

**RURAL ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**16 NOVEMBER 2011**

**REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS**

**PROVIDING A HOUSING REQUIREMENT FIGURE FOR MELTON:  
TOWARDS SUBMISSION**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek agreement for the Melton Core Strategy to reflect the East Midlands Regional Plan housing requirement.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 That the Melton Core Strategy be prepared to reflect the East Midlands Regional Plan housing requirement of 3,400 dwellings between 2006 and 2026.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

3.1 The Melton Local Development Framework (MLDF) Core Strategy Local Development Document (LDD) will set out the long-term spatial vision for the Borough and the strategic policies required to deliver that vision. It will implement the spatial and transport policies of the regional spatial strategy and incorporate its housing requirement. It will set out broad locations for delivering the housing and other strategic development needs such as employment, retail, leisure, community, essential public services and transport development.

3.2 At a meeting of the Melton Local Development Framework Task Group on the 3 November 2011 a Towards Submission paper which considers Housing Requirements for Melton was presented and the advice of the Task Group sought. The Towards Submission paper is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

3.3 On 8th September 2010 this Committee considered a report on the housing requirement for Melton. The report noted that Melton Borough Council had not objected to the Draft Regional Plan provision of 160dw pa and at the Examination in Public (EiP) held in 2007 there were no participants objecting specifically to Melton's provision. The Committee resolved that:

- the abolition of regional strategies and the transfer of regional housing and planning powers to local planning authorities is welcomed;
- in the interim the East Midlands Regional Plan housing provision for Melton of 3,400 dwellings (170 dwellings per annum) between 2006 and 2026 should continue to be used; and
- the Assistant Chief Executive cooperate with other local planning authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area on this matter.

3.4 Work on the Melton Core Strategy has advanced on the basis of this resolution. Whilst the intended abolition of the RSS should be noted, Government advice is that local planning authorities should continue to proceed with all due speed towards the introduction of an up to date development plan document for their area. Delays

introduced by the removal of the RSS and associated housing figures should not be allowed to introduce lengthy hold-ups in the adoption of Core Strategies.

- 3.5 The Melton Core Strategy to date has been prepared in accordance with these decisions.

#### 4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Melton Local Development Framework Task Group was established to consider the detailed provisions and policies in the emerging Local Development Framework and to advise the Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee accordingly. Task Groups do not take decisions. They oversee the detailed and intensive work on projects (in this case the Local Development Framework) and provide support and political direction to officers and the committee.

- 4.2 The Coalition Government has made clear its intention to abolish the Regional Plans (RSS). The duty to determine figures for housing requirements are to be transferred to local planning authorities. This approach has been confirmed in the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 4.3 A recent High Court ruling has found it to be unlawful to prepare a Core Strategies without having regard to the housing figure contained within the Regional Plan (RSS). However, it is possible that the Regional Plan will have been abolished by the time the Core Strategy reaches examination and it is also sensible to consider our position on the emerging planning process. In light of these factors we need to consider the housing requirement for Melton and how to proceed with our plans for housing.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council's Policy team is part of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Service. The team is responsible, on a day-to-day basis, for the preparation of the MLDF. The team is led by the Principal Policy Officer and consists of three Policy Officers. The team is supported by other services within the Council. Consultants are engaged on specific projects to provide specific technical expertise or where there is a need for independent advice or a lack of in-house capacity. There are also contributions from various departments of Leicestershire County Council, particularly on transport, conservation and environmental issues.

- 5.2 Any alteration to the housing figures, following the rescinding of the RSS, should go through a process of extensive consultation to examine the various options for development in the Borough, local opinion, and the housing requirement figures which would result. Consultation of the various issues and options available to arrive at a suitable figure and preparing an evidence base for employment, retail and transportation associated with a different figure is a time consuming process and would add considerable delay to the production of a development plan for Melton. Government advice, including that within the draft NPPF, states that local authorities should endeavor to have plans in place as soon as possible to deliver development that reflects the vision and aspirations of the local community.

- 5.3 Whilst the Core Strategy should be progressed with all due speed the Government has made clear their intent that housing requirements are to be set by individual local authorities, in cooperation with other local authorities in their housing market area. To ensure that this intention is met the housing requirement figures contained within

the Core Strategy could undergo an early review. This would ensure that the development plan for Melton fully reflected the opinion of the Melton community and truly echoed the localism agenda.

## 6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 The local development framework is prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Planning Act 2008, and the detailed provisions of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended 2008, 2009).

## 7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

## 8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There are no direct equalities issues raised by this report. Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken as part of the development of policy.

## 9.0 RISKS

9.1 We have assessed the risks to the Local Development Framework through the Local Development Scheme and these are regularly reviewed. The main risks associated with this with a high impact and high chance of occurring are set out below, together with a summary of the actions we are taking to reduce the possibility of them occurring or their impact, or both:

### *Scale and Complexity of Representations*

9.2 Matters relating to the housing figures are likely to be focused on during the consultation on the Core Strategy and its subsequent examination. Recent examinations of other authorities Core Strategies have seen the relationship between the outgoing Regional Plans and the emerging National Planning Policy Framework considered in detail. Counsel advice has been taken and this paper implement the advice received.

### *DPD fails test of soundness*

9.3 We will minimise this risk by taking legal advice at key stages and in the run up to submission of Development Plan Documents. We will also undertake an independent 'test of soundness' and legal compliance audits. An audit of the Melton Core Strategy and its relationship with the emerging National Planning Policy Framework is being undertaken by the national Planning Advisory Service.

9.4 The Core Strategy has taken a number of years to advance to this stage and is now nearing completion. If an alternative set of figures is to be reflected in the document the evidence base will need to be reviewed and further consultation will be necessary. To reflect Counsel advice, the Core Strategy could complete its journey to completion with the prospect of an almost immediate review of housing figures to be undertaken to fully accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and current PPS3 advice on 15 years land supply.

## 10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no direct links to Climate Change issues.

## 11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 The attached paper discusses consultation that has taken place on the housing figures. .

## 12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 The Melton Local Development Framework covers all wards.

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Date:	7 November 2011
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – PROVIDING A HOUSING REQUIREMENT FIGURE FOR MELTON: TOWARDS SUBMISSION