

## Chapter 2: Melton Borough Today – A Portrait

### 2.1 General

- 2.1.1 Melton Borough is an attractive rural area covering 48,138ha in the north-east part of Leicestershire and at the heart of the East Midlands. The Borough has a total population of approximately 50,376 (Census 2011) which has risen from 47,866 (2001 Census). The main activities of the Borough are centred on the market town of Melton Mowbray.
- 2.1.2 The Borough has a wide range and choice of places to live, with around a half of all existing housing located at Melton Mowbray. In the rural hinterland, there are some 70 attractive villages spread across all parts of the Borough including the larger settlements of Asfordby, Bottesford, Long Clawson and Waltham on the Wolds.
- 2.1.3 The Borough's employment base is primarily in food and drink related manufacturing, focused at Melton Mowbray. This main town is also where most retail, leisure and service sector jobs are located. Tourism, which makes a vital contribution to the Borough's economy, occurs at locations more widely spread across the Borough, as well as at Melton Mowbray.

### 2.2 Housing

- 2.2.1 In 2011 there were 21,490 households with dwellings comprising:
- 8,784 detached houses;
  - 7,743 semi-detached houses;
  - 3,341 terraced houses; and
  - 1,622 flats/other.
- 2.2.2 8.5% of the housing stock is owned by the Local Authority with only 2.6% available for rent from a Registered Provider (RP). Privately owned housing accounts for 88% of the housing stock which is higher than average for the East Midlands region and the rest of the country. Providing homes for those that cannot afford to buy is therefore a key challenge for the Borough.
- 2.2.3 Melton Borough is located within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing market area. This recognises the relationship of the Borough with Leicester city and the rest of Leicestershire in terms of access to employment and services. However, parts of the area, e.g. Harby, Bottesford and Croxton Kerrial, relate more closely to Nottingham and Grantham.
- 2.2.4 The average house price in the Borough is £145,000, which is higher than the regional average but lower than the national average. More detailed breakdown of house prices based on house type is provided in our latest Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). In 2008/09, the Borough delivered 114

affordable homes. However, since then, delivery has become more challenging with no affordable homes delivered in 2013/14, only 4 in 2014/15 and 6 in 2015/16. This reflects the decline in house building and the restricted financial capacity of housing associations arising from the economic recession.

## **2.3 Jobs and Prosperity**

- 2.3.1 Melton Mowbray is the main service and employment centre. A significant percentage of jobs is in manufacturing (mainly food and drink), which is higher than the national and regional averages. The jobs in Melton Mowbray are mostly provided by a few large manufacturers, although business start-ups are increasing, particularly in the rural parts of the Borough, where a growing trend for home working is matched with an attractive environment.
- 2.3.2 Of the resident working age population in Melton Borough, the proportion qualified below NVQ level 2 & 3 is very high and the proportion qualified to NVQ level 4 and above is also high. 21.4% of people over 16 have no qualifications. This gap in skills reflects the relatively low skilled jobs that are available in the town (Local Futures Profile, 2013) and represents a significant challenge for the economy, particularly in providing a labour force to service industry.
- 2.3.3 There are a growing number of small and medium sized enterprises spread across the Borough. Some of the jobs are on business parks such as Old Dalby or operating in small premises in rural locations. The number and diversity of jobs in the rural area have been increasing each year, as mentioned in paragraph 2.3.1 above.
- 2.3.4 Melton Mowbray is the Rural Capital of Food. The town centre has a varied range of commercial activity such as banks, solicitors and estate agents, but also a high proportion of independent retailers, particularly independent food shops. Vacancies in the town centre are relatively low. There are three supermarkets: Tesco on Thorpe Road, Sainsburys on Nottingham Road and Morrisons on Thorpe End. A new Lidl store on Scalford Road provides for the budget store market and there is a planning permission for Aldi on Leicester Road.
- 2.3.5 Outside Melton Mowbray, Asfordby, Bottesford, Long Clawson and Waltham on the Wolds act as the local service centres, although other larger villages, particularly to the south of the Borough, also perform a similar role.

## **2.4 Accessibility and Transport**

- 2.4.1 The Borough is crossed by the A606 Nottingham to Oakham road and the A607 Leicester to Grantham road. The A52 Nottingham to Grantham road runs through the Borough at the northern edge. The M1 Motorway is about 25

minutes' drive time to the west of Melton Mowbray, the A1 trunk road is about 25 minutes' drive time to the east, and Nottingham and East Midlands Airport are about 45 minutes' drive time to the north west. Traffic is known to cross the Borough to link from the M1 to the A1 and the east coast ports. Melton Mowbray station is on the Birmingham to Stansted Airport railway line, providing quick and regular access to Leicester. Bottesford station is on the Nottingham to Skegness line, with a good connection to Grantham.

2.4.2 Peak hour traffic flows at key junctions and sections of road in and around the Town Centre are at capacity. This results in severe delay to journey times when crossing the town of in excess of 5 minutes. This is adversely affecting the quality of life of the residents of the Borough going about their daily business and also adversely affects the perception of the town as a place to do business in, or to visit. The environmental impact of this traffic congestion is magnified by significant numbers of HGVs in the traffic mix.

2.4.3 Despite the traffic conditions, Melton has a high level use of alternative means of transport including cycling and walking.

## **2.5 Safety and Protection**

2.5.1 Crime and fear of crime is relatively low in Melton Borough compared to the national and regional averages, with Melton Borough ranked 266th out of 376 national districts for the level of crime it experiences.

## **2.6 Community Development**

2.6.1 On the indices of deprivation, Melton Borough is ranked 236 out of 354 districts, putting it in the 40% least deprived districts nationally. Melton Borough has an Index of Multiple Deprivation rating of 13.12. This compares to 25 in Leicestershire, 24.65 in the East Midlands and 15.78 in England. Whilst this means that the Borough scores favourably compared to the rest of the sub region and nationally, there are pockets of deprivation, particularly in and around Melton Mowbray.

2.6.2 Whilst the Borough has an ageing population with a high percentage of the population in their 40's, there is an average number of young families living in the Borough compared to the rest of the country. However, there are fewer under 16 year olds and people aged between 15 and 44 living within the Borough than is found in Leicestershire as a whole and the rest of the country. This suggests that younger people are migrating out of the Borough for higher education opportunities and employment, and there may be an inward migration of older people seeking retirement homes.

2.6.3 Life expectancy for both the male and female residents in the Borough is higher than the regional and national average but it varies across the Borough.

- 2.6.4 A significant percentage (18.9%) of the population is obese in Melton Borough which is comparable to the national average.
- 2.6.5 The Borough is served by 10 GP surgeries located in the town and larger villages. There are 5 dentists mainly concentrated in Melton Mowbray. Secondary schools are located in Melton Mowbray and Bottesford and 19 villages have a primary school. MV16 is located in Melton Mowbray providing further education for 16–18 year olds. Brooksby College provides tertiary education choices.
- 2.6.6 The hospital at Melton Mowbray is a maternity hospital, as well as having one ward which provides general rehabilitation and palliative care. There is both a leisure centre with a swimming pool and a sports village in Melton Mowbray, and there are two libraries, one in Melton Mowbray and another in Bottesford. In the rural areas of the Borough, village and parish halls make a valuable contribution to the local residents where they host facilities for sports and leisure groups and accommodate further activities for the local population.
- 2.6.7 There are no large parks and gardens in the north and east of the Borough, and these areas are not served by Egerton or Wilton Parks in Melton Mowbray. Although there are other types of formal provision servicing the area, such as allotments and cemeteries, these do not provide the function of a local park for people to visit and enjoy for recreational use or play.
- 2.6.8 There is generally a good distribution of natural and semi-natural sites across the Borough.
- 2.6.9 Open spaces in the more urban areas of the Borough tend to be well linked by green corridors, particularly in Melton Mowbray, with its Heritage Trail taking in town centre parks and gardens.
- 2.6.10 The Borough's residents have access to a number of leisure facilities and cultural activities including a leisure centre, golf courses, theatre and cinema within Melton Mowbray.

## **2.7 Environment**

- 2.7.1 Outside the built-up areas, arable farmland accounts for about half of the area. The remainder is used for grazing. Approximately 95% of agricultural land is grade 3, which is good to moderate quality.
- 2.7.2 The landscape is typically rolling hills and valleys. The most prominent features are the escarpments defining the southern edge of the Vale of Belvoir. The latter is also a tourist attraction, along with Burrough Hill, a former iron-age fort in the south of the Borough.
- 2.7.3 Melton Mowbray is situated in the centre of the Borough and is a large, well contained market town on rising ground above the Wreake Valley. The

numerous small villages within the Borough retain many of their historical features and are built in local ironstone and sandstone. Most are centred on a church or prominent spire. Many have been designated a Conservation Area, of which there are 45 in the Borough, containing some of the 702 listed buildings.

2.7.4 Gently sloped river valleys are also characteristic features of the landscape, notably the Wreake, Eye and Gaddesby Brook. The main waterway is the Grantham Canal.

2.7.5 Melton Borough has a long history of flood events. Flood alleviation work such as the Brentingby Dam has previously taken place which has significantly reduced the impact of flood events in Melton Mowbray. Fluvial flooding is not the only type of flooding. Secondary sources include run-off from hillsides, groundwater flooding, flooding from sewers and drains and blockages to artificial drainage systems. All these comprise a significant flood risk in some areas of the Borough.

*KEY EVIDENCE:*

- *2001 Census*
- *2011 Census*
- *Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing market Assessment, GL Hearn 2014*
- *Local Futures Report*
- *Leicester and Leicestershire Employment Land Study, PACEC, 2012*
- *Melton Employment Land Study, BE Group, 2015*
- *Melton Open Spaces Study 2014*
- *Play Pitch Strategy 2014*
- *Indoor Facilities Assessment 2014*
- *Authority Monitoring Report 2016*
- *DCLG's The English Indices of Deprivation 2015*