



EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF MELTON

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

18 SEPTEMBER 2014

PRESENT

Councillors J. Wyatt (Mayor)  
P.M. Baguley, G. Bush, P.M. Chandler  
P. Cumbers, J.M. Douglas, A. Freer-Jones, M.M. Gordon,  
L. Horton, E. Hutchison, J. Illingworth,  
V.J. Manderson, M. O'Callaghan, J.T. Orson,  
P.M. Posnett, J.B. Rhodes, J. Simpson,  
N. Slater, O. Twitney, D.R. Wright

Strategic Director (KA), Strategic Director (CM)  
Monitoring Officer  
Head of Regulatory Services  
Regulatory Services Manager, Local Plan Manager  
Senior Democracy Officer

The Reverend Kevin Ashby offered prayers and included a prayer and period of silence for the recent loss of Councillor Trevor Moncrieff

Councillor Bush, the Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, paid tribute to his colleague, Councillor Trevor Moncrieff. He stated that he was always cheerful, took up all his Council responsibilities with enthusiasm and due to his good nature people respected his views. He had been a pleasure to know and work with and he would be sadly missed and never forgotten and he bid him farewell.

Councillor Rhodes, the Leader of the Council, added his tribute and those of his group. He stated that Councillor Moncrieff had been a respected Councillor and although they had had some robust debates and he may not have always agreed with him, there had never been any acrimony. Melton was the worse for his loss and joined in Councillor Bush's tribute.

Councillor O'Callaghan stated that he had recruited Councillor Moncrieff as a Councillor and he was one of those politicians that people felt close to and who served those he grew up with and understood their issues. He added that sometimes Councillors forgot what they were there for, but Councillor Moncrieff never did. He worked tirelessly with RAGE and the Egerton Ward and had made some outstanding achievements in supporting people on that ward together with ex-Councillor Brenda Smith. He was a Councillor who was based in the community and who believed in the Labour Party and socialist values. He bore no grudges and loved working within and for the community. He added that he would be missed and the Council needed more of his type, with his life experience and what he stood for.

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The Mayor announced that the meeting would be recorded and may be available for public listening. It was also noted that new legislation allowed the public to film, record or use social media during the meeting. The Mayor stated this must not be disruptive to the good order of the meeting and must not include any recording of the public seating area.

#### CO28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barnes, Botterill, Graham, Holmes, Lumley, Moulding and Sheldon.

An apology for absence was also received from the Chief Executive.

#### CO29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Twitney declared a potential disclosable pecuniary interest in the Melton Local Plan due to his employer, Brooksby Melton College, being a local landowner. However based on advice received regarding the content of the reports under consideration, he would remain in the meeting but should the discussion move onto the location of housing, he would leave the room.

*There was a presentation on the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options and Supporting Documents by the Head of Regulatory Services and Local Plan Manager which summarised progress to date on activities in working towards the development of the Melton Local Plan and bringing Members up to date in proposing the consultation arrangements which were detailed in the following report.*

#### CO30. (a) MELTON LOCAL PLAN : ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The Chair of the Melton Local Plan Working Group, Councillor Wright, presented the report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) and stated

- the report sought approval of the documents necessary to commence a 12 week public consultation on the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options. Mr. Luke Fleming and Mr Jim Worley had given a detailed overview of the documents before Members;
- in summary, the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options was a key milestone in the preparation of the Local Plan. It was the opportunity for the public and other stakeholders to comment on all the issues that the Melton Local Plan needed to address. These issues were informed by the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the extensive engagement undertaken to date with the Council's Reference Groups and other forums;

- the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options started to set the structure for the emerging Local Plan. Following the response received to the Issues and Options Consultation the next steps would be to refine the options available to the Council into a preferred development strategy and policies for the Borough. In accordance with the programme agreed on 30 April the preferred options were scheduled for consideration in May 2015;
- supporting the Issues and Options Consultation Document and each stage of Local Plan preparation was a Sustainability Appraisal, an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and a Consultation and Engagement Statement;
- the Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal made an assessment of the social economic and environmental effects of different policy options set out in the Issues and Options document. This could be used to inform any responses to the consultation, but also demonstrated the Council was considering the effect of alternative policy choices at this early stage;
- the Issues and Options Infrastructure Delivery Plan set the context for detailed infrastructure planning work needed to inform the Council's future preferred development strategy. It set out what infrastructure was in the context of the Local Plan and how it needed to be planned for. Delivering appropriate infrastructure to support development was a key challenge and this document provided the opportunity for any respondent to understand more about how this was dealt with through the Local Plan;
- the Issues and Options consultation and Engagement Statement essentially summarised all the extensive engagement the Council had undertaken to date and explained how this had influenced Melton Local Plan Issues and Options;
- as Chair of the Melton Local Plan Working Group, he moved that the Council approved the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Documents and supporting documents to commence a 12 week public consultation, following graphic design, formatting and setting up the online consultation.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Rhodes seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak later in the debate.

Councillor O'Callaghan stated that to date the proposals were good and the public had been involved. He added that it would get more difficult as the Council progressed into the issue of looking at houses to the north and south of the town as well as the rural/town split. He said that the Council needed to get this right for the community as last time the Council went ahead despite opposition. He explained that engagement so far had been good and the Council needed to offer genuine consultation and be open to listening to people's ideas and views as to where the housing should go. He thought 12 weeks was a long enough consultation period with the right media and communications support.

Councillor Posnett stated that the Issues and Options paper was the best report she had seen written by an officer in a while in that it was readable and easily understood and she agreed with some of the remarks made by Councillor O'Callaghan. She referred to the success of the Reference Groups and urged residents to take part in the 12 weeks' consultation so that the Council could get the widest picture of what people wanted in the Borough for the future.

Councillor Gordon requested attendance details of the Landowner and Developer Reference Group and the Strategic Director (CM) advised officers would liaise with the Councillor to provide the information she needed.

Councillor Orson welcomed the consultation and considered 12 weeks was a long enough period for receiving views.

Councillor Wright responded on the 12 weeks consultation period and added that the consultation would end on 12 January 2015 which actually meant it would run for 14 weeks. He explained that there were 83 questions in the document and each question allowed for a personal view to be included.

Councillor Chandler responded on the town/rural split mentioned by Councillor O'Callaghan and stated that public feedback was needed as to what they wanted. She referred to the village envelopes and whether these were still needed and again public opinion was needed to help give direction.

Councillor Twitney stated that it was a good report and he encouraged the people of the town to get involved and have their say. He added that this was why he had come into politics and people must feel part of the plan and it was important for people to give their feedback and views.

Councillor Rhodes referred to the useful contributions made by Members and that Councillor Wright had set out what was needed in his introduction. He stated that a different approach was needed to the one adopted for the previous plan some years ago due to the difficulties experienced last time and in the end it not being successful. He explained that the approach most recently had been to engage with as many people as possible through the Reference Groups and anyone with an interest in development and the future of the Borough may already have contributed. Following the proposed consultation and the results being available, the debate would really start. The Council would have to reach agreement and taking all views into account would not be easy as it was already known there were people who didn't want large scale development near the town and there were those in the rural areas who did not want development near where they lived. However in future there would be more people to accommodate and people lived longer than before and more people wanted to live in the Borough and move here and this was linked to the great need for housing across the country. People wanted to live on their own and there was more demand for single dwellings than used to be the case. He referred to previous generations when there would be 8 or 9 people in one house but this was not how people expected to live now and they wanted more space and the Council had to find a way of providing this. He referred to the plan being for the future and for those that followed the current generations. He added that he was hoping for a very positive response followed by discussions in the Reference Groups including understanding, give and take and a positive willingness to find a way to build the houses for the Borough in the future. He said he was looking forward to the debate and it was Melton's opportunity to show the rest of the country how it should be done. He added that the 12 weeks consultation included the Christmas period which took it to 14 weeks which he felt gave ample opportunity for people to read the information and respond and he urged Councillors to vote for it so that it could get started.

Following a vote, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that the following documents appended to the report be approved for a 12 week public consultation (for the period specified at paragraph 13.4 in the report):

- (a) the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options;
- (b) the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- (c) the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal;
- (d) the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options Statement of Consultation and Engagement.

(b) MELTON LOCAL PLAN : MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Rhodes, presented the report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) and stated

- there was a statutory requirement that Melton co-operated on its assessed housing need for the area with its neighbouring Councils such as Rushcliffe and South Kesteven as well as and those in the county such as Blaby, Charnwood and Harborough etc. The Memorandum of Understanding formalises this and approval of it across these Councils enabled the process of co-operation to continue;
- the first Council that needed co-operation was Charnwood as they were ahead in the development of their Local Plan process. He added that Charnwood was using an earlier method of working and they had not been through the public hearing stage yet. In order for Charnwood's plan to be declared sound they had to demonstrate that all the other Councils were co-operating. Melton was being asked to agree the level of housing in Melton Borough through to 2028, this being the end date of the Charnwood plan;
- Melton's allocation was 3,400 to 4,250 and this equated to 200-250 per annum which was one of the smallest numbers and some Councils in the county had significantly higher levels. The Council needed to agree to meet the demand for its part in Charnwood's Local Plan on the proviso that sites could be identified for this range. He added that it was known there were sufficient sites available in the Borough and there was potential for 23,000 homes therefore it ought to be possible to construct up to 4,000 homes in the period specified. He added that it could not be confirmed where these houses would be built and there were mitigating factors around the transport infrastructure set out at paragraph 3.7 of the report;
- the Council was in a position to agree the housing allocation and thereby approve the Memorandum of Understanding and assist Charnwood in going forward and in turn, the support would be reciprocated by Charnwood when Melton moved towards a public hearing. He moved the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Posnett seconded the motion.

Councillor Twitney expressed concern at the commitment to the housing allocation

and referred to paragraph 3.7 in the report and stated that this was an opportunity for Melton to hold back on approval of the Memorandum of Understanding until there was commitment for a bypass. He added that the County Council was looking into Melton's transport infrastructure and a report was expected before the end of the year. He considered that to sign up at this meeting would be wrong and the figures for housing approved would be used against the Council at a later date when asking for a bypass. He felt this was a chance to stand up for Melton and stated that there could not be commitment for housing allocation until the bypass was agreed. He requested that the Leader withdraw the report and that Members support him in this. He considered this was an opportunity to do something about the bypass but if the Council signed up to this document, the Council would be committed for 14 years.

Councillor Rhodes responded that some interesting points had been raised and he stated that he was the first to say that should there be substantial building in Melton, then a bypass was a must.

(Councillor Rhodes declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest at this point due to his role as a County Councillor.)

Councillor Rhodes stated that he was working hard at the County Council to get a bypass for Melton and he confirmed there were studies in place. He added that he had seen a draft of the first one but it was not available yet for debate as there was further work being done. He considered that this issue should not prevent the Memorandum of Understanding being signed as the Council was not signing up to building the homes in the town but in the whole Borough and some areas of the Borough did not have traffic problems. He considered the Council was not being disingenuous to sign the document and if homes were to be built around the town then the road structure would be needed to cope with it. However the Council could still find sites in the Borough which met the housing targets and provided the houses needed. He considered that this agreement document should not be used as a weapon to browbeat over the bypass when the objectives of the Local Plan could be met without it. He felt it was safe to sign the document and he would not withdraw it.

Councillor O'Callaghan expressed a concern that there was no comfort in mentioning other sites beyond the town, he stated that the County Council had form on the bypass and it was likely that development would be focussed on the town. He referred to the village envelopes being unrealistic and people needed to realise that all development could not be in the town. It needed to be accepted that houses were needed in villages and village envelopes needed to be changed. He referred to his time on the County Council when there was no previous mention of a bypass for Melton. He mentioned the meeting at the Cattle Market when the previous Leader of Leicestershire County Council promised a bypass for Melton by the next County Council.

The Mayor announced that Councillor O'Callaghan had exceeded his 5 minute speech allocation. Councillor O'Callaghan asked for the procedure rule to be waived but the Mayor declined and stated that he had made his point.

Councillor Chandler stated that she did not disagree on changing village envelopes but there were traffic problems in rural areas and until these were sorted out, they could not accept more houses. She added that transport issues needed to be

addressed and there was little parking. Whilst the village envelopes were part of the Council's policy, they needed to be taken into account.

It was asked who had written the Memorandum of Understanding and it was noted that all the district councils in Leicestershire had contributed and it had been co-ordinated by a manager who had been brought in for this purpose from Cambridge County Council and who was based at North West Leicestershire.

The Leader assured Members that this was a safe document to sign and it was in the Council's interest. It also would ensure that Melton would be supported when its Memorandum of Understanding was needed.

It was noted that other areas around the County had a good road network such as the A46 and bypasses around the towns and Melton was the only one lacking.

Following a vote, the motion was carried.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 1) be approved for adoption as an agreement that the levels of need for additional housing can be met in Melton Borough over the period 2011-2028;
- (2) the work that will be undertaken to develop a longer term growth strategy for the Housing Market Area to 2036 be noted.

The meeting, which commenced at 6.30 p.m., closed at 7.35 p.m.

Mayor