



**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

Your Ref

Our Ref CRTR-POL-2023-40362

Thursday 21 December 2023

Dear Melton Borough Council,

Melton Local Plan Update: Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above document.

We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) is a statutory consultee in the Development Management process, and as such we welcome the opportunity to input into planning policy related matters to ensure that our waterways are protected, safeguarded and enhanced within an appropriate policy framework.

Please find below the Trust's response to the Local Plan Partial Update Issues and Options consultation. We hope that the comments provided are clear and helpful. We are willing to continue to work with you, to meet and discuss these points for clarity and to seek to work together towards a high-quality borough that relates positively with the waterway network.

Within Melton Borough, the Trust owns and maintains some 18km of the Grantham Canal together with Knipton Reservoir, which provides a water supply to the canal. The Grantham Canal was closed to navigation in 1936 (under Section 38 of the LNER (General Power) Act 1936) with the proviso that a two-foot level of water should be maintained to support agricultural needs. Under the Transport Act 1968, waterways were classified as Cruising Waterways or Commercial Waterways with those not listed as either being designated as 'remainder' waterways. The Grantham Canal is a 'remainder' waterway. Since then, the canal has become a valuable wildlife habitat. The canal is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) between Rectory Bridge (Br. 44) at Harby and Redmile Mill Bridge (Br. 53) at Redmile. The particular interest of the site relates to the aquatic vegetation in the canal and the towpath grassland along with associated habitats such as emergent vegetation, trees and hedgerows.

The Grantham Canal Society has worked extensively to restore parts of the canal and the Grantham Canal Partnership (GCP) was established in 1997 with the stated aim *"to reopen the Grantham Canal to full navigation from the River Trent in Nottingham to the centre of Grantham"*. The Trust, along with Melton Borough Council (and the other local authorities whose jurisdiction includes the canal), the Grantham Canal Society, Natural England, the Wildlife Trust and the Inland Waterways Association are all members of the GCP and support this aspiration.

Inland waterways are acknowledged as significant green infrastructure, but they also function as blue infrastructure, serving as a catalyst for regeneration; a sustainable travel resource for commuting and leisure; a natural health service acting as blue gyms and supporting physical and healthy outdoor activity; an ecological and

Canal & River Trust Planning Team

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW

W: canalrivertrust.org.uk

biodiversity resource; a tourism, cultural, sport, leisure and recreation resource; a heritage landscape; a contributor to water supply and transfer, drainage and flood management. The waterway network forms part of the historic environment, the character, cultural and social focus of the area.

Policy EC8 of the adopted Local Plan includes support for the restoration of the Grantham Canal and we note that deletion of this policy is not recommended. Both Options 2 and 3 propose additions/amendments to the policy although neither indicates whether the support for future restoration of the Grantham Canal is intended to continue to be included. We consider that it is still important to retain a positive reference to the Council's support for future restoration of the canal, as this would still have a positive effect on the local economy through encouraging visitors to the area.

Policy EN3 includes the Grantham Canal as one of the primary green infrastructure areas where enhancements are sought. The Trust considers the proposed amendment of this policy to be appropriate providing it continues to offer support to the enhancement of the canal as a valuable green infrastructure asset within the Borough.

Policy EN11 aims to minimise flood risk and specifically notes that development adjacent to the Grantham Canal should consider the residual risk associated with any overtopping of the canal or breaches of the canal. The Trust therefore agrees that deletion of the policy would not be an appropriate option. The Trust considers that Options 2 and 3 both represent appropriate options for amending the policy. Whilst Option 2 does not explicitly state that reference to the canal should be retained, we consider that it should be if this approach is taken. Option 3 specifically identifies retention of reference to the canal and the Trust agrees that this is appropriate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Dickinson MRTPI
Area Planner

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/planning-and-design>

Canal & River Trust Planning Team

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW

W: canalrivertrust.org.uk