

My name is Nick Farrow and I am a Councilor of Frisby Parish Council on whose behalf I am speaking.

I am also a member of the Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee.

I will briefly outline the chain of events that have resulted in the production of our Neighbourhood Plan.

I hope to convey the commitment of the Parish Council and the extent of the involvement of the community.

We have sought to produce a document that represents the majority view of residents.

We believe that it satisfies both the aspirations of the local community for our long term future development, while simultaneously meeting our obligations to the wider borough community as currently expressed in the draft Melton Local Plan.

In August 2012 at a Parish Council meeting of the previous Councilors, the group received a presentation by the Rural Community Council to try and determine if there was a need to create a Neighbourhood Plan.

This presentation informed them of the opportunities arising from the “Localism Bill”.

This Bill is intended to enable local communities to help influence the basis of all local developments through a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council were hesitant at this stage to continue with the production of such a plan as it looked a daunting task for a small parish to produce, which it has proven to be.

In May 2015 following the Parish Council elections, the current Councilors who were elected, decided to review the previous committee’s decision and to investigate the necessary processes for developing a plan.

Following this investigation it was agreed to take forward the idea of developing a Neighborhood Plan as it became clear that this was essential to ensure local democratic involvement in decisions which would impact on us.

In June 2015, Frisby Parish Councilors met with Lyn Aisbett the then Chief Executive of Melton Borough Council together with other members of her team for guidance regarding to, if it was beneficial to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council were advised at the meeting, to await the draft Melton Local Plan that was due in September 201 as that alone may meet our needs and make it so a Neighborhood Plan was not required.

This left the members of Frisby Parish Council feeling vulnerable and at their next Parish Council meeting in August 2015 it was agreed to examine the feasibility of developing a Neighborhood plan.

All of these issues were conveyed at length and in great detail to residents in a special edition of our village newsletter in October 2015.

The Frisby Parish Council then appointed a professional advisor (Your Local) to assist with the development of the Neighborhood Plan.

There followed an inaugural village consultation event .

This event was attended by 70 plus villagers and resulted in 30 written offers of involvement to help with the Plan.

This level of support was described as unparalleled in the county by our advisor.

In December 2015 the past chairman (Dr Ron Thew) submitted an application to Melton Borough Council for Frisby Parish to become a designated Neighborhood Plan area.

In February 2016 a Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee was formed with a Terms of Reference and with a clear message that this plan would be community led.

At this point Frisby Parish Council understood that their allocation of housing units (In the Local Plan) was to be 48, with 3 different sites identified by the Melton S.H.L.A.A. process.

In March 2016 there was a village drop-in event staged in the Village Hall that was resourced by Melton Borough Council that confirmed housing number allocated to Frisby in the Local Plan.

Following this presentation Frisby Parish Council carried out a letterbox household survey relating to housing requirements and allocations.

By November 2016, there had been a further letterbox survey to every household, and numerous meetings with M.B.C resulting in the first draft Neighborhood plan.

In February of this year The Neighborhood Plan was submitted for consultation (under regulation 14), and in May submitted for regulation 16.

During this summary, I have only outlined the basic mechanics of arriving at the position, where we have produced our Neighborhood Plan.

However, this does not describe the hard work, long hours and expertise that the lay members of the Advisory Committee have dedicated to this complex task.

For which The Parish Council and villagers are greatly indebted to them.

It would be remiss not to comment on the difficulties that have been encountered during these events, resulting from the teething problems of the frequently changing housing target stipulated in the Melton Local Plan which we have had to contend with.

These targets have caused a lot of confusion when they have been applied to the developing Neighborhood Plan, especially in relation to keeping the village informed.

The Melton Borough Council housing allocation for Frisby has at various times been recorded from a starting figure of 48 to 78, and back to 68, at which it currently stands.

These allocations have created further confusion by the ever changing larger numbers attributed to available sites.

In addition, we have had to contend with numerous planning applications which are at variance with our plan, and which have caused a lot of concern to residents and has also given a further distraction to the Parish Council.

Our Neighbourhood Plan has a contribution in support of the strategic aims of the developing Local Plan and does specify a number of housing units in excess of our allocation.

Furthermore, our proposed sites can support sustainable development without the obvious difficulties of the sites specified in the draft Melton Local Plan.

MBC have actually advised us that they were not wedded to a particular site, that the scoring of all the sites showed no marked differences (all were much of a much ness, as Jim Worley Put it) and that we were at liberty to choose sites that were not in the draft Melton plan.

Planning Practice Guidance clearly states that a Neighborhood Plan can allocate alternative sites to those in a Local Plan. It is a matter of perplexity why this is proving to be so difficult.

(Quotation is from the planningportal.gov.uk website)

Importantly, our sites have the support and consent of the local community.

In summary we have approached this as a community led exercise in an open, transparent and collaborative way. All consultations and evaluations undertaken have reflected the changing housing needs and have been based upon robust evidence available at the time to ensure the community was able to make informed choices...