



24 November 2016

To Whom It May Concern,
Re: Draft Melton Local Plan

I am writing to object to the inclusion in the recently published Draft Melton Local Plan (MLP) of three potential development sites in the village of Somerby. It appears that the proposed sites are not in accordance with many of the saved policies of the Local Plan 1999 or the proposed policies in the new Draft MLP. Additionally they do not accord with the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Leicestershire Structure Plan (LSP) upon which the MLP is based.

Site SOM 1 MBC/146/14

This site is stated as being of Subgrade 3a quality agricultural land and as such should be afforded protection from development according to the NPPF guidance to protect best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land (paragraph 112). Additionally protected species have been identified within a pond on the boundary of the land (Great Crested Newts) and the site is likely to be used as terrestrial habitat for these newts.

Site SOM 2 MBC/023/16

This site is also stated as being of Subgrade 3a quality agricultural land and again should be protected as BMV land (NPPF paragraph 112)

The site also contains two areas which were previously designated as Protected Open Spaces and is designated as an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside (APAC) and therefore considered of higher landscape value than other areas (LSP SP4).

The site contains the local play area, with associated play equipment, and the football pitch used by local children. The NPPF guidance is such that existing open space, sports facilities and playing fields should not be used for development (NPPF paragraph 74).

Site SOM 3 MBC/048/13 (Reserve)

The agricultural land quality of this site is not stated. However, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Provisional Agricultural Land Classification map sheet 122 (1972) shows the site to be of Grade 2 quality. These maps should not be used for site specific purposes but until further information is available, this site should be regarded as having a higher level

of protection from loss as Grade 2 quality agricultural land. The MLP states that 95% of agricultural land is of Grade 3 quality therefore land of Grade 2 quality should be protected from irreversible loss.

All the sites would also contravene policies and aims within the Draft MLP with regard to landscape, climate change, transport and community development objectives.

Policy EN1 - Landscape

Development should not affect an area's sense of place and local distinctiveness.

These sites would irrevocably change the aspect and visual appeal of the village.

Policy EN8 - Climate Change and Policy IN1- Transport and Strategic Transport Infrastructure

Additional car journeys will conflict with the aims of the local plan with regard to climate change.

Policy IN1 states that developments should have regard to locations where travel can be minimised and does not unacceptably impact on the safety and movement of traffic on the highway network.

The proposed development sites will increase traffic movements through the village and increase the number of junctions or use already inferior junctions onto the poor main road. There is no viable alternative to the use of private cars for access to work as the bus service to Melton and Oakham does not provide an adequate alternative and it is unlikely in the extreme that work for a potential 102 households will be found within walking or cycling distance of the village.

As there is only the one road through the village the increased traffic flow will exacerbate problems which already exist. The flow of traffic is already poor due to the majority of the road being reduced to a single lane by parked cars (which have no alternative parking available) and the tight bends within the village. These bottlenecks are compounded by the increased number of large lorries, vans, coaches and farm traffic which necessitate traffic to drive on the very narrow pavements. This makes for dangerous conditions for pedestrians. This also has resulted in a number of incidents involving damage to vehicles and property. The proposed developments will increase these problems.

Education and Healthcare

The Primary school and the local GP surgery are already at a point where there is little scope for additional pupils/patients. The Draft MLP recognises that 'In the rural area a number of schools are likely to require developer contributions to help meet the costs of providing additional pupil places'. Additionally with regard to healthcare the Draft MLP states 'Further discussions and engagement is required'. Should these developments occur no changes to

the provision of primary school places or additional access to a GP will be in place before the number of people requiring such services is greatly increased.

Therefore in conclusion the proposed developments within the village of Somerby will be detrimental to the environment and the health and safety of the existing Somerby residents. To allow developments on these sites is contrary to the stated aims of the Draft MLP, and National planning guidance.

Yours Faithfully

Dr R Leverton