

RURAL ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

MELTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TASK GROUP UPDATE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the work undertaken by the Melton Local Development Framework Task Group and to seek advice from the Committee on any areas which require additional consideration at this time.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the progress on the Melton Core Strategy be noted.**

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 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.

- 3.3 The work of the Task Group focuses on the sustainable urban extension and meeting housing needs. This report provides a further update to those provided by report to this committee on 10 March 2010, 10 November 2010 and 15 June 2011. This report provides an update on the main areas of work undertaken and overseen by the Task Group between August and October 2011.

Planning for Renewable Energy

- 3.4 The Task Group has supported a consultation exercise on Renewable Energy Development policy to be included in the Core Strategy. The consultation was undertaken in August 2011 and reported to the MLDF Task Group on the 3 November 2011.

Melton Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.5 The Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee approved the draft Statement of Community Involvement 2011 for consultation at its meeting on 15 June 2011 and gave delegated powers to the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods to make minor amendments in response to that consultation and publish the resulting Statement of Community Involvement.

- 3.6 The draft Statement of Community Involvement was published for consultation for 6 weeks from 18 July 2011 to 26 August 2011. Minor amendments to the text in the document were made following the consultation and reported to MLDF Task Group on the 17 October 2011. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods has now published the Melton Statement of Community Involvement 2011 under delegated powers as provided by the resolution from this Committee.

Melton Core Strategy: Housing Needs

- 3.7 The MLDF TG have considered the Housing policy direction for the Core Strategy. The Task Group has advised that the policy direction be reflected in the Core Strategy DPD to be considered for publication by REEA later in the year.

Sustainable Urban Extension

- 3.8 The MLDF TG of 31st August 2011 received a strategic development appraisal, which helps us to determine how much residual value there might be in the sustainable urban extension and therefore available to deliver infrastructure to support an appropriate scheme. The Task Group also received the draft Infrastructure Schedule. Taken together, the appraisal and schedule help us to consider whether a suitable development can be delivered. This will be a key question at the examination in public for the Core Strategy and as we move forwards through masterplanning of the urban extension and eventual consideration of a development proposal at the planning application stage.

- 3.9 The Task Group noted that values are limited by the current climate; phasing of the proposal helps cashflow and directly contributes to maximized values; prioritising infrastructure into what is essential, desirable and aspirational can help later decisions on what can be sought as part of the development and can also help with influencing other funding streams or pursuing grant funding. We must also plan to monitor values and provide a review mechanism of any agreements to allow the long term uplift in values to be captured and reflected in increased infrastructure provision. An Infrastructure Delivery Group could play a role in monitoring changing values, directing public sector funding and securing innovative delivery mechanisms

Burton and Dalby Parish Council Address to 7 September 2011 REEA

- 3.10 The Task Group agreed that a letter would be prepared by the Strategic Director and the Chairman of REEA to respond to the points made in the address.

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.

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 We have prepared a budget profile to provide for the preparation and publication of LDDs and for the development of our evidence base. This profile is used to inform our medium-term financial strategy to ensure that the budget needed to support the MLDF programme is available. Contributions from the revenue budget are earmarked for a reserve fund which is used to ensure that sufficient resources are available to fund the plan preparation process over the medium term and to even out spending patterns.

- 5.3 We also have access to resources made available through the New Growth Point Programme/ Regional Growth Fund which provides grants to support the delivery of housing and economic growth.

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). As a consequence, the programme of work undertaken by the Melton Local Development Framework Task Group is also guided by this planning legislation.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report. However, the Core Strategy includes a set of objectives which guide the development of policy. Two of these relate to community safety; to improve community safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime; and reduce anti-social behaviour and problematic drug use. Whilst the objectives guide all areas of policy development they have a particular relationship with those policies that seek a better standard of design in new developments.

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 risks 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 There will be good opportunities for stakeholders and the local community to be informed of and participate in the preparation of all development documents that make up the MLDF. This will help develop consensus and identify key issues of concern earlier in the process. We will also be investing in consultation software that will enable an increasing number of consultations to be carried out online, which will then be simpler to summarise, manipulate and report.

Staff capacity

9.3 We have established good working relationships over the years with consultants and other planning authorities which will allow us to draw upon experienced and skilled staff if necessary, subject to funding.

Competing demands on service

9.4 The MLDF programme is prioritised against the other work of the Policy team.

DPD fails test of soundness

9.5 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.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no direct links to Climate Change issues although the Renewable Energy policy direction goes some way to meeting the climate change duties placed on us as a local planning authority.

11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 The paper reports covers focused consultations on Renewable Energy and the Melton Statement of Community Involvement.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 The Melton Local Development Framework covers all wards.

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Date: 7 November 2011