

AGENDA ITEM 3B

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

8th DECEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

MELTON LOCAL PLAN: EMERGING OPTIONS (DRAFT LOCAL PLAN)

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval of the Emerging Options Draft Local Plan which is appended to this report as the basis for 12 weeks public consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 a) **That Council approve the Emerging Options Draft Local Plan attached to this report for publication for a 12 week period of public consultation, beginning the week commencing 11th January 2016.**

b) **Delegated authority is given to the Head of Regulatory Services to make any necessary changes required for clarification or typographical corrections to the text of the plan prior to publication.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

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 (MLPWG) to oversee the process. A timetable was agreed at this point to progress the plan in stages aiming for adoption in the spring / summer 2017.

3.3 Preliminary engagement on the Local Plan was completed in February 2014 and on 30 April 2014 Council approved a draft vision for the Borough. Between October 2014 and January 2015 extensive consultation was undertaken on the Melton Local Plan Issues and Options. This consultation generated approximately 300 responses and 9,000 comments on the key issues and choices facing the development of the Borough.

3.4 Informed by the consultation responses, the extensive catalogue of evidence documents and numerous engagement workshops with the Melton Local Plan Reference Groups, officers and the Local Plan Working Group have developed policies and proposals for inclusion in the Emerging Options Draft Local Plan for the

next stage in preparing the Plan - a 12 week period of public consultation. This stage will provide a chance for people to have their say on the preferred development strategy, draft policies and potential site options which would guide the development of the Borough up to 2036. This consultation forms part of the process of meeting the requirements of Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2014 and provides the Council with the opportunity to adjust the plan before it is published formally, inviting representations to be considered by an Inspector as part of the public examination.

3.5 The Emerging Options (Draft Local Plan) is attached to this report and includes policies and proposals for the development and growth of the Borough for the plan period 2011 -2036. It should be noted that the Emerging Options is a full draft version of the policies and text of the plan together with supporting maps and diagrams. Following Full Council's consideration, a consultation version of the plan will be designed and published to ensure that the document is attractive and readable.

3.6 The Emerging Options (Draft Local Plan) is a consultation document. It has been prepared to engage the community in the decisions about how and where growth can be accommodated in the Borough. It does not therefore represent the final version of the Local Plan. The final version of the plan will be prepared and published as the "Publication Local Plan" in the Autumn of 2016 having taken into consideration the comments made through the forthcoming consultation on this Emerging Options (Draft Local Plan). In particular it is important to note that the following issues will need further consideration and will be the subject of new (or updated) evidence and further detailed assessment during the early part of 2016:

- Update and review of the Settlement Hierarchy for villages;
- Review and assessment of potential development sites in other villages not currently identified as Primary or Secondary Rural Service Centres;
- Detailed assessment of site options for housing and employment development, including the consideration of comments about sites generated by consultation on the Emerging Options, leading to determination of which sites to allocate for development;
- Review and update of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and the identification of a site or sites to meet any outstanding need identified;
- Whole plan viability assessment to ensure that the plans' proposals are deliverable and viable;
- As necessary any additional assessment of sites promoted and or amended through the consultation, for development and/or protection – for example additional sites suggested as Local Green Space.

3.7 This additional work will be carried out during the early part of 2016 and reported to the Local Plan Working Group before being considered by Council. It is anticipated that the final "Publication" version of the plan will be finalised late summer 2016 in order that it can be published for the statutory six week consultation during the Autumn of 2016. Members will be aware that the Government has requires Local Plans to be deposited by 2017 and has created powers of intervention to achieve this if necessary. The timetable referred to above accords with this requirement.

Emerging Options Draft Local Plan

- 3.8 The draft Local Plan has been prepared within the context of the recommendations arising from the evidence base. It has also been prepared with the help and support of the Reference Groups and the Working Group, both of which have had an on-going input into the identification of a preferred approach to addressing the issues arising from the evidence base as it has emerged. Consideration has also been given to the comments made about the Issues and Options consultation. This input features within the text of the draft Local Plan in the “you said” box at the beginning of each chapter.
- 3.9 The draft plan includes policies and proposals for the Borough for the plan period 2011 – 2036 which cover the following key areas:
- the Vision of the Borough and the Strategic Priorities for delivering that vision;
 - Establishes the amount of new Housing and Employment Growth needed in the Borough during the 25 year period;
 - Establishes a Spatial Strategy which distributes the majority of the housing (65% of the requirement) and employment growth to Melton Mowbray, whilst distributing the remaining 35% of the housing requirement to the villages. The Spatial Strategy also identifies specific housing targets for the villages identified as Primary Rural Service Centres and Secondary Rural Service Centre;
 - Identifies two new Sustainable Neighbourhoods (as urban extensions) to the North and South of Melton Mowbray, to accommodate the housing and employment growth identified for the town which will also deliver sections of the outer relief road;
 - Identifies a selection of potentially suitable sites for housing development in and on the edge of the Primary and Secondary Rural Service Centres. By identifying a selection of sites which might be suitable this consultation plan encourages the involvement of the community, in particular Neighbourhood Plan groups in the process of determining which sites are most suitable and acceptable for development in their village;
 - Identifies potential sites for employment development in Melton Mowbray and as an extension to the Asfordby Business Park;
 - Provides a set of policies to ensure the delivery of an appropriate housing mix, affordable housing, gypsy and traveller accommodation, healthy and sustainable communities, a vibrant town centre, tourism, and a suite of environment, landscape, heritage, open space and design policies designed to protect and enhance our built and natural environment;
 - The draft plan also considers the infrastructure and facilities which will be needed to support the development and growth of our communities. It includes a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan which has been informed by the infrastructure and utility providers. This identifies essential new or improved infrastructure which will be required to support the spatial strategy and pattern of distribution included in the plan.

Community Engagement

- 3.10 The Emerging Options Draft Local Plan has been written to try to engage the wider community in the policies and proposals as they evolve. A 12 week consultation period will ensure that sufficient time is available for all sectors of the community to engage in the process and have an opportunity to make representations about the approach set out. A programme of public engagement events is being prepared which will include a Local Plan Launch to which Reference Group members and Parish Council's will be invited, in the week beginning 11th January 2016 as well as exhibitions and engagement events in locations around the Borough during January and February 2016. The January edition of the Melton Mail will also feature the Local Plan consultation to ensure maximum publicity.
- 3.11 The Local Plan is expected to change as a result of the consultation and the additional work identified in paragraph 3.6 above and it is the intention that the Reference Groups will continue to be involved in these changes as they emerge and will play an important part in formulating a revised Local Plan.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.12 National and European regulations require documents such as the Local Plan to be assessed to consider the potential effect of policies and proposals on sustainability objectives (which include environmental, social and economic factors). This is called a Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA). The Issues and Options consultation was accompanied by an SA Scoping Report which identified the key SA/SEA objectives and assessed the options included in that consultation. The SA process is largely iterative and requires SA work to be undertaken as options are assessed and a preferred approach emerges. As such the spatial strategy and pattern of distribution, together with the reasonable alternative site options for both large and small sites have been assessed as these elements of the plan have evolved over the last six months.
- 3.13 All of the policies and proposals included in the Draft Local Plan are currently being assessed using the SA/SEA framework and an SA report for the Emerging Options Draft Local Plan is being prepared. The SA report is a technical document which must be published alongside the consultation plan.
- 3.14 Because the SA process is iterative, a series of draft sections of the appraisal have already been received as each key element of the plan has been considered by the Local Plan Working Group, however the final element of the appraisal relates to the assessment of the proposed policies which were considered by the Local Plan Working Group on 24th November. The draft SA report is expected from our consultants on 30th November and a copy will be made available in the Members Room as soon as it is received.

Melton local Plan– Consultation and Engagement Statement

- 3.15 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.
- 3.16 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 Consultation and Engagement Statement has been updated to reflect outcome of the Issues and Options consultation and Reference Group meetings held during 2015. A copy of this statement will be made available in the Members Room.

- 3.17 This document will continue to 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.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Melton Local Plan Emerging Options provides the vehicle to engage with people on the preferred approach to addressing the issues and challenges which need to be dealt with through the Local Plan. The responses received will inform the selection of sites for allocation and may result in changes to the spatial and distribution strategy and to the wording of policies.

- 4.2 The document has 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.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 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 Emerging Options Draft Local Plan consultation fulfils the requirements of Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012 and as consultation documents they do not yet form Council policy. They are therefore not at risk of any legal challenge at this stage. Undertaking this scale of community engagement on Emerging Options should help demonstrate to a Planning Inspector how the Council has sought to engagement the community in the development of the plan and may reduce the risk of the plan being challenged at a later date.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 There are no direct community safety implications as a direct result of this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

- 8.1 The Emerging Options Draft Local Plan is a consultation document and not a strategy or policy. For these reasons, as a standalone document it will have little impact upon Equalities. The SA/SEA does however incorporate Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the appraisal process.

9.0 RISKS

9.1

L I K E L I H O O D	A	Very High				
	B	High				
	C	Significant		2	1	
	D	Low				
	E	Very Low				
	F	Almost Impossible				
			Negligible 1	Marginal 2	Critical 3	Catastrophic 4

IMPACT

Risk No	Risk Description
1	Scale and nature of representations received through consultation result in the need to significantly revise the preferred approach requiring additional evidence and resources
2	Responses received do not reflect the Borough's demographic profile and therefore skew the perception of the communities response to the plan

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

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

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Subject to Council approval a 12 week consultation on the Melton Local Plan Emerging Options will be undertaken in accordance the approved Statement of Community Involvement. 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.
- 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.

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 Local Plan Launch prepared for. It is therefore suggested that the formal consultation period should commence Monday 11th January 2016, 12 weeks would take this to Monday 4th April 2016.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All.

Contact Officer J Worley, Head of Regulatory Services
Date: 27th November 2015

Appendices :
1. Emerging Options Draft Local Plan
2. Sustainability Appraisal (copy to be placed in the Members Room)
3. Melton Local Plan Consultation and Engagement Statement (copy to be placed in the Members Room)

Background Papers: None