

MELTON LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION
POSITION STATEMENT OF MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
8 January 2018

MATTER 4
Melton Mowbray Sustainable
Neighbourhoods (MMSNs)
(Policies SS4 and SS5)

Matter 4: Melton Mowbray Sustainable Neighbourhoods (MMSNs) **(Policies SS4 and SS5)**

QUESTION 4.1 Are the sustainable neighbourhood allocations as a whole consistent with the strategic objectives for Melton Borough?

1.1 Yes. The Strategic Objectives of the Plan are set out in detail after paragraph 3.3.4. There are 25 objectives in total, with the priorities identified in italics. For the avoidance of doubt, the 12 priority objectives are stated below:

Housing

- *Help provide a stock of housing accommodation that meets the needs of the community, including the need for affordable housing.*
- *Develop a housing stock to provide for the future aspirations for the local economy*

Jobs and Prosperity

- *Enhance the vitality and viability of Melton Mowbray town centre.*
- *Provide sufficient land to meet current and future employment needs.*

Accessibility and Transport

- *Reduce the need to travel by car and improve access to public transport*
- *Reduce traffic congestion in Melton Mowbray*

Community Development

- *Improve access to services and facilities, including health, schools, social care, jobs, recreation, sport and education, broadband.*
- *Promote sustainable communities.*

Environment

- *Promote high quality and innovate design which is visually attractive, reflects local context and distinctiveness, and, contributes to a safe and accessible environment, to make places better for people.*
- *Conserve the historic environment and Melton Borough's historic assets.*
- *Protect the rural character of the Borough.*
- *Reduce the risk of flooding and avoid development in areas prone to flooding.*

1.2 Sustainable neighbourhoods are strategic developments that will provide significant amounts of housing, including affordable housing, employment,

community facilities, provide transport options and improvements, and environmental enhancements to meet the needs of the population.

- 1.3 A sustainable neighbourhood is a place where people want to live now and in the future. It is a neighbourhood that is socially, environmentally and economically healthy; a place that is safe, well planned and built to last.
- 1.4 The aspirational, but realistic, housing requirement figure for the Borough over the Plan period is 6125. The way that this figure was derived is explained in detail in documents [MBC/HN1a](#) and [MBC/HN4a](#), with additional supplementary information detailed in response to Matter 3.
- 1.5 The Council considered various options to plan for the housing requirement in the Plan. This included dispersal across the whole Borough, to existing small and large villages; allocating the majority to a new village or town, or concentrating provision within the Borough's existing most sustainable location, Melton Mowbray and a range of 'large site' options.
- 1.6 These options were assessed in terms of their relative potential contributions to the Plan's objectives and priorities. It was concluded that the 'dispersal' option would not achieve the Council's priority objectives for the Plan, particularly the objectives relating to accessibility and transport, jobs and prosperity, and community development ([MBC/G4b](#) and [MBC/G4ci](#) parts [A](#), [B](#), [C](#), and [D](#)).
- 1.7 Equally, if the Council allowed a significant amount of development within Melton Mowbray to come forward in a 'piecemeal' fashion, this would also adversely impact upon the Council's ability to deliver against its objectives, as it would allow the town to expand without the requisite facilities and services upon which the population would depend to be a properly functioning and attractive place to live.
- 1.8 Therefore it was concluded that the optimum option from those available for the future level of housing required in the Borough over the plan period would be large, planned strategic site(s) ([MBC/WP2c](#)). In 2015 the Council commissioned a report to consider an initial range of options. The paper 'Large Scale Development Sites' ([MBC/SS5](#)) assessed a range of options for alternative sites to identify which option, or combination of options, were most able to meet the outstanding strategic development requirements. The paper examined 'reasonable alternatives' that could be advanced at future stages of plan making. The sites that were assessed within the report mainly emerged through the Melton Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) ([MBC/AR/HN1](#)). In addition, directions of growth to the east and west of Melton Mowbray were considered although they have no identified promotor. It was considered

important that they were assessed because of their strategically advantageous location next to the main urban area of Melton Mowbray.

- 1.9 Using the evidence supplied within [MBC/SS5](#), the 'Melton Local Plan Sustainable Neighbourhoods Topic Paper' [MBC/SS6](#), and the Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options ([MBC/WP2b](#)), the Council concluded that an increased focus on development in Melton Mowbray, delivered through the development of two new sustainable neighbourhoods 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 enhance the vitality and viability of the town.
- 1.10 Furthermore, whilst offering the best opportunities to provide strategic scale growth which delivers the requirements for new housing and employment development, the two Sustainable Neighbourhoods (SNs) would not be at the expense of allowing some of the Borough's villages to grow. With planned growth, the villages can become more sustainable, and add to the housing choice and delivery opportunities. This meets with the Plan's objective of providing a stock of housing accommodation that meets the needs of the community, including the need for affordable housing, and helps achieve the local plan priority objective of promoting sustainable communities whilst maintaining delivery and 5 year housing land supply at all times during the plan period.
- 1.11 By choosing large-scale development sites in Melton Mowbray and concentrating development around the town, the need for residents to travel by car is reduced. The size of the SNs give rise to economies of scale, allow the integration of the new communities with the existing ones, and encourages sustainable patterns of living, by aiding accessibility and reducing congestion. By contrast, a more dispersed pattern of smaller development would have limited scope to encourage sustainable patterns of living.
- 1.12 The scale of the SNs ensures that they are able to support a range of services and facilities, e.g. new schools, shops and potentially a GP surgery to help to encourage new communities to form, and reduce the need to travel in accordance with the Council's priority objectives. The developments will deliver new residential and business communities in the form of attractive and high quality new neighbourhoods and places supported by the infrastructure necessary to mitigate the impacts of growth. This would not be achievable through the delivery of smaller sites.
- 1.13 The south SN has a large employment land allocation, circa 20ha, which formed part of the recommendations of report [MBC/EL2](#) in 2015. It was identified by local businesses as a preferred relocation site, justified in size for the likely demand and growth needs of key local businesses. It is considered that a significant employment allocation close to the town

within the south SN also boosts the town's overall 'sustainability credentials'. Furthermore, the Sustainability Appraisal work undertaken at the various stages of the preparation of the Plan confirms this ([MBC/WP2a-h](#)).

- 1.14 In addition, because large regional and national development companies are behind the promotion of both of the SN's (please see MBC response to initial question 4, ID1D), they provide greater certainty around the deliverability of the volume of development needed. Report [MBC/SS5](#) (page 9) also confirms that there are practical difficulties in delivering the scale of growth required in Melton Mowbray from brownfield and other sites within the urban area, making the SNs the only practical option for delivering the level of new housing needed.
- 1.15 Through Policies SS4 and SS5, both SNs will be master planned, ensuring that they provide the housing, employment, community facilities, transport and environmental improvements required and identified within the Plan. The Council is confident that the SNs delivered through the policies will be successful in meeting the Council's strategic objectives and priorities, forming successful communities where people want to live now and in the future. The SNs are key to delivering a significant part of the Council's plans for housing, employment and infrastructure overall.

QUESTION 4.2 Based on all the evidence, have they been positively prepared and has their identification been adequately justified? Is the overall size of the allocations and the quantity of development proposed appropriate?

Positively prepared

- 2.1 Paragraph 182 of the Framework defines positively prepared:

The plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.

- 2.2 In formulating the most appropriate sustainable development strategy for the Borough, the Council explored a range of alternative options, as discussed above at paragraphs 1.5 – 1.9. The Council's preferred option focuses new development in the Borough's most sustainable town, Melton Mowbray. This is to take full advantage of the town's inherent sustainability including provision of services/facilities and the existing high level of accessibility by a variety of modes of transport (train, bus, car, cycle, pedestrian) and, as explained above, because of its capability to secure objectives and priorities.

- 2.3 In determining how best to grow Melton Mowbray, a key issue was how to reconcile the significant growth proposed against the existing infrastructure constraints, notably the lack of capacity on the local highway network. An important conclusion was that significant growth would have to be accompanied by substantial investment in the provision of a new distributor road as part of an overall Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy. The new distributor road would need to perform 2 functions – ease the existing traffic problems, and facilitate the development of a significant amount of new housing.
- 2.4 Consequently, and arising from this approach, a piecemeal approach to development on a wide range of sites, scattered throughout the town was judged unlikely to support the kind of sustainable and comprehensive development required to plan effectively for the sustainable growth of Melton Mowbray and housing supply, and the provision of the necessary infrastructure to allow it to proceed
- 2.5 Accordingly, the strategy adopted and evidenced through report [MBC/SS5](#) was to identify two locations, one to the north and one to the south of the town. These would be optimally placed in relation to the line of a new distributor road and the provision of sufficient good quality deliverable and developable land for the provision of housing and associated infrastructure in accordance with the Council’s strategic objectives and priorities.

Adequately justified

- 2.6 Paragraph 182 of the Framework defines adequately justified:
- The plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.*
- 2.7 The Council’s decision to pursue the two SNs to the north and south of the town was based on evidence in the form of report [MBC/SS5](#). This report (as explained at paragraph 1.8 above) considered a range of options for alternative sites, assessing the options in order to identify which option, or combination of options, were most able to meet the outstanding strategic development requirements. The report assessed reasonable alternatives that had emerged through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) ([MBC/AR/HN1](#)).
- 2.7 There were nine locations assessed within the report [MBC/SS5](#), as follows:
- Melton South SUE
 - Melton South East SUE
 - Melton North SUE
 - Welby SUE

- Thorpe Arnold SUE
- Dalby / Melton Mowbray Airfield (New Settlement)
- Normanton Airfield (New Settlement)
- Belvoir Road, Bottesford (New Settlement)
- Land at Six Hills (New Settlement)

In addition to these specific sites identified in the SHLAA, the report assessed two directions of growth to the east and west of the main urban area of Melton Mowbray. It is therefore considered that the report was comprehensive in its assessment of the various sites and spatial development options around the Borough and provides an evidenced conclusion as to the sites that are the most capable of offering the best opportunities to provide strategic scale growth.

- 2.8 Specifically, the new settlement options at Dalby and Normanton Airfields and at Six Hills were considered to be too remote from higher order centres, which would result in dependency upon the private car to access employment, services and facilities and generate longer travelling distances. Furthermore, they are considered to pose considerable uncertainty that they would be able to provide the appropriate mix of uses, new employment, public transport, and services and facilities on site.
- 2.9 The proposed SUEs at Welby, Thorpe Arnold and Bottesford were considered to be too small to meet the outstanding requirements for housing and the necessary mix of uses. The sites are less able to accommodate significant Green Infrastructure, and some are highly constrained by heritage assets. The report concluded that although some of the sites may be acceptable for small-scale housing schemes, they are not appropriate to meet the mix of uses required for large scale development.
- 2.10 Furthermore, the Council's Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal ([MBC/WP2a-WP2f](#)) concluded that the extensions to the north and south of the town were the most appropriate of the large scale development sites, and offered the best opportunities to deliver the required housing, employment and infrastructure and perform well against the sustainability objectives. In addition, the whole plan viability work ([MBC/WP5](#)) demonstrates that these are viable.
- 2.11 It is therefore considered that the decision to pursue the two large scale sites to the north and south of the town is adequately justified and proportionately evidenced.

Size of allocations and quantity of development

- 2.12 The size of the allocations for the SNs was determined having regard to two things. Firstly, they are partly derived from the overall identified requirement of 6125 homes for the Borough ([MBC/HN4a](#)) and Policy SS2 which distributes about 65% of this to Melton Mowbray. Taking into account the contribution that other sites in the town can make to housing delivery (MBC/HA1a), this left about 3200 new homes to be provided in the SNs to fulfil the 65% of the total requirement. Secondly, through sustainability and viability studies (MBC/WP2a-h and MBC/WP5), it reflects the amounts of development that are viable and capable of delivering sustainable development.
- 2.13 The overall spatial strategy distribution proposed by the Plan is underpinned by a strategy of urban concentration, seeking to provide approximately 65% of the housing within and adjacent to Melton Mowbray and 35% within the rest of the Borough (please see the Council's response to Matter 2 for the background to this). This was informed through the Sustainability Appraisals (MBC/WP2a-h) which consider this method to be a sustainable approach towards delivery.
- 2.14 In terms of the size of the allocations, the Council is aware that both of the SN's could accommodate more housing than that which is proposed within the Plan. For example, within document [MBC/SS5](#), prepared in 2015 at an early stage of plan preparation, it was shown that in total the Melton South SN has the potential to accommodate some 4400 houses, and the Melton North SN has the potential for some 5350 houses. However, the extents of the sites have reduced somewhat since then. They are assigned allocated capacities that reflect the Sustainability Appraisals (MBC/WP2a-h), the Council's SHLAA developer panel, and the overriding spatial strategy of urban concentration seeking to provide approximately 65% of the housing within and adjacent to Melton Mowbray. Substantially increasing the size(s) of the SN's would distort the proposed spatial strategy which had been assessed by the Sustainability Appraisals as being an appropriate, sustainable approach towards delivery. The viability evidence (MBC/WP5) suggests that reducing the allocations could adversely affect their ability to deliver sustainable development, e.g. compromises on the amount of affordable housing, other community facilities or infrastructure provision would be required.
- 2.15 When other allocations within Melton Mowbray are taken into consideration, the SNs have a requirement of 3200 dwellings within the plan period. The southern SN has a total capacity for 2000 dwellings, with 1700 to be delivered within the Plan period. The northern SN has a total capacity for 1700 dwellings, with 1500 to be delivered within the plan

period. The potential extra capacity of the SNs beyond the amounts identified in the submitted Plan allows for flexibility to respond to changing requirements that may emerge in the future, in particular with regards to viability and deliverability considerations as highlighted within report MBC/WP5. For example, both SNs could deliver more housing if necessary to support the provision of infrastructure, and both have opportunities for development to be undertaken from several different points, giving spatial flexibility. This is consistent with the requirements of the NPPF.

- 2.16 Furthermore, the Council considers that the potential for additional housing and employment land within the SNs make it well placed to further its commitment to significantly boost the supply of housing in the area over the longer term, in accordance with the Framework.
- 2.17 It is therefore considered that there is sufficient evidence that the size of the allocations and quantity of development proposed within the SNs is appropriate, and allows for flexibility within the plan period. Like all the plan allocations, the numbers are estimated capacity and are not intended to be maximums.

QUESTION 4.3 Is the housing trajectory for completions over the Plan period and particularly within the first five years realistic and underpinned by robust evidence from all partners to the MMSNs' delivery? Does progress on master planning and timescales for full planning permission support the trajectory figures? What is the market evidence to support the level of completions expected by 2022/2023? Is there in-built flexibility to resolve any barriers to delivery?

- 3.1 The Council is confident, based on the activity surrounding the planning applications for both of the SNs, and the evidence collated from the developers that both of the SNs are deliverable and have a realistic prospect to deliver housing over the next 5 years. Please see the Council's response to Matter 6 for a comprehensive response regarding the trajectory.
- 3.2 With regards to the south SN, the Council has already granted outline planning permission for 520 dwellings (15/00910/OUT) and is in detailed 'pre application discussions' for an initial phase of 88. There is also an outline application pending consideration for a further 1500 dwellings (16/00515/OUT). Totalling more than 2000 dwellings, this already exceeds the allocation for the south SN in the plan period. The Council is working closely with the developer for 1500 dwellings to resolve outstanding issues, and it is likely that this application will be ready for determination in spring 2018.

- 3.3 In the north SN, there is a live outline planning application for up to 200 dwellings (14/00808/OUT) which it is also anticipated will be determined in early 2018. There is also a consortium of developers working closely together alongside Leicestershire County Council and Melton Borough Council to form a master plan for the entire north SN. They have also been fully involved in the design of the northern section of the proposed distributor road, and are supportive of the Outline Business Case submitted to the Department for Transport for the road. The master plan for the north SN is currently in development; it is expected that this will be submitted alongside the planning application for the SN early in 2018.
- 3.4 In December 2017 the Council undertook an updated housing delivery forecast with the partners involved in the two SNs to ensure that the evidence is robust. The revised trajectory is discussed in full in response to Matter 6, however the most up to date Five Year Land Supply and Housing Trajectory Position is document [MBC/HS1a](#) which sets out the Council's position as of December 2017. As developers provided the evidence underpinning this report, it is considered to be a robust representation of the likely delivery of the SNs. In summary, it states that the North SN will commence development in 2020/21 with 25 dwellings, rising to 75 and then 100 dwellings in 2022/23. The South SN will also commence development in 2020/21 with 36 dwellings, rising to 72 and then 110 dwellings in 2022/23.
- 3.5 The updated position statement [MBC/HS1a](#) has considered the size of the two SNs and the time it will take for them to commence development on site, including realistic build out rates to ensure a robust 5-year housing land supply. Owing to their size and infrastructure requirements, the SNs will only start to deliver new homes towards the end of the first five-year period. It is now forecasted that the SNs will start to provide dwellings in 2020/21.
- 3.6 The principal prospective developer (with a submitted planning application for 1500 dwellings) for the south SN has provided an up to date timeframe for delivery, summarised in the table below:

Predicted Timeframe for the Southern Sustainable Neighbourhood		
Item / Task to be Undertaken	Time Allowed	Predicted Completion
Application at planning committee	n/a	March 2018
Completion of S106 following determination	3 months	June 2018
Preparation of Reserved Matters application	6 months	December 2018
LPA determine Reserved Matters application	2-3 months	March / April 2019
Agree price to sell land and sell	9 months	January 2020
Start on site to build first dwelling	4 months (16 weeks)	May 2020

- 3.7 The timeframe for delivery is in addition to the already permitted site within the south SN for 520 dwellings, which projects the delivery of 36 dwellings in 2020/21, 72 in 2021/22 and 110 in 2022/23. The projected delivery for this site can be viewed within document [MBC/HS1a](#).
- 3.8 The consortium of developers for the north SN has provided the Council with an updated timeframe / trajectory for the delivery of the north SN. Their planning application is due imminently. The table below is extracted from the latest correspondence with the consortium dated 6th December 2017:

Indicative Sales Trajectory for North Sustainable Neighbourhood					
Year (April-March)	Year	Private Dwelling Sales	Affordable Dwelling Sales	Year Total	Cumulative Total
2019-2020	1	72	13	85	85
2020-2021	2	108	19	127	212
2021-2022	3	108	19	127	339
2022-2023	4	144	25	169	508
2023-2024	5	144	25	169	677
2024-2025	6	180	32	212	889
2025-2026	7	180	32	212	1101
2026-2027	8	180	32	212	1313
2027-2028	9	180	32	212	1525
2028-2029	10	180	32	212	1737
2029-2030	11	180	32	212	1949
2030-2031	12	144	25	169	2118
2031-2032	13	70	12	82	2200
TOTAL		1870	330	2200	

- 3.9 When assessing the delivery of sites, local planning authorities are required to have close regard to the information provided by developers and agents (PPG paragraph: 023 Reference ID: 33-023-20140306). The figures above take into consideration the allowance for several developers that are likely to be involved in the delivery of the SNs.

Market Evidence

- 3.10 The Council's latest Five Year Land Supply and Housing Trajectory Position (December 2017) states that in total, 418 dwellings are expected to be provided over both of the SNs by 2023. A telephone survey was undertaken in November and early December 2017 with estate agents in the Borough to understand their thoughts as to the operation of the housing market and its ability to absorb the numbers of dwellings proposed.
- 3.11 In summary, most agents reported that the housing market is either fairly or very healthy, and recently strengthening. It is constrained by lack of stock, particularly new builds. Agents consider that 350 new homes per annum could be sold in the Borough over the next five years, because the

demand outstrips supply. Agents report that there are effectively localized sub-markets, meaning that multiple outlets could come on stream concurrently in several locations without competing with each other.

- 3.12 Please refer to Appendix 3 of the Council's response to initial question 4 for further information.

Built-in Flexibility

- 3.13 The Council is confident that there is sufficient built-in flexibility to the plan to enable the resolution of any barriers to delivery. Whilst early funding and provision of the distributor road would be helpful, particularly in reducing the impact of traffic on the town whilst development is taking place, as both SNs are effectively extensions to the town, there is no reason why these cannot begin construction, and incrementally build the northern and southern elements of the proposed distributor road. They are not dependent upon the success of the Local Majors Fund bid that has been submitted to the Department for Transport. The Local Highway Authority has confirmed that this approach is acceptable, provided there are appropriate triggers for phased infrastructure provision agreed. These matters are discussed further in response to Matter 10. The Council considers that this demonstrates the built-in flexibility in the plan, as there is no strict order of build out in terms of location, subject to mitigating transport issues.
- 3.14 In addition, both of the SNs have allocations that exceed the requirement for housing within the plan period. This allows for flexibility for developers and locations within each SN to deliver the housing over the plan period, and allows for additional dwellings to be constructed during the plan period should they be required.
- 3.15 As stated above at paragraph 3.2, the planning permission (520 dwellings) and the submitted planning application (1500 dwellings) for the south SN can provide in excess of 2000 dwellings against a plan requirement of 1700. In addition, there is further land owned by a local family within the allocation for the south SN which may come forward within the plan period further aiding flexibility. The Council is at present working hard with this landowner to re-establish their support for the plan. Should this support be forthcoming, it opens up further options for delivery of the south SN during the plan period. This would assist the flexibility even further should any barriers to delivery emerge in the areas that are currently at a more advanced stage of the planning process. It is important to note however that this land may not be required to fulfil the trajectory.

- 3.16 The consortium of developers for the north SN also state in their formal representations to the plan that whilst the allocation for the north is 1700 dwellings (of which 1500 will be delivered before 2036), the delivery trajectory above at paragraph 3.8 demonstrates that 2200 dwellings can be provided. The consortium considers that the site can accommodate this higher level of dwellings. The Council therefore considers that this further demonstrates the inbuilt flexibility in the delivery of the site over the plan period and beyond, as its own aspirational but realistic trajectory plans for 700 fewer than this over the plan period.

QUESTION 4.4 Have interdependencies between the delivery of the MMSNs and Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy, especially the Distributor Road (Policy IN1), been made clear and have they been adequately taken into account?

- 4.1 For more detail relating to this question please see Matter 10.
- 4.2 Leicestershire County Council has worked closely with Melton Borough Council to develop a transport strategy that is integrated with Melton Borough Council's proposed spatial strategy. Through this process significant interdependencies have been identified between the MMSNs and the necessary transport infrastructure in terms of timing and delivery. In particular, the need for the Distributor Road to be in place in its entirety will evolve over time relative to the build out of the planned growth including the MMSNs. It does not have to be in place from day one of the local plan.
- 4.3 Traditionally, mechanisms for the delivery of major pieces of transport infrastructure (or otherwise) do not readily align with housing growth/delivery, i.e. all other things being equal, the ability to deliver housing 'on the ground' comes ahead of the ability to deliver the infrastructure.
- 4.4 Recognising this, the County Council has engaged early with MBC, and both Authorities have issued statements explaining that they are prepared to adopt a pragmatic and flexible approach to the Local Plan and its growth proposal, including splitting the MMDR into 3 distinct sections and allowing elements of growth to come forward in advance of the highways solution being complete ([MBC/T4](#), [MBC/T10](#)).
- 4.5 Certain sections of the distributor road and wider transport infrastructure will need to be delivered in conjunction with the MMSNs. In particular, LCC and MBC are working proactively with promoters of the MMSNs to plan for the delivery of the northern and southern sections of the distributor road

on an agreed basis (this collaborative approach is evidenced by the letters of support for the MMDR that have been provided by the promoters of the Northern and Southern Sustainable Neighbourhoods, please see Appendix A and B to this report). This includes maximising developable land for the MMSNs, including consideration of how individual land holdings are accessed without compromising the ability to deliver a suitable standard of road to achieve the objectives.

- 4.6 Recognition of these interdependencies has also led LCC and MBC to an early start in securing funding towards the delivery of the distributor road, in particular the eastern section; and to deliver it as soon as practically possible, potentially ahead of housing phasing. Early completion of the route in its entirety would provide the opportunity to accelerate housing growth whilst ensuring the objectives of the local plan are also met. In any event and with reference to the LHA's response to Matter 10, there is every reason to be confident that the complete route will be in place by the end of the plan period.
- 4.7 In conclusion, the Council working in partnership with the LHA, considers that the interdependencies between the delivery of the MMSNs and Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy, especially the Distributor Road have been made clear and have been adequately taken into account.

QUESTION 4.5 Are the specific policy requirements for each for the MMSNs justified and deliverable [Note: the affordable housing targets will be considered under Matter 3]? In particular:

Subsection i) Are the community facility requirements justified and deliverable?

- 5.1 Paragraph 182 of the Framework defines adequately justified:

The plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence.

- 5.2 In order for the SNs to indeed be sustainable, they must be equipped with a full range of good quality services and facilities. As noted within [MBC/WP2d](#) at paragraphs 5.17 onwards, both SN's are some distance from the town centre at the far edges. Therefore, it is essential that they are delivered with community facilities, incorporating essential facilities such as shops, schools and spaces for recreation to reduce the need for residents to travel.
- 5.3 In developing the plan, the Council worked closely in consultation with external partners to establish an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which was produced in March 2017 ([MBC/INF1](#)). Indeed, the scale of both of the

developments of SN's has been informed by the need to secure a 'critical mass' of housing to finance and deliver the necessary infrastructure, including community facility requirements. One of the key drivers behind the decision to pursue the two SN's is that they are considered capable of being 'delivered' as the sites have willing promoters ([MBC/SS6](#)).

- 5.4 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the kind, amount and timing of the requirements conveyed to the Council by partners. The Council is therefore confident that each of the policy requirements for the SNs are justified.
- 5.5 The Council's own Viability Study ([MBC/WP5](#)) demonstrates that the policy requirements relating to community facilities within both the SNs are deliverable (page 87). Indeed, the most significant planning application currently under determination for the south SN (1500 dwellings) proposes the community facilities that would be required under Policy SS4; a new local centre, primary school, areas of public open space, children's play space and informal recreation.
- 5.6 The provision of a school within the South SN has been 'costed' and agreed with the Local Education Authority and forms part of the submitted planning application reference 16/00515/OUT. The policy requirement for retail and town centre uses is in accordance with the evidence of section 7 of the PBA 2015 retail report (MBC/TCR1a). The developers have agreed to the provision of sports and leisure facilities through financial contributions towards the Melton Leisure Village, and other forms of play and open space are proposed on-site in accordance with the proposed policy EN7.
- 5.7 In terms of the North SN, the Council has held discussions with all partners who have confirmed that they are working together to ensure delivery. Components of the North SN include a small employment site, a Local Centre, extra-care housing and the provision of sports pitches, play and open space on-site and built leisure facilities (towards the Melton Leisure Village) through financial contributions in accordance with the proposed standards in Policy EN7.
- 5.8 From the evidence contained within [MBC/WP5](#) the Council can confidently conclude that the identified community facility requirements are capable of being delivered.

Subsection ii) In the case of South MMSN, will the separate identities of Burton Lazars and Eye Kettleby and settlement fringe sensitivities in general be adequately protected through the Plan's policies?

6.1 To aid understanding of the potential impact of the expansion of Melton Mowbray upon neighbouring settlements, the Council commissioned the report 'Areas of Separation, Settlement Fringe Sensitivity and Local Green Space Study' ([MBC/LC3a, b and c](#)). The report provides guidance for each area to be used to inform the master planning of future development proposals and consideration of future planning applications, so that the separate identities of settlements can be protected.

6.2 In relation to the Area of Separation (AoS) between Melton Mowbray and Eye Kettleby, the report [MBC/LC3](#) states that:

The ridgeline from the southwest edge of Melton Mowbray to the east of Eye Kettleby lakes provides a natural division between the landscape patterns, relating to the settlement edges and restricts the inter visibility of the two settlements. There are sensitive landscape features and patterns within this landscape, which characterise the isolated settlement of Eye Kettleby. Any development coming forward in this landscape should seek to retain the isolated character of Eye Kettleby and protect the small scale landscape setting between Eye Kettleby and Kirby Lane from expansion of the industrial edge of Melton Mowbray.

6.3 In relation to the AoS between Melton Mowbray and Burton Lazars, the report [MBC/LC3](#) states that:

The landscape to the west and northwest of Burton Lazars contains historic landscape features, which should be conserved. Topography limits the views of the existing built edge of Melton Mowbray experienced from Burton Lazars. Any development coming forward should have consideration of the important ridgeline to the south of Melton Mowbray that limits the visual connection of the two settlements. The physical and visual separation of the settlements should be retained, to conserve distinctive features.

6.3 To ensure that the isolated character of Eye Kettleby is protected, and the historic landscape features of Burton Lazars are retained, clause en1 within Policy SS4 of the Plan specifies the approach developers should take. The policy requires the protection of the separate identities of those settlements in accordance with Policy EN4, responding to settlement fringe sensitivity in accordance with Policy EN1.

6.4 These policies will ensure that the edge of the development leads to an improved edge of the town of Melton Mowbray, creating a distinctive development with particular regard to the ridgeline to the south of the town. This ridgeline separates the visual connection between the town, Burton Lazars (to the south east) and Eye Kettleby (to the south west). Policies EN1 and EN4 are reiterated below for clarity:-

Policy EN4 (*Areas of Separation*) identifies Burton Lazars and Melton Mowbray; and Eye Kettleby and Melton Mowbray as the Areas of Separation about how development can be accommodated in these sensitive locations in a way which maintains the sense of separation, and where appropriate landscape settings and areas of tranquillity.

Policy EN1 (*Landscape*) supports mitigation of potential harm to the built form at the settlement fringe and its relationship to the landscape through proposals requiring to respond to design guidance in the individual assessments of settlement fringe sensitivity in the Areas of Separation, Settlement Fringe Sensitivity and Local Green Space study ([MBC/LC3a-3c](#))

Subsection iii) How will uncertainty about the deliverability of the 20ha employment land allocation in South MMSN be addressed and mitigated if necessary?

- 7.1 The Council understands that the uncertainty perceived in the deliverability of the employment land allocation in the south SN has come about from the representations of a local landowner in the south.
- 7.2 The nature of the uncertainty arises from a misunderstanding of the landowner (the Lomas family) that most of their land had been allocated for employment purposes. The Council has met with the landowner to clarify that their land is not predominantly allocated for employment purposes. Some of their land (25.3%) does indeed form part of the employment allocation towards the west of the south SN allocation, however a significant part of their land (74.7%) forms part of the housing allocation, which is what the landowner wishes to be the case.
- 7.3 The Council is therefore not aware that there would be any significant impediment to bringing the land forward for employment purposes as allocated within the plan. If there was, and should it be required, there would be a planned basis for Compulsory Purchase Order as the land is allocated within the Plan. In addition, the current Davidsons outline planning application (16/00515/OUT) provides the access to the employment site from Leicester Road (A607). It is highly likely that the provision of this access would be required as part of the phased delivery of the wider Davidsons housing development further to the east which is the subject of a current planning application, and could be conditioned as such to ensure the delivery of the employment land.

Subsection iv) How will the special interests of the St Mary and St Lazarus Hospital Scheduled Ancient Monument be protected by the development and the proposals for the Distributor Road?

- 8.1 The Council commissioned a report by Cotswold Archaeology ([MBC/SS8](#)) to undertake a Heritage Settings Assessment in relation to the Southern SN site in light of consultation comments provided by Historic England and a previous heritage assessment undertaken by CgMS. The methodology for the assessment was based upon key professional guidance, undertaken by suitably qualified individuals.
- 8.2 It is the Council's opinion, taking account of the evidence provided within the Report, that the proposed development and the construction of the proposed Distributor Road do not affect the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) *per se*.
- 8.3 In the circumstances, the Council takes the view that there can be no more than 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the SAM. Setting in itself is not a designated heritage asset, and clearly there will be no impact on the monument itself. The policy clauses within Policy SS4 and Policy EN1 will also secure any required protection of the SAM.
- 8.4 The views of the principal developer for the south SN (Davidsons) broadly accord with the Council. That is, that there have been marked transitions in the SAMs fortunes over the years, with the setting of the monument also changing throughout these periods of use. The site proposed for the Southern SN does not appear to have formed an important part of the setting of the monument during any of these periods. The small element of the site that extends into Burton Lazars parish does not appear to have formed part of the medieval Preceptory. In conclusion, a sense of separation is not a key aspect of the site at Burton Lazars, and Historic England's concerns regarding the perceived importance of a sense of separation are not supported by the historic evidence. Indeed, the proximity of local settlements and main roads appear to have been a key determining factor in the establishment of the Order of St Lazarus at Burton Lazars.
- 8.4 Historic England consider that were the scheme for the south SN to be built out and serviced in a manner which breaks through boundaries which they consider to be historic towards the southern side of the application area, it would constitute 'substantial harm' to the significance of the monument. For the reasons as set out at paragraphs 8.1 to 8.3 above, the Council and its heritage advisers do not agree that the development of this area would or indeed could, constitute substantial harm to the SAM.
- 8.5 A further consideration is the weight that should be accorded to the interest of the SAM in relation to the planning benefits of proposals. The

Council and its heritage advisers, consider that in accordance with paragraph 134 of the Framework, the harm to the SAM will be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the very substantial benefits of the scheme and the proposed Distributor Road. The special interests of the SAM will be protected by a high quality scheme, with design and mitigation which strikes a proper balance between the competing interests, that on the one hand ensure the protection of the SAM, and on the other, ensure the growth of Melton Mowbray to the benefit of the Borough and wider economy as a whole.

- 8.6 The Council has considered the consequences of the impact on the significance of the asset being considered 'substantial'. Under NPPF paragraph 133 this would require that the proposals are justified as "substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm." The Council considers the role of the south SN to be so significant to the future economic, infrastructure and residential development of the town and wider area that it also satisfies this test.
- 8.7 Realising the ongoing disagreement between the Council and Historic England, the Council entered into a Statement of Common Ground with Historic England (SGG1) as of 13th December 2017 reflecting the current position. The Council, Historic England and other parties are continuing to work to find a solution to the representations made by Historic England in respect of Policy SS4, FC Policy IN1 and their depiction on the Policies Map.
- 8.8 In addition, the Local Highway Authority are confident that a technical solution to delivery of the southern section of the MMDR exists which adequately addresses any legitimate concerns that Heritage England may have about the potential impact on the Scheduled Ancient Monument. However, the LHA recognises that this matter has to be considered in the round as part of the overall master planning process for the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood.

Subsection v) How will any potential adverse impacts from North MMSN on Melton Country Park be satisfactorily addressed?

- 9.1 Any potential adverse impacts will be managed through Policy SS5. Revised Policy SS5 also specifies the nature of the protection zone expected around the Country Park.
- 9.2 Within the Council's Areas of Separation Study ([MBC/LC3a](#)), Melton Mowbray North has been categorised as Landscape Character Zone 1 (LCZ1). The edge of the settlement of the town varies across the zone, with a good degree of landscape integration to the western extents and to

the east, where the late 20th century development ties in with the wooded Melton Country Park beyond.

- 9.3 In the central part of LCZ1's southern boundary, the perception of development is much more apparent, where the built form has increasingly ascended the valley slopes. The report [MBC/LC3a](#) recommends that development to the east of Scalford Road should be well integrated through appropriate landscape proposals that physically and visually link to the Country Park to the east.
- 9.4 The Council has acknowledged and responded to the concerns of the Friends of Melton Country Park that were received by the Council in the form of a petition and representations at both Pre-Submission Draft and Focused Changes stages of the Plan.
- 9.5 Taking account of report [MBC/LC3a](#) and the Friends of the Melton Country Park correspondence, Policy SS5 which relates to the northern SN was strengthened through the Focused Changes prior to submission, so that it now commits to establishing a protection zone between the Melton Country Park and any future development. Specifically, it states that (the SN will [provide]):
- (B) Establish a protection zone between Melton Country Park and any future development. Development should respond to the local topography and utilise it to define the protection zone. This zone should also include the provision of an undeveloped area of land between part of the existing northern boundary of the park and the proposed distributor road.*
- 9.6 The Council is content that this policy requirement is appropriate and proportionate to ensure that any potential for adverse impacts upon the Country Park can be addressed and prevented / mitigated.
- 9.7 Furthermore, through all of the informal and formal engagement to date, no fundamental issues have been identified with regards to the impact of the MMDR on the Country Park. The LHA will continue to engage with the relevant stakeholders as necessary throughout the detailed design process. There will also be further formal opportunities for input to the scheme design during the scheme planning process.

END

APPENDIX A: DAVIDSONS LETTER OF SUPPORT

Ms L Godfrey
Transport Strategy and Policy
Environment and Transport
Leicestershire County Council
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire
LE3 8RA



12th December 2017

Dear Sirs

Re: SUPPORT FOR LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE FOR THE MELTON MOWBRAY DISTRIBUTOR ROAD

Davidsons Developments Ltd. Is writing to express support in relation to Leicestershire County Council's Outline Business Case to DfT for the Large Local Majors Fund Bid for the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road.

There is a considerable need for additional housing in Leicestershire and specifically Melton Mowbray as a key focus of significant growth proposed as part of the Council's Submitted Local Plan. The Local Plan, with examination scheduled for January 2018, proposes the provision for over 6000 new dwellings and 51 hectares of employment across the district as part of the Local Plan and as the main urban area in the Borough, Melton Mowbray is a key focus for growth. This planned growth within the town will be located at new developments to the north and south of the town. Davidsons Developments Ltd, in conjunction with local landowners, including the Melton Town Estates, is promoting the greater part of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood, which is allocated for up to 1,700 dwelling during the current plan period. An application for outline planning permission has been submitted to the Borough Council and in addition to 1,500 dwellings includes provision for a new primary school and local centre as well as the southern link road, an important part of the proposed highway network to relieve congestion in Melton town centre.

Given the transformational number of homes required, the successful delivery of the Melton Local Plan requires a comprehensive set of transport measures to be delivered. This includes a new 'A606 to A606' strategic road link' avoiding the existing town centre ring road.

The MMDR is a key, and significant, piece of infrastructure to accelerate growth and housing delivery to the town, with over 6000 dwellings and 51ha of employment land directly related to the provision of this infrastructure in Melton; and as stated is necessary infrastructure in both the Local Plan, and the Transport Assessment submitted as part of the recent Outline Planning Application.

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It is this active policy and scheme context that makes this a key growth and scheme priority for Leicestershire County Council, Melton Borough Council and the wider Stakeholders, including Davidsons Developments Ltd, emphasising both the strategic importance and deliverability of the scheme.

We have been working with Leicestershire County Council and Melton Borough Council to develop a scheme that satisfies the need to accommodate housing and the requirement for a road that is fit for purpose.

Davidsons Developments Ltd recognises that Leicestershire County Council has an excellent track record on delivery of large and major transport schemes. In recent years these have included, Loughborough Town Centre Scheme and Leicester Park and Ride, Birstall, both of which were completed within budget and programme. We are also working with LCC to deliver major highway improvements at Coalville in North West Leicestershire District as part of the South East Coalville Sustainable Urban Extension.

Davidsons Developments Ltd looks forward to continue to work with LCC, to develop Melton Mowbray as a thriving economic district and market town.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Whetton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S'.

Sarah Whetton
Strategic Land Director



An **APLEONA** company

Our Ref: Ref
Your Ref: Ref

19 December 2017

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SUPPORT FOR LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE FOR THE MELTON MOWBRAY DISTRIBUTOR ROAD

Dear Andy

We act on behalf of the representatives of the consortium for the Northern Sustainable Neighbourhood (comprising Barwood, Leicestershire County Council, Richborough Estates, Taylor Wimpey and William Davis) and who wish to express support in principle in relation to Leicestershire County Council's Outline Business Case to DfT for the Large Local Majors Fund Bid for the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR).

There is a considerable need for additional housing in Leicestershire and specifically Melton Mowbray as a key focus of significant growth proposed as part of the draft Local Plan.

The Local Plan with examination scheduled for January 2018, proposes the provision for over 6000 new dwellings and 51 hectares of employment across the district as part of the Local Plan and as the main urban area in the Borough, Melton Mowbray is a key focus for growth.

This planned growth within the town will be located at new developments to the north and south of the town. The Consortium members have significant land interests to the north of the town and control all of the land comprising the Melton North Sustainable Neighbourhood (MNSN) and MMDR.

Given the number of homes to be delivered we note that the policy requires a comprehensive set of transport measures to be delivered. An essential component of the developing Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy is the delivery of northern and eastern section of the MMDR.

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The consortium for the Northern Sustainable Neighbourhood is committed to delivering the housing allocation set out in the Local Plan. Richborough Estates and Leicestershire County Council's are in the process of finalising their masterplan for submitting an outline planning application for development of land between Nottingham Road and Scalford Road in early 2018. The current application by Taylor Wimpey (14/00808/OUT) for 200 houses is due to go to Planning committee with a recommendation for approval in February 2018 and as part of that scheme, a significant contribution is sought by LCC towards the MMDR.

The Consortium have been working with LCC and MBC to develop a scheme that satisfies the need to accommodate housing and the requirement for a road that is fit for purpose. That work is progressing and whilst detailed design changes are inevitable, the principle of the MMDR is fully supported, provided that where the alignment of the MMDR cannot be delivered on the northern most boundary of the proposed allocation, due to geometry and landownership constraints resulting in a severing of the development parcels, that housing development north of the MMDR in these locations is accepted.

It is fully appreciated that the MMDR is key infrastructure in achieving the ambition for accelerated delivery of growth and we have been working closely with LCC and MBC to develop a scheme that satisfies the real need to accommodate housing and the requirement for a road that is fit for purpose. Taking the through traffic out of Melton Mowbray will benefit attractiveness for development by enhancing the town's vitality and its desirability as a place to live.

We look forward to continue to work with LCC, to develop Melton Mowbray as a thriving economic district and market town.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.