

# Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 This Pre Submission Draft Melton Local Plan has been published to fulfil the requirements of Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It may also be known as the publication draft plan. It is the document that the Council considers is ready to submit to the Government for independent examination. Its publication follows consultation on the Melton Local Plan Emerging Options document, which ended in April 2016. The Pre Submission Draft Plan sets out the development strategy, policies and proposals, including site allocations, which will guide land use and development in the Borough up to 2036.
- 1.2 Publication of this Pre Submission Draft Plan marks the start of a six week period during which objections and representations relating to it may be made. This six week period runs from **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 to Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2016 inclusive**. All responses that are 'duly made' at this stage are submitted to the Government for consideration by a Planning Inspector alongside the Council's Submission Draft Plan, as part of a Public Examination.
- 1.2 What is a Local Plan?**
- 1.2.1 ~~All Local Planning Authorities must prepare a Local Plan setting out planning policies for their area.~~ The Local Plan guides decisions on planning applications for development and sets out the strategic direction of the area on social, economic and environmental matters.
- 1.2.2 Key roles of the plan are to set out the amount of new homes needed for the plan period, make provision for employment development and identify the infrastructure which might be needed to support it. The plan also identifies areas of land which should be protected. In addition, the plan sets out **who** will work together to deliver the plan and **what, where, how and when** development will be delivered in the Borough.
- 1.2.3 Local Plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) and the [National Planning Practice Guidance \(NPPG\)](#). It is not simply a duplicate of national policy, but applies the objectives of national policy to the local circumstances and local priorities.
- 1.2.4 Once the Local Plan is adopted, it will be the main factor used to decide planning applications for individual proposals, alongside Neighbourhood Plans, where applicable. The Local Plan must be kept up to date and reviewed when required.

### **1.3 National Planning Policy and Guidance**

- 1.3.1 The NPPF and the NPPG are referred to throughout this document. Whilst there are other relevant central government plans, strategies and ministerial statements, the NPPF and NPPG set the ground rules and represent the main starting point for determining the matters that the Local Plan needs to deal with.

### **1.4 When will the Local Plan be completed?**

- 1.4.1 Preparation of the Local Plan has followed a number of required stages to ensure that local people and other stakeholders have had the opportunity to be fully engaged in the process, and that the contents of the plan are based on robust evidence. The key stages of plan preparation are summarised in Figure 1.
- 1.4.2 It is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted by the Council in 2018. However due to the complex nature of the work, the programme is kept under regular review. For more details on the Local Plan work programme, please see the Melton Borough Local Development Scheme (LDS), which can be found at [www.meltonplan.co.uk](http://www.meltonplan.co.uk).

### **1.5 What period does the Local Plan cover, and when will it be reviewed?**

- 1.5.1 NPPF states that Local Plans should preferably plan for a 15 year time horizon. The Melton Local Plan period is 25 years, from 01 April 2011 to 31 March 2036, but at least five of these years will have elapsed by the time the plan is adopted.
- 1.5.2 A development strategy over this amount of time has allowed a clear direction of travel to be set out for the Borough, as the plan includes enough development to effect a real step change in economic, social and environmental conditions over that time. However the Local Plan will need to be subject to regular review. Such reviews are likely to be triggered if monitoring of the delivery of the plan indicates that development is not coming forward as expected, or if other factors, such as updated evidence, becomes available, or if the development needs of neighbouring Local Authorities need to be taken into account.

### **1.6 How have we engaged on the Local Plan?**

- 1.6.1 Melton Borough Council has undertaken extensive engagement with local people, businesses, landowners, developers and other stakeholders. It has also held a number of public events and drop-in sessions across the Borough as part of the Issues and Options consultation, as well as Emerging Options. A programme of similar events is planned at this stage. The Council

also established a set of Melton Local Plan Reference Groups which have been involved in nine rounds of meetings over the last three years.

- 1.6.2 Community engagement and how it has influenced the plan at each stage (see Figure 1) has been recorded in the Melton Borough Local Plan Consultation and Engagement Statement which will be submitted to the Inspector for consideration as part of the Public Examination. This statement has been prepared in sections alongside each stage of Local Plan preparation so that people can see how their contribution has helped to shape the plan.

## **1.7 The Value Added by the Reference Groups**

- 1.7.1 The Melton Local Plan Reference Groups have been integral to the development of the Local Plan. They have ensured that the plan has evolved and been influenced by local people, and have contributed to the identification of constraints and opportunities, whilst developing an understanding of the rationale of the plan. The Reference Groups have also been party to the difficult decisions needed throughout each stage ensuring that the Reference Group members have travelled the complete journey of the plan's preparation.

- 1.7.2 Melton Borough Council established the Reference Groups in July 2013 under the following themes:

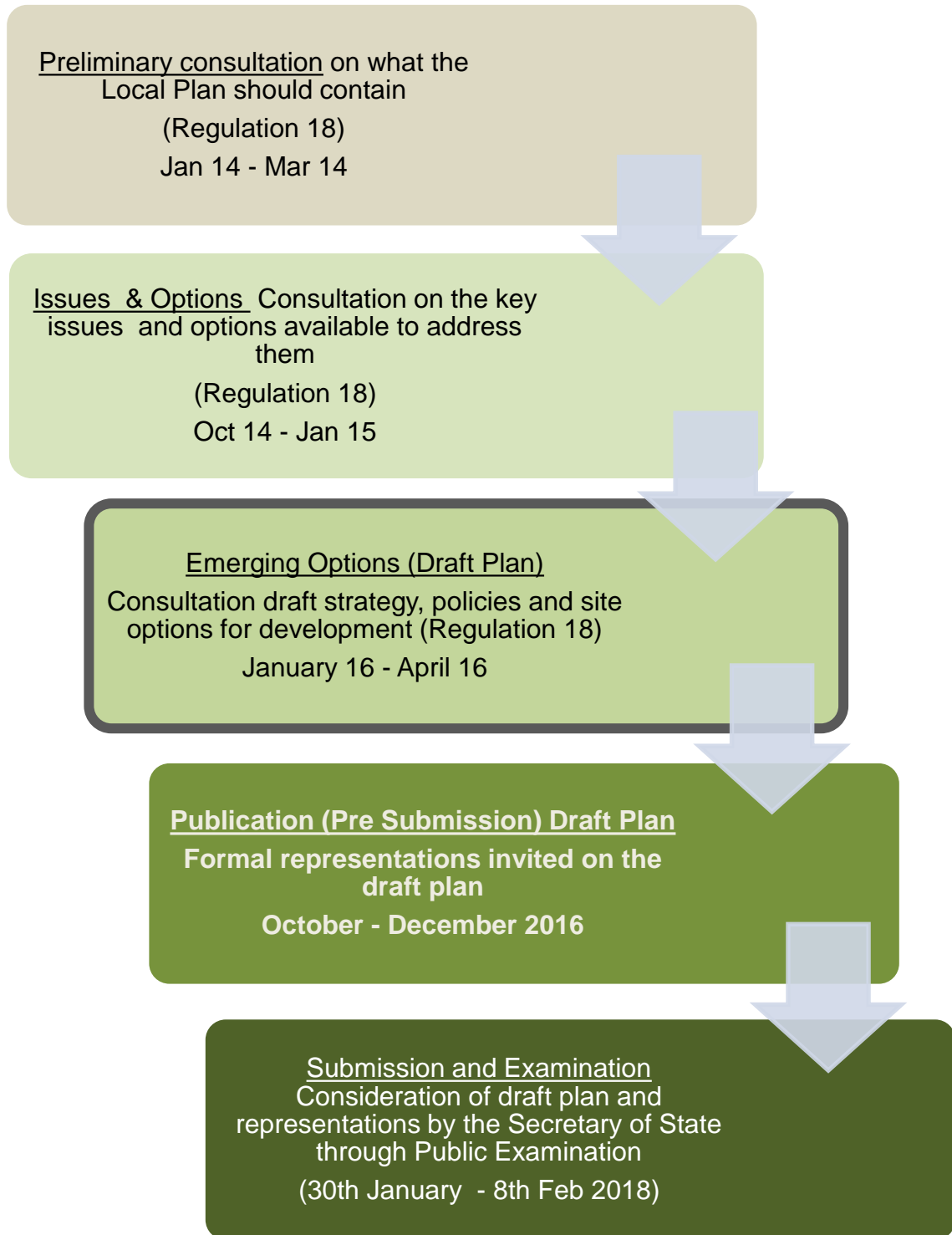
- Residents
- Employment
- Town Centre
- Landowner and Developer
- Environment
- Special Interest
- Young Persons

- 1.7.3 These themed groups have considered matters individually and together as the Local Plan has been progressed. There have been over nine rounds of Reference Group meetings, undertaking detailed discussions and workshop based exercises which have directly influenced the Local Plan. Full details of all sessions are set out in the Consultation and Engagement Statement.

## **1.8 How does the Local Plan relate to other plans and strategies for the area?**

- 1.8.1 Partnership working and co-ordination of strategies are key features of the planning system. Melton Borough Council has liaised with relevant bodies that prepare strategies affecting the Borough's future, including health, transport, housing, employment, infrastructure providers and the

environment. This is to ensure that plans and policies are as closely aligned as possible and that strategies support each other. Delivery of some of the policies and proposals in the Local Plan will rely on actions by other parties, so it is important that this plan and other key strategies are aligned.



**Figure 1: Local Plan Stages of Preparation**

- 1.8.2 The Local Plan vision and objectives are aligned with the Council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2015-2020, and address key issues set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy 2015-2020.
- 1.8.3 Together with other key local strategies, such as Melton Borough's Economic Growth Plan, these documents set out a joint vision for Melton Borough, shaping the actions and commitments to further economic, social and environmental well-being.
- 1.8.4 It is important to identify how future issues, challenges and priorities will be addressed across many different aspects and boundaries such as economic development, health, housing, education, climate change and infrastructure delivery. Key amongst these will be joint working and the Council's membership of the Melton Community Partnership, along with the Council's strong relationship with the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership.
- 1.8.5 This shows the importance of having a Local Plan that positively works with others and which carefully balances economic, social and environmental aspects in order to achieve the greatest benefits for the Borough, leading to sustainable development.

## **1.9 What are Neighbourhood Plans and how do they relate to the Local Plan?**

- 1.9.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011. By producing a Neighbourhood Plan, communities can take the lead on developing planning policies for their areas, provided that their plans are prepared in accordance with the rules set out by the Government and that any plans and policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan. When a Neighbourhood Plan has successfully completed its preparation and been adopted, it will be made part of the development plan. The policies and proposals included in the plan will then be used in determining planning applications in that area.
- 1.9.2 There are currently 14 42 Neighbourhood Plan areas designated in the Borough. Each area is at a different stage in the preparation of their plan. ~~Asfordby has progressed the furthest having submitted a draft plan to the Council in October 2016.~~ The designated areas, shown on Figure 2, are:
- Asfordby
  - Bottesford
  - Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold
  - Wyndham and Edmondthorpe
  - Ab Kettleby
  - Hoby, Rotherby, Brooksby and Ragdale

- [Croxton Kerrial and Branston](#)
- [Nether Broughton and Old Dalby](#)
- [Somerby](#)
- [Clawson, Hose and Harby](#)
- [Frisby on the Wreake](#)
- [Great Dalby](#)
- [Gaddesby](#)
- [Scalford](#)

1.9.3 Melton Borough Council is working with these communities to align timetables and aspirations. **This will include:**

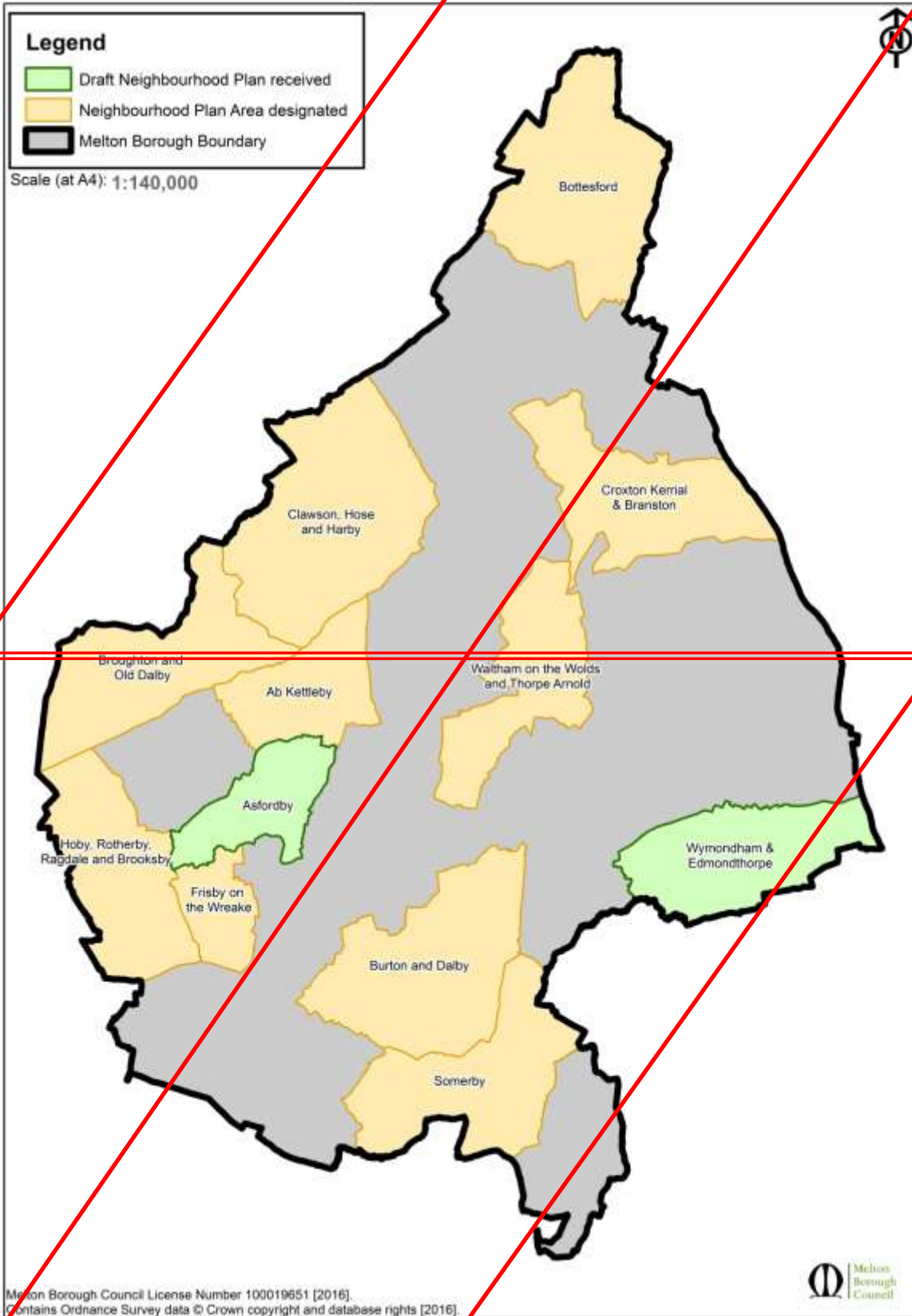
- sharing evidence to ensure Neighbourhood Plans can make the fullest use of the most up to date available information;
- providing advice and assistance in respect of the content of the NPPF and NPPG and any updates to these as it relates to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans;
- sharing its experience of how Examinations have informed earlier Neighbourhood Plans;
- providing comprehensive responses to consultations at 'Regulation 14' and 'Regulation 16' stages of Neighbourhood Plan preparation; and
- engaging positively in constructive discussions regarding innovative approaches to housing supply and other issues.

1.9.4 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017), the Council will work with communities in ensuring Neighbourhood Plans stay up to date and functional, including if necessary supporting any reviews of Neighbourhood Plans. The Council will strongly encourage Neighbourhood Plan Groups to align review periods and content with that of the Local Plan, to ensure continued alignment as and when Local Plan review is necessary. This will allow Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans to respond positively to changing needs, for example for housing or infrastructure. The Council will also use Local Plan Reviews as an opportunity to align Local Plan content to Neighbourhood Plan content where possible.

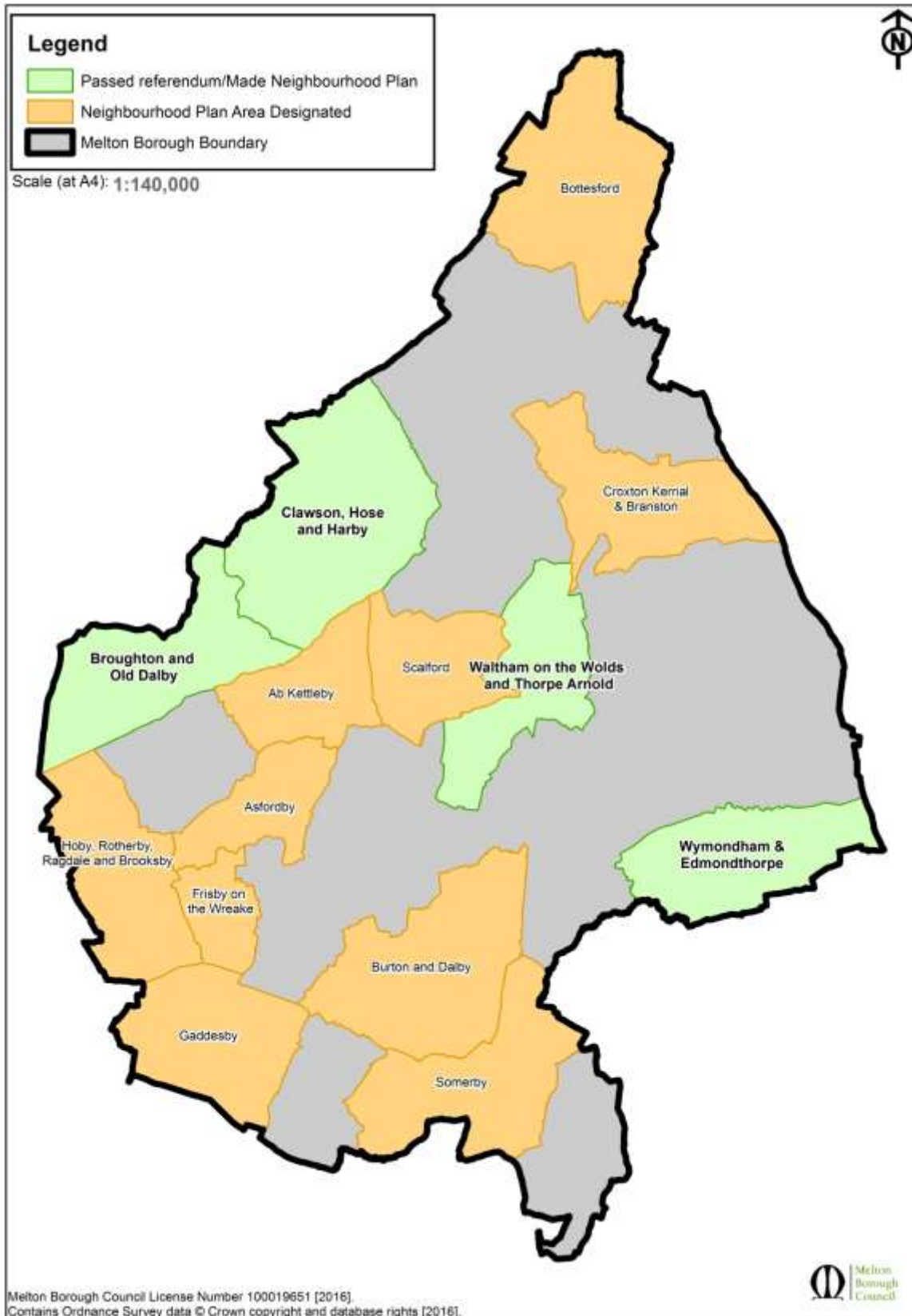
1.9.5 **For the purpose of testing conformity of Neighbourhood Plans with the Local Plan, all policies included in the Local Plan up to and including Chapter 8 are regarded as strategic policies.** Whilst the remaining policies will be relevant for determining planning applications, they are not viewed as strategic policies for the purpose of testing Local Plan conformity.

## **1.10 How does the Melton Local Plan relate to the Plans of Neighbouring Local Authorities?**

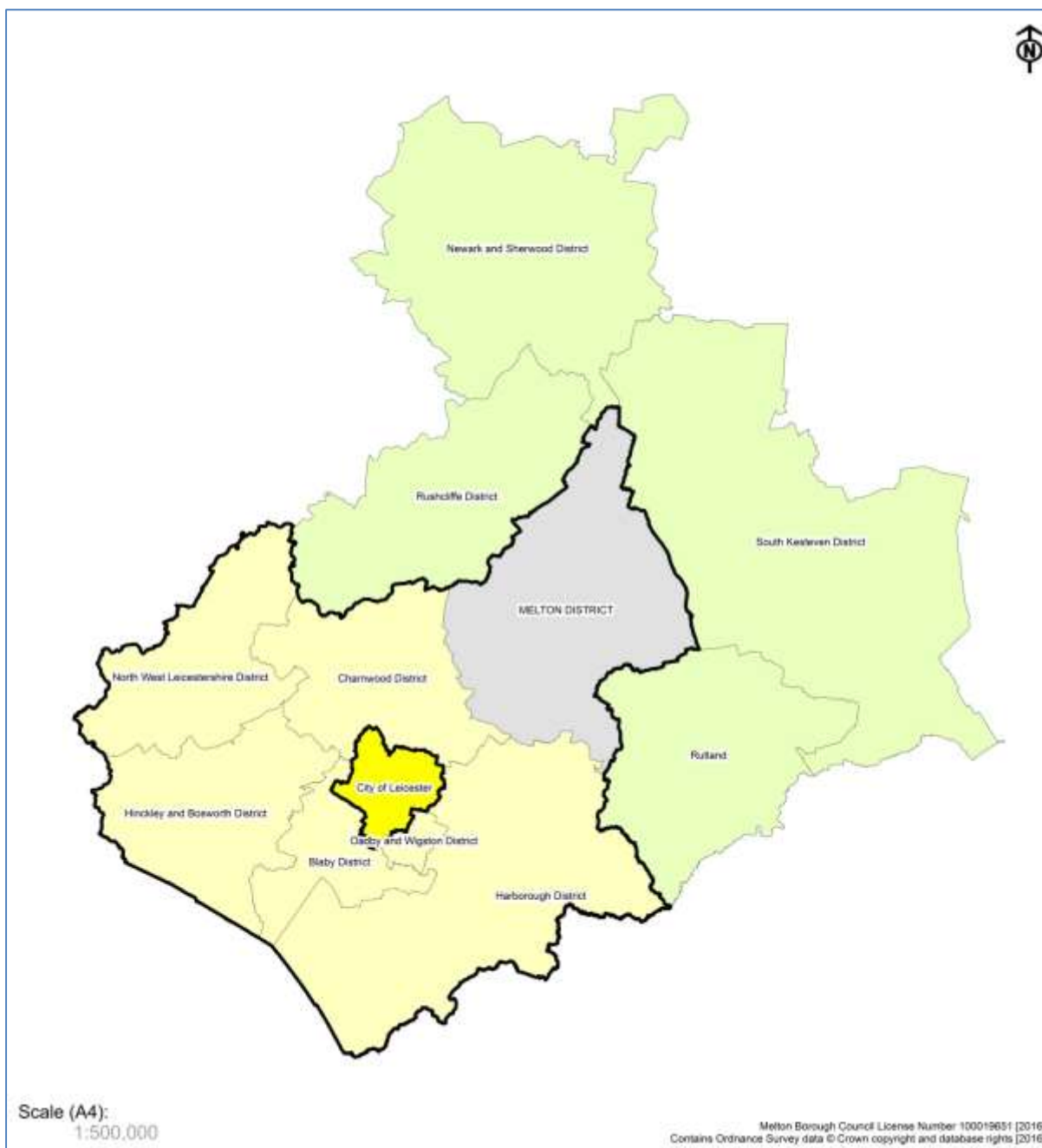
- 1.10.1 The Melton Local Plan has been prepared working jointly on strategic priorities with Leicester and the wider Leicestershire Local Authorities as well as Rushcliffe, South Kesteven, Newark and Sherwood Districts and Rutland, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils. This is known as the Duty to Co-operate. The Local Planning Authorities are required to undertake the Duty to Co-operate with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies throughout the plan-making process for strategic and cross-boundary issues in order for the plan to be found legally compliant in the examination. This Pre Submission Draft Plan is a result of joint working with our neighbouring authorities.
- 1.10.2 Melton Borough forms part of the Leicestershire and Leicester Housing Market Area and as such, the Local Authorities work closely together, particularly when planning for housing, the economy and the infrastructure needed to support growth. Figure 3 sets out Melton Borough in the context of the neighbouring Local Authorities; the thick line shows the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area.







**Figure 2: Designated Neighbourhood Plan Areas**



**Figure 3: Melton Borough in Context**

## **1.11 What will happen to previous work on the withdrawn Melton Core Strategy?**

1.11.1 The Melton Core Strategy was withdrawn from Public Examination in April 2013, closely followed by a commitment to develop a New Local Plan swiftly and engaging as many people as possible in the process.

1.11.2 This Local Plan has revisited the policy choices made through the Core Strategy and reviewed or refreshed the evidence prepared to support that plan. Previous consultation feedback from the Core Strategy has not been carried forward; instead, the Local Plan has gathered up to date views through new methods of engagement. Some of the evidence base which underpinned the withdrawn Core Strategy is still valid. It has either formed the starting point for new evidence or remains valid because no significant change has taken place in the work area.

## **1.12 What will happen to the Melton Borough Local Plan 1999?**

1.12.1 Until the New Local Plan is adopted, the development plan is provided by the saved policies of the [Melton Borough Local Plan 1999](#) and these policies, read in conjunction with the NPPF, will guide decisions on planning applications.

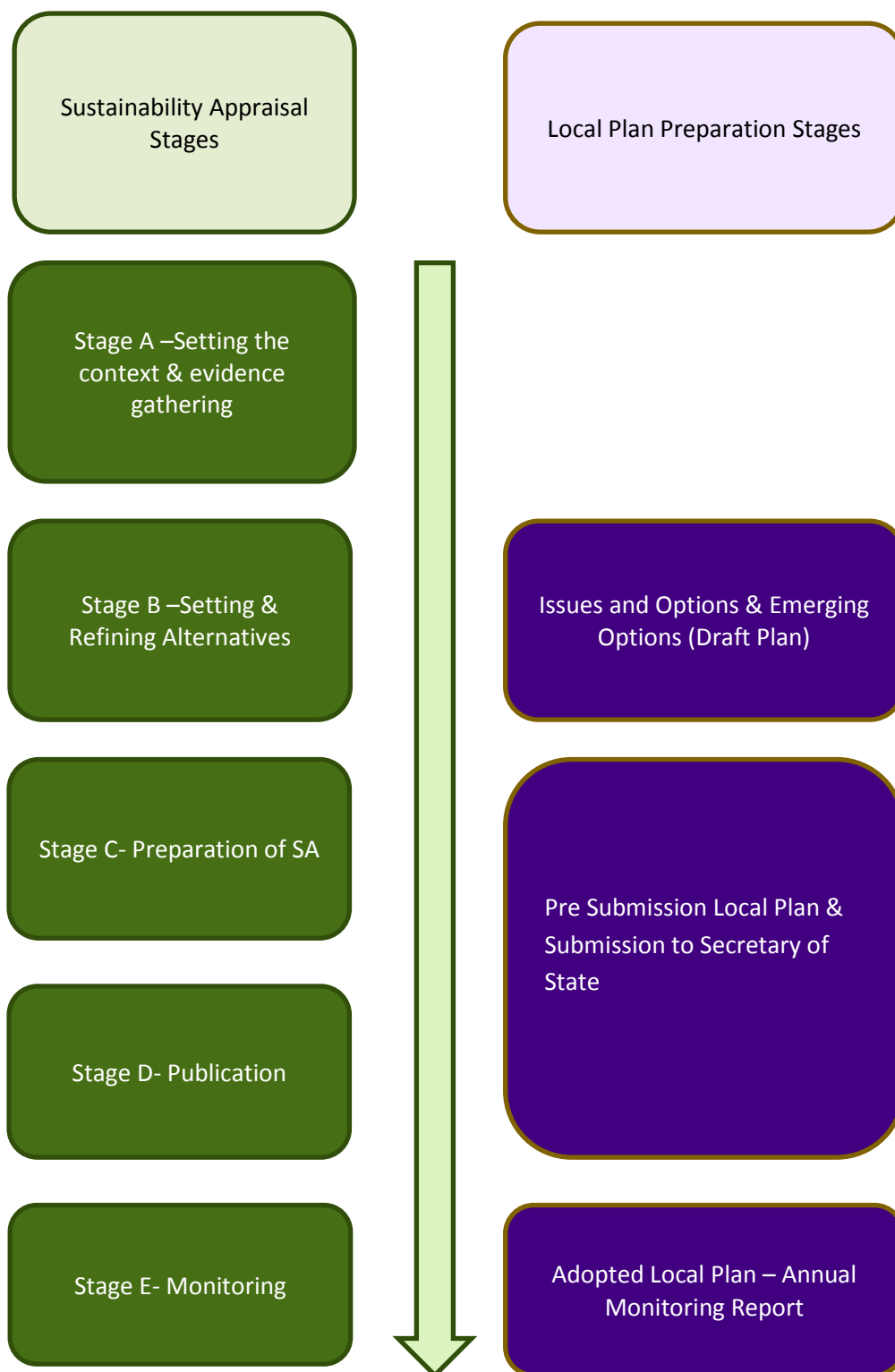
1.12.2 Once the new Local Plan is adopted, it will supersede in its entirety the saved Local Plan Policies. These are all listed in Appendix 2.

## **1.13 What is the Melton Borough Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal?**

1.13.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a statutory requirement and an essential part of assessing and selecting options for the Melton Borough Local Plan. It involves a detailed assessment of the Local Plan's objectives, options and proposed policies in terms of their environmental, social and economic impacts. Its purpose is to ensure that the policies and proposals of the local plan contribute to sustainable development.

1.13.2 The Melton Borough Local Plan has been prepared alongside an iterative SA process. The SA report published alongside this Pre Submission Draft Plan shows how reasonable alternative options and draft policies and proposals have been assessed against the sustainability objectives and the cumulative sustainability effect of all the policies and proposals. The SA process incorporates the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as well as an assessment of equalities and diversity.

1.13.3 Figure 4 shows how the SA has been developed in stages alongside the preparation of the Local Plan. At each stage of Local Plan preparation, an appropriate assessment of the effects of Local Plan options or draft policies has been set out in an SA report.



**Figure 4: Sustainability Appraisal Process**

## 1.14 What is the Melton Borough Local Plan Evidence Base?

1.14.1 Local Plans must be based on robust evidence. This evidence is extensive and often technical in nature, and has informed all stages of plan preparation. It is available to view alongside the Pre Submission Draft Plan on [www.meltonplan.co.uk](http://www.meltonplan.co.uk). At the end of each chapter, the main pieces of evidence relevant to that section are listed.