



2nd October 2020

Initial comments for Melton Borough Council

Reserve Sites

6. I would ask Melton BC to comment on whether the trigger for bringing forward reserve sites is a shortfall in housing sites coming forward in the parish or the wider district.

Based on paragraph 94 of the [Inspector's Report](#) in relation to the Melton Local Plan, reserve sites are intended to assist in meeting need at the settlement level only.

7. Is the expectation of Melton planners that if the Pickwell Site were to be developed then the reserve site status on SOM3 would fall away?

We consider that, whichever reserve site is left after the development of the other one could retain its status as 'Reserve Site'. Having two sites only increases the flexibility in the selection process of the one that aligns better with the shortfall in Somerby. Basically, it is our understanding that the Neighbourhood Plan proposes to choose between the two sites depending on the scale deficit seeking to be 'recovered' due to under delivery, failure of an allocated site, or increased needs.

Limits to Development

10. Could the Melton planners comment on whether they would treat that any windfall housing in Somerby would count against the Somerby housing numbers as set out in Table 6 or whether it would count against the windfall figure for the Parish. Also, could they comment on whether development only taking place with limits of development, is consistent with Policy SS3 which refers to new residential development "within or on the edge of existing settlements". I am treating that as a strategic policy.

For the purposes of the Local Plan, windfalls in Somerby village would be considered as windfall sites for Somerby village and windfalls in other parts of the Parish would be considered windfalls contributing to the overall figures in the Borough. However these are no established targets for windfall to be met in specific locations, or indeed any upper limit.

Secondary settlements which are related to Service Centres, as it is the case of Easthorpe-Bottesford or Thorpe Arnold-Melton Mowbray have their own requirement in the Local Plan. However, in order to preserve the Settlement Hierarchy in the Local Plan and, at the same time, allow some flexibility with the inclusion of the reserve site in Pickwell it seems sensible to consider the potential contribution of this single development in Pickwell as a contribution to meet the requirement in Somerby (village, in Local Plan terminology - but recognised as acceptable towards this contribution due to proximity, connectivity and shared services and facilities) and an exception to the first section of this response.

Responding to the second part of this matter, the Council considers that windfall sites in the rural area need to be within or on the edge of existing settlements, therefore the current approach of the policy is in conflict with this strategic policy (SS3). Local Plan policy SS2 makes a similar point for those proposals in sustainable settlements: '*This will be delivered by planning positively for the development of sites allocated within **and adjoining** the Service Centres and Rural Hubs by 2036 [...]*'. As identified by the examiner, a similar modification of a Neighbourhood Plan was suggested as part of the Gaddesby NP examination ([examiner's report](#), paragraph 7.30).

Affordable Housing

13. Does the Borough Council currently accept funding in lieu of on-site provision for non-social rented housing e.g. Starter Homes?

The Council accept financial commuted sums in lieu of on-site affordable housing (which could be affordable housing for rent or affordable home ownership) but this is as an exception where there is no evidenced need for affordable housing in a particular locality.

14. Does the Council's housing allocation policy give priority to eligible housing in the Parish? My view is that this is a housing allocation policy and is not a policy for the use and development of land.

No, the Housing Allocation Policy (known as the Choice Based Lettings Policy) does not give priority to people with a Parish connection but instead a Borough connection.

Sites of Environmental Significance

17. Could the Borough Council confirm whether the existing designations, other than locally significant sites, are already protected by existing local plan and national policy? If they are already protected, I would welcome views whether the neighbourhood plan should only be identifying these sites not already protected, but which are felt to be locally valued i.e. those shown as solid blue and solid yellow on Map 8.

We can confirm that Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites and Priority Habitats are already protected in the Melton Local Plan (policy EN2). Heritage assets, including non-designated features are already covered in policy EN13 of the Local Plan. Historic Environment Records are protected through the National Policy (paragraphs 187 and 189).

For the reasons above, the inclusion of these designations (Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Site, Priority Habitat Sites, and Leicestershire and Rutland HER Sites) in policy ENV 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan seems to be unnecessary. Conversely, the inclusion of Locally Significant Sites (for historic and natural environment) is welcomed.

Flood Risk

23. Can the Borough Council outline its requirements as set out in the Local Validation Checklist in terms of which applications are required to submit a Flood Risk Assessment? I have concerns that this policy is too onerous to be applied to all development proposals.

Where the development is proposed within Main river bye-law distance or where the development is within flood zones 2 & 3 or the site is greater than 1 hectare within Flood Zone 1 a Flood Risk Assessment would be required for the following types of application:

- a) Application for Full Planning Permission
- b) Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved
- c) Application for Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved
- d) Application for Planning Permission and Conservation Area consent for demolition
- e) Application for Planning Permission and Listed Building consent
- f) Application for Planning Permission and Advertisement consent

A standard form to negate the need for a Flood Risk Assessment is required for the following types of applications:

- a) Householder application for planning permission for works or extension to a dwelling
- b) Householder Application for planning permission for works or extension to a dwelling and Conservation Area consent for demolition in a Conservation Area
- c) Householder Application for planning permission for works or extension to a dwelling and Listed Building consent

Other types of applications do not have specifications regarding the need to submit a Flood Risk Assessment.

With this information, the Council considers that Policy ENV 16 would need to be more closely related to the current Development Managements requirements and limit its implementation to those applications that require a Flood Risk Assessment as specified above.

Community Infrastructure Levy

25. Has the Borough Council got any plans for introducing CIL?

At the present time, the Borough Council does not have specific plans for introducing CIL.

Yours sincerely,

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