

FULL COUNCIL**11 DECEMBER 2013****REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES****MELTON LOCAL PLAN REFERENCE GROUPS****1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report informed the Working Group of the current status of each of the Reference Groups and invites Council's authority to proceed on the basis proposed by the Melton Local Plan Working Group.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1
- a) **To combine the Employment and Town Centre Reference Groups. (see para 3.4. below).**
 - b) **To proceed with the 'Special interest Group' in its current form (para 3.5).**
 - c) **To agree that the approach to the engagement with young people will differ from the remaining groups and proceed with these arrangements (para 3.6)**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Following the conference on the 28th September, the current membership of the Reference Groups is set out below. The number of members indicates the numbers who have requested to join a specific Group. The number in brackets indicates those whose first choice was that group, therefore, removing double counting.

Residents – 50 members (40)
Environment and Rural – 58 members (44)
Town Centre – 18 members (9)
Employment – 23 members (11)
Special Interest – 21 members (6)
Landowners/Developers – 47 members (37)
Young People – 13 members (7)

3.2 To date the Residents, Environment and Landowners and Developers Reference Groups have all now met and carried out a planning for real exercise based on what they like and don't like about the Borough and their hopes and fears for the future. It is proposed that the findings from these meetings will be presented to the Working Group once all of the Reference Groups have attended their first meeting. A meeting has also taken place with the Melton Youth Council where the same planning for real exercise was carried out.

3.3 As can be seen from para 3.1 a number of the Reference Groups, in particularly the Town Centre, Employment, Special Interest and Young Peoples groups are low on membership numbers. In order to encourage members of the public to get involved in these Reference Groups, a press release was issued on the 20th October 2013 targeted at encouraging members of the public to join these Reference Groups. Targeted marketing has taken place for each of the Reference Groups apart from the Special Interest Group.

3.4 The MLP Working Group proposes to merge Town Centre and Employment Reference Group meetings into a single Group. Subject to this change, it is intended to arrange for this Group to meet in the very near future.

- 3.5 The Special Interest Reference Group currently has 21 members, 15 of these members currently sit on more than one Reference Group. The MLP Working Group proposes that the Special Interest Group continues to move forward in its current form. It is intended to arrange for this Group to meet in the very near future.
- 3.6 The current membership of the young people's Reference Group is not reflective of the 16-24 year old age bracket. It is not anticipated that the young people's Reference Group will be held in the same format as the other Reference Groups, where young people would be expected to attend meetings. There is currently an issue with young people not wishing to sign up to the Reference Group for the longer term. However, there is the opportunity to engage with young people, through the secondary schools, colleges and the Youth Council, however this will not offer longevity or continuity (of contribution). Officers have also identified other groups such as the Young Farmers Club and local youth groups where there is the opportunity to engage with young people and gain their views on an ad-hoc basis. In addition, further initiatives can be pursued such as You-tube publicity, twitter/facebook conversations etc. This approach will require greater resources with officers attending a number of events in order to engage with the younger members of the population. The MLP Working Group have agreed that this an acceptable way forward for the engagement of younger people, in lieu of a Group that meets regularly.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed amendment represent a departure from the arrangements made on 17th July 2013 but is considered to retain the overall objective of the Reference Groups as a vehicle to facilitate meaningful community engagement into the development of the Local Plan.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The changes proposed will have no financial implications and can be met from within existing budgets.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 There are no legal issues arising from these proposals.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 There are no direct links to community safety arising from this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

- 8.1 There are no direct equality issues arising from this report.

9.0 RISKS

- 9.1 It is considered that a minor risk exists in terms of the engagement of Young People in that each exercise may engage a different group of young people and as such the approach will not be continuous or iterative.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 10.1 There are no climate change issues arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

- 11.1 The changes have been considered by the MLP Working Group in detail.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 To varying degrees, all wards are affected indirectly.

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Date: 5th December 2013

Appendices : None

Background Papers: Review of MLDF – report to full Council on 17.7.2013
Minutes of Full council 17.7.2013