

## Assessing Large Scale Development Site Options

The full report is available to view and download at:

[http://www.melton.gov.uk/downloads/download/630/large\\_scale\\_development\\_site\\_options](http://www.melton.gov.uk/downloads/download/630/large_scale_development_site_options)

### **1. Background**

1.1 In order to have a 'sound' Local Plan, the Council is required to demonstrate that it can meet its Full Objectively Assessed Need for Housing (6,125 houses between 2011 and 2036). In considering options for housing delivery, the Local Plan 'Issues and options' paper considered the potential for 'Large Scale Development Sites' (LSDS), including New Settlements and Sustainable Urban Extensions.

1.2 The findings of the 'Issues and Options' paper indicated that mixed-use Large Scale Development Sites have many advantages over a more dispersed pattern of development and help to meet the outstanding requirements for growth. Benefits include creating new homes, jobs, services and facilities in close proximity and in the most sustainable locations reducing the need to travel long distances to obtain employment services and facilities. Well located LSDS adjacent to Melton Mowbray also have the potential to use existing infrastructure, employment opportunities, services & facilities and public transport. High Design Quality can be secured by applying 'Garden City' principles.

### **2. Sites considered**

2.1 The 'Assessing Large Scale Development Sites' paper considered 11 alternative options for Large scale Development Sites. These include: three 'urban extension' options and two large scale 'directions of growth' to Melton Mowbray; two options close to Melton Mowbray at Thorpe Arnold and Welby; an urban extension to Bottesford; and three new settlements at Dalby Airfield, Six Hills and Normanton airfield. All sites except the 'directions of growth' to Melton Mowbray have been put forward by landowners and developers through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

### **3. Methodology**

3.1 The 'Assessing Large Scale Development Sites' paper aimed to assess the 'sustainability' of each of the options by scoring them against the Vision and Objectives of the emerging plan. The report included an assessment of 'social' sustainability, such as the ability to access existing, and deliver new, housing, health, community and education facilities. Economic sustainability was assessed against the

ability to deliver new employment and education and enhancing the economies of Melton Mowbray and the Rural Areas. Environmental sustainability was assessed against the potential impacts on bio-diversity, heritage assets, landscape and settlement character. In addition climate change issues were addressed including flooding, pollution and ability to maximise renewable energy.

#### **4. Key findings**

- 4.1 The 'new settlement' options at Dalby and Normanton airfields and Six Hills were considered too remote from higher order centres resulting in dependency on private cars to access employment and important services and facilities. In addition, there is considerable uncertainty that these proposed new settlements have the ability to provide an appropriate mix of uses, including new employment, education and health services 'on site'. These options also had considerable uncertainty regarding transport choice (including public transport) resulting in reliance on private cars. Overall directing considerable development towards these locations away from existing centres, particularly Melton Mowbray, would not assist our ability to realise the Melton Local Plan Vision and Objectives. Specifically it would provide no opportunity to strengthen Melton Mowbray's role as the main social and economic focus of the Borough and would provide limited opportunities to support infrastructure investment where it is felt to be most needed.
- 4.2 The proposed 'sustainable urban extensions' at Welby, Thorpe Arnold and Bottesford were generally too small to meet the outstanding requirements for housing and provide the necessary mix of uses (employment, services and facilities) and Green Infrastructure.
- 4.3 The assessment concluded that the proposed 'Melton North' and 'Melton South' Sustainable Urban Extensions offered the best opportunities to provide strategic scale growth. They were most able to deliver the outstanding requirements for new housing and employment development and, because of their scale, are able to support the range of services & facilities, public transport and Green infrastructure that help to encourage communities to form and reduce the need to travel.

#### **5. Next stages and further work**

- 5.1 Preferred sites will need to be identified in the Council's 'Preferred Options' paper that will be subject to consultation in September 2015.
- 5.2 Further work will need to be undertaken to establish whether these preferred options are deliverable, in terms of the quantity of development required and the ability to afford associated infrastructure (including transport improvements) without undermining the site's viability.