

## **Melton Borough Council's Response**

### **GVA Hearing Statement January 2018**

GVA act on behalf of the North Melton Consortium, a consortium of developers interested in delivering the north Sustainable Neighbourhood (SN). Within their statement, GVA made 6 recommendations for further amendments to policy SS5 at paragraph 3.54. The Inspector requested that the Council respond to these recommendations following the close of the Examination in Public on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018. The recommendations set out by GVA are listed below, with the Council's response to each individual point.

- h1 should be reworded to state:

**"Up to 2,200 houses with at least 1,700 to be delivered by 2036, 15% of which should be affordable, subject to viability."**

As set out in the Council's Matter Statement at paragraph 2.14, the Council is aware that the SN could accommodate more housing than that which is proposed within the plan. The assigned capacity of 1500 to be delivered during the plan period, with 1700 in total, is a capacity that reflects the Sustainability Appraisals (MBC/WP2a-h), the Council's SHLAA developer panel, and the spatial strategy which seeks to provide approximately 65% of the housing within and adjacent to Melton Mowbray.

The Council was clear at the Examination Hearings that the figures within the Local Plan are minimums, not maximums. The Council however remains clear that the policy should remain as worded in terms of housing numbers. This is because departure from the spatial strategy would have significant implications for housing choice and undermine deliverability in terms of the initial 5 year period following adoption. The figures requested by GVA would threaten the ability to delivery much needed housing in the first five years after adoption, whilst schemes for the SSNs are completing the planning process and preparatory site works are being undertaken.

The Council is content to re-instate 'subject to viability' in the wording of the policy, but objects to the request to alter the housing numbers.

- c1 should be revised to:

**"A new two-form primary school (1.7 hectares) to be delivered alongside a local centre where possible and additional land provision**

**towards potential secondary school expansion to meet the identified need for school places.”**

The Local Education Authority (LEA) advised in their representations that the primary school would need to have a capacity for 420 pupils with a minimum site size of 1.7ha. The Council would be concerned that if this figure was used in the policy, it could prove inflexible if significantly in excess of the planned 1500 homes by 2036 do ultimately get built in this area.

With regards to secondary school provision, the LEA has requested financial contributions. This is because John Ferneley College is already one of the largest secondary schools in the County, with around 1100 pupils. The County advise that their secondary schools typically have capacity of 600-1000 pupils, and adding further places here may not be in the best interests of the school. By requesting financial contributions, the LEA will be able to decide where the provision is required and how best to provide for it. It is considered that an 'and/or' clause could be added into the policy to introduce the ability for land to be given in lieu of financial contributions, and this is set out in the post hearing suggested main modifications to the Plan.

- c2 should be revised to:

**“An accessible local centre that will incorporate a mix of uses including small scale retail (up to 200 square metres), office-based employment and other community and healthcare facilities, subject to viability and where a need has been identified.”**

The Council is of the opinion that the need for an accessible local centre has been evidenced within the Sustainability Appraisals (MBC/WP2a-h). Indeed, for the SN to be truly sustainable, as detailed at paragraph 1.3 of the Council's Matter Statement, it needs to be a neighbourhood that is socially, environmentally and economically healthy. To achieve this, it must be able to provide not only housing, but employment, community facilities, transport options and improvements and environmental enhancements to meet the needs of the population.

**The Council considers that, as per GVA's suggestion, it would be acceptable to insert 'a mix of uses, including' into the policy, to add to the flexibility of uses that the local centre will be able to offer to residents of the SN.**

The evidence within MBC/SS5, MBC/SS6 and MBC/WP2b lead the Council to the conclusion that the SNs to the north and south of the town would have the greatest potential to realise the vision for the Borough in accordance with the Council's own Strategic Priorities and create SNs. All of this evidence, combined with the latest viability assessment (MBC/WP5) demonstrates that not only is

there the need for these facilities within the SN, but they are a viable proposition, and necessary for the achievement of sustainable development.

As such, the Council objects to the **substantial** rewording of this policy **for the reasons** as set out above, but is content to add 'a mix of uses, including'. This is **therefore** suggested in the post hearing main modifications to the Plan.

- t1 should be revised to:

**"A comprehensive package of transport improvements informed by an appropriate transport assessment will be delivered subject to viability and phasing to be agreed with the Council. This will include..."**

Leicestershire County Council, as the Local Highway Authority (LHA) have worked alongside Melton Borough Council in preparation of the Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy. The SN's have had viability assessments undertaken (MBC/WP5) and it is considered that the required transport improvements will not risk the delivery of the SN.

Therefore, the LHA would not wish to see the wording of this policy altered.

- t1(a) should be revised to:

**"A strategic road link connecting A606 Nottingham Road to Melton Spinney Road, consistent with the boundary alignment of the North Sustainable Neighbourhood, forming part of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road as part of a wider agreed scheme. The link road should provide specific access points into the development parcels to enable access and to ensure that development can take place on a phased basis in advanced completion of the relief road."**

Leicestershire County Council, as the LHA have advised that further realignment of the road to match with the northern boundary of the SN would lengthen the route, making it more expensive and less desirable as a route. Furthermore, there would, of necessity, be significant impacts on the existing business of Twin Lakes on the Melton Spinney Road.

The design of the road will not prevent developers from accessing the proposed housing areas, leaving them able to fulfil their commitment in terms of housing numbers. Therefore, the LHA are of the opinion that taking a shorter route that will not impact upon a local business and is a reasonable approach.

Access to the road itself will need to be limited to maintain its functionality as a distributor road. Access should be provided from the roundabouts or from the radial routes that they serve. The evidence to support this was supplied

alongside the Outline Business Case which was submitted to the Department for Transport in December 2017.

As such, the LHA advise that they would not wish to see the policy reworded as expressed above.

- en6 should be revised to:

"A development that complies with building regulations for energy efficiency and carbon emissions."

The Council can agree to the re-wording of this policy.