

RURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

9 JANUARY 2013

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

MELTON MOWBRAY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AREA DELIVERY STATEMENT

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs the Working Group of the final draft Employment Growth Area Delivery Statement which has been commissioned in support of the Melton Borough Council's broad allocation Employment Growth Area, as identified in the Melton Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Publication) DPD 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That Members comment and approve the Economic Growth Area Delivery Statement.**

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The Melton Core Strategy identifies a broad allocation Employment Growth Area of up to 30ha to the south west of the town, along Leicester Road. To inform this allocation during the preparation of the Core Strategy a report has been commissioned from Paul McKim Consulting Ltd examining how this area may be brought forward as a broad location for employment growth. The report is attached (Appendix 1) along with the area examined as part of the report (Appendix 2).
- 3.2 It should be noted that no masterplanning design or definitive site red line delineation has been undertaken. This will be the subject of further work and the plan solely identifies the broad area examined.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 In preparing the report a range of evidence has been used including a document review, market conditions and information supplied by Melton Borough Council. A consultation exercise was also undertaken which included employment land promoters and a number of local agents in the Borough.
- 4.2 The report establishes the local context in Melton and considers factors which will influence the delivery of the Employment Growth Area (EGA). This includes planning and environmental evidence; the sub regional and local econometric context and strategies; market conditions and local supply side data; information for Melton's key sites; information received from promoters, agents and Melton Borough Council; the geographical and locality protection Melton enjoys for food production; and finally the report examines a local case study within the Leicestershire market.
- 4.3 These factors are then used to examine the potential for development of the EGA and provide a series of recommendations for Melton Borough Council to consider as part of its planning and economic development strategies and actions.

SUMMARY

- 4.4 The report has raised a number of key issues. Firstly, the evidence on the face of it suggests that the market itself is unable to take on the comprehensive delivery of a large scale employment site. However, developer/promoter interest, such as that shown by Westleigh, and the localised case study suggests that there would seem to be demand for reasonable quality employment space for small scale of operations which could come forward to satisfy pent up market localised market demand once masterplanning and design matters have been addressed.
- 4.5 Secondly the Council, as part of its plan making, clearly needs to respond to the lack of new modern employment facilities in the town both to accommodate existing users and to deliver its wider strategic objectives and improve environmental and transportation benefits for the town as whole.
- 4.6 Thirdly it is important that the emerging Core Strategy and its supporting documents provide an appropriate framework to guide development, motivate land owner interests and provide the overarching framework to promote development. This will serve to provide greater certainty regarding the future of the EGA and support public and private sector investment decisions. It also reflects the cyclical nature of the local property market with activity and development taking place followed by periods of consolidation.

CONCLUSION

- 4.7 In the present market it is unlikely that the private sector alone would deliver Melton's Employment Growth Area in a comprehensive manner which would promote the quality environment required. A proactive approach to promotion and master planning is needed to assemble the existing landowners/promoters interests and support unifying land ownerships to create core development areas.
- 4.8 The EGA can only be developed comprehensively and to a quality threshold if it is managed in its entirety. This will need a proactive approach and will need to involve key agencies and landowners matched with active marketing and development of Melton's food brand to end users, and by targeting key local employment sectors and their supply chains to maximum benefits. Any masterplan and delivery plan should also be regularly reviewed and refined in response to changing circumstances.
- 4.9 Public sector investment should also be sought from the Growing Places Fund and other mechanisms to provide assistance; for example, soft loans for infrastructure funds or rate holiday periods for new build development.

NEXT STEPS

- 4.10 Provision of the Employment Growth Area could be progressed through a number of areas of work including early design work; initial steps to seek developer interest; the consideration of landowner interests in the context of site assembly; and, work to ensure adequate highway infrastructure and road safety.
- 4.11 An initial development brief which is capable of marketing the employment site to the development industry, provide planning guidance and set out the criteria for quality design aspirations and environmental benefits would also greatly assist this process.
- 4.12 Public sector sources of development/infrastructure funding, notably through the LLEP, to support the development of the Employment Growth Area should also be further investigated.

5. POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Employment Growth Area Statement supports the allocation identified in the Council's Core Strategy

6. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct financial implications

7 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no direct legal implications

8. **EQUALITIES**

8.1 No direct Equalities issues have been identified.

9. **RISKS**

9.1 A risk assessment is included in the draft MLDF.

10.0 **CONSULTATION**

10.1 This is the first stage of the Economic Growth Area evidence and further consultation will be undertaken as this develops.

11.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

11.1 All wards south west of Melton Mowbray

12. **CLIMATE CHANGE**

12.1 There are no direct Climate Change Issues

Contact Officer:	Paul Gilding
Date:	17 th December 2012
Appendix 1	Final Draft Melton Mowbray Employment Growth Area Delivery Statement
Appendix 2	Plan of Employment Growth Area
Reference	Xdrive/Committees/REEA/2012-13/090113/HR- EGA