

# Topic Paper 2

## Melton Local Plan Update

### Infrastructure

January 2025



## Introduction

---

1. The purpose of this topic paper is to outline the Council's updated position relating to the infrastructure required to support the delivery of the Melton Local Plan Partial Update. This topic paper is being published alongside the Pre-Submission Melton Local Plan Update, which is the formal Regulation 19 public consultation stage.
2. The Council considers that a full Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) update is not currently required for the reasons set out within this topic paper; however the list of key infrastructure projects may need to be updated prior to Examination in consultation with key infrastructure partners to reflect the most up-to-date Masterplan and transport modelling for the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood.
3. This topic paper does not form part of the Local Plan Update, however it provides an important update of the Council's infrastructure position, and should be read in conjunction with the Pre-Submission draft Plan, the adopted Local Plan and the outcomes of the Local Plan Review.

# Background

---

## National Policy and Guidance

4. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF, 2023) and [Planning Practice Guidance](#) require plans to set out the framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure.
5. Plans should make provision for necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development within the area, including infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk, the provision of minerals and energy; community facilities such as health, education and cultural infrastructure; and green infrastructure.
6. The preparation and review of plans should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence; which should be adequate and proportionate, focussed tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and considering relevant market signals (NPPF paragraph 31).

## Adopted Melton Local Plan (2018)

7. The current [Melton Local Plan](#) was adopted in October 2018, setting out the development strategy for growth for the period 2011 to 2036, including site allocations to deliver at least 6,125 new homes and approximately 51ha of employment land over 25 years.
8. The spatial distribution underpinning the overall strategy identifies the main urban area of Melton Mowbray as the priority location for growth to accommodate around 65% of the Borough's housing need, with the remaining 35% expected to be accommodated within the rural areas. A significant proportion of this development is focussed within the two large scale sustainable neighbourhoods to the north and south of the town, which the adopted Plan estimates will respectively deliver 1,700 and 2,000 new homes.

## Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2017)

9. The [Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#) (IDP, 2017) was prepared to support the adopted Local Plan setting out the key infrastructure requirements over the plan period to 2036. The IDP includes an infrastructure delivery schedule, which is replicated at [Appendix 4](#) of the adopted Local Plan, outlining the specific physical, social and green infrastructure projects required to deliver the growth promoted through the Local Plan. The schedule

prioritises these infrastructure requirements by considering whether each item is essential or desirable, and identifies the responsible provider, timescales for delivery, estimated cost and funding gap for delivering each infrastructure item with links to associated Local Plan policies.

10. The highest value essential items are transport related, including the Eastern, Southern and Northern sections of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR), followed by education provision required to serve the new Sustainable Neighbourhoods and the growing population across the borough. The MMDR is key to the delivery of the two Sustainable Neighbourhoods, which comprise a significant proportion of the planned housing and employment growth within the borough.

## Local Plan Partial Update

11. A [five-year review of the adopted Local Plan](#) was undertaken in September 2023, which found several of the adopted policies remain up-to-date, relevant and effective, but that some policies required updating.
12. Notably the review concluded that there was no need to reconsider the spatial strategy, housing targets or housing allocations (specifically policies SS2, C1(A), C1(B) and appendix 1) but that employment allocations and many of the development management policies would need updating.
13. The [Issues and Options \(Regulation 18\) consultation document](#) was published in November 2023 setting out the context and options for updating each policy.

## Issues for consideration

---

### Development Strategy and Plan Period (see also topic paper 1)

14. The overall spatial strategy and distribution of development as outlined within the adopted Local Plan is outside the scope of the Local Plan partial update, as is the duration of the plan period to which the partial update applies. As such, the planned outcomes of the Local Plan partial update will not differ substantially to those envisaged through the adopted Local Plan, aside from some factual adjustments to the timing of the delivery of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods (see following section); however, the delivery of these strategic sites were planned to extend beyond 2036.
15. The Council's latest [Five year housing land supply and Housing Trajectory report \(2023/24\)](#) demonstrates 7.6 years' supply of housing land using a relatively cautious assessment, and the latest Housing Delivery Test result is 153% for 2023/24, which

shows the plan strategy is working well to deliver housing in the short term, but also towards the medium and longer term. Further analysis of the continued relevance and effectiveness of the Local Plan period and development strategy is provided in topic paper 1.

## North and South Sustainable Neighbourhoods

16. The Melton North Sustainable Neighbourhood (MNSN) and Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood (MSSN) are expected to deliver a total of 1,900 and 2,000 new homes respectively (1,500 and 1,500 within the plan period as outlined in the revised Policies SS4 and SS5), which accounts for 55% of the housing delivery in the borough to 2036. The housing requirement within the adopted Local Plan is apportioned as a stepped housing trajectory to take account of the lead-in times for these large strategic sites.
17. A breakdown of housing delivery for both Sustainable Neighbourhoods is provided in table 1 below. All remaining parcels within the MNSN were granted outline planning permission in December 2024. The delivery of the MSSN has been slower, as a result of the funding issues associated with the southern section of the MMDR.

<b>Breakdown of housing delivery at April 2024</b>	<b>Melton North Sustainable Neighbourhood (MNSN)</b>	<b>Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood (MSSN)</b>
<b>Completions</b>	193	208
<b>Remaining with planning permission</b>	690	347
<b>Outline applications pending consideration</b>	1230 <sup>1</sup>	1991
<b>Total</b>	<b>2113</b>	<b>2546</b>

Table 1: Breakdown of housing delivery for Melton North and Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhoods at April 2024. Source: [MBC Housing Trajectory 2023/24](#).

18. Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) grant funding for £18.2 million was secured in December 2021 towards the construction of the MMDR South; however, due to significant cost and inflation increases Leicestershire County Council (LCC) announced they would be stepping back from building the road in [October 2023](#). This has resulted in the delivery of this section of essential infrastructure stalling and HIF funding subsequently being reclaimed by the Government despite ongoing discussions with Homes England.

---

<sup>1</sup> Granted outline permission on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 (planning references include: 21/00973/OUT, 21/01198/OUT and 21/00989/OUT).

19. Detailed workshops took place in October 2024 between the site developers, Davidsons Developments and Bloor Homes, with LCC (Highways, Education and Major Growth teams) and Melton Borough Council planning officers to consider how best to overcome the constraints to delivering the MSSN.
20. The focus of the workshops was a collaborative Master planning exercise to agree principles for the delivery of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood, MMDR and other transport requirements alongside meeting the education, open space, sport, recreation and green infrastructure requirements for the site. This joined-up approach has informed the preparation of a development framework plan to support revised Policy SS4 within the Local Plan update and the expectation to publish a detailed Masterplan to guide the construction of the Sustainable Neighbourhood and the road. All partners remain committed to the delivery of this strategic site.
21. Detailed transport modelling is being undertaken by LCC, to inform specifications for the southern section of the MMDR, which will inform the detailed planning process. Planning applications for further parcels are expected to be submitted for consideration by Melton Borough Council in January 2025.

## Issues and Options Consultation Responses

22. The [Statement of Consultation](#) outlines the comments received to the Issues and Options consultation, which included several representations relating to the viability and deliverability of the sustainable neighbourhoods, specifically to Policies SS4 and SS5, which set out the detailed policy requirements for these two strategic sites.
23. Comments received highlight the viability and deliverability issues associated with the MMDR funding and necessary education provision; however, these are supportive of the Council's approach to update the relevant policies to accord with an up-to-date Masterplan for the MSSN. All relevant partners involved in the delivery of the site articulate their commitment to working with the Borough Council to achieve this and raise no further concerns relating to other infrastructure beyond those associated with the delivery of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods.

## Employment Allocations

24. The [Employment Land Study](#) (2024) recommends that existing employment allocations are amended but retained and identifies a minimum additional need of 5.26 hectares of employment land for industrial/warehousing and 0.81 hectares of employment land for offices up to 2036. The Employment Site Selection Paper (2025) has informed the allocation of 3 additional employment sites (5 sites are allocated in total when

including retained employment sites) within the Pre-submission Plan as these are considered to be the most sustainable locations for employment use based on the robust assessment of sites.

25. The site selection process involves consultation with technical consultees and utility providers, including National Highways, LCC (Highways, LLFA, Archaeology), Anglian Water, Severn Trent Water, energy and telecommunications providers. No specific infrastructure requirements were highlighted as part of this technical consultation.
26. The proposed employment allocations within the Local Plan update address the small undersupply of employment land, which is not significant enough to alter the overall strategy. Therefore, it is considered the overall strategy in the adopted Local Plan, and more specifically, the overall strategy for employment needs, remain up to date.
27. The potential employment allocations were discussed with prescribed bodies, neighbouring local authorities and authorities within the Functional Economic Market Area at the Duty to Cooperate meeting in October 2024. This targeted consultation exercise did not highlight any concerns in respect of infrastructure provision for any of the potential allocations.

## **Whole Plan Viability Assessment**

28. The Whole Plan Viability Assessment (January 2025) has been prepared to test the policies within the Local Plan Partial Update, to ensure these are realistic and that the total cumulative cost of all relevant policies will not undermine the deliverability of the plan. The assessment appraises several site typologies for residential and non-residential uses, including the Melton North and South Sustainable Neighbourhoods as the main strategic sites. Preparation of the viability assessment has involved consultation with the development industry, LCC and elected Members.
29. The assessment concludes that viability of the large strategic sites is challenging and these may not be able to accommodate the level of developer contributions required by LCC; however, it is recommended the Borough Council continue to engage with the site owners, LCC and relevant parties to ensure the delivery of these key strategic sites.
30. As set out within the previous North and South Sustainable Neighbourhoods section the Council is working collaboratively to produce an updated Masterplan and transport modelling for the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood. This is likely to be an iterative process and may require further work, including seeking a Statement of Common Ground, prior to Examination.

## Infrastructure Funding Statement

31. The Council has published an annual [Infrastructure Funding Statement](#) (IFS) since these became a statutory requirement in 2020. The IFS includes a summary of all financial and non-financial developer contributions activity for the previous financial year, providing a transparent audit of all received funds. The latest [IFS](#) (2024) was published in December 2024 including details of future infrastructure projects within the borough, providing a partial update to some of the key infrastructure projects outlined within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
32. LCC is responsible for the delivery of much of the large-scale infrastructure within the borough, including highways, schools, libraries and waste; therefore, is also required to publish an IFS annually. These are available on the County Council website: [Developer contributions | Leicestershire County Council](#).

## Collaborative working arrangements

33. The Council has well established joint-working arrangements with LCC, neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies for strategic planning matters. These include regular meetings at senior officer level and county-wide governance structures. Further information on collaborative working arrangements is provided within the Council's Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement.
34. Alongside Duty to Cooperate discussions the Council engages with infrastructure providers through the plan-making process. As explained within the previous Issues and Options Consultation section, aside from representations, including those from LCC and the development industry, relating to the viability and timing of the delivery of the Sustainable Neighbourhoods, no concerns have been raised by infrastructure providers to the Council's approach, which does not alter the distribution of development. Utility providers were also consulted as part of the site selection process to inform the employment allocations within the Local Plan partial update.
35. Furthermore, the Council provides annual updates to infrastructure providers, such as National Grid, including projected delivery rates for planned sites based on the latest housing trajectory. A county-wide workshop, led by LCC took place in October 2024 with representatives from National Grid, Severn Trent Water, Homes England, Arup, Planning Advisory Service, LCC and Leicestershire partner authorities to improve collaboration and engagement with these specific providers, with scope for future workshops with Highways England and Health providers.

## Summary

---

36. The Local Plan partial update does not alter the distribution of development or plan period from the adopted Local Plan. The full Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) prepared alongside the adopted Local Plan outlines the key physical, social and green infrastructure necessary to support the development strategy as outlined within the adopted Local Plan; however, the Council acknowledges the timescales and costs for delivering this infrastructure are impacted by the delays to the delivery of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood and associated section of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road.
37. Work with all relevant partners is at an advanced stage to overcome the barriers to delivering the MSSN; however, further detail will be known once the updated transport modelling and revised Masterplan are complete. This may necessitate a factual update to the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS), in consultation with infrastructure and utilities providers, to reflect latest timescales and costs for the delivery of key essential items of infrastructure to support the Local Plan partial update at Examination.
38. This approach is considered to be adequate and proportionate, and focused tightly on the policies within the scope of the partial update, which does not include those relating to the spatial strategy, housing targets or housing allocations. Furthermore, the Council is committed to an early full plan review, particularly in the context of changes to the planning system.