community involvement in planning. We want to provide pro-active opportunities for the community to have a constructive input into the shaping of policy and our decision making processes.

2.2 Our Vision for community involvement in the Local Development Framework is that:

We will offer the widest opportunity to stakeholders and the local community to be informed of, and participate in, the preparation of all development plan documents that make up the Melton Local Development Framework, within the resources available; and, we will exceed the minimum legal requirements for consultation and publicity wherever reasonably possible.

2.3 Our aims are to:

- take a structured approach to managing community involvement based on stakeholder and community interests;
- present information in a clear and effective way;
- value the opinions, insights and expertise of stakeholders, groups and individual members of the community;
- make a particular effort to involve under represented and hard to reach groups;
- wherever possible use resources available from stakeholders for particular aspects of LDF consultation and publicity;
- use different approaches, methods and techniques to secure community involvement that are appropriate to different stages of the plan process and specific groups within the community; and,
- integrate consultation with other community involvement initiatives wherever reasonably possible.

2.4 A number of participation techniques and methods of distributing information to the community are available which can be used in various combinations to achieve our aims. Appendix 3 sets out a range of techniques with comments on their advantages and disadvantages. Having considered these techniques we intend to carry out our consultation arrangements for the LDF according to the procedures below.

3 THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.1 Our Local Development Framework (LDF) will take the form of a portfolio of plans and documents. Some documents will be statutory whilst others will be adopted as local guidance documents. The documents may be prepared at different times and in some instances will form a series of overlapping policies to address a certain subject or issue within the Borough. All documents in the LDF will be called Local Development Documents (LDDs).

3.2 The statutory documents in the Melton LDF are called Development Plan Documents (DPDs). These documents form the development plan for the

Borough. Further guidance is provided on the policies and proposals set out in DPDs by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SPDs do not have development plan status but act as a material planning consideration when planning decisions are made.

4 CONSULTATION ON A DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD)

- 4.1 The Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which will form the Melton LDF are statutory documents and have the weight of development plan status as defined in Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. We will ensure that they undergo rigorous procedures of community involvement and consultation in their formation. The resulting DPD which is developed from this process will be subject to an independent examination by a Planning Inspector to assess the policies and proposals it contains.
- 4.2 To assess the needs, problems and opportunities to be addressed by a DPD; and, to ensure that policies and proposals are robust and relevant, we will gather evidence and consult at the earliest possible stage to inform the decisions to be made. The evidence and consultation responses gathered will be relied upon when the soundness of a document is tested at independent examination.
- 4.3 We will involve relevant stakeholders, groups and organisations in the preparation of this evidence, as appropriate. For example, the Environment Agency would be involved in the preparation of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; whilst local businesses would be included in an Employment Land and Premises Study. Participation may include workshops and other informal meetings that can help to identify issues which the Development Plan Document needs to address.

Stages of consultation

- 4.4 The process for preparing and adopting DPDs can generally be divided into informal and formal stages. The process was more formal when we commenced work on our Core Strategy DPD; requiring a series of stages to be undertaken before the submission of the DPD. The requirements are now less rigid but consultation still remains a central part of the process. The key stages of public consultation for a DPD now consist of:

Informal Stages

- Pre-production evidence gathering and consultation to inform the contents of the DPD;
- Generation of options
- Consultation on these options

Formal Stages

- Publication of Pre-Submission DPD;
- Consultation on the Pre-Submission document; and
- Submission of DPD to the Secretary of State.

Pre-production Consultation

- 4.5 At the earliest stage possible in the preparation of a DPD, we will seek views from specific and general consultation bodies and stakeholders to assist in its formation. There are a variety of consultation measures which may be used depending on the

nature of the DPD concerned.

- 4.6 We maintain an extensive list of potential consultees whose views may be important. The parties we will consult may include:

Specific consultation bodies:

- Central and local government (including neighbouring local authorities)
- The Secretary of State for Transport (in relation to the Secretary of State's functions with regard to railways and highways)
- Statutory advisory bodies (the Coal Authority, the Environment Agency, English Heritage, and Natural England)
- Town and Parish Councils within or adjacent to Melton Borough
- Infrastructure providers
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
- Primary Care Trusts (or successor) operating in any part of Melton Borough
- Police authorities operating within or adjacent to Leicestershire

The local community:

- the general public
- community area partnerships
- resident/community/civic societies and associations
- local businesses and business groups
- charity and voluntary organisations
- under-represented groups within the community

The extended community:

- landowners, developers and agents
- national interest groups
- general business and industry
- housing bodies
- transport bodies
- regional development agencies.

- 4.7 Under Regulation 25 of the 2004 amended regulations we are required to notify certain bodies that we intend to produce a DPD and must invite these bodies to tell us what issues they consider the DPD should address. This notification and invitation for comment is the only formal requirement at the early stages of DPD production. We intend to seek further involvement at these stages to seek an extensive range of comments from our community.

Options Generation and Consultation

4.8 Following the initial evidence gathering and consultation exercises we will use the comments and responses received from stakeholders, other bodies and our community to draw together the options available.

4.9 We will discuss these options with the appropriate consultation bodies for the DPD by publishing a consultation document, outlining the issues being tackled and the alternative options available. The document will form the basis of an extensive consultation exercise and a variety of measures may be used such as public meetings, exhibitions, leaflets, press notices and presentations to existing groups. Extensive use will be made of our website, www.melton.gov.uk, to inform the community and interested bodies. We also have consultation software available to provide a high quality method of consultation online via our website.

Period of consultation

4.10 We will ensure that following publication of a consultation document there is an appropriate period of time during which comments can be submitted. This will allow us to provide all parties with the opportunity to have an input into the plans and policies which will affect our community before we prepare for the next stage of plan production.

Advertising and the media

4.11 We will use advertising and the local media to raise public awareness of any consultation exercise. We expect this to be an effective means to secure public and community awareness that a consultation is taking place.

Forums and meetings

4.12 We will use public meetings and workshops as another useful means for consultation and, where necessary, public meetings will be arranged for issues that could have a significant impact on local communities.

Stakeholder Involvement

4.13 We have established an extensive database of parties interested in our Core Strategy. The database includes stakeholders, organisations and members of the public. We encourage any party or individual to be added to our database. This enables us to ensure that stakeholders and members of our community, who have expressed an interest, receive notice of any consultation event involving the Melton LDF.

Consultation Responses

4.14 We will consider the representations received at the end of each consultation period and make decisions on each of the matters raised. This will provide the ultimate direction for the preparation of the formal DPD. The consultation process and our decisions on the representations received will be conducted in as fair, transparent and efficient a manner as reasonably possible having regard to all material factors including the need to ensure full and open discussions.

Statement of Consultation

4.15 We want our community to know how the representations received have been used. We will produce a Statement of Consultation setting out the key issues raised and how we intend to deal with the representations received. The decisions we take will ultimately be fed into the preparation of the 'Publication' DPD. The

statement will demonstrate that the consultation process and our decisions on the representations have been conducted in a fair, transparent and efficient manner. The statement will be made available together with a summary of the consultation results to respondents, stakeholders and the public, and for downloading from the web site, melton.gov.uk.

Publication of a DPD and its Consultation

- 4.16 We will provide the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to comment on a DPD when it is published, before it is submitted to the Secretary of State. We will make the DPD available for public inspection at venues throughout the Borough, including the Borough Council Offices; the Melton Mowbray and Bottesford public libraries; the County mobile library; and Post Offices and shops in villages throughout the Borough.
- 4.17 We will seek media coverage through press articles and a notice will be published in the Melton Times newspaper. Posters will be displayed throughout the Borough to advertise the submission documents. We will also seek coverage through our web site. Public meetings will be held, where appropriate, during the consultation period at various venues to enable members of the community to discuss the document.
- 4.18 There will be a specified six-week consultation period for representations to be made on the proposed submission DPD. We will publish details on our website (www.melton.gov.uk) of where and when the proposed submission documents will be available for inspection. The documents will also be available to view and comment on using our online consultation portal which can also be accessed on our website. This will provide the principle means by which comments can be made by our community but we will make sure that a variety of other methods are available and no members of our community excluded.
- 4.19 As soon as reasonably practicable, we will make the representations received on the DPD available for public inspection at the venues where the DPD has been made available and also publish these on the web site, www.melton.gov.uk.
- 4.20 Should any representations be made during the specified period include proposals for alternative site allocations or boundary changes (where a DPD deals with such matters) which do not repeat issues previously raised and are realistic and related matters we will publish notices in the same newspaper and invite representations on the proposals to be made within a further specified period of six weeks.
- 4.21 Prior to the allocation of land in any DPD, the Council will contact the landowners involved to ensure that the land will be made available for development.

Submission of a DPD

- 4.22 We will send the Submission DPD and the representations received to the Secretary of State for the purpose of examination.
- 4.23 We will make information available on the Melton Borough Council website, melton.gov.uk, including the proposed submission documents, a statement of the

representations and a statement of the fact that the proposed submission documents are available for inspection and of the places and times at which they can be inspected.

Advertising & the media

- 4.24 When we submit the DPD we will publish notices (outlining a statement of the representations procedure and a statement of the fact that the proposed submission documents are available for inspection and of the places and times at which they can be inspected) in the Melton Times, Leicester Mercury, Grantham Journal and Newark Advertiser newspapers. We will seek media coverage and provide information on our web site, www.melton.gov.uk that is available for downloading. Posters will be displayed throughout the Borough to advertise the submission document.

The Examination and Adoption

- 4.25 The purpose of an Examination is to consider if a DPD is 'sound'. The Examination Inspector will consider all representations received during the submission stage of consultation before making any recommendations.
- 4.26 If the Examination involves an oral hearing, we will publish a notice in the local press at least six weeks before it begins that gives details of the examination. We will include this information on our web site, www.melton.gov.uk, and notify any person who has made a representation at the Publication stage.
- 4.27 Following the Examination, the inspector will prepare a report advising of any changes to the DPD which are considered appropriate in order to make it sound. If the Council wishes to adopt the DPD it must be amended on the basis of the Inspectors binding report. Our intention would be to adopt the DPD as soon as possible after receipt of the report. Although not expressly consultation, there is a six week period for legal challenge after adoption. The Localism Bill might make some changes to the power of the Inspector to amend draft documents.
- 4.28 We will notify all those who made representations that we have received the Inspectors report. We will also publish the Inspector's report on our website together with a schedule of all the modifications required to the DPD.
- 4.29 We will publish a notification of adoption of the DPD in the Melton Times. Following adoption, a DPD will be made available at the Council Offices and published on the web site, www.melton.gov.uk.

Localism & Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.30 The Localism Bill is expected to become law later in 2011. The Bill will introduce new powers for local people to shape development in their area through a Neighbourhood Plan. This may cover a range of issues from determining the locations of shops, offices and schools to setting the standards of design for new housing. The current proposals for the Bill require Neighbourhood Plans to be in general conformity with the Core Strategy, but instigated and produced by the community.

5 CONSULTATION ON A SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

5.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) can cover a range of issues that may expand policy or provide further detail to policies in a DPD. They are likely to take the form of design guides; development briefs; or, issue or thematic based documents that supplement policies in a DPD. Community involvement will be extremely important in preparing SPDs but they will not be subject to independent examination.

5.2 There will be a three stage process of:

- survey and evidence gathering;
- draft preparation; and
- adoption.

Survey & evidence gathering

5.3 We will consult the relevant community, stakeholders and other bodies as part of the survey and evidence gathering stage of the process.

Period of consultation and access to information

5.4 The draft SPD will be subject to a six-week consultation period. Throughout the period copies of the SPD will be made available at the Council offices for public inspection.

5.5 The consultation arrangements we will use will depend on the theme or geographic area of a SPD. They may be localised if, for example, they deal with a development site or specific area.

5.6 Copies of the draft SPD will be sent to the relevant stakeholders and other bodies for comment. Where a SPD involves a particular parcel of land, owners and occupiers of the land will be notified of the consultation arrangements. Letters advising of the consultation exercise will be sent to occupiers of properties adjoining the land. The draft document will be made available for downloading from the web site, www.melton.gov.uk.

Advertising and the media

5.7 At the commencement of the period of consultation we will seek media coverage through press editorials.

Forums and meetings

5.8 If necessary, a public meeting will be held during the consultation period at a venue that is convenient to the stakeholders or section of the community that is interested in or affected by the subject of the document.

Statement of consultation

5.9 At the end of the consultation period we will produce a Statement of Consultation that registers all comments received and the response of the Council to each of them. The Statement will explain how we have dealt with the comments and how they have affected the final SPD.

Adoption

5.10 The adopted SPD will be made available for public inspection and purchase, together with the Statement of Consultation, at the Council offices. These documents will be made available for inspection and downloading from the web site

www.melton.gov.uk. A notice advising of the adoption of the SPD will be placed in the local press.

6 CONSULTATION ON A SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

For a Development Plan Document

6.1 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is an iterative process which will be integrated into the preparation of a DPD. We will consult key stakeholders on the scope of the SA at commencement of DPD preparation.

6.2 An initial SA report will be published at the Options Generation and Consultation stage together with the DPD. The same 6 week period will be given for representations to be made on the SA. It will be made available for inspection at the venues where the DPD is deposited. We have published a Sustainability Appraisal in association with our Core Strategy Preferred Option which can be viewed at:

http://www.melton.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/planning_policy/sustainability_appraisal.aspx

6.3 At the publication stage of a DPD, a final SA will be published and made available for inspection with the DPD for the same period and at the same venues where it is deposited. It will be submitted together with the DPD to the Secretary of State. The SA will be made available for downloading from the web site, www.melton.gov.uk.

For a Supplementary Planning Document

6.4 A Sustainability Appraisal is generally not required for an SPD. However, it we will publish a 'screening report' which draws on the SA report of the parent DPD, and clarifies whether or not the SPD is likely to lead to any further significant effects. The screening report will ensure that any requirements under the European Directive on SEA are met for the SPD.

7 CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

7.1 We currently consult on planning applications in accordance with the requirements of Article 8 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (as amended) and the 'good practice' set out in Circular 15/92. This is supplemented by additional mechanisms Melton BC has employed to consult more widely than the legislation and guidance requires, for example with Parish Councils and re-consultation following substantive amendments to applications. The results of consultation are considered by officers and Members when making decisions on the acceptability of planning applications. Please note bodies such as English Nature will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.

7.2 These provisions consist of public notices in the press, on-site or 'near to site' notices, and, letters of notification to neighbours.

7.3 We will continue to consult in accordance with the Order and Circular and our supplementary arrangements for all planning applications that are submitted.

7.4 We recognise that applications of a more significant scale can raise particular

issues and concerns that may require wider community consultation.

- 7.5 In these cases it may be of benefit to commence consultation at the pre-application stage. Where appropriate, developers will be encouraged to carry out community consultation for applications that are considered to be significant. We will expect developers to enter into early dialogue with us to agree a form of community consultation, and to submit a statement with an application that describes the actions taken to involve the local community.
- 7.6 These expectations will be set out in a guidance note which will supplement the current literature that sets out how to submit an application and how applications are processed. The notes will set out which kind (e.g. by scale or category) of application will require additional publicity and consultation and what forms this should take. It will also set out the practices we will employ for the remaining, less contentious, applications. Future legislation arising from the Localism Bill may impact upon these requirements and require different mechanisms for a wider range of applications.
- 7.7 The consultations undertaken by the developer may take the form of a public meeting and / or exhibition, additional neighbourhood notification or press coverage. Consultation will normally be localised with an emphasis on informing and involving stakeholders, businesses, residents or members of the public that might be affected by the proposal.
- 7.8 Because pre-application consultation is not a statutory requirement, the Council is not empowered to decline an application where it has not been carried out. However, we will assist applicants who wish to undertake consultations by making the policy widely available as part of our application guidance notes. Where consultations are carried out we will request the submission of a 'certificate' with the formal application that describes the measures an applicant has taken, the impact that the measures have had in terms of the content of the original proposal, and if no amendments have been made to the proposal, why that conclusion was reached.
- 7.9 Appendix 5 sets out the Council's suggested consultation mechanisms for the pre-application and post-submission stages.

8 PLANNING AID

- 8.1 Planning Aid England is a free voluntary service offering independent professional advice to enable local communities, especially those with limited resources, to engage effectively in planning decisions which may affect their area. Planning Aid England aims to give people the confidence to help themselves and to become involved in wider planning issues.
- 8.2 Despite the recent reductions in funding from central Government, which have impacted upon a wide range of public services, the benefits of the advice provided by Planning Aid has been recognised with a continuation of support. They can be contacted on the planning aid advice line, on 0330 123 9244, or via the email address advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk. We will encourage the use of the service provided by Planning Aid where it will help to secure more effective engagement

with the community.

9 MAKING CONSULTATION INCLUSIVE

- 9.1 We believe it is important to make consultation inclusive to find out the views of an accurate cross-section of the whole community. We are aware that different sections of the community, particularly minority groups, may have views that differ from those of the majority. If they are not consulted effectively these views could be unheard. To assist effective consultation, our documents will be clearly written without jargon and made available in a variety of formats (e.g. large print, audiotape). We have access to skills of language interpretation and sign language for people who may find it difficult to access our services due to language barriers.
- 9.2 We are aware that some groups and individuals can find it difficult to access consultation exercises. In rural areas problems of distance and transport can be a barrier to certain types of consultation exercises. We will make full use of local facilities (e.g. village shops) in which to place our documents and make other information available.
- 9.3 We want to use existing community forums to access certain 'hard to reach' groups. We have already made progress in reaching the Seniors Forum and Access Group. By consulting more widely with groups in the voluntary sector we hope that many more people will be included in the MLDF process than in the past.
- 9.4 We recognise that maintaining an open dialogue between, and with, all those parties who have an interest in the planning process can contribute towards ongoing education in respect of each other's views and desired outcomes. A culture of open dialogue can also reduce delays and disagreements that do not contribute to a faster and more efficient process. Whilst we will use internet technology to foster inclusiveness we also recognise the desire for and benefits of face to face contact. We will continue to use our Customer Service Centre to enable interested parties to access planning officers and information. We will make qualified planning officers available to attend Parish or other local group meetings where necessary.

Engaging Under Represented Groups in the Planning Process

- 9.5 The Borough Council is committed to engaging all sectors of the local community in the planning process. We recognise that there are certain sectors of the local community who the Council has difficulty fully engaging with. This presents two challenges for the Council – firstly, identifying who these 'under represented' groups are and secondly, finding new and appropriate ways to encourage them to get involved in the planning process.
- 9.6 We will encourage the following groups to be more involved in the planning process:
- **Farmers** - Melton is a largely rural area and a considerable amount of the land in the Borough is in agricultural use. We are keen for the farming community to become more engaged in the planning process. Connection with these members of the community can be achieved through the National

Farmers Union, Country Landowners Association and the Leicestershire Rural Partnership.

- **Young People** - It is often hard to get young people involved in the planning process, yet the future development and use of land within the Borough will have a large impact on their present and future lives. We will seek to actively engage this section of the population within the planning process through working closely with Melton Youth Council, youth clubs and groups, local schools and fully utilising our Children's Centres. We will inform young people of the purpose of the planning system and the ways in which they can get involved.

- **Older People** - We recognise that older people form an increasing proportion of Melton's population. As such it is essential that their views on life in the Borough and the facilities and services they require to improve their quality of life are fully taken into account in both the development of the Local Development Framework and the Community Strategy. The Council will work closely with Melton Senior's Forum and the voluntary sector in finding ways to engage this group more fully.

10 LINKS WITH OTHER COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

10.1 The Melton Community Partnership (MCP) is the local strategic partnership for Melton. The MCP represents a wide cross section of organisations and groups in Melton and is a key stakeholder. We will ensure that full advantage is taken of the opportunity this represents to assist in an extensive consultation of the LDF.

10.2 The Partnership published the Melton Sustainable Community Strategy in 2008 which will be reviewed every 5 years. The strategy contains the main economic, environmental and social aims of the local community. We recognise that the LDF is a key mechanism for delivering the spatial aspects of the community plan and as such it is essential that stakeholders and the community are fully consulted. The objectives set within our LDF will mirror the objectives set within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

10.3 We will seek to ensure that wherever possible and appropriate, joint consultation will take place with MLDF documents. We will take every opportunity to co-ordinate MLDF consultation exercises with the strategies and plans of other public bodies and organisations, including the Leicestershire Community Strategy, where there can be positive benefits to the local community.

10.4 The Melton Sustainable Community Strategy aims to 'encourage local people to get involved by developing ways in which people in the Borough can be given the opportunity to express their needs and wishes for their areas.' We see this SCI as an opportunity to help in this aim as the LDF process will offer the community considerable opportunity to comment and make representations at key stages.

11 RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT

11.1 We believe that communicating with the public is the key to swift progress of the Melton LDF; however, we realise that consultation exercises require resources in terms of personnel, finances and facilities.

- 11.2 The preparation of the MLDF will be the responsibility of the Policy unit of the Council, under the direction of the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods. The MLDF process will be overseen by the Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee to ensure that elected Members have full control over the proposals and policies contained within the MLDF.
- 11.3 The financial implications of consultation and availability of other resources have influenced the extent and approach that we have taken to our consultation strategy. Budgetary provisions have been made to provide for the preparation and publication of LDDs.

12 REVIEW AND MONITORING

- 12.1 We want to ensure that our consultation processes operate as well as possible and we receive as wide a range of community involvement as possible. We will monitor the effectiveness of our consultation procedures by periodically seeking the views of those who have participated in the planning process. Key indicators and targets will be set to enable our performance to be measured. We will regularly monitor the indicators and publish them in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

Evaluating effectiveness

- 12.2 Evaluation will be based on a system of monitoring that involves an on-going assessment of the consultation process. Monitoring will focus on:
- short feedback questionnaires for those who have attended focus groups and public meetings;
 - questionnaires to respondents on a sample of MLDF documents;
 - comments from the existing planning users advisory group about planning applications;
 - the distribution of a questionnaire to all respondents following the adoption of a LDD.
- 12.3 These surveys will help us to consider both the outcomes of consultation and the process. A formal review of the SCI could be triggered if:
- Monitoring of consultation arrangements suggest the need for significant change;
 - The number of responses to a consultation exercise is significantly below expectations, particularly from hard to reach groups;
 - Staff or financial resources become overstretched.

The costs of consultation will be monitored and measured for the purpose of Best Value and evaluation.

13 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Criteria for assessing the soundness of a Statement of Community Involvement

An SCI should

- Explain clearly the process and methods for community involvement for different types of local development documents and for the different stages of plan preparation. This needs to include details of how the diverse sections of the community are engaged, in particular those groups which have been underrepresented in previous consultation exercises.
- Identify which umbrella organisations and community groups need be involved at different stages of the planning process, with special consideration given to those groups not normally involved.
- Explain the process and appropriate methods for effective community involvement in the determination of planning applications and where appropriate refer to Planning Performance Agreements.
- Include details of the LPAs approach to pre-application discussions.
- Include the LPAs approach to community involvement in planning obligations (S106 agreements).
- Include information on how the SCI will be monitored, evaluated and scrutinised at the local level.
- Include details of where community groups can get more information on the planning process, for example, from Planning Aid and other voluntary organisations.
- Identify how landowner and developer interests will be engaged.

Source: Planning Policy Statement 12 'Local Development Frameworks'

APPENDIX 2

Glossary

AAP Area Action Plans

Area Action Plans will be DPDs. They will focus on the implementation of key opportunity areas and will be relevant to a wide range of circumstances including urban expansion areas, new settlements, regeneration areas and areas sensitive to change.

AMR Annual Monitoring Report

The Annual Monitoring Report will monitor and assess the implementation of the LDS and whether LDD policies are being achieved. The AMR will review plan progress against targets and milestones and seek reasons if they are not being met. The SA will have specific monitoring requirements and will be useful in developing AMR contextual indicators.

CS Core Strategy

The Core strategy will be one of the first DPDs to be produced. It will set out the overall vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the borough. It will contain the prime strategic policies and proposals for the borough. Having regard to urban capacity studies it will determine the broad location of development, especially housing. All other DPDs will be in conformity with the Core Strategy.

DPD Development Plan Documents

These documents will be statutory documents and subject to an independent examination by an inspector. They will undergo rigorous procedures of community involvement and consultation. The recommendations of the examination inspector will be binding.

LDD Local Development Document

Local Development Document is the generic name for all documents contained in the LDF.

LDF Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework will contain a portfolio of LDDs that will establish a local planning authority's policies for meeting the economic, environmental and social aims for their area as it affects the development and use of land.

LDS Local Development Scheme

The Local Development Scheme will set out the timetable, targets and milestones for the preparation of LDF documents.

MLDF Melton Local Development Framework

The Melton Local Development Framework is the LDF for Melton Borough.

MSCI Melton Statement of Community Involvement

The Melton Statement of Community Involvement is the SCI for Melton Borough.

PM Proposals Map

The Proposals Map will be a DPD and illustrate all other DPD policies and proposals that have a geographic designation or specific land use implication. The map will be an Ordnance Survey base map and where necessary include inset maps.

PPG Planning Policy Guidance PPS Planning Policy Statement

These are Government statements of national planning policy.

RSS Regional Spatial Strategy

A Regional Spatial Strategy establishes the soon, to be abolished, regional policy that informs the preparation of LDFs, local transport plans and sub-regional strategies and programmes.

SA Sustainability Appraisal

The Sustainability Appraisal will assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of the policies and proposals of LDDs. It is an iterative process that will commence from the outset of document preparation.

SCI Statement of Community Involvement

The Statement of Community Involvement is the local authority's strategy on community and stakeholder consultations on the LDF and planning applications.

SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment is a required under European Union regulations and will assess the environmental impacts of the policies and proposals of DPDs. It will be incorporated within the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Saved

Saved is a term that confirms that an adopted development plan will continue to operate for a period of three years from the commencement of the Act, or from the date of adoption of an emerging plan. The period may be extended for a plan or particular policies with the agreement of the Secretary of State.

Specialist body

Before granting planning permission for particular types of development that are defined in the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 a local planning authority must consult particular bodies e.g. Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency, the local highway authority.

SPD Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary planning documents will elaborate on policies and proposals in DPDs. They will not have development plan status. They will be considered as a material planning consideration and their weight will be reflected by their status. SPDs are likely to take the form of design guides, development briefs and issue or thematic based documents.

Stakeholder

An authority, organisation or business that has an interest in the MLDF (e.g. government department or agency).

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APPENDIX 3

Methods of informing and involving the community

Method	Main considerations
Inspection venues	Public access to documents and information at little cost - venues may not be accessible to all members of community – needs to be well publicised
Public meetings	Good opportunity for open debate and discussion of issues - often available to only small sections of the community – issues can become sidelined by more vocal members of community -
Public exhibitions	Good way of bringing information and advice to community – resource intensive – attendees are self-selecting - good publicity necessary beforehand – may require several days – location important – attractiveness of displays important
Leaflet drops	Comprehensive approach to informing community – leaflets should be well designed and user friendly – usually expensive – can be discarded as junk mail
Posters	Cheap form of informing community – limited information
Focus group meetings	Good for in depth discussions – small numbers involved – may be bias in responses
Workshops	Constructive participation - can develop ownership - careful planning required – limited to small numbers
Newsletter	Comprehensive approach to informing community – expensive
Website	For this stage of consultation an online portal, Objective Online 4.0, will be used as a method for the public and stakeholders to leave comments and view comments which have been made.
Citizen's panel	Useful for gaining cross section of views at reasonable cost – hard to reach groups can be excluded
Press Notice	Can have wide audience – formal appearance may discourage reading – can be expensive
Presentations to existing groups	Good way of presenting information in detail – can be resource intensive
Media editorials /press editorials	Very good and cheap way of reaching large proportion of community – editorials can have bias – timing important

APPENDIX 4

List of consultation bodies and stakeholders

Specific Consultation Bodies

The following bodies are specific consultation bodies and must be consulted in accordance with the Act and Regulations. Please note, this list relates to successor bodies where re-organisations occur.

The Regional Planning Body

- East Midlands Councils

A relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority:

- Leicestershire County Council
- all adjoining county councils
- all adjoining district councils
- all parish councils within Melton Borough
- all adjoining parish councils
- Leicestershire Constabulary
- all adjoining police authorities

The Coal Authority

The Environment Agency

English Heritage

Natural England

Secretary of State for Transport

British Telecom

British Telecommunications Plc

Mobile Phone Operators Association

Leicestershire and Rutland Primary Care Trust

Lincolnshire Teaching Primary Care Trust

Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust

National Grid – UK Gas

E.ON

British Gas Connections Ltd

Severn Trent Water Ltd

Anglian Water Ltd

Homes and Communities Agency

General Consultation Bodies and Other Consultation Bodies

The regulations also identify general consultation bodies that relate to voluntary organisations representing certain groups within the community. These include voluntary bodies which represent the interests of different ethnic groups, religious groups, and disabled people; and, people carrying on business in the area. They vary locally and may change with the document being prepared.

Local planning authorities are also advised to consult any government department or agencies that have large land holdings in the area and a variety of other agencies and organisations when Local Development Documents are prepared.

The following list of organisations and agencies will be consulted. The list does not preclude consultation with other organisations, agencies and groups.

Age UK
Airport Operators Association
The Ancient Monuments Society
Anglian Water Services
Arriva
The Belvoir Estate
British Gas
British Geological Survey
British Toilet Association
British Waterways
British Waterways (Newark)
BT Group PLC
Bottesford High School and Community College
Brooksby Melton College
Buckminster Trust Estate
Business Link (Leicestershire)
Business Link (Melton)
CBI East Midlands
Central Networks
Central Trains Ltd
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Chemical Business Association
The Church Commissioners
Churches Together in Melton
Civil Aviation Authority
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
Connexions Leicestershire
Council for British Archaeology
Campaign to Protect Rural England (Leicestershire)
Country Land & Business Association
The Crown Estate
Diocesan Board of Finance Leicestershire
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
East Midlands Ambulance Service
East Midlands Trains
East Midlands Tourism
EDF Energy
Energy Saving Trust
English Welsh and Scottish Railways
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Fields in Trust
Forestry Commission
Freight Transport Association
Friends of the Earth
The Garden History Society

The Georgian Group
Grantham Canal Partnership
Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire
Health and Safety Executive
Heart of England Tourist Board
The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
Home Builders Federation
Institute of Directors East Midlands
John Ferneley School
King Edward VII Sixth Form Centre
Learning and Skills Council
Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce
Leicestershire Constabulary
Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council
Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils
Leicestershire Education Authority
Leicestershire Footpath Association
Leicestershire Gypsy Council Liaison Group
Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership
Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust
Leicestershire & Rutland Bridleway Association
Leicestershire & Rutland Sport
Leicestershire Wildfowling Association
Long Clawson Conservation Group
Long Field High School
Melton Access Group
Melton Borough Citizens Advice Bureau
Melton and Oakham Waterways Society
Melton Community Partnership
Melton Area Safer Communities Partnership
Melton Mowbray Chamber of Trade
Melton Mowbray Market Partnership
Melton Mowbray Town Estate
Melton Mowbray and District Civic Society
Melton Seniors Forum
Ministry of Defence
National Disability Council
National Farmers Union
National Farmers Union (Melton)
NFU East Midlands Region
National Grid – UK Electricity
Network Rail
Newark Area Internal Drainage Board
Npower
Paul James Coaches
Prospect Leicestershire
Rail Freight Group
Railtrack PLC
The Ramblers Association
The Ramblers Association (Melton Mowbray Group)
Record Office for Leicestershire and Rutland
Road Haulage Association

Royal Mail Group Property Holdings
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Scottish Power
Scottish and Southern Energy
Sport England
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
Sustrans
Sustrans (Leics)
Trent Barton Bus Company
Urban design Group East Midlands
The Victorian Society
Voluntary Action Melton
Voluntary Action Leicestershire
West End Travel
Wyndham and Edmonthorpe Civic Society
Young Peoples Learning Agency

The Council maintains a database of such organisations, agencies and groups which it will utilise to ensure properly targeted consultations. This database will be kept up to date

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Appendix 5

Consultation measures for planning applications

Consultation mechanism	Pre-application stage			Minimum requirement Post-submission	Post-submission stage		
	Strategic	Major	Other		Strategic	Major	Other
Public Exhibition	*						
Public Meeting	*				*		*
Consultation with parish councils and/or other representative groups	*	*		*	*		*
Consultation with specialist bodies	*	*			*		*
Statutory consultation	*	*		*	*		*
Letters to properties adjoining the site (circular 15/92)				*	*		*
Non statutory press notices					n/a	n/a	Where impact is likely to extend beyond immediate neighbours
Non statutory site notices					n/a	n/a	Where impact is likely to extend

Consultation mechanism	Pre-application stage			Minimum requirement Post-submission	Post-submission stage		
	Strategic	Major	Other		Strategic	Major	Other beyond immediate neighbours
Availability of Committee reports at Council offices & on website					*	*	*
Display of full details at Council offices & on website					*	*	*

Definitions:

Strategic applications: applications for >100 houses, 10,000 sq m industrial / retail / commercial floorspace (or outline equivalent: 5 hectares) where the development is on land not allocated in the local plan / LDF for such purposes.

Major applications: applications for >50 houses, 10,000 sq m industrial / retail / commercial floorspace (or outline equivalent: 2.5 hectares) where the development is on land not allocated in the local plan / LDF for such purposes, and strategic applications where they accord with the local plan / LDF.

Other applications: all applications not covered by the above definitions.

Public meetings: meetings conducted by the Council for the purposes of consultation. Meetings will be publicised by a variety of media including (as a minimum) letters to adjacent residents, press and site notices.

Public exhibitions: exhibitions initiated by developers. Meetings will be publicised by a variety of media including (as a minimum) letters to adjacent residents, press and site notices, and will involve liaison with the Council regarding location, format etc.

Non statutory notices: site and/or press notices produced voluntarily by the Council (i.e. where they are not a statutory requirement).