

FULL COUNCIL

18TH SEPTEMBER 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

MELTON LOCAL PLAN – ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 On 30th April 2014 Full Council agreed a timetable and vision for the Melton Local Plan also it considered the response to a preliminary consultation on what the Local Plan for Melton should contain.
- 1.2 Building on this work and in accordance with the timetable agreed, this report seeks approval of the recommendation from the Melton Local Plan Working Group to approve the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options and supporting documents and to commence a 12 week public consultation process.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the following documents appended to this report are approved for a 12 week public consultation (for the period specified at para 13.4 below):**
 - 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**

3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (as amended) 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare a development plan for their area. At present this development plan is provided by the saved policies of the Melton Local Plan 1999, read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 3.2 Following the withdrawal of the Melton Core Strategy from its examination in public in April 2013, it was resolved on 17 July 2013 to commence work on a new comprehensive Local Plan for the Borough alongside a commitment to engage as many people in the process as possible. This included establishing the Melton Local Plan Reference Groups and the creation of the Melton Local Plan Working Group to oversee the process.

3.3 On the 30 April 2014, the Council agreed to a formal timetable and programme of work as set out in the Melton Local Development Scheme and a statement setting out how the Borough Council will consult on the preparation of the Local Plan and planning applications, in a Statement of Community Involvement. The key stages of Local Plan preparation and consultation can be summarised below:

- a) Preliminary Engagement – Consultation on what the plan ought to contain including views on the vision for the Borough (completed);
- b) Issues and Options – the detail has explained in this paper (September 2014 to December 2014);
- c) Preferred Options/Draft Plan – Consultation on a draft strategy for the Borough including preferred development sites (May 15 – August 15);
- d) Pre-submission Draft Plan – An opportunity for people to submit representations on the plan for consideration as part of the Examination in Public – (January – February 2016);
- e) Submission and Examination in Public – Planning Inspector holds an Examination in Public (July 2016 – April 2017);
- f) Adoption (May 2017).

3.4 Preliminary engagement was completed between late 2013 and early 2014 and involved a number of events spread across the Borough. On 30 April 2014 Council considered the responses received and a draft vision for the Borough. This response reflected the preliminary engagement feedback and the outputs of the work undertaken with the Melton Local Plan Reference Groups.

3.5 This report seeks approval for the material necessary to commence a 12 week consultation on the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options as set out in the Melton Local Development Scheme.

4 Melton Local Plan Issues and Options

4.1 The Melton Local Plan Issues and Options document is included as Appendix A. The Melton Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document is the second stage in the preparation of the Local Plan. This consultation document provides the public and any interested parties with the opportunity to raise any planning issues they feel the Melton Local Plan should address, or suggest how planning policy issues should be addressed. Interested parties can do this by responding to questions they are interested in and giving views on alternative options where planning policy choices are available.

4.2 A comprehensive Local Plan will need to meet all the Borough Council's main planning policy needs in one single document. This is different to the previous approach where the plan was proposed to be developed in a series of individual documents i.e. a Core Strategy setting out strategic policies, followed by a further Development Plan Document setting out non-strategic site allocations and detailed development management policies.

4.3 The final Local Plan will include spatial policies which will set out the overall strategy for the development of the area over the next 15 to 20 years, together with policies to assess planning applications and a range of allocations for the development of housing, employment and other uses. The Issues and Options is the opportunity to set the structure of the Local Plan and to gather views on its content. The main content of the Issues and Options is drawn from a number of sources including:

- The NPPF and NPPG
- Feedback received through the preliminary consultation
- Engagement with the Melton Local Plan Reference Groups
- The existing Local Plan evidence base and evidence under preparation
- The Saved Policies of the Melton Local Plan 1999.
- Relevant national and local strategies and plans

4.4 Detailed questions are asked throughout the document and the intention is that respondents would pick out the issues they are interested in and there is no obligation to answer all questions. The Melton Local Plan Issues and Options is structured by the following chapters or themes:

- **Introduction**
Setting out what the Local Plan is, its role and how it has been developed to date.
- **Vision & Objective for Melton Borough**
Seeks views on the vision and objectives approved by Full Council on the 30th April 2014.
- **Melton Borough Today – A Portrait**
Sets out what Melton Borough is like today.
- **Growing Melton Borough – The Spatial Strategy**
Considers the overall level of growth (homes and jobs) and how this could be distributed across the Borough.
- **Melton’ Communities – Strong, Healthy and Vibrant**
Considers the type and tenure of housing needed, how services are provided and how the Local Plan could support the development of healthy communities
- **Melton Borough’s Economy – Strong and Competitive**
Considers issues associated with employment, retail, tourism and the town centre.
- **Melton Borough’s Environment – Protected and Enhanced**
Seek views on the approach to Landscape, Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Open Space, Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Flood Risk
- **Managing the Delivery of the Melton Borough Local Plan**
Sets out the issues and choices around the delivery of infrastructure in the Borough together with the detailed development management policies e.g. design.
- **Development Site Options (starting the process of selecting site allocations)**
Seeks views on site options and sets out how they will be assessed through the Local Plan process.

- 4.5 As the Local Plan progresses through its stages of preparation it will be supported at each stage by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Sustainability Appraisal and Consultation and Engagement Statement. These are cross referenced throughout the Issues and Options and this approach will be continued going forwards.

5 Melton Local Plan Issues and Options – Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 5.1 The NPPF requires plans to be deliverable and therefore supported by a comprehensive assessment of the infrastructure investment needed to see the plan delivered. Included at Appendix B is the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options – Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This will be developed in stages alongside the stages of plan preparation set out above. Due to being at the early options stage, this document draws on our existing evidence and early discussions with infrastructure providers and aims to set the context for future Infrastructure Delivery Planning work once preferred options are identified.
- 5.2 It provides those responding to the Issues and Options with the detail of what infrastructure is within the context of the Local Plan and sets out how infrastructure to support development is delivered and who has responsibility for delivering it. A key message in the document is that to achieve a deliverable plan a number organisations will need to ensure their work is aligned.

6 Melton Local Plan Issues and Option - Sustainability Appraisal

- 6.1 The Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of the new Melton Local Plan under Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the various options emerging from the plan will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. The Melton Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal has been developed to incorporate an assessment of the impact of policies and equalities. A non-technical summary explaining the Sustainability process in relation to the Melton Local Plan is included as Appendix C.
- 6.2 On 16 July 2014, Council approved, subject to consultation, the Melton Borough Council Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report broadly sets out how policy choices will be assessed. Following the response received the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been amended to take into account the comments received. The revised Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has then been applied to the options set out in the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options.
- 6.3 As set out above the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options sets out a series of questions. For those questions which have options, each option has been assessed against the 16 Sustainability Objectives set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report to create an assessment of the possible social, economic and environmental effects on the Borough of each option.
- 6.4 Only those questions which have options that will have a direct effect on the social environmental or economic development of the Borough have been appraised at this stage. The appraisals of all relevant options have been collated into the Melton Local

Plan Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal. Given the broad nature of the Local Plan and the number of options available at this early stage of plan preparation, this document is extensive and therefore has only been made available online and to view at the council offices. However it can be printed upon request. For the purposes of this report it is referred to as Appendix C1.

7 Melton local Plan Issues and Options – Consultation and Engagement Statement

7.1 Meaningful engagement in Local Plan preparation is a requirement of the NPPF and a key principle underpinning the development of the Melton Local Plan particularly through the work undertaken with the Melton Local Plan Reference Groups.

7.2 The Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012 require a summary of all consultation and engagement to be submitted as part of the examination into the Local Plan. The Melton Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation and Engagement Statement is included as Appendix D to this report.

7.3 This document sets out all of the engagement and consultation undertaken and how the public have been informed of Local Plan work up until the preparation of the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options, which includes:

- 3 rounds of meetings with the Melton Local plan Reference Group
- Preliminary Consultation on the vision and what the Local Plan ought to contain
- Meeting with young people through engagement
- Regular publicity through newspaper adverts, the website, Facebook and Twitter.

7.4 This document will be developed in stages alongside the preparation of the Local Plan so that interested parties can understand how their engagement is influencing Local Plan preparation without having to wait until the plan is submitted for examination.

8 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Melton Local Plan Issues and Options provides the platform to engage with people on all matters that will need to be dealt with through the Local Plan. The response received will inform the selection of the preferred options for the strategy in respect of the development of the area and the policies needed to manage its development, in order to achieve the highest standard of development possible.

8.2 The documents have been prepared taking account of all relevant Corporate Plans and Policies. As the Local Plan moves through its stages of preparation it will need to take account of changes to other Corporate plans and policies.

7 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no significant unknown financial or resource implications arising from this report. The Local Plan Issues and Options consultation will be an intensive exercise, and will have a significant resource implication on the Planning Policy Team. However this will be met through the existing Local Plan budget arrangements.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 8.1 Preparing a Local Plan in accordance with a Local Development Scheme and a Statement of Community Involvement are requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (as amended) 2004 and the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012. The Melton Local Plan Issues and Options and supporting documents are essentially consultation documents and are not policy. They are therefore not at risk of any legal challenge.
- 8.2 Undertaking an Issues and Options stage as part of Local Plan preparation should reduce the risk of legal challenge at the later stages.

9 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 9.1 There are no significant community safety implications arising from this report.

10 EQUALITIES

- 10.1 The Melton Local Plan Issues and Options is a consultation document and not a strategy or policy. For these reasons, as a standalone document it will have little impact upon Equalities.
- 10.2 However where a number of options are identified to address issues, recognising that these will be likely to have different effects a Sustainability Appraisal of each option has been undertaken in the Sustainability Appraisal Issues and Options Report. The Melton Sustainability Appraisal Framework incorporates Equalities Impact Assessment.
- 10.3 Therefore equalities impacts are addressed as a continued thread through the process of preparing the Melton Local Plan.

11 RISKS

Probability
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Very High A				
High B				
Significant C		1, 2		
Low D				
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

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Impact

Risk No.	Description
1	Low total number of responses to the consultation
2	Response received from people not reflective of the Boroughs demographic profile.

12 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 12.1 Part of the evidence base for the preparation of the Melton Local Plan will be relevant Climate Change Studies concerning appropriate Policies and land allocations/proposals. Chapter 7 of the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options “Melton Borough’s Environment – Protected and Enhanced” specifically seeks views on how Melton Borough should contribute towards climate change mitigation.

13 CONSULTATION

- 13.1 Subject to Council approval a 12 week consultation on the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options will be undertaken in accordance the approved Statement of Community Involvement.
- 13.2 This will involve publicity through a range of communication media including:
- Newspaper adverts, press releases and posters distributed across the Borough
 - Notifications to parties registered on the Local Plan consultee database and to Local Plan Reference Group Members
 - Two rounds of meetings with the Local Plan Reference Groups
 - A range of public drop in sessions and presentations at locations spread across the Borough.
 - A whole council approach, by liaising with focus groups already active for other corporate Local Authority purposes
 - Regular updates of the Melton Local Plan Website, Twitter feeds and updates to the Melton Local Plan Facebook site.
- 13.3 All documents will be produced in electronic and paper format. They will be available for inspection at the Council Offices and distributed to Local Access points.
- 13.4 Subject to Council approval the document will undergo graphic design and formatting. In addition the electronic communication media and promotional material will need to be developed and the events and reference group sessions prepared for. It is therefore suggested that the formal consultation period should commence Monday 6th October 2014, 12 weeks would take this to Monday 29th December, therefore allowing for the Christmas break it is suggested that the consultation is extended to Monday 12th January 2015.

14 WARDS AFFECTED

- 14.1 This report refers to matters that affect the whole Borough.

Contact Officer: Luke Fleming (Local Plans Manager)

Date: 18th September 2014

Appendices: Appendix A: Melton Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document
Appendix B: Melton Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Stage 1)

Appendix C: Melton Local Plan Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal – Non Technical Summary
Appendix C1 – Melton Local Plan Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal (available online or on request in paper form)
Appendix D: Melton Local Plan Statement of Consultation and Engagement (Part 1)

Background Papers: None