



Local Development Scheme Update (February 2025)

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Lead Member/Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Margaret Glancy - Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment and Regulatory Services (Deputy Leader)

Corporate Priority:	Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton Protect our climate and enhance our rural, natural environment
Relevant Ward Member(s):	All Members – Borough wide
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	Melton Local Plan Working Group meetings
Exempt Information:	No
Key Decision:	No
Subject to call-in:	No Not key decision

1 Summary

- 1.1 The updated Local Development Scheme sets out a revised timetable for the Melton Local Plan Update and indicative timescales for a future new Melton Local Plan. The main reason for this update is to have a more realistic timescale for examination. This Local Development Scheme will supersede the version approved in September 2023.
- 1.2 The Melton Local Plan Update is currently at the final stage of statutory public consultation, which is taking place from 17th January 2025 until 28th February 2025. Following this consultation, it is expected that the plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in June/July 2025, who will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to undertake an Examination in Public. The Melton Local Plan Update is anticipated to be adopted in January 2027.
- 1.3 The Local Development Scheme formally sets out this timetable and provides information about the process undertaken to date, including the five-year review which concluded that most development management policies of the Melton Local Plan require updating whilst

the overall strategic policies relating to housing targets and allocations continue to be appropriate. It also provides information about other key planning documents in the Borough, including Neighbourhood Plans.

- 1.4 The document also addresses the likely need for a new Local Plan as soon as possible after the adoption of the Partial Local Plan Update.

2 Recommendations

That Committee:

- 2.1 Approves the publication of the updated Local Development Scheme, superseding the 2023 version.
- 2.2 Delegates authority to the Director of Place and Prosperity for the next 24 months to make minor updates to the Local Development Scheme in relation to the Melton Local Plan Update, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment & Regulatory Services.

3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 Having an up-to-date Local Development Scheme is a statutory duty. This update, which also establishes the scope and timetable of the Melton Local Plan Update, provides a more accurate timeline when compared to the current Local Development Scheme, which was approved in September 2023.
- 3.2 Delegation to further update the Local Development Scheme is sought to add flexibility to make changes to the timetable, and to align the delegation with the timetable for the adoption of the plan. Such changes may become necessary as the Local Plan Update progresses through Examination in Public. There is a pressing requirement for the Council to update the Local Development Scheme by 6th March which has arisen from a recent Government request in a letter to all local authorities dated 12th December following the publication of the updated National Planning Policy Framework.

4 Background

- 4.1 Having an up-to-date Local Development Scheme is a statutory duty. This updated Local Development Scheme will supersede the September 2023 version.
- 4.2 The Local Development Scheme contains information and links to Development Plan documents for Melton Borough, which includes the Melton Local Plan 2018, the Leicestershire Mineral and Waste Local Plan to 2031 and Neighbourhood Plans. It also includes links to other key planning documents including Supplementary Planning Documents, masterplans, monitoring, strategic planning and other documents relevant to plan making.
- 4.3 The document provides an overview of the conclusions of the 5-Year Review of the Melton Local Plan and establishes the scope of the Melton Local Plan Update, which is:
- All the policies require an update, apart from policies SS2, C1(A), C1(B), C5, C6, EN1, EN4, EN6, EN13, IN3, D2, D3 and the site-specific policies in Appendix 1 of the Melton Local Plan.
 - Policies SS2, C1(A), C1(B), C5, C6, EN1, EN4, EN6, EN13, IN3, D2, D3 and the site-specific policies in Appendix 1 of the Melton Local Plan do not require an update at this stage.

- c) The Vision and Objectives require an update.
 - d) During the Update, it will be explored whether new policies would be needed in order to produce a sound Local Plan.
- 4.4 Following the 5-year review, the Council undertook the [Issues and Options Consultation](#) (Regulation 18) between 6th November 2023 and 7th January 2024. Details of this consultation, representations received and the response given are in the published [Statement of Consultation](#). Over the course of 2024, Council Officers have gathered required evidence, engaged with statutory partners, and drafted its Pre-Submission Local Plan. Progress has been discussed regularly with members through the Local Plan Working Group.
- 4.5 The Council is currently at the Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 19) which will take place between 17th January 2025 until 28th February 2025 and, following this, intends to formally submit the plan in June/July 2025. Council Officers are currently in the late stages of preparing an updated Melton South Masterplan, with detailed transport modelling currently being progressed by the Highways Authority. Depending on the outcomes of this work, a further focussed Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 19) may be undertaken. The remit of a further consultation will be strictly limited to any additional information arising from an updated Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood Masterplan. This approach aligns with the Government's expectations to minimise the duration of Local Plan examinations by having all the evidence prepared in advanced, and it was covered in meetings with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Planning Inspectorate.
- 4.6 The Local Development Scheme Update adjusts the timetable for the Melton Local Plan Update to ensure this remains realistic. The main reasons for this update are to have a more realistic timescale for examination as advised by the Planning Inspectorate and reflecting delays in plan-making as consequence of timescales for producing evidence and consequential uncertainty arising from considering changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).
- 4.7 The Local Development Scheme Update sets out the following timeline for the preparation of the Melton Local Plan Update:
- a) Regulation 18 preparation, consultation and analysis - September 2023 to March 2024
 - b) (Current) Regulation 19 preparation, consultation and analysis - April 2024 to June 2025
 - c) Submission - June/July 2025
 - d) Examination (including preparation and main modifications) - July 2025 to December 2026
 - e) Adoption - January 2027
- 4.8 Finally, the Local Development Scheme Update sets out an indicative timeline for the preparation of a future new Local Plan:
- a) Internal consultation - Q1 (2027) – Q3 (2027)
 - b) Regulation 18 preparation and consultation - Q4 (2027) – Q3 (2028)
 - c) Regulation 19 preparation and consultation - Q4 (2028) – Q4 (2029)

5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 Having an up-to-date Local Development Scheme is a statutory duty. The timetable proposed in this Local Development Scheme Update (see Appendix A) represents a realistic reflection of actions required towards adopting the Melton Local Plan Update. It would supersede the current Local Development Scheme which was adopted in September 2023.
- 5.2 The updated Local Development Scheme also incorporates a broad timetable for the early stages of a new Local Plan, which is expected to commence as soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of the current Local Plan Update. The inclusion of this additional timetable addresses two matters: (a) providing reassurance in relation to those policies that are not going to be updated in the current Local Plan Update that they will be covered by a new Local Plan; and (b) addressing a suggestion made by the Planning Advisory Service to include a high-level programme post 2026.
- 5.3 The Melton Local Plan Update is supported by a detailed evidence base which ensure that its proposed policies have taken a justified and sound approach. The evidence base includes Sustainability Appraisal (and Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment); Equalities Impact Assessment; and a range of policy topic studies covering viability, employment, open space, green infrastructure, climate change, local housing needs/affordable housing, and flooding. The plan is also supported by a Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement which demonstrates how the Council has engaged positively with statutory partners. The full suite of supporting evidence is available online: www.meltonplan.co.uk/evidencebaselpu.
- 5.4 The recent December 2024 update to the National Planning Policy Framework includes transitional arrangements at Annex 1. The Melton Local Plan Update is being consulted upon and submitted within the timescales of these transitional arrangements. Consequently, the Melton Local Plan Update will be examined under the previous December 2023 version of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.5 In summary, the progression of the Melton Local Plan Update has remained broadly on track and the [Pre-Submission Local Plan](#) (currently at consultation) is considered to take a justified and sound approach. The Local Development Scheme Update (Appendix A) provides a realistic timetable for the progression of the Local Plan Update and adopting it will further support progress towards the submission of the plan.

6 Options Considered

- 6.1 Option 1: adopt the prepared Local Development Scheme (Appendix A), which includes a realistic reflection of progress made to date and anticipated timescales.
- 6.2 Option 2: prepare a Local Development Scheme with a longer timetable, which would represent a more cautious approach to the potential, but universal, risk of delays at examination. In addition, a longer timetable could facilitate the Council preparing a new Local Plan under the emerging provision of a reformed plan-making system. The Council has not endorsed this approach to date, given the findings of the 5-year Review, so it is considered to be an option that would not be consistent with progress made to date.
- 6.3 Option 3: prepare a Local Development Scheme with a shorter timetable or do not update the Local Development Scheme, which would represent an ambitious but unrealistic approach.

7 Consultation/Engagement

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment and Regulatory Services has been consulted as part of the proposal to update the Local Development Scheme. Whilst there has been no other consultation on the Local Development Scheme Update at Appendix A, the timetable is a factual update consequential to the progression of the Melton Local Plan Update which has had several methods of engagement, as detailed below.
- 7.2 The Melton Local Plan Update will have two rounds of statutory public consultation:
- a) Issues and Options Consultation (Regulation 18) - 6th November 2023 to 7th January 2024
 - b) Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 19) - 17th January 2025 to 28th February 2025.
- 7.3 The Local Plan Working Group has met regularly to date:
- a) in 2022 on 5th September
 - b) In 2023 on 22nd February and 10th July
 - c) In 2024 on 10th January, 29th February, 28th March, 24th April, 22nd May, 13th June, 30th July and 18th November
 - d) In 2025 on 6th January
- 7.4 Council officers have engaged informally with statutory partners throughout the preparation of the Melton Local Plan Update, including several Duty to Cooperate exercises as covered in the Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement.

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

- 8.1 Should members approve this paper, the Local Development Scheme (see Appendix A) will be published on the Council's website and will support the submission documentation.
- 8.2 The revised timetable will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Planning Inspectorate.

9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 Adopting the updated Local Development Scheme reflects a realistic timetable for the preparation of the Melton Local Plan Update. Work towards this timetable will be met by existing budgetary arrangements.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Insert Reviewer (S151 or deputy)

10 Legal and Governance Implications

What authority, powers and duties are involved in being able or required to come to this decision and what might this proposed decision mean to the Council legally?

What legal (legislation) and constitutional issues have been considered and consulted?

Is there a statutory/regulatory duty to provide the report/have a policy/provide a service?

What are the Governance/decision making considerations, how does the report comply with the councils rules on decision making? Where necessary refer to specific sections of the council's constitution.

Comments should be written by the report writer and then approved by legal officers – it is best practice to work with Legal when developing proposals and involving them from an early stage is strongly advised.

- 10.1 The preparation of a Local Development Scheme and the Local Plan are statutory requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Planning Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Local Development Scheme demonstrates how the council is progressing with the Local Plan Update. There is a duty to demonstrate that the Local Development Scheme is updated, therefore failure to produce and update this scheme would result in a failure to meet the Council's legal obligations.
- 10.2 There is a pressing requirement for the Council to update the Local Development Scheme by 6th March which has arisen from the recent Government letter to all local authorities dated 12th December following the publication of the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Government has been clear that local planning authorities should not delay the Local Plan process whilst waiting to see what changes may be proposed to the wider planning system, meaning that the Development Scheme should be reviewed and updated in accordance with the current legal and NPPF provisions.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Insert Reviewer (MO or deputy)

11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 11.1 The publication of the Local Development Scheme update does not have Equality and Safeguarding implications. However, due consideration of equalities implications of the policies of the Local Plan Update is covered separately through a specific Equality Impact Assessment, which was published in January 2025.

12 Data Protection Implications (Mandatory)

- 12.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed for the following reasons because there are no risks to the rights and freedoms of natural persons as part of the publication of the Local Development Scheme update.

13 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 The publication of the Local Development Scheme will not have Community Safety implications. However, the Local Plan Update includes policies that aim to contribute towards this objective, for example active building design to increase community cohesion and natural surveillance of public spaces.

14 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 14.1 The publication of the Local Development Scheme will not have Environmental and Climate Change Implications. However, the Local Plan Update includes policies that aim to contribute towards this objective, for example incorporating sustainable design principles and responding to flooding.

15 Other Implications (where significant)

- 15.1 None identified.

16 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	As part of the examination process, being required to produce further supporting work	Significant	Critical	Moderate

	or to address procedural matters resulting in delays to the examination			
2	Staff availability (sickness, turnover, etc) resulting in reduced capacity for the work associated with the Local Plan Update	Significant	Critical	Moderate
3	Planning reform changes to national policy and/or legislation resulting in significant change in approach to the Local Plan Update	Significant	Catastrophic	High
4	Legal challenge to the adoption of the plan resulting in delays to adoption	Low	Critical	Moderate
5	Local election results resulting in delays decision making / a change of agenda in relation to the Local Plan political priorities.	Very High	Marginal	Moderate
6	Procedural errors found in relation to the current Regulation 19 consultation resulting in having to extend the consultation period or delay the intended submission.	Low	Critical	Low
7	Plan found unsound during the examination resulting in the need to withdraw the plan or resolve issues during the examination and consequential delays to adoption.	Significant	Catastrophic	Moderate
8	Local Government reorganisation advances quickly resulting in undermining the progress of or priority given to the Local Plan Update	Low	Critical	Low
9	Lack of financial resources to afford the examination resulting in hindering or stalling progress.	Very Low	Catastrophic	Low

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High		5		
	5 High				
	4 Significant			1,2	3,7
	3 Low			4,6,8	
	2 Very Low				9

1 Almost impossible				
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Risk No	Mitigation
1	As mentioned in the report, consideration is being given to undertaking a further focussed Pre-Submission Consultation to reflect potential updates to the Melton South Masterplan. This approach would mitigate the potential risk of being required to undertake consultation as part of the examination process. In addition, the Prew-Submission Plan is supported by a suite of evidence that justifies a sound approach, which should mitigate challenge at examination
2	The working pressures of plan-making can have intense workload peaks for staff. Managers are actively aware of and monitor staff wellbeing and some workstreams are de-prioritised during plan-making workload peaks.
3	Plan reform has been a nationally significant political topic for several years. The election of a new Government with a renewed political agenda for planning reform means that the national policy / legislation context has been and will continue to change. Officers will continue to monitor Government announcements and consultations and address risks as they arise.
4	Legal support will be sought at every stage of the review process to manage this risk. Any changes to the scope of works will need to consider any legal implications.
5	It is uncertain at time of writing whether the County Council elections will proceed, given recent publications related to delaying elections to facilitate announcements to Local Government Authority reform. As the County Council is a key partner a potential change in political direction could have implications, however officers maintain an ongoing working relationship. At a local level, Melton Borough Council members have been engaged through the Local Plan Working Group.
6	Detailed consideration of procedural requirements has been and will be considered as the Local Plan progresses, which mitigates this risk.
7	Local Plan examinations are wide ranging and it should be expected that some elements of soundness will be identified and resolved through examination. This is the case for all Local Plan examinations. The Local Plan Update is supported by a detailed evidence base which ensure that its proposed policies have taken a justified and sound approach
8	Whilst Local Government reorganisation appears to be a likely eventuality, it would be a decision of a future new authority to decide whether to continue with or withdraw a Local Plan that is progressing.
9	Likely costs of the examination process are accounted for in the Local Plans budget.

17 Background Papers

17.1 None.

18 Appendices

18.1 Appendix A – Local Development Scheme February 2025.