

Carl Powell (231 / 150)  
Somerby  
28<sup>th</sup> Dec 2017

## **MELTON LOCAL PLAN - Matters and Questions for the Examination**

Dear Inspector Mary Travers,

Important parts of the draft Melton Local Plan (MLP) and Focussed Changes are unsound for want of proportionate and reliable evidence. Some policies are unsupported by evidence and some ignore the evidence. In the worst cases evidence has been selected or even created retrospectively to justify policies already preferred and pre-determined.

This is most apparent in matters relating to housing numbers and site allocations and to assessments of environmental sustainability. Also to wrongly defining what is 'Strategic' and thus claimed as the exclusive gift of the Local Plan as against any Neighbourhood Plan.

Somerby Parish will be unavoidably prominent in this document simply because it is the place about which I know enough to write. However I believe other villages in the rural Borough have been similarly treated; please consider Somerby an example.

### **MATTER 2: Overall spatial strategy**

#### **2.1 Does the Plan provide a sound framework for the roles that will be played by various parts of the Borough in meeting development needs over the plan period?**

**No** - the MLP does not provide a sound framework for the roles to be played by various parts of the Borough. In particular:

**i) and ii) Settlement hierarchy.**

**No** – the settlement hierarchy and apportionment of growth are not founded on robust evidence:

The early 2016 village facility audit for the MLP applied about 40 broadly-based sustainability criteria to Melton's rural settlements (school, public transport, shop, etc.) These were then assessed and totalled to give a score and settlement roles and housing allocations followed. However when some of the scores were challenged MBC did

not revise those scores or reconsider the sustainability of the affected villages. Instead they discarded what they had previously considered valid criteria and replaced them with only four. These are:

***A primary school, superfast broadband, a community building, employment opportunity.***

The outcome was that the same or more villages were deemed 'sustainable'. The criteria were modified to ensure that villages already selected for housing development stayed selected, and to defeat objections. This was a case of changing the test to get the desired result, which is unsound because it wilfully disregards relevant but 'inconvenient' evidence.

Certainly it is unlikely to be disputed whether a settlement has a school, community building or broadband. These are yes/no questions. However 'employment opportunity' is not so simple:

### **Employment Opportunity and settlement hierarchy**

In December 2016 we asked MBC for their data supporting presence of 'employment opportunity' in Somerby and received the following reply:

*Dear Mr Powell,*

*We used the following for consideration on our assessments for housing allocations (I'm assuming that a similar approach has been followed for setting the sustainability of the village in terms of employment):*

- 800m from the closest employment site: positive value*
- Between 800m and 2km: medium-positive value*
- 2-5km and Public transport: medium value*
- Over 5 km with Public transport: medium-negative value*
- Over 5 km: negative value*

*John O'Gaunt Industrial Estate (Public Transport Available, line 113) is identified as the closest one according to the Employment Land Study final report July 06. It is at 4.5km of the edge of the village (5 minutes driving) and qualified as a good quality employment site (medium size – general industry). However, Burrough Court is even closer and within a walkable distance (12min, 0.6miles) from a bus stop (Melton Lane).*

*In terms of the number of employed people, unfortunately we don't hold that information, especially on areas that include several businesses as any industrial estate. Employers don't usually share information.*

*According to our Local Plan records we don't have any other (reasonable large) employment site within the Parish. However, I've sent an email to our Economic Development team requesting any sort of information related with the Employment on the Somerby Parish. I hope they can be of any further help but I'm not sure if they manage that level of detail.*

*As soon as I receive an update from them, I'll let you know.*

*Kind regards,  
Jorge Fiz Alonso*

This was followed shortly, as promised, by the following from MBC Economic Development Team:

*Dear Mr Powell,*

*I've just received a reply from our Economic Development Team:*

*'Truth is that these kinds of databases are hard to get and keep updated, which is one of the reasons why we don't really have much information on that outside of the town centre. There are companies that charge a fair amount to give access to such directories, so you can imagine how many resources it takes (for example, <http://www.businesslistsuk.com/>).*

*I can refer him to the Melton Times business directory, although personally I don't know how updated they keep it. He can take a look and maybe it'll be of help: <http://findit.meltontimes.co.uk/search/somerby%2Cmelton-mowbray%2Cleicestershire>'*

*I know that this is not too much, but I hope it is of any help.*

*Kind regards,  
Jorge Fiz Alonso*

This is no evidence at all of Employment Opportunity' in Somerby. It indicates that MBC has almost no evidence. Perhaps they have more for other settlements but the words suggest not. In the evidence-gathering stage of the Somerby Parish Neighbourhood Plan research was done on economy and employment in the Parish and a document produced in April 2017, **'Employment and Employment Opportunity in Somerby Parish'**. The document is in the public domain and I have attached it.

That document uses a variety of sources including the National Census, published consultancy documents, interviews with 30 local businesses and a household questionnaire completed by 397 parishioners (a 60.2% return rate). It contains two presentations of the same material – one with more tables and figures, one more of a narrative – totalling only 14 pages (including the MBC correspondence you have just seen above).

We would be grateful if the Examiner found time to read it.

The document concludes that although Somerby Parish enjoys relatively high employment it actually has very low employment opportunity. Key findings are that 82% of parishioners work outside the parish, job density is low at 0.61,

the largest employers in the parish do not recruit locally, and average distance travelled for work one-way is 26 miles.

Somerby therefore fails the test of 'employment opportunity' and so is incorrectly categorised as a Service Centre. By MBC's own criteria Somerby has 'Negative Value' for employment opportunity. The settlement role is unsound therefore so are the housing allocations that follow.

**Suggested change:** Somerby is just an example. The plan should be changed to really exclude as 'service centres' settlements with poor employment opportunity. This is no more than MBC's own criteria require but it hasn't been done. If MBC don't know where these locations are, they need to find out and review the settlement roles.

**iii) Is the role of Table 4 clear? Is its evidence base sufficient for its purpose?**

**No** - The *intended* role of Table 4 is quite clear but the evidence base is **not** sufficient for its purpose. This is primarily because the overall housing target is arbitrary and un-evidenced (**Matter 3**) and secondarily because of inaccurate and arbitrary settlement roles (notably assumptions about 'employment opportunity' based on no evidence – point ii) above). Table 4 is further discussed at the end of this document, **Appendix – Table 4**.

**2.2 Does Policy SS3 provide effective guidance for development proposals on unallocated sites in/on the edge of existing rural settlements? (repeated application etc.)**

**No** – This guidance is not quite effective. The Examiner correctly identifies the potential weakness, which is risk of a series of applications for 'small' developments year after year which achieve a 'large' development by stealth. The policy does require that the proposal 'will not result in a level or distribution of development that is inconsistent with the development strategy' but this is not sufficient because the development strategy contains no upper limits of any kind.

**Suggested change:** Strengthen the policy to require review, and accounting for, the settlement's progress towards its housing requirement (not housing allocation) when an application is made under SS3.

Overall however I support policy SS3. Indeed the Somerby Parish Neighbourhood Questionnaire demonstrates 80.6% support for meeting Somerby's housing requirement through small developments of 10 houses or less.

## Conclusion

If I could only make four points from all of the above they would be:

- 4,250 not 6,125 is the soundly evidenced housing target for Melton Borough. HEDNA is more objective and thorough than TAHR and the addendum to TAHR which were commissioned solely to justify decisions already made.
- Serious environmental 'negatives' in the Sustainability Appraisal have been ignored or deliberately replaced in the MLP Evidence Base. Housing delivery is important, but the draft MLP elevates it unduly to the exclusion of many important paragraphs of the NPPF.
- In claiming every single one of its policies (except three in Chapter 9) to be a 'Strategic Policy' MBC seeks to monopolize control of all important planning and decision making. This is contrary to NPPF paras 184 and 185. In particular, calling every single site allocation a 'strategic policy' is untrue and unsound.
- The most important parts of the draft Plan are not based on the evidence. Evidence has been ignored, or even found retrospectively to justify policies already decided. This is the absolute opposite of soundness.

It was made abundantly clear to me at that meeting with MBC on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017 that there was *nothing* I or my neighbours could say to MBC to change *anything* in the draft MLP, and if I didn't like that I should try telling the Inspector. So that is what I'm doing.

I have not asked to speak on my own behalf at the Examination but would endeavour to do so if invited. I am more than happy to discuss or explain by email anything I have written if thought useful. Thank you for reading.

Yours sincerely,

Carl Powell

## Appendix – on Table 4

Apologies for resorting to an appendix but as Table 4 bears on **Matters 2, 3 and 5** some repetition can be avoided if we discuss it separately.

Here is reproduced Table 4. It lays out each settlement's 'share' of 6,125 houses.

(Note: Table 4 apportions 30% not 35% of 6,125 outside Melton Town. I assume the other 5% is to allow for Policy SS3 small sites? This is reasonable.)

**Table 4**

Table 4: Residual Housing Requirements for Service Centre & Rural Hubs	Population Estimate (from ONS Output Areas)	% of population	Requirement based on % of population	Minus	Total Net Completions 2011 - 31/03/2017	Dwellings under construction - 31/03/2017	Dwellings with planning permission on small sites at 31/03/2017	Equals	'Residual' Requirement	Capacity from Site Allocations identified in policy C1(a)
<b>Service Centre</b>										
Asfordby	2446	16%	290		76	0	0		214	160
Bottesford	3525	23%	419		72	2	11		334	324
Croxton Kerrial	530	4%	72		3	1	0		68	55
Harby	931	6%	109		15	15	1		78	139
Hose	580	4%	72		6	0	1		65	77
Long Clawson	1066	7%	128		11	2	4		111	141
Old Dalby	355	2%	36		5	0	23		8	28
Scalford	356	2%	36		8	2	1		25	23
Somerby	548	4%	72		14	1	13		44	69
Stathern	728	5%	91		10	0	10		71	82
Waltham on the Wolds	836	6%	109		19	9	5		76	114
Wymondham	632	4%	72		12	1	5		54	55
<b>Service Centres</b>			<b>1506</b>		<b>251</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>74</b>		<b>1148</b>	<b>1267</b>
<b>Rural Hub</b>										
Ab Kettleby	223	1%	18		12	1	3		2	10
Asfordby Hill	589	4%	72		20	5	0		47	87
Easthorpe	143	1%	18		1	0	9		8	21
Frisby on the Wreake	557	4%	72		2	0	2		68	118
Gaddesby	381	3%	55		1	0	7		47	36
Great Dalby	544	4%	72		6	0	1		65	37
Thorpe Arnold	120	1%	18		0	0	0		18	24
<b>Rural Hubs</b>			<b>325</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>255</b>	<b>333</b>
							<b>Totals</b>		<b>1403</b>	<b>1600</b>

It is possible to criticise Table 4, for example:

- Why are Service Centres and Rural Hubs treated exactly the same, given that Rural Hubs have already failed to meet at least one of the four sustainability criteria for rural settlements? (**Matter 2**).
- Why was % of population rounded to whole numbers? This results in anomalies such as Ab Kettleby at 223 and Thorpe Arnold at 120 attracting the same requirement of 1%. It would be easy to calculate to one decimal place. (**Matter 5**).
- The apportionment is rather blunt. The village with the larger population is not necessarily more sustainable for development eg. Does it have employment opportunity, or good public transport? (**Matter 2**).

**Suggested change:** Calculate ' % of population ' to 1 decimal place. If the % population approach is considered to be sound, greater accuracy would be achieved with minimal additional effort.

More interesting is to calculate the effect the better-evidenced FOAN of 4,250 would have on the village housing requirements. This is easily done – simply apply the Table 4 percentages and arithmetic to this lower number:

6,125 x 0.3 = 1,838 (Table 4 due to ‘rounding’ makes 1831, but no matter)

4,250 x 0.3 = 1,275 (Table below due to ‘rounding’ makes 1283)

Then share out according to % population and subtract ‘completions’, ‘under construction’ and ‘permission granted’ just as in Table 4. Now we can compare:

**Comparison: Residual housing requirement calculated from 6,125 or 4,250 houses:**

Residual housing reqmt – based on 6125 or 4250 houses	Requirement based on % of population		M i n u s	Completions+ under construction + permissions granted	E q u a l s	Residual requirement		Site allocations in policy C1(A)
	From 6125 (Draft MLP)	From 4250 (HEDNA)				From 6125 (Draft MLP)	From 4250 (HEDNA)	
<b>Service Centre</b>								
Asfordby	290	204	-	76	=	214	128	160
Bottesford	419	293	-	85	=	334	208	324
C.Kerrial	72	51	-	4	=	68	47	55
Harby	109	77	-	31	=	78	45	139
Hose	72	51	-	7	=	65	44	77
L.Clawson	128	89	-	17	=	111	72	141
Old Dalby	36	25	-	28	=	8	0	28
Scalford	36	25	-	11	=	25	14	23
Somerby	72	51	-	28	=	44	23	69
Stathern	91	64	-	20	=	71	44	82
Waltham	109	77	-	33	=	76	43	114
Wymondham	72	51	-	18	=	54	33	55
<b>Service Centres</b>	1506	1056		358		1148	701	1267
<b>Rural Hub</b>								
Ab Kettleby	18	13	-	16	=	2	0	10
Asfordby H.	72	51	-	25	=	47	26	87
Easthorpe	18	13	-	10	=	8	2	21
Frisby	72	51	-	4	=	68	47	118
Gaddesby	55	38	-	8	=	47	30	36
Great Dalby	72	51	-	7	=	65	44	37
T.Arnold	18	13	-	0	=	18	12	24
<b>Rural Hubs</b>	325	227		70		255	165	333
<b>TOTALS</b>						1403	866	1600

It is immediately seen (in **bold** under 'residual requirement') what a marked effect MBC's insistence on 6,125 homes rather than the HEDNA-evidenced 4,250 has on the residual requirement in the rural settlements. This is because the number of completions, 'under constructions' and permissions already granted remains the same.

The 'uplift' from 4,250 to 6,125 represents a 44% increase for the Borough. This is already a very large increase and I have argued that it is unsound. But the effect on the rural settlements is much greater; the uplift from 866 to 1403 represents a **62% increase**.

Furthermore if we look at the Policy C1(A) Site Allocations, they are now 85% larger than the actual requirement calculated according to HEDNA (1600 compared to 866). Reserve sites are of course additional to this. I cannot help noticing that the allocation to my own village of Somerby is fully 3 times the requirement that HEDNA's assessment advises. This is excessive and arbitrary over-allocation, above what has been assessed as sustainable in HEDNA and the SA. Arbitrariness is unsound.

This paper has argued throughout that the HEDNA figure of 4,250 houses is sound and the draft MLP figure of 6,125 is not. The higher figure is unsustainable because employment opportunity will not support it, and for environmental reasons; recall all the '**Red**' (- - ?) scores a target of 6,125 / 245 dpa attracted for landscape, biodiversity, heritage and efficient land use in Table 3 of the SA (**Matter 1** above). It is in the rural settlements that the environmental impact would be proportionately greatest, by arithmetic alone not to mention the inherent sensitivity of smaller settlements.

**Suggested change:** Apologies for repetition, but construct the MLP around 4,250 homes not 6,125 homes.



## **Employment and Employment Opportunity in Somerby Parish**

**13<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

Somerby Parish Council have asked the Somerby Parish Neighbourhood Plan committee to comment on Employment and Employment in the Parish. It is recognised that such matters bear on the question of sustainable housing development because 'employment opportunity' is a major one of the four factors (employment, school, community building, broadband) used by MBC to define the settlement role of Somerby Village and therefore set any notional housing allocations.

The data will show that whilst the Parish enjoys high levels of economic activity and employment, this does not translate into high future employment opportunity. In fact the reverse is true.

Fortunately the Neighbourhood Plan is well able to comment using evidence collected from a number of sources. Principally these are:

**The National Census 2001 and 2011**

**Leicestershire Rural Economy Evidence Base 2014**

**East Leicestershire Rural Workspace Demand Study 2014**

**Neighbourhood Plan household questionnaire January 2017**

**Neighbourhood Plan business questionnaire January-March 2017**

Of these sources the most recent and locally informative is the Household Questionnaire which enjoyed an impressively high return rate of 60.02% and included several relevant questions for parishioners. Having said that it is recognized that representative as it is the Questionnaire is not a 100% survey, so Census data will be used where it is thought more authoritative despite being older.

Unfortunately we haven't produced colourful graphics or charts yet (maybe in a couple of weeks) so prepare for a lot of words and numbers. [A narrative version of this report follows in blue text. It might be considered an easier read.](#)

### **Demographic overview**

In 2011 the Parish had a population of 812. There is a perception that our population is 'older than average' and this is borne out by the Census though the difference is not extreme; average age is 44 compared to 41.7 for the Borough and 39.3 for the UK as a whole. Despite this the percentage of population of 'normal working age' (16-64) is actually higher than in the Borough, East Midlands or UK as a whole – 67% compared to about 64%.

We are not a 'parish of pensioners'. Retirees make up about 17% of the population in common with larger populations. 74.5% are 'economically active' (employed or self-employed) which is the same as the rest of the Borough and higher than the national

average of about 69%. About 17% are self-employed which is almost double the regional and national averages.

Unemployment was low at 3% in 2011. In considering matters of economy, employment and population the Neighbourhood Plan will seek to maintain and if possible improve this situation.

## **Employment sites in the Parish**

### **Assistance from Melton Borough Council**

In December 2016 the Economy theme group of the Neighbourhood Plan asked Melton Borough Council for their evidence that Somerby Parish has 'employment opportunity' and they replied as follows:

*Dear Mr Powell,*

*We used the following for consideration on our assessments for housing allocations (I'm assuming that a similar approach has been followed for setting the sustainability of the village in terms of employment):*

- 800m from the closest employment site: positive value*
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*In terms of the number of employed people, unfortunately we don't hold that information, especially on areas that include several businesses as any industrial estate. Employers don't usually share information.*

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This is indeed ‘not very much’. As evidence it is insignificant. It does not support at all the presence or otherwise of ‘employment opportunity’ in Somerby parish and so also not the categorization of Somerby Village as a ‘Service Centre’ or as ‘sustainable’ in terms of employment. This categorisation is therefore arbitrary.

The Neighbourhood Plan has obtained much more information than this, including consultations with some 30 businesses

Concerning the two employment sites identified above by MBC:

#### **John O' Gaunt Industrial Estate**

There is really no such thing. They seem to be referring in confused fashion to two businesses there:

Redd Europe Limited – permanently employs 15 people.

John O' Gaunt Rural Industries – 7 various-sized units. 14 people work there but only 5 or 6 are ‘employed’ the rest being self-employed.

#### **Burrough Court Estate**

The Neighbourhood Plan has engaged extensively with BCE and in fact the owners Fred and Dawn Wilson sit on the Economy Theme Group. Unlike MBC we can say how many people work there:

Full time 200, Part time 17, contractors 34, and casual workers 28.

This is a high number but there are limitations on the site as an employment opportunity for the Parish. First, although it lies *within* the Parish it is not the exclusive opportunity *of* the Parish. Twyford, Thorpe Satchville and Great Dalby all lie as close or closer than Somerby Village. Second, it is not accessible by public transport nor is it feasible to walk the unlit road without a pavement from the nearest bus stop in Burrough on the Hill. Third, BCE is an employment site but not an employer; all the businesses there occupy land or buildings on leases of up to 8 years. They come and go. All are to some degree transient and potentially

temporary. Fourth, they rarely recruit staff locally, instead bringing trained employees with them from elsewhere.

This description of BCE, including the limitations, was mainly provided by the owners.

The Neighbourhood Plan also has evidence about employment sites not mentioned by MBC:

### **Gates Garden Centre**

MBC overlook this important employment site. Far from seeking to understate the level of employment opportunity in the Parish the Neighbourhood Plan has included it in our analysis because it lies within 5km of Somerby village. It is by far the largest single employer within this range (Burrough Court Estate is not an employer) and the Neighbourhood Plan has consulted with the owner Nigel Gates. It employs 40 full-time and 60 part-time staff and is accessible by public transport (the 113 bus service between Melton and Oakham, albeit only two-hourly, and not on Sundays).

Again however there are limits on the value of the site as employment opportunity for Somerby parish. Firstly as well as Somerby it lies within 5km of Cold Overton, Langham, Knossington, Braunston, and a large part of Oakham. We therefore share any employment opportunity with them. Secondly although Gates's has a management structure like any other business the majority of employees are on minimum or quite low wages not sufficient to afford the 'rural premium' on housing or necessary transport costs of living in Somerby parish. Anecdotally we know of almost no parishioners who work there.

### **Other employers in the Parish**

The Neighbourhood Plan has consulted to varying degrees with about 30 other businesses employing about 80 people in the Parish. Although this is not quite every employer we are confident to have spoken to all the largest ones which employ between 4 and 15 people. These are 'large' employers by the standards of the Parish but 'small' by universal standards.

Among other useful information obtained, only one business (employing 10 people) has medium-term plans to possibly employ more, and none report difficulty obtaining labour or a shortage of it. Overall these employers are land-based and require employees with the corresponding skills and inclinations which are different to those of the wider Borough or Leicestershire population.

### **Job Density**

Job Density is a measurement used by the Office for National Statistics. It is defined as the number of filled jobs (including self-employment) in a given area divided by the number of working age people (16 – 64) resident in that area. It is not the same thing as an employment rate. ***It is an indication of demand for labour***, in other words the extent to

which additional labour supply is or is not required by the economy in an area. This is thought very relevant to the present analysis and what our Parish Council need to know.

Although the Job Density value cannot be used to calculate a strict 'deficit' or 'surplus' of labour in an area, it is an indicator, especially in comparison with neighbouring areas. A low number indicates out-commuting for work and a high number indicates attraction of workers from outside the area. Some sample Job Density figures from 2014 are:

England & Wales **0.78**

Leicestershire **0.74**

Rural Leicestershire **0.64**

We would like to compare a figure for Somerby Parish with these. If we simply took known stock of jobs in the Parish and divided it by the 624 people aged 16 – 64 living there the figure would be about 0.70 but that would be misleading. It would ignore employment sites outside of the Parish but within 5km (Gates's, John o' Gaunt) but also ignore populations outside the Parish but within 5km of those sites. Somerby Parish is not an island.

Therefore we have done our best to total all the employment opportunity in the Parish, then added Gates's and John o' Gaunt. We have then considered which non-Parish settlements 'share' the employment opportunity offered by those sites. For example, Burrough Court Estate is in the Parish but also within 5km of Twyford, Thorpe Satchville and, Great Dalby. Gates's Garden Centre is within 5km of Somerby but also Langham, Knossington and Braunston. We have obtained or carefully estimated the number of 16 – 64 year olds in those villages and done the arithmetic.

**We estimate the Job Density of Somerby Parish to be 0.61**

We may failed to include a few jobs in the Parish, but this is more than offset by us not including the large part of Oakham which lies within 5km of Gates's.

**0.61 is a low figure even for Rural Leicestershire.** It indicates the demand for additional labour in the Parish is low, so that adding population is likely to mean they have to travel out of the area for employment (or be unemployed). It accords with what local employers have told us (they are not short of labour) and our data on 'distance travelled to work'. These are all indicators of relatively low employment opportunity.

## **Household Questionnaire Responses**

661 Household Questionnaires were distributed and 397 returned, representing a very credible return rate of 60%. Of those respondents 145 are not economically active for various reasons (mostly being retired) so we are working for the present purpose with responses from 252 employed or self-employed people. Not all answered every question (most did) so the total in the following analysis will usually be slightly less than 252.

## Q.24 How far do you regularly travel for work? (Miles, one – way)

225 people gave a distance in miles. Additionally 17 stated '0 miles' or gave no mileage but could be inferred to be home-workers. In making this inference we have if anything understated the distance parishioners travel to work. Likewise anyone travelling 100 miles or more (including in three cases by plane...) was taken to be travelling only 100 miles. It will be seen that the distances are generally very large and we wish to stress that we have not exaggerated them; they are under- rather than over estimated.

### Banding

Bands can be assigned to the mileages we have in any number of ways but the example below is thought most meaningful. In particular **the 0 – 3 mile band equates to the 'less than 5km' range** generally taken by MBC (and others) to indicate 'medium value' for an employment site or employment opportunity:

#### DISTANCE TRAVELLED FOR WORK (miles, one – way)

Miles	0 - 3	4 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 50	51 - 99	100+	TOT
Number	42	13	49	55	23	19	14	27	242
Percent	17.4%	5.4%	20.2%	22.7%	9.5%	7.8%	5.8%	11.2%	100%

Some conclusions from this table and (and the full list we compiled it from):

- Only 17.4% of respondents work within 5km of their employment site. This includes homeworkers. **(Actually a further 9 respondents gave no mileage so cannot appear in the above table, but said they worked outside the Parish, so probably more than 5km / 3 miles, reducing this figure to 16.7%).**
- A maximum of 22.8% of respondents *might* work within the Parish (less than 5 miles)
- There are strong 'peaks' in the mileages around 5 – 8 miles (probably Melton and Oakham) and 15 – 20 miles (probably Leicester).
- Almost all of the 100+ mile respondents commute to London.

### Average mileage for work

This required a lot of arithmetic (multiplying every stated mileage by the number of respondents who travelled it, adding all those together, then dividing by the total number of respondents) but we have a figure:

**Average daily mileage travelled for work, one way - 26.5 miles**

The 'London' mileages do contribute a lot to this but they are in fact travelled so there is no reason not to include them. However, if they were removed the figure would be **17.3 miles**.

These are high mileages. The 2011 Census did not include 'mileage for work' but the 2001 Census did. The figure for Somerby Parish was 15.1 miles so in terms of sustainability (emissions, traffic volume, road safety, and work / life balance) the situation appears to have worsened in the last 15 years. This probably indicates that employment opportunity has fallen relative to population in the Parish. People are having to travel much further to work than they used to.

## Q.22 Do you work outside the Parish?

Slightly more people answered this question than gave a mileage for work. However, the two questions are a cross-check on each-other at the low mileage end and the results are consistent. Obviously we have excluded respondents who answered 'no' but also indicated they do not work at all:

### DO YOU WORK OUTSIDE THE PARISH?

Response	YES	NO	BOTH	TOTAL
Number	194	46	11	251
Percentage	77.3%	18.3%	4.4%	100%

The combined figure for 'Yes' and 'Both' is 81.7%. This corresponds very closely with the result of Q.24 that about 22.8% of respondents travel less than 5 miles to work, suggesting the figure is reliable.

## (Census) Method of travel to work

This table is taken from the 2011 Census not the Household Questionnaire as it provides a larger (in theory 100%) sample with no disadvantage. We've taken out the people who were not in employment.

### HOW DO YOU TRAVEL TO WORK?

Method	Car, Van, M.Cycle	Train	Bus	Bicycle	On Foot	Work at Home	TOTAL
Number	345	11	4	5	31	42	438
Percent	78.8%	2.5%	0.9%	1.1%	7.1%	9.6%	100%

The 78.8% predominance of car use is unsurprising given the rural location. For comparison car use for Melton Borough was about 71.0% and for England about 55.0%.

The relative uselessness of the bus for getting to work from the Parish is conspicuous and probably due to the service being only two-hourly and only to Melton or Oakham.

Compared to the Parish figure of 0.9% that for Melton Borough was about 2.7% and for England about 4.9%. The Neighbourhood Plan is trying to increase usage of the under-threat bus service with a stop at Burrough Court Estate but this is only a provisional suggestion.

In combination with the long average distance driven to work in the Parish (26.5 miles) this data shows the relationship between home and work in the Parish to be unfavourable in terms of emissions, traffic volume, road safety and work / life balance.

*(The next sections aren't about 'economy and employment', just travel in general, but I've added them up so here they are for any use which can be made of them).*

### **Q.24 How far do you travel regularly for grocery shopping? (Miles one-way)**

288 people answered this question. The replies are so clear that breakdown into bands is not really necessary, but we do so for consistency:

#### **HOW FAR DO YOU TRAVEL FOR GROCERY SHOPPING?**

<b>Miles</b>	<b>0 - 4</b>	<b>5 - 8</b>	<b>9 - 12</b>	<b>13+</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	12	235	33	8	288
<b>Percentage</b>	4.2%	81.6%	11.4%	2.8%	100%

With hindsight there is a weakness here in that we don't know how many people shop on-line for home delivery. Certainly such delivery vehicles are becoming more commonly seen in the villages. We feel this is a practice likely to increase in the coming years because it reduces costs for both supplier and consumer. However regardless of that it is clear that about 93% of residents grocery shop in either Melton, Oakham or (as we hear some people from Burrough do) Syston. Average distance travelled is about **6.7 miles**.

### **Q. 24 How far do you travel regularly for leisure? (Miles one-way)**

198 people answered this question but 7 gave answers which whilst undoubtedly true did not lend themselves readily to interpretation eg. 1 – 500 miles and 5 – 200 miles so we omitted them for this purpose, leaving 191. It wasn't obvious what mileage bands would be most useful so we used the same ones as for travel to work:

#### **HOW FAR DO YOU TRAVEL FOR LEISURE?**

<b>Miles</b>	<b>0 - 3</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>	<b>6 - 10</b>	<b>11 - 20</b>	<b>21 -30</b>	<b>31 -50</b>	<b>51 -99</b>	<b>100+</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	8	27	90	52	8	2	1	3	191



<b>Percent</b>	4.2	14.1	47.1	27.3	4.2	1.0	0.5	1.6	100%
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Again mileages tend to indicate Melton or Oakham as the destinations, or else enjoyment and use of the local countryside. There was also a noticeable spike of 26 people at 20 miles which might indicate travel to Leicester.

### How far do you travel regularly for healthcare? (Miles one-way)

191 people answered this question. Interpretation was quite difficult as a few people gave two figures, one for Somerby surgery and another for a hospital they presumably (hopefully) have to visit less often. We used different bands for this question to reflect the observed distribution:

#### HOW FAR DO YOU TRAVEL FOR HEALTHCARE?

<b>Miles</b>	<b>0 - 4</b>	<b>5 - 8</b>	<b>9 - 12</b>	<b>13+</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	98	59	7	27	191
<b>Percentage</b>	51.3%	30.9%	3.7%	14.1%	100%

It is easy to interpret which facilities people are talking about. The first band mean Somerby Surgery, the second Oakham or Melton, the third probably Market Overton, and the fourth probably hospitals in Leicester.

The usefulness of Somerby Surgery is obvious. 19.9% of respondents gave their distance as '0' or 'less than 1' indicating that they live in Somerby village and rely mostly on that surgery. Having said that, there are limits to what a local surgery can provide and half of all respondents rely on more distant facilities. This might not be much different in Melton or even a city.

### Q.24 How far do you travel regularly for School? (Miles one-way)

Only 49 people answered this question and we can assume these were the ones with children. Of course it gives no indication how many children live in the Parish or go to Somerby Primary School, because we don't know how many respondents were referring to how many children, or whether they are of primary school age.

#### HOW FAR DO YOU TRAVEL FOR SCHOOL?

<b>Miles</b>	<b>0 - 1</b>	<b>2 - 4</b>	<b>5 - 8</b>	<b>9 - 16</b>	<b>17 - 20</b>	<b>60+</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	12	12	20	0	3	2	49
<b>Percentage</b>	24.5%	24.5%	40.1%	0%	6.1%	4.1%	99%

It is possible to say that 12 respondents live in Somerby Village and travel the very short distance to Somerby School but that doesn't mean 12 children.

The most important observation is probably that 'school' altogether represents very little of the total travel in the Parish compared to work, shopping or leisure. This is unsurprising because not everybody has children. The school itself has told us only about a third of its 31 children are from Somerby Village or Parish.

*Economy Theme Group, Somerby Neighbourhood Plan, 13/04/17*

Next follows a narrative version of the above. The substance is the same but with no tables and less numbers, so it is intended to be easier to read. There is also a (draft) conclusion.

## **Employment and Employment Opportunity in Somerby Parish**

**13<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

### **Introduction**

Somerby Parish Council has asked the Parish Neighbourhood Plan Committee to comment on the economy and employment situation in the Parish. Sustainable economic growth will be one objective of the Neighbourhood Plan but the subject also bears on the question of sustainable housing development because 'employment opportunity' is a major one of the four factors (employment, school, community building, broadband) used by Melton Borough Council to define the settlement role of Somerby Village and from that set provisional housing allocations.

### **Evidence gathering**

In December 2016 we asked MBC for their evidence of employment opportunity in Somerby Parish but they were able to supply very little. They described Burrough Court Estate and 'John o' Gaunt industrial estate' as 'good quality employment sites' but had no information on the quantity or quality of employment at these or any other sites saying it was difficult to obtain. We found it quite easy to obtain by asking the employers themselves which realistically MBC could not be expected to do.

During the neighbourhood planning process evidence has been gathered on economy and employment in Somerby Parish from a number of sources referenced at the end of this report. The most recent and locally specific of these are the Business and Household Questionnaires collected at the beginning of 2017. The Business Questionnaire consulted 30 businesses in or near the Parish (including all the largest employers) and the Household Questionnaire enjoyed an impressive 60.2% return rate. We therefore believe we have the best evidence base on the economy of the Parish currently available.

## Demographic background

In 2011 the Parish had a population of 812. The population is slightly 'older than average' but the difference is not extreme; average age is 44 compared to about 42 for the Borough and 40 for the UK as a whole. The percentage of population of normal working age (16-64) is actually slightly higher than in the Borough or UK as a whole at 67%. We are not a 'parish of pensioners'. Retirees make up 17% of the population which is the about the Borough and National average. Parishioners are busy; about 75% are economically active (employed or self-employed) which is the same as the rest of the Borough and 5% higher than the national average. About 17% are self-employed which is almost double the regional and national averages.

Unemployment was quite low at 3% in 2011. In considering matters of economy, employment and population the Neighbourhood Plan will seek to maintain and if possible improve the ratio of employment to population.

## Employment sites

Burrough Court Estate is by far the largest employment site in the Parish or within 5km of Somerby Village. Approximately 250 people (full-time equivalent) consider it their main place of work. This is a high number but there are considerable limitations on the site as an employment opportunity for the Parish. First, although it lies *within* the Parish it is not the exclusive opportunity *of* the Parish. Twyford, Thorpe Satchville and Great Dalby all lie as close or closer than Somerby Village. Second, it is not accessible by public transport nor is it feasible to walk the unlit road without a pavement from the nearest bus stop in Burrough on the Hill. Third, BCE is an employment site but not an employer; all the businesses there occupy land or buildings on leases of up to 8 years. They come and go. All are to some degree transient and potentially temporary. Fourth, they rarely recruit staff locally, instead bringing trained employees with them from elsewhere.

Gates's Garden Centre is the second largest site. It is outside the parish but within 5km so can be considered a potential opportunity. About 70 people (full-time equivalent) work there. Again however there are limits on its value as employment opportunity for Somerby parish. Firstly as well as Somerby it lies within 5km of Cold Overton, Langham, Knossington, Braunston, and a large part of Oakham. They share the employment opportunity. Secondly although Gates's has a management structure like any other business the majority of employees are part-time and on minimum or quite low wages not sufficient to afford the 'rural premium' on housing and transport associated with living in Somerby parish. Anecdotally we know of almost no parishioners who work there.

'John o' Gaunt industrial estate' is something a misnomer. MBC may be referring to two businesses there, Redd Europe Limited and John o' Gaunt Rural Industries. About 30 people

work there between them. They are outside the Parish but just inside 5km of Somerby Village.

The Neighbourhood Plan has consulted to varying degrees with some 30 other businesses employing about 80 people in the Parish. Although this is not quite every employer we are confident to have spoken to all the largest ones which employ between 4 and 15 people. Among other useful information obtained, only one business (employing 10 people) has plans to possibly employ more, and none report difficulty obtaining labour or a shortage of it. Overall these employers are land-based and require employees with the corresponding skills and inclinations which are different to those of the wider population.

### **Job Density**

Job Density is a measure used by the Office for National Statistics. It is defined as the number of filled jobs (including self-employment) in an area divided by the number of working age people (16 – 64) living there. It is not an employment rate, *it is an indication of demand for labour*, in other words the extent to which additional labour supply is or is not required by the economy of that area. This is very relevant to any discussion of future housing development and population increase.

Although the Job Density value cannot be used to calculate a strict ‘deficit’ or ‘surplus’ of labour in an area it is an indicator, particularly in comparison with other areas. A low number indicates out-commuting for work and a high number indicates attraction of workers from outside the area. Some sample Job Density figures from 2014 are:

England & Wales 0.78	Leicestershire 0.74
Melton Borough 0.76	Rural Leicestershire 0.64

In order to obtain a figure for Somerby Parish to compare with these, we have done our best to total all the employment opportunity in the Parish, then added Gates’s and John o’ Gaunt. We have then considered which non-Parish settlements ‘share’ the employment opportunity offered by those sites. For example, Burrough Court Estate is in the Parish but also within 5km of Twyford, Thorpe Satchville and, Great Dalby. Gates’s Garden Centre is within 5km of Somerby but also Langham, Knossington, Braunston and Oakham. We have obtained or carefully estimated the number of 16 – 64 year olds in those villages and done the arithmetic.

We estimate the Job Density of Somerby Parish to be about 0.61

We may have overlooked a few jobs in the Parish, but this is more than offset by us including Gates’s (outside the Parish) and not including the large part of Oakham which lies within 5km of Gates’s.

0.61 is a low figure even for Rural Leicestershire. It indicates low demand for additional labour in the Parish is low, so any new population is likely to have to travel out of the area for employment (or be unemployed). This accords with what local employers have told us (they are not short of labour) and our data on ‘distance travelled to work’ described next. These are all indicators of relatively low employment opportunity in the Parish.

**Distances travelled for work, shopping, leisure, healthcare and school. These were given in miles, one-way.**

The Household Questionnaire was very informative about these distances. Between 190 and 290 people answered the questions except for 'travel to school' where the lower number of 50 presumably reflects those with children. These are large samples and therefore both reliable and informative.

Travel for Work attracted 242 responses (not everybody works) and travel was by private motor vehicle for 79% of them which is higher than the Borough and much higher than the country. About 82% of them work outside the Parish and average distance travelled for work (one way) was very high indeed at about 26 miles. No figure for comparison is available from the 2011 Census but in 2001 the figure was 15 miles showing that parishioners are travelling much further for work than they used to. In combination with the low job density figure (explained above) this strongly suggests that employment opportunity relative to population has fallen in the Parish over the last 15 years. There is no reason to believe increased population would improve this situation, and the evidence suggests it would make it worse.

Only about 16% of respondents travelled less than the desirable 5km to work and this figure included homeworkers. Conspicuous spikes at certain mileages strongly suggest that Melton, Oakham and Leicester are where more than half of economically active parishioners work and about 10% commute to London regularly.

*(The next sections aren't about 'economy and employment', just travel in general, but they may still bear on settlement role and sustainability so are included here)*

Travel for Grocery Shopping produced the highest number of responses of all at 288. This is unsurprising as not everybody works, is ill or has children but everybody eats. 96% of respondents travel 5 or more miles for grocery shopping and the average distance travelled is about 6.7 miles, strongly indicating Melton, Oakham or (as we hear some Burrough residents prefer) Syston all of which have several supermarkets.

There is a knowledge gap in that we don't know how many people use home delivery for their groceries but such delivery vehicles are becoming more commonly seen in the villages and we feel this is a practice likely to increase. However it remains the case that although Somerby Village has a small and valued shop almost no-one meets all their grocery shopping need there.

Travel for Leisure attracted 198 responses but 7 were so wide-ranging (eg. 1 – 100 miles and 5 – 200 miles) that although undoubtedly true we had to leave them out for statistical purposes. Average distance travelled for leisure was about 12.5 miles but responses were in strong clusters so it is more meaningful to consider them. The 61% travelling 4 to 10 miles tend to indicate Melton or Oakham as the destinations, or else enjoyment and use of the local countryside. There was also a noticeable spike of 14% of people at 20 miles which might indicate travel to Leicester.

Travel for Healthcare attracted 191 responses. Average mileage was about 5.6 but again it is more informative to look at clusters and patterns. It was easy to interpret from the mileages which medical facilities people were referring to. About 51% referred to Somerby Surgery as their main healthcare destination, about 31% to Oakham or Melton, about 4% probably to Market Overton, and 14% probably to hospitals in Leicester.

The usefulness of Somerby Surgery was very obvious both for the healthcare it provides and for reducing distances travelled by parishioners. 20% of respondents gave their distance as '0' or 'less than 1' indicating that they live in Somerby village and rely mostly on that surgery. Having said that, there are limits to what a local surgery can provide and half of all respondents rely on more distant facilities as well. This might not be much different in Melton or even a large city.

Travel for School attracted 49 responses but they are difficult to interpret. The average mileage was 4.5 excluding two who go so far away it must be to boarding school. 24 respondents travel a short enough distance that they must be going to Somerby Primary School but of course that doesn't indicate a number of children. We know from asking the school that only about a third of its pupils come from Somerby village or parish. The most important observation is probably that 'school' altogether represents very little of the total travel in the Parish compared to work, shopping or leisure. This is unsurprising because not everybody has children.

### **Conclusions**

Somerby Parish has relatively high employment but low employment opportunity. In other words local employers are not short of labour and a substantial increase in population would not be absorbed by them. This is evidenced both statistically and by consultation with those local businesses:

Key statistics are a low Job Density of 0.61, a very high average mileage to work of 26 miles, and 82% of respondents going outside the Parish for work. Only about 17% of respondents find their work at an employment site within the 5km recognised by MBC as indicating 'medium value'.

Key information from local businesses is that few if any intend to employ more people in the near future and none complain of a shortage of labour supply. The largest employment site, Burrough Court Estate, is a very successful enterprise itself but accommodates businesses on short leases which furthermore tend to bring their skilled labour with them and do not recruit locally. Employment opportunity for residents of Somerby Parish there is very low.

Neighbourhood Planners are pleased to report high employment and economic activity in the Parish but cannot report high employment opportunity. On the contrary it is quite low. The Neighbourhood Plan will seek positively to encourage sustainable economic growth in the Parish but does not believe this can be achieved in proportion to the levels of housing development (50 or 100 or more) and population growth (up to 40%) being considered by Melton Borough Council. Employment opportunity should limit population growth, otherwise we anticipate a worsening of the Parish in terms of employment, carbon emissions, traffic volume and road safety, work-life balance and general wellbeing.

Economy Theme Group, Somerby Parish Neighbourhood Plan 13/04/17

**Sources:**

*The National Census 2001 and 2011*

*Leicestershire Rural Economy Evidence Base 2014*

*East Leicestershire Rural Workspace Demand Study 2014*

*Neighbourhood Plan household questionnaire January 2017*

*Neighbourhood Plan business questionnaire January-March 2017*