

# Cabinet

8 December 2021

**Report of:** Councillor Joe Orson - Leader of the Council

## Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood Masterplan

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Priority 3: Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton
<b>Relevant Ward Member(s):</b>	All
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	6 December 2021
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Subject to call-in:</b>	No Not key decision

### 1 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval of the Masterplan for the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood.
- 1.2 The Masterplan has been prepared on behalf of the Council and the developers in the area with an interest in the land (Davidsons Developments, Greenlight Developments and Truframe Ltd.)
- 1.3 The Masterplan is a non-statutory document to provide guidance on development in the area south of Melton Mowbray. This includes the implementation and application of the Local Plan in the South Sustainable Neighbourhood area, and will be a material consideration to be taken into account in all relevant planning applications, building upon, and additional to, the adopted Policy SS4. All planning applications in the site will be expected to demonstrate due regard and strong adherence to the framework as set out within the document.
- 1.4 The Masterplan supersedes, and replaces that which was approved by the Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020. This Masterplan builds on the revised development layout which was approved by the Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and which was considered following detailed work undertaken with the County Council to enable them to accept the Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) award.

## 2 Recommendations

### That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approves the Masterplan for the purposes of providing a framework to guide the consideration of future planning applications in the South Melton area including the identified 'Sustainable Neighbourhood' area, subject to the receipt of a viability assessment that demonstrates its deliverability.
- 2.2 Notes that the approval of the Masterplan will support the delivery of the south section (A606 to A607) of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR) in particular;
- 2.3 Notes that the approval of the Masterplan is the final part of the package of works required to support the County Council in accepting the Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) grant, as set out by their Cabinet on 20 July 2021.

## 3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Masterplan incorporates within a wider context the main requirements of adopted Policy SS4, supporting the wider aspirations of the Local Plan for a high quality sustainable neighbourhood, and the delivery of homes and the infrastructure required to support them.
- 3.2 The Masterplan has been developed as a result of close collaboration between the Council and the landowners/developers, and represents a strong, positive and coherent approach to the continued development of the area south of Melton Mowbray including the South Sustainable Neighbourhood.
- 3.3 The adopted Masterplan will provide the assurance as required by Leicestershire County Council to ensure the delivery of housing and associated infrastructure, giving them the confidence to proceed with and 'forward fund' the education requirements for the Borough and the MMDR project.
- 3.4 Viability assessment of the Masterplan is underway, and initial outputs are expected early in 2022. The County Council is keen to see progress with the Masterplan, and agrees with the approach set out at recommendation 2.1, that the Masterplan is approved subject to viability assessment. The headline viability assessment and its final outputs will be shared with the County Council at the earliest possible opportunity, and the assessment will be subject to the scrutiny of both parties.

## 4 Background

- 4.1 The Local Plan adopted in October 2018 established the policy basis for a Masterplan for the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood in order to co-ordinate its content and delivery.
- 4.2 On 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 Cabinet approved the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood Masterplan. That Masterplan was developed in an attempt to meet the requirements associated with the County Council's decision as to whether to accept the HIF award offered by Homes England. The Masterplan was however not acceptable to the County

Council as it did not fulfil the ambition of the HIF award which has a wider ranging and longer term ambition to secure ‘additionality’ beyond the quantity and time horizon of the Local Plan.

- 4.3 The revised development framework / layout that underpins this updated Masterplan was approved following further proactive engagement with the County Council, their consultancy team, and key stakeholders representing land owner and developer interests in late 2020. The layout was approved by the County Council’s Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020, and the Borough Council’s Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020.
- 4.4 The revised development framework / layout identified additional land for the provision of c. 150 dwellings, and the utilisation of some 9ha of allocated employment land also for housing. The employment land would be partially replaced to the north across Leicester Road. The Masterplan has been developed on this basis.
- 4.5 At the County Council’s Cabinet meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021 it was agreed that subject to the completion of a package of works and a number of conditions being met, the County Council would be in a position to conditionally accept the Housing Infrastructure Fund grant for the southern leg of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- 4.6 The approval of this Masterplan is the final piece of work making up the ‘package’ of work to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021, which included:
  - a) Developer Contributions SPD (adopted 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021)
  - b) Melton North Sustainable Neighbourhood Masterplan (approved 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021)
  - c) Staged Payment Agreement with Leicestershire County Council to Support Infrastructure Investment (approved 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021, signed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021)

## **5 Main Considerations**

- 5.1 The updated Masterplan is built upon the approved Development Framework and is included at Appendix A. It relates to the full extent of the HIF application and award. This is a wider area than the South Sustainable Neighbourhood as defined in policy SS4 of the Local Plan, comprising greater quantity of development which reflects the HIF ambition to secure ‘additionality’ to planned growth and to maximise the effectiveness of the infrastructure it is funding.
- 5.2 The main features of the Masterplan are as follows:
  - a) Introduction – this sets out the purpose of the document, the evolution of the allocation within the Melton Local Plan, land ownership, key stakeholders etc.
  - b) Planning Policy Context – this section sets out the national policy context in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Design Guide, the Melton Local Plan, adopted and emerging SPD’s, and the County Council’s policies.
  - c) Analysis – this chapter gives more detail of the context of the allocation in the wider setting, the site location and surroundings and how it links to the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR) project. Additionally, it goes into further detail around topography, landscape, ecology, townscape and the existing site features.
  - d) Masterplan – this section sets out the vision for the Masterplan, how it will achieve and well-designed place, utilising the 10 characteristics of a well-designed place. It

concludes on a map showing the development layout and parcels of land, alongside the proposed land uses (residential, employment, community facilities, education etc.)

- e) Access & Movement – this chapter details how pedestrian and cycle links are expected to be provided across the development to encourage sustainable methods of transport. It also deals with vehicular movement and access points into / out of the development.
- f) Green Infrastructure – this chapter discusses the required provision and sets out a concept for the provision across parks, youth and adult recreation, green corridor and play areas.
- g) Land Uses – this sets out in more detail the parcels of land to be used for residential, the local centre and employment, and education. It gives examples of what a successful development may look like on the ground, and reflects the content of the Design of Development SPD.
- h) Delivery & Phasing – this section sets out the principles for developer contributions, and gives a strategy for the likely delivery and phasing of the site in relation to physical infrastructure in particular.

5.3 Of particular significance is the safeguarding of the sites for a new secondary school for the town, and two new primary schools to serve the development. Additionally, as envisaged by the policy, there is a proposed local centre and extra care facility.

5.4 The Masterplan covers a period up to and beyond the adopted Melton Local Plan which runs to 2036. It is subject to changing market conditions, potential changes of land ownership and option agreements. The Masterplan is the foundation upon which further information can be gathered and appended. This is likely as further details emerge over the course of the development of the planning application for the southern distributor road and associated development. Additional information will be gathered over the coming months which will give additional clarity around the design of the individual land parcels, and may influence the route of internal roads for instance. It is not envisaged that this would re-write the Masterplan however as this sets the foundation for the development.

## **6 Options Considered**

- 6.1 This Masterplan is required as part of the package of works to support the County Council to accept the HIF from Homes England, and is the final element. As such, the Masterplan has been developed in accordance with this requirement, and all stakeholders are satisfied with it.
- 6.2 The only other option would be to not approve this Masterplan. A Masterplan is not explicitly required by Local Plan Policy SS4. However, it is encouraged by the policy, and a specification is included within Policy SS4 regarding its scope and content and the Masterplan document is considered to satisfy this aspiration, and more. If the Council does not approve the Masterplan, it is likely that the County Council would decline the HIF grant from Homes England.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 The Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood was formulated by the Melton Local Plan (2011-2036) and was subject to significant engagement with statutory consultees and

interested parties and its various stages of development, in accordance with statutory requirements over the period from 2014-2018.

- 7.2 The Masterplan has not been subject to public consultation owing to its status as non-statutory guidance.
- 7.3 Leicestershire County Council were at the inception meeting where the overall content, and specification for the Masterplan was discussed and agreed in mid September 2021. The consultants then worked on this, liaising with Officers where appropriate.
- 7.4 The County Council were consulted on the first draft of the Masterplan in mid October 2021. This enabled further detailed responses to be received from them relating to ecology and archaeology in particular. Additionally, further work was able to be undertaken with the County Council and the developers to ascertain the delivery and phasing of the site, feeding in detailed information regarding the timing for the delivery of the schools. County Council colleagues also fed in further information regarding aspirations for sustainable construction in the light of the climate change agenda, linking into the relevant local plan policies. Overall it was commented that it was a very good document.
- 7.5 Further work commenced based on these comments and feedback from Melton Borough Council and the full draft was received on 11<sup>th</sup> November. At this point it was also shared with the developers with interests in the site, and the County Council. The County Council response mainly concerned the timing of the provision of the primary schools in relation to the progression of the development ('trigger points') and the inclusion of the Healthy Communities agenda under Policy H9 of the Local Plan, and these have been considered and incorporated within the document as appropriate.
- 7.6 The developers wished for it to be reiterated and clarified that the document is a foundation upon which further detail can be built upon as it becomes known, recognising the changing policy basis (climate change in particular). Additionally, the point around the HIF funding relating to the forward funding of the infrastructure to enable house building. The relevant changes and amendments have been made to the document, which now appears at Appendix A to this report.

## **8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication**

- 8.1 Once approved, the Masterplan will be a material consideration to assist with decision making, to which the Council will assign weight reflecting its non-statutory status, for the determination of planning applications with immediate effect.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The cost of the Masterplan work has been met by Melton Borough Council via the Local Plans budget / reserve.
- 9.2 The Council has been successful in seeking capacity funding from Homes England to support the development of key documents that provide the conditions to be able to secure funding for infrastructure (including the MMDR) and to progress the major applications within the Neighbourhood. The cost of this Masterplan will be recouped from that funding once accepted.

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate Services**

## 10 Legal and Governance Implications

- 10.1 Approval of the Masterplan is an executive function.
- 10.2 As described in the report the Masterplan is an informal non-statutory document and whilst it will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications to support the delivery of the identified sites, the weight to be attached to such a document will be a matter for the decision maker and assessed on a case by case basis.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer**

## 11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 11.1 No equality or safeguarding issues have been identified.

## 12 Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 No community safety issues have been identified.

## 13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 13.1 This report is significant to environmental impact and climate change. The Sustainable Neighbourhood and Melton Mowbray Distributor Road are both important elements of the approach to sustainable development particularly in terms of travel patterns and traffic flow. The Local Plan, and the allocation of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods has been sustainability appraised prior to its adoption, and the Development Plan has been considered to be the most sustainable approach to development in the Borough.

## 14 Other Implications (where significant)

- 14.1 Policy C9 of the adopted Local Plan relates to 'healthy communities' and advises that the health impacts of major development proposals should be considered early in the planning process through the submission of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) with a planning application. These are key tools in creating and sustaining healthy, vibrant communities.

## 15 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	The Masterplan is not adopted, causing issues in terms of MBC's agreed package of works to enable LCC to secure HIF	Low	Critical	Medium Risk
2	The Masterplan is afforded insufficient weight because it is neither a local development document or SPD	Low	Marginal	Low Risk
3	Non statutory guidance documents can be challenged on the basis they should follow formal procedures for SPD's or local development documents	Low	Marginal	Low Risk



		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High				
	4 Significant				
	3 Low		2,3	1	
	2 Very Low				
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	Consultation has taken place with key stakeholders; it is not considered that this risk is likely as there are no outstanding objections.
2	Key stakeholders have been involved in its production and support the Masterplan. The Council will be the main decision-maker and understand its role and the importance of its content with regard to delivery of the Neighbourhood and securing wider strategic infrastructure
3	The masterplan is not a local development document.

## 16 Background Papers

- 16.1 Melton Local Plan, Policy SS4
- 16.2 MBC Cabinet Report, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Item 10 – North Sustainable Neighbourhood Masterplan
- 16.3 MBC Cabinet Report, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Item 7 - South Sustainable Neighbourhood Masterplan
- 16.4 UPDATE

## 17 Appendices

- 17.1 A: Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood Masterplan Final Draft, September 2021

<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Sarah Legge</b> , Local Plans Manager
<b>Report Author Contact Details:</b>	01664 502380 SLegge@melton.gov.uk
<b>Chief Officer Responsible:</b>	<b>Jim Worley</b> , Assistant Director for Planning and Delivery
<b>Chief Officer Contact Details:</b>	01664 502359 jworley@melton.gov.uk