



Approval of Melton Town Centre Vision

Corporate Priority:	Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton
Relevant Ward Member(s):	Melton Craven: Cllr Bindloss & Cllr Douglas Melton Egerton: Cllr Faulkner & Cllr Smith Melton Warwick: Cllr Fisher & Cllr Freer
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	25 May 2022
Exempt Information:	No
Key Decision:	Yes
Subject to call-in:	Yes

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Council’s Corporate Strategy 2020-2024 includes a commitment to work with partners to promote Melton and to deliver the promise of the ‘Rural Capital of Food’. This is set out within the Council’s strategic priority to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton.
- 1.2 As part of the 2021-22 budget, the Council allocated funding to support a number of town centre enhancements. This included a commitment to prepare a town centre vision as a strategic basis and evidence base for future improvements and regeneration opportunities.
- 1.3 This evidence base will be kept under review and will provide a framework to guide future regeneration project opportunities and to support access to associated funding streams.
- 1.4 The Town Centre Vision has been developed through a collaborative process, including engagement with a wide range of stakeholders in September 2021 to seek views on the issues, opportunities and aspirations for the town centre.
- 1.5 Further consultation, including public consultation on the draft vision, has supported prioritisation of aspirations and opportunities in the form of a set of project opportunities.
- 1.6 The draft town centre vision sets out a long-term vision / aspiration for the town centre. It seeks to strengthen Melton’s unique position as Rural Capital of Food to maximise the potential of Melton Mowbray as rural market town and proposes to deliver the Town Centre vision by:
 - Reinforcing commercial and economic activities

- Enhancing visitor experience
- Increasing the use of public open spaces

- 1.7 The Town Centre vision is an important framework document for Melton and the collaborative process taken to develop it has led to the development of an action plan. It is a live document that will be updated on an annual basis and will allow the Council and its partners to utilise it as an evidence based framework for future funding and investment opportunities.
- 1.8 The Council is currently preparing two funding bids that will be underpinned by the Town centre Vision evidence base:
- a) The Council's Levelling Up Fund Bid is being prepared and is due to be submitted by 6th July 2022
 - b) The Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Bid is being prepared and is due to be submitted by 1st August 2022.

2 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 **Notes and endorses the consultation version of the Town Centre Vision and considers any amendments required following feedback received from the Council's Scrutiny Committee and through the public consultation.**
- 2.2 **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity, to make any necessary amendments to the Town Centre Vision following the consultation, and to finalise the document.**
- 2.3 **Acknowledge that formal adoption of the Town Centre vision will underpin the submission of the Council's round 2 Levelling Up Fund bid.**

3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 Priority 3 of the Council's Corporate Strategy 2020-24 'Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton' identifies the following focus areas:
- Work with our partners to promote Melton and deliver the promise of the 'Rural Capital of Food'.
 - Regenerate our town centre, encourage inward investment and create jobs.
 - Deliver inclusive growth by improving access to higher paid jobs, improving skills and tackling low wage economy.
- 3.2 Melton Mowbray town centre is the engine of the borough's economy and is a key visitor destination. A long-term vision is required to steer the development of the town centre over the next ten years.
- 3.3 The Town Centre Vision document is accompanied by an action plan which includes projects and activities identified by the Council and its partners that would support delivery of the vision. The Vision will help direct investment and funding towards delivery of projects in the future.

- 3.4 The Government has recently published the Levelling Up White Paper and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 2 and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) have also recently been announced. This Vision and action Plan will support the Council's efforts in seeking funding to deliver projects, through these funding programmes.

4 Background

- 4.1 Melton Mowbray town centre is the engine of the economy and hub for Melton borough. In order for Melton to thrive, it is important to support the town centre to be resilient and to adapt to needs of the residents, businesses and visitors at all times.
- 4.2 The recent events of Brexit and COVID-19 pandemic along with the changing trends in retail, leisure and commercial sectors have meant transformational changes to most high streets and town centres across the country are required. While Melton Mowbray town centre has managed to minimise the negative impact of these events so far, with a lower than average vacancy rate, it is evident that an agreed and aspirational vision is required to enable the town centre to respond to the current challenges by building on its existing strengths.
- 4.3 The time is now to develop a clear vision and framework for investment in the town centre to maximise the current opportunities that exist through Government funding being made available to local authorities. With this in mind, following two stakeholder events the Council and its partners have come together and are seeking to agree a shared vision to enhance and deliver on the town's enviable reputation as the 'Rural Capital of Food'.
- 4.4 The Town Centre vision is an important framework document for Melton and the collaborative process taken to develop it has led to the development of an action plan. It is a live document that will be updated on an annual basis and will allow the Council and its partners to utilise it as an evidence based framework for future funding and investment opportunities.

5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 **A vision and action plan for Melton Mowbray town centre:**
- 5.2 Melton Borough Council is committed to supporting and enhancing how Melton Mowbray Town Centre supports the wider local economy, residents, workers and visitors. The Vision will help the Council and its partners to enhance the town and its 'offer' by providing a universally agreed approach to delivery of the agreed aspirations.
- 5.3 As well setting a Vision, the final document will provide a pipeline of proposed projects and activities through which the Council will be able to proactively seek funding and investment (both public and private) to achieve the agreed aim of securing, enhancing and promoting Melton Mowbray's position as being the 'Rural Capital of Food'.
- 5.4 Beyond simply identifying projects and activities, this document will also provide clarity and an agreed position on the importance of future development opportunities and development activity in the town. This will help to ensure the town centre continues to serve as a functional economic area by attracting new users and continuing to provide a space where residents of Melton and its wider rural hinterland can continue to visit, work,

live and socialise. This is both for the users of today but also ensuring the town can effectively respond to the growth planned over the next 15-20 years.

- 5.5 The Council has many different roles to play in the progression of the range of projects identified in the vision document for Melton Town.
- 5.6 Whilst there will be projects that the Council will lead, in many instances the council will instead, act as an enabler or facilitator by acting as a champion for the town and working with private sector partners and organisations to encourage investment into the town. This supporting role can be undertaken in many ways ranging from proactive engagement, persuasion, and negotiation right through to utilising the powers and tools available to us as a Local Authority (i.e. planning, regulatory and enforcement) to encourage and enable change and improvements.
- 5.7 The development of this vision document is a first step in taking a long-term view for the town centre. Having a wide ranging and agreed vision for the town is intended to act as a strategic lever, to ensure all key partners and landlords recognise their role in improving the overall offer and providing greater leverage to ensure sufficient commitment and engagement from all parties.
- 5.8 The proposed action plan includes proposals for the following categories of projects:
- Development projects and opportunities
 - Transport and connectivity projects
 - Public realm enhancement opportunities
 - Heritage enhancement projects
 - Events, markets and tourism activities
 - Place-branding, promotion and marketing activities
 - Business, employment and skills actions
 - Place management and community stewardship approach
 - Sustainability initiatives
 - Governance and monitoring activities
- 5.9 In seeking to ensure the Vision enjoys continuing support, a further period of public and stakeholder consultation is currently underway and due to conclude on 13th June. This is to ensure that those who utilise the town and those who are served by the town have the opportunity to comment and provide their thoughts on how the town should be developed and adapted moving forward. Demonstrating meaningful engagement and incorporation of the views of our residents will be important in any future funding or investment applications.
- 5.10 A summary of the feedback from the public and stakeholder consultation will be provided verbally at the Cabinet meeting.
- 5.11 As part of the consultation process, the Council's Scrutiny Committee considered the consultation draft at their meeting on 6th June. Committee members provided feedback and comments which will be taken into consideration when developing the final version of the Town centre Vision document. A brief summary of these comments can be found at Section 7 of this report.

- 5.12 It is proposed that following conclusion of the consultation process, authority is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity, to make any necessary amendments to the Town Centre Vision, and to finalise the document.
- 5.13 The Town Centre vision is an important framework document for Melton and will allow the Council and its partners to utilise it as an evidence-based framework for future funding and investment opportunities.
- 5.14 The Council is currently preparing two funding bids that will be underpinned by the Town centre Vision evidence base:
- a) The Council's Levelling Up Fund Bid is being prepared and is due to be submitted in July 2022
 - b) The Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Bid is being prepared and is due to be submitted in August 2022

6 Options Considered

- 6.1 The Council could choose not to progress a vision for the Town. However, this is not recommended because:
- 6.1.1 Given the impact of the pandemic and the structural changes in town centres more generally, it is important to set out a vision and investment plan for the town centre.
 - 6.1.2 Having a clear vision will strengthen the submission of the Levelling Up Fund bid and UKSPF investment plan as it provides an evidence base, a framework for prioritisation and demonstrates a collaborative approach that includes views of stakeholders and the community.

7 Consultation

- 7.1 The Town Centre Vision has been informed by 2 stakeholder workshops, with a wide range of perspective incorporated, including specific engagement with students of SMB College Group.
- 7.2 The Vision document has also been informed by a range of surveys and consultations undertaken over the last 18 months, including work led by the Council's Scrutiny Task and Finish Group in response to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on our '[Place](#)'.
- 7.3 A summary of consultation activity is included within section 2 of the Vision document.
- 7.4 Most recently the consultation draft has been shared with all stakeholders who have engaged with the council previously, including all businesses within the BID area, Melton Place Board partners and all partner organisations identified within the document. The public consultation is due to finish on 13th June and verbal feedback will be provided at the Cabinet meeting of any comments received. The responses to this consultation will be published on the Council's website for participants to see the comments provided.
- 7.5 The Council's Scrutiny Committee met on 6th June to consider and provide feedback to Cabinet on the vision document as part of the consultation process. These comments will be presented to Cabinet for consideration within the final vision document before it is adopted. The main observations are listed as below:

- a) Youth services and activities should figure more prominently within the vision. More adequate attention needs to be given within the document to provision that will attract younger people and families.
- b) Whilst car parking is reference within the document, members of the committee felt there needed to be a clearer strategy or agenda for car parking in the town more generally.
- c) Concern was raised that regarding ensuring any investment in the cattle market / Stockyard, did not detract from the wider town centre offer.
- d) Comment was made that whilst Melton Mowbray is described as the Rural Capital of Food, the food offer was limited. Members were supportive of the vision's focus on enhancing the food offer.
- e) It was felt that the language in the document was at times rather negative with reference to 'Low wage, low skill' and that this may impact on aspirations for the town
- f) Members were pleased to see PERA referenced in the document due to its offer and the potential benefits it has to the wider town.
- g) Members were keen to ensure that value for money will be achieved in delivery of any subsequent submissions and project development arrangements

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

- Cabinet to consider the feedback received from the Scrutiny Committee and through the public consultation which concludes on 13th June.
- Officers to work with the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity to make any necessary amendments to the Town Centre Vision prior to adoption by end of June.
- Submission of LUF bid – 6th July 2022
- Submission of UKSPF Investment Plan – 1st August 2022

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The projects identified in the action plan are not a commitment from the Council or any organisation, they are identified as a potential list of activities that would help deliver the town centre vision. Delivery of projects or programmes of work would be accelerated by securing funding and partners' support. Having a vision in place will provide a framework for funding bids to be prepared.
- 9.2 Match funding will be required to support the Levelling Up Funding bid which is due to be considered by Cabinet on 16th June 2022.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Deputy s.151 Officer

10 Legal and Governance Implications

- 10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report / decision as it is a list of potential activities.
- 10.2 Legal implications will be considered throughout each project in the usual way.

- 10.3 Members should note, the Vision will need to have regard to the adopted Local Plan policies covering the town centre area but will not be binding on decisions of the Local Planning Authority.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer

11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 11.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be prepared for the Vision document prior to final approval by the end of June.
- 11.2 Each project in the action plan will require an EIA through its design and development stages.

12 Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 Community safety implications have been considered and projects identified to address them.

13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 13.1 Economic, environmental and social sustainability is a key theme that runs across all projects and activities within this action plan. It is envisaged that this will be considered at all stages of design and delivery of all projects.

14 Other Implications (where significant)

- 14.1 Planning and enforcement implications have been considered at high level in proposing the projects. All projects in the action plan will need to consider these implications at design and delivery stages.

15 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Stakeholders and residents feel their views are not listened to.	Very Low	Critical	Medium Risk
2	The Vision and Action Plan are not approved in time for the submission of the bid and the opportunity is missed to strengthen the bids.	Low	Critical	Medium Risk
3	Projects are added to the action plan that are not deliverable or not owned by any partner organisation.	Low	Critical	Medium 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	
	2 Very Low			1	
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	The Vision and Action Plan are informed by a series of consultation events with a range of partners. Care has been taken to address all concerns raised and accommodate all suggestions in the plan.
2	The timescales are tight, yet achievable. Momentum will need to be maintained in order to meet the deadlines.
3	The action plan should only include projects that contribute towards delivering the vision. The Council will work with partners to prepare deliverable plans for these projects.

16 Background Papers

16.1 None

17 Appendices

17.1 Appendix 1 – A Vision for Melton Mowbray Town Centre- Draft for Consultation May 2022.

Report Author:	Pranali Parikh , Director for Growth and Regeneration
Report Author Contact Details:	01664 504321 PParikh@melton.gov.uk
Chief Officer Responsible:	Pranali Parikh , Director for Growth and Regeneration
Chief Officer Contact Details:	01664 504321 PParikh@melton.gov.uk