

# Chapter 6: Melton's Economy – Strong and Competitive

## 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Melton Borough benefits from a vibrant economy, underpinned by a significant and predominantly food related manufacturing sector, concentrated on the market town of Melton Mowbray. The town is the main economic centre for the Borough, providing a base for the larger employers and being the main retail and service destination for local people and visitors.
- 6.1.2 Melton Mowbray is England's "Rural Capital of Food". Its town centre is the main destination for shopping and leisure within the Borough, with a rich, diverse and distinctive retail and other uses offer, enhanced by a weekly livestock market and twice-weekly Farmers' Market.
- 6.1.3 Businesses in the rural areas also play an important part in supporting the local economy. There is a diversity of mostly smaller rural enterprises in and around the Borough's villages, including farm diversification, from small scale up to regional tourism enterprises.
- 6.1.4 The Borough currently has very low levels of unemployment, but also high levels of low paid/low skills employment, especially within Melton Mowbray. This is attributed to the presence of a number of large manufacturers, particularly in food related businesses, and a reliance on agriculture.

## 6.2 The Economic context

- 6.2.1 Economic growth is a key objective of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The NPPF defines economic development as:

*"Development including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development)"*

- 6.2.2 Melton Borough's economy sits within its wider Leicestershire context and the Local Plan's economic strategy is aligned with the aspirations contained within the economic strategy of the [Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership](#).
- 6.2.3 As well as contributing to wider economic goals, the Borough Council is committed to working with the private sector to deliver employment opportunities that meet the identified employment needs for current and future local residents and those who work in the Borough.

6.2.4 [The Melton Borough Community Partnership](#) has set out priorities for Melton Borough's economy in its [Melton Economic Development Strategy \(MEDS\)](#). These are reflected in the Local Plan which aims to deliver those sustainable economic development priorities spatially, so as to enhance the prosperity of the Borough's residents. Unless there is any significant step change in approach, it is expected that this Local Plan will be flexible enough to accommodate any reviews to the MEDS over the plan period.

### **6.3 Identifying Employment Growth Sectors**

6.3.1 Employment in Melton Borough has historically been provided through farming and food production. However over the last 50 years, jobs in manufacturing and services have grown significantly as a proportion of overall jobs. Manufacturing employment in Melton Borough has largely been provided by significant companies such as Masterfoods (pet food producer), Melton Foods (Samworth Brothers), Kettleby Foods, Long Clawson Dairy and Arla Foods.

6.3.2 Nationwide, the service sector has grown significantly and continues to grow, whilst manufacturing has started to decline. This is not fully reflected in the Borough of Melton where manufacturing is forecast to experience significant growth up to 2036.

6.3.3 Whilst Melton Borough's food and drink specialism provides bespoke opportunities and a degree of local resilience, there is a need to monitor closely how this sector will perform in the future.

6.3.4 Growth in a range of economic sectors is essential for the Borough's economic future. A more resilient and higher performing economy will need to provide a greater diversity of jobs in a broader range of industries. The employment study indicates that the main areas of forecast employment growth are manufacturing, professional and other private services and information and communication (see Table 11).

6.3.5 Melton Mowbray also has the potential to attract and retain knowledge based industries e.g. PERA Business Park, which are key to competitive economies. They include enterprises such as:

- Hi tech Manufacturing
- Finance & Banking
- Business Services
- Communications
- Computing
- Research and Development; and
- Media

6.3.6 These enterprises usually require high quality sites in accessible attractive locations, and may be best located in and around the town centre, and/or integrated into mixed use schemes, or could be provided for as part of a single large business park.

Employment Sector	Jobs (2011)	%	Jobs (2036)	%
Agriculture, energy and water <sup>1</sup>	860	4	850	3
Manufacturing	4,410	19	6,120	24
Construction	1,490	7	1,740	7
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	2,050	9	2,560	10
Transport and communication <sup>2</sup>	1,540	7	1,840	7
Financial, Real Estate, Professional and Administrative activities <sup>3</sup>	4,400	19	5,180	20
Public administration, education and health	4,290	19	3,950	15
Wholesale and Retail	3,560	16	3,780	15
Total Jobs (all sectors)	22,620	100	26,020	100 <sup>4</sup>

**Table 11: Forecast change in jobs by employment sector 2011-2036**

(Source: Employment Land Study, 2015)

6.3.7 Based on previous rates of delivery for each sector, the majority of B class employment growth has been in B1(a) offices and B2 manufacturing. The current main employment sectors are shown in Table 12 below.

Employment Sector	People Employed	%
Agriculture, energy and water	1,080	4
Manufacturing	4,416	17
Construction	1,982	8
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	5,341	20
Transport and communication	1,705	6
Financial, Real Estate, Professional and Administrative activities	3,568	14
Public administration, education and health	6,780	26
Other	1,508	6
Total Jobs (all sectors)	26,380	100

Note: The figures relate to people living in the Borough and those travelling to work outside it (not jobs in the Borough).

**Table 12: Melton Borough Residents' Employment by Sector (2011 Census)**

6.3.8 However, historic trends may not be replicated going forward. Employment forecasts contained in the employment land study indicate that the main growth areas are likely to be in the manufacturing and service industry sectors, as shown in Table 11.

<sup>1</sup> Includes Agriculture (650) Extraction and mining (10) and utilities (200)

<sup>2</sup> Includes Transport (1,020) and Information and Communication (520)

<sup>3</sup> Includes 'Professional and other services' (4,220) and 'Finance and Insurance' (180)

<sup>4</sup> Does not sum due to rounding.

6.3.9 The forecast changes in employment by employment sector over the next 20 years and to the local economy in general have informed the assessment of how much employment land is needed.

## **6.4 Ensuring an appropriate labour supply**

6.4.1 A number of the Borough's key employers are currently unable to grow due to a lack of local labour and a shortage of freehold development sites available. If businesses are unable to expand in the Borough for these reasons, there is the very real possibility they will look to relocate out of the Borough. Even without relocation, high levels of commuting workforce coming from outside the Borough is not a sustainable model.

6.4.2 The Melton Employment Land Study (2015) found that there is likely to be a 7.1-7.9% increase in jobs in the Borough and an increase in the likely demands for employment land. This, combined with an existing low unemployment rate (only 0.9% of the working age population claim Job Seekers allowance), puts pressure on employers looking for additional staff and may force some to halt plans for expansion or employ staff from out of the Borough, leading to a likely increase in unsustainable modes of transport being used.

## **6.5 Providing Jobs**

6.5.1 The Borough Council, in line with government guidance, is seeking to achieve sustainable growth. This forms part of the rationale as to why the planned housing requirement is more than the objectively assessed housing need for the borough, as identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment, and why the Spatial Strategy seeks to use new development to enhance Melton Mowbray's local and sub-regional role, whilst also allowing villages to develop sustainably. The Local Plan's strategy for providing jobs is therefore based on an assessment of employment and economic development needs and also the employment needs generated from new housing.

6.5.2 To enable businesses in the Borough to grow, increased labour supply must be provided in the locality. More jobs require an increase in the working age population, which will arise from planned new households. Moreover, in allocating 30ha of employment land, businesses have the opportunity to expand. These measures, combined with the delivery of strategic infrastructure such as the Melton Mowbray East Distributor Road, will pave the way for internal business growth and external investment coming into the town, which will represent a step change from trend based employment growth forecasts.

## 6.6 Amount of Employment Land Needed

- 6.6.1 Historically, Melton Borough has had a number of large employment sites with an ample supply of employment land. The three largest sites, Asfordby Business Park, Holwell Works, and Leicester Road Business Park, provide a substantial part of the employment land in the Borough.
- 6.6.2 In identifying an appropriate amount of employment land, the Local Plan seeks to align provision with the anticipated growth in jobs. More jobs require an increase in the working age population, which will arise from new households. More specifically, the policies seek to allow flexibility maximising the opportunities for and choice of employment that matches the available local employment and the future employee skills base. This will help to ensure that the Borough of Melton retains its economic competitiveness, meeting local economic needs and reducing the need for large scale out-commuting.
- 6.6.3 The Employment Land Study (2015) suggests there is a ‘realistic deliverable supply’ of 19.46ha of employment land (with planning permission) and that the Local Plan should provide for an additional 30.29ha of employment land. The requirement for employment land is based on an assessment of historic employment land take up in the Borough, and local intelligence about the future needs of businesses already in the Borough and those that might want to locate here. The plan takes account of changing economic conditions, the need to offer a balanced portfolio of sites and the presence of deliverability constraints that may affect some sites, and has made an allowance for all these to offer flexibility in the overall requirements.
- 6.6.4 Taking account of the above, Policy SS2 – ‘Development Strategy’ has identified a need to deliver 50.75ha of employment land in the Borough up to 2036.
- 6.6.5 Table 13 sets out the employment land supply for the Borough. It identifies completions since 2011 and sites that have planning permission (commitments), and sets out the additional land needed during the plan period.

	Requirements 2011-2036	Completions 2011 - 2015	Commitments as at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015	Residual 2015 - 2036
Employment land (in Hectares)	50.75ha	7.5ha	19.5ha	23.75ha

Table 13: Employment position summary table

- 6.6.6 The Council will the monitor progress against these targets through its annual monitoring report.

6.6.7 Reference to employment land in the Local Plan refers mainly to offices, industrial space and warehouses. These are known as “Class B Uses” and are defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). These are set out in Table 14 below.

<i>Employment Land (Class B Land Uses)</i>
<i>1. B1: Business</i>
<i>a) Offices, other than a use within Class A2 (Financial Services)</i>
<i>b) Research and development of products or processes</i>
<i>c) Light industry</i>
<i>2. B2: General Industrial</i>
<i>Use for the carrying out of an industrial process other than one falling in class B1</i>
<i>3. B8: Storage &amp; Distribution</i>
<i>Use for storage or distribution centre (includes open air storage)</i>

Table 14: Use Classes for business related uses

## **6.7 Employment Locations and Providing Jobs**

6.7.1 The Local Plan seeks to sustain existing viable employment sites and make new land available for investors to create new jobs in the Borough, and for existing businesses to expand.

6.7.2 Research including consultation with local business and property agents led to recommendations in the Council’s Employment Land Study (2015) that the majority of additional employment allocations should be in and around Melton Mowbray, but that the role of the rural economy also needs to be recognised. This gives rise to two strands of the spatial strategy, ‘Melton Mowbray Employment Growth’ and ‘The Rural Economy’, dealt with separately below.

## **6.8 Melton Mowbray Employment Growth**

6.8.1 Melton Mowbray is the main economic centre for the Borough, providing the larger employers and the main retail and service destination for local people and visitors. The Spatial Strategy seeks to use new development to enhance Melton Mowbray’s local and sub-regional role but also allows villages to develop sustainably.

6.8.2 The Local Plan therefore provides for an allocation of 20ha of employment land as part of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood (Chapter 4 - 4.2.3) and identifies 10ha of additional land (achieved by remodelling and intensifying use) within the Asfordby Business Park, both targeted towards the manufacturing and industrial sectors and intended to be Melton’s prime locations for economic growth. As part of the proposals elsewhere in this plan for a distributor road, attention should be paid to ensuring an effective connection with St Bartholomews Way, to ensure an effective link from

Asfordby Business Park to the town's arterial roads out of the town, distributor roads around the town and easy access on to the wider road network.

### 6.8.3 Offices

Notwithstanding previous rates of office delivery, the demand for land for additional office space in Melton Mowbray is perceived to be relatively low, in part due to premises available in rural areas and high quality office accommodation provided at PERA Business Park on Nottingham Road. The majority of new office development is expected to be delivered within Melton Mowbray town centre and/or as part of an extension to PERA. Some additional growth may be appropriate as part of the 'local centres' associated with the strategic developments to North and South of Melton Mowbray, which may also provide some small business start-up space.

### Policy EC1 – Employment Growth in Melton Mowbray

The Council will seek to meet the employment needs of its residents and the wider economy, by providing sufficient new employment land for the period up to 2036 in the following locations:

1. 10 hectares of employment land within **on brownfield land available at** Asfordby Business Park for class B employment uses (as shown on the Policies Map);
2. 20 hectares of employment land, located off Leicester Road, as part of the South Melton Mowbray Sustainable Neighbourhood; and
3. 1 hectare of employment land for B1(a) office space within or adjacent to Melton Mowbray town centre and/or including PERA Business Park.

Proposals for employment development on allocated and non-allocated sites in Melton Mowbray will be allowed where:

4. The site is located in an area that can be easily accessed by public transport, walking and cycling, and can be satisfactorily accessed by service and other employment related vehicles;
5. It provides a mix of B-class employment uses that seek to meet local business and employment needs;
6. The sequential approach to town centre uses is applied where offices (use class B1(a)) are proposed.

## 6.9 Melton Borough's Rural Economy

- 6.9.1 Whilst Melton Mowbray will be the focus for economic growth, the contribution of a diversity of rural enterprises to the Borough's economy now and in the

future cannot be underplayed. Outside the town, these operate in and around villages across the Borough, including the larger ones. Rural enterprises can operate differently to those in the town, and whilst they include large employers, such as Long Clawson Dairy, Masterfoods at Waltham and Ragdale Hall, businesses tend to be of a smaller scale, and include many start ups.

- 6.9.2 Rural businesses often have strong local connections in terms of proximity and their local workforce, but also enjoy the attractive rural environment and the connections to a number of major centres such as Nottingham and Leicester, and to the national transport network.
- 6.9.3 The Local Plan must guide development in a way which ensures that the natural and physical environment (infrastructure) remains attractive and a local workforce can be provided to service business. This means additional employment growth in the villages through a positive approach to the rural economy and rural diversification. The Local Plan policy does not allocate specific sites in the rural areas. Instead, it encourages and allows small businesses to start up and expand to medium sized enterprises, where this can be achieved without any significant adverse impacts on the environment, local infrastructure and amenity.
- 6.9.4 Employment growth in the rural areas will be supported where it contributes to the long term sustainability of villages and is sympathetic to the rural character and attractiveness of the area. Increased homeworking and small business start-ups are anticipated over the plan period, particularly in light of improvements to broadband speeds.
- 6.9.5 In order to support the rural economy, where agricultural buildings are no longer needed for agriculture, they can be converted to provide employment opportunities. Conversions can bring environmental improvements, as good, sensitive design and general improvements can enhance the wider visual appearance of the area.
- 6.9.6 However it is also important to consider whether development is appropriate in its location, so that any significant numbers of visitors or employees can access it by means other than the car.
- 6.9.7 Local planning policies are also required to support farm diversification into agricultural and other land-based rural businesses such as farm shops, holiday accommodation and farm based processing and packaging, as these can help maintain working farms. Enterprises relating to the keeping or breeding of horses are also prevalent in the Borough's rural areas.



6.9.8 Schemes brought forward that generate additional traffic should contain sufficient car parking to avoid exacerbating the dangerous blockages to roads or footpaths that occur, particularly within settlements.

## **6.10 Food Enterprise Zone and 'Food and Farming' Local Development Order**

6.10.1 Melton Mowbray is England's "Rural Capital of Food" and whilst Melton's food and drink specialism provides bespoke opportunities and a degree of local resilience, farm businesses are under pressure to respond to pricing volatility and to adapt to environmental challenges which adversely impact productivity and farm income.

6.10.2 In February 2015, Melton Borough Council in partnership with the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), successfully responded to DEFRA's national call for pilots to support a 'Food and Farming' Local Development Order (LDO). This pilot will ultimately deliver the planned growth of Leicestershire's only Food Enterprise Zone (FEZ). The LDO element was completed in June 2016 and was designed to allow a specific range of development to be fast tracked over a two year period (which can be extended after a formal review to five years) to enable new and existing food and farm based businesses to innovate, grow, and adapt to changing market opportunities, delivering enterprise and additional jobs for the local and sub-regional economy.

6.10.3 A key focus of the FEZ will be to improve integration within the food chain, linking the farmers at the beginning of the food chain, the manufacturers who add value to the food, the distribution partners who deliver it, the businesses/ establishments who sell it, and the customers who buy the high quality food products. There is also a significant export opportunity for the 'Made in Britain' brand as well as the historic Melton Mowbray 'covenant' and branding as the 'Rural Capital of Food'.

6.10.4 It is the ambition of the FEZ and LDO component to inspire development that contributes to a growing rural economy by seeing an increase in productivity and sector output. The initiative also recognises that investment in high-level skills training is needed to support the sub-regional and UK agri-food sector response to food security and food sustainability issues.

6.10.5 The NPPF indicates in paragraph 28 that 'planning policies should support sustainable growth in rural areas, in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development'. Economic diversity and agricultural diversification will therefore be encouraged specifically via the LDO, subject to it being demonstrated that the enterprise clearly enhances the food and farming supply chain and proposals involve the re-use of existing redundant buildings, or are entirely contained within an

existing enclosed area with no significant adverse impact on the locality. Examples of proposals for the re-use and adaptation, or in certain defined circumstances, the replacement of buildings or new buildings/extensions, are provided below:

- Uses and small scale developments to allow farm diversification
- 'Farm shops'
- New development to allow existing businesses to grow
- Uses directly related to agriculture and where the enterprise forms part of the food and farming supply chain.

## Policy EC2 – Employment Growth in the Rural Area (Outside Melton Mowbray)

In order to support the rural economy, the Council will allow for:

- A) new employment land to be provided in rural settlements; and/or;
- B) rural employment proposals which create or safeguard jobs.

The following types of rural employment development are acceptable:

1. The re-use of existing farm buildings and well-designed new buildings for employment;
2. Schemes for farm diversification involving small-scale business and commercial development that help to support the viability and retention of the farm holding;
3. Small-scale tourism proposals, including visitor accommodation, such as glamping, camping and bed & breakfast;
4. The expansion of existing rural businesses, dependent upon the nature of the activities involved, the character of the site and its accessibility;
5. Small scale employment development to meet local needs; and
6. The use of land for agriculture, forestry and equestrian activity.

Subject to the proposal:

7. Being of an appropriate scale for its location;
8. Having sufficient accessible off road car parking provided on site or in the nearby vicinity to cater for the use proposed.

### **6.11 Protecting existing employment areas**

6.11.1 The Council is mindful of the National Planning Policy Framework, which advises that:

“Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose”

6.11.2 Taking account of the findings of the Melton Employment Land Review 2015, the Council considers that all of the Borough’s network of employment premises and land is essential to serve the needs of the existing economy, to help maintain a wide portfolio of employment sites, and to provide jobs, especially in the rural area. Without it, there could be a negative effect on the local economy and the Council’s aims for sustainable development.

6.11.3 The Borough Council will seek to ensure that where existing employment sites are economically viable, contributing to the economic growth of the Borough and the wider economy and providing valuable jobs for local people, they remain in employment use. This reflects the findings of the Employment Land Study 2015, which indicated that a number of employment sites should be safeguarded from non B class uses, including:

- Masterfoods HQ, Waltham.
- Asfordby Business Park, Asfordby Hill
- Holwell Works (Melton Mowbray Business Park), Asfordby Hill
- Stanton PLC (St Gobain), Asfordby Hill
- Saxby Road Area (incorporating Hudson Road Estate), Melton Mowbray
- Crown Business Park (incorporating the Six Hills Area), Old Dalby
- Old Dalby Trading Estate, Old Dalby
- Melton and Kettleby Foods, Melton Mowbray
- Leicester Road Estate, Melton Mowbray.

6.11.4 However, the Borough Council recognises that as the economy changes, the requirements for the scale and type of land and premises needed may also change.

6.11.5 The Council will continue to monitor planning applications that affect the provision of current employment land, to ensure that any net gains and losses are recorded and appropriate action taken to ensure that employment provision and local need are, as far as possible, balanced.

### Policy EC3 – Existing Employment Sites

The following employment sites and industrial estates across the Borough will be retained for employment uses (within Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order).

#### Employment facilities listed for retention

EC3(i): Masterfoods HQ, Waltham.

EC 3 (ii): Asfordby Business Park, Asfordby Hill  
EC3(iii): Holwell Works (Melton Mowbray Business Park), Asfordby Hill  
EC3 (iv): Stanton Plc (St Gobain), Asfordby Hill  
EC3 (v): Saxby Road Area (Incorporating Hudson Road Estate), Melton Mowbray  
EC3 (vi): Crown Business Park, Old Dalby  
EC3(vii): Six Hill Business Area, Six Hills  
EC3(viii): Old Dalby Trading Estate, Old Dalby  
EC3 (ix): Melton And Kettleby Foods, Melton Mowbray  
EC3 (x): Leicester Road Estate, Melton Mowbray.

~~Other Key employment sites~~

EC3 (xi): Normanton Lane, Bottesford.  
EC3 (xii): Orston Lane, Bottesford.  
EC3 (xiii): Hickling Lane Employments Sites, Long Clawson.  
EC3(xiv): Snow Hill Industrial Estate, Melton Mowbray  
EC3 (xv): Burrough Court, Burrough on the Hill

Proposals to change the use of **all of part** of an an existing employment site ~~and~~ **or** allocation to non-employment uses will be permitted where:

- it can be demonstrated, through an acceptable viability study, that the site is no longer economically viable for employment purposes in the long term; and
- there are alternative employment facilities available to meet employment needs ~~in the same settlement~~ or within the local vicinity; and
- the site is not well related to existing centres (large, existing or planned areas of population, employment or commercial activity) or is not able to be easily accessed by public transport, walking or cycling; or
- its release would offer significant benefits to the local area **in particular where proposals have demonstrable community support, for example through an allocation in a made Neighbourhood Plan**

Proposals for non B-class employment uses on employment sites will be allowed where they would support the effective operation of that site and would not be more appropriately located in town centres **or are required to make the site viable and are not in conflict with policies contained within this Local Plan.**

## **6.12 Holwell Works and Asfordby Business Park**

6.12.1 The Holwell Works and Asfordby Business Park represent significant opportunities and challenges for the Borough. **The area identified as Asfordby Business Park in Figure 8 and on the Policies Map is the entire business park area that is being marketed for employment uses. It includes at least 10ha of brownfield land, and it is this that should be the focus of growth during the**

plan period. Any expansion beyond this, onto the greenfield part of the site (8.6ha in the north west corner), should have appropriate regard to the adjacent Grade I listed Welby Church and its setting, and consultation should take place with Historic England to ensure this. ~~Both sites are identified on Figure 8.~~ Studies have suggested that the Holwell Works site is contaminated affecting the viability of appropriate development. Asfordby Business Park is under occupied, but this may be partly due to units only being available on a leasehold arrangement and therefore not attractive to potential freehold investors. ~~Improved access to both sites would be required to allow significant major redevelopment/remodelling. This is likely to be secured as part of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road.~~ Improved access will be considered as part of the Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy and will likely be secured through development specific mitigation. Both sites are identified on Figure 8.

6.12.2 Both sites are still seen as significant opportunities for the Borough, as part of a wider economic development strategy. They are both well serviced by water and power and benefit from a rail connection. Both sites represent significant brownfield opportunities for the Borough.

6.12.3 The starting point in considering the future of these sites is establishing whether they are viable employment opportunities going forward. If not, there may be potential to consider other land uses.



**Figure 8: Asfordby Business Park and Holwell Industrial Area**

## 6.13 Other employment proposals

6.13.1 The Local Plan and the wider economic development strategy for the Borough seek to generate a climate where investors will create sustainable jobs, either by expanding existing business, setting up new enterprises or through relocations to the area. The Local Plan policies allow flexibility in the amount and type of employment land in the Borough. The policies are not prescriptive in the mix of employment types (other than seeking to locate office uses to town centre locations).

6.13.2 The Local Plan is seeking to plan positively for economic growth. It provides flexibility of sites to meet the growing employment needs of the Borough and the wider economic area. The proposed allocations allow for high employment retention rates and limit the impacts of unsustainable commuting. The employment sites identified are 'deliverable' during the plan period and are in sustainable locations that are attractive to a commercial market. Notwithstanding this, the Council recognises that other 'speculative' employment sites and proposals for mixed-uses incorporating employment might be proposed during the plan period. The following policy seeks to plan positively for such circumstances.

### Policy EC4 – Other Employment and Mixed-use Proposals

Proposals for employment and mixed-use developments (*incorporating employment uses*) outside of existing or allocated employment sites will be encouraged where:

- the employment component of the scheme can be satisfactorily accessed by service and other employment related vehicles;
- the proposed uses are not more appropriately located in town centres;
- the site is located in an area that can **or has the scope to** be easily accessed by public transport, walking and cycling;
- the mix of uses does not result in an unacceptable impact on residents by reason of noise, disturbance, air quality or other emissions caused by the use of the building or the vehicle movements associated with it;
- the proposal does not adversely affect land which is of particular significance to the form and character of the settlement; and
- the proposal is of an appropriate scale in the context of the existing settlement.

## 6.14 Retail, Leisure and the Town Centre

### New retail and commercial leisure requirements

6.14.1 In order to plan effectively for new retail and commercial leisure developments, the Council has gathered evidence of the amount and type of such development that is required to help to meet identified needs.

6.14.2 The Melton Borough Retail Study 2015 assessed the future needs for retail and commercial leisure development across the Borough of Melton between 2015 and 2036. The study indicated that there was no demonstrable need for additional 'convenience' retail floorspace, and that 'comparison' floorspace would only be needed after 2021. Table 15 indicates the level of net and gross comparison floorspace needed over the plan period.

	By 2021	2026	2031	2036
Net	1,020 sqm	3,020 sqm	5,080 sqm	8,870 sqm
Gross	1,450 sqm	4,310 sqm	7,260 sqm	12,670 sqm

Table 15: Cumulative net and gross floorspace required in Melton Borough 2015-2036

6.14.3 Melton Borough Council will work proactively with the private sector and other partners such as the Melton BID (Business Improvement District) to deliver the comparison retail need throughout the plan period to in a way that positively improves the overall retail offer of Melton Mowbray town centre. This could include realising development, redevelopment and land assembly opportunities arising from the Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy and/or land currently in beneficial uses. Furthermore, the Council will investigate opportunities through its Town Centre Strategy (a commitment made in the Melton Growth & Prosperity Plan, 2018-2022) to ensure this need is met.

## 6.15 Melton Mowbray Town Centre

6.15.1 Melton Mowbray Town Centre is the main destination for shopping and leisure within the Borough. It has a distinctive retail offer with a high proportion of independent retailers and small franchises which are enhanced by the weekly livestock market, ~~and~~ the twice-weekly Farmers' Market and the thrice-weekly town centre stall market. The town centre is much more than just a destination for shopping. It contains a rich and diverse number of uses which together give the town its own distinctiveness.

6.15.2 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to ensure town centres remain vibrant, diverse and healthy and perform effectively as the heart of communities. To achieve this, it seeks to ensure that where possible, 'main

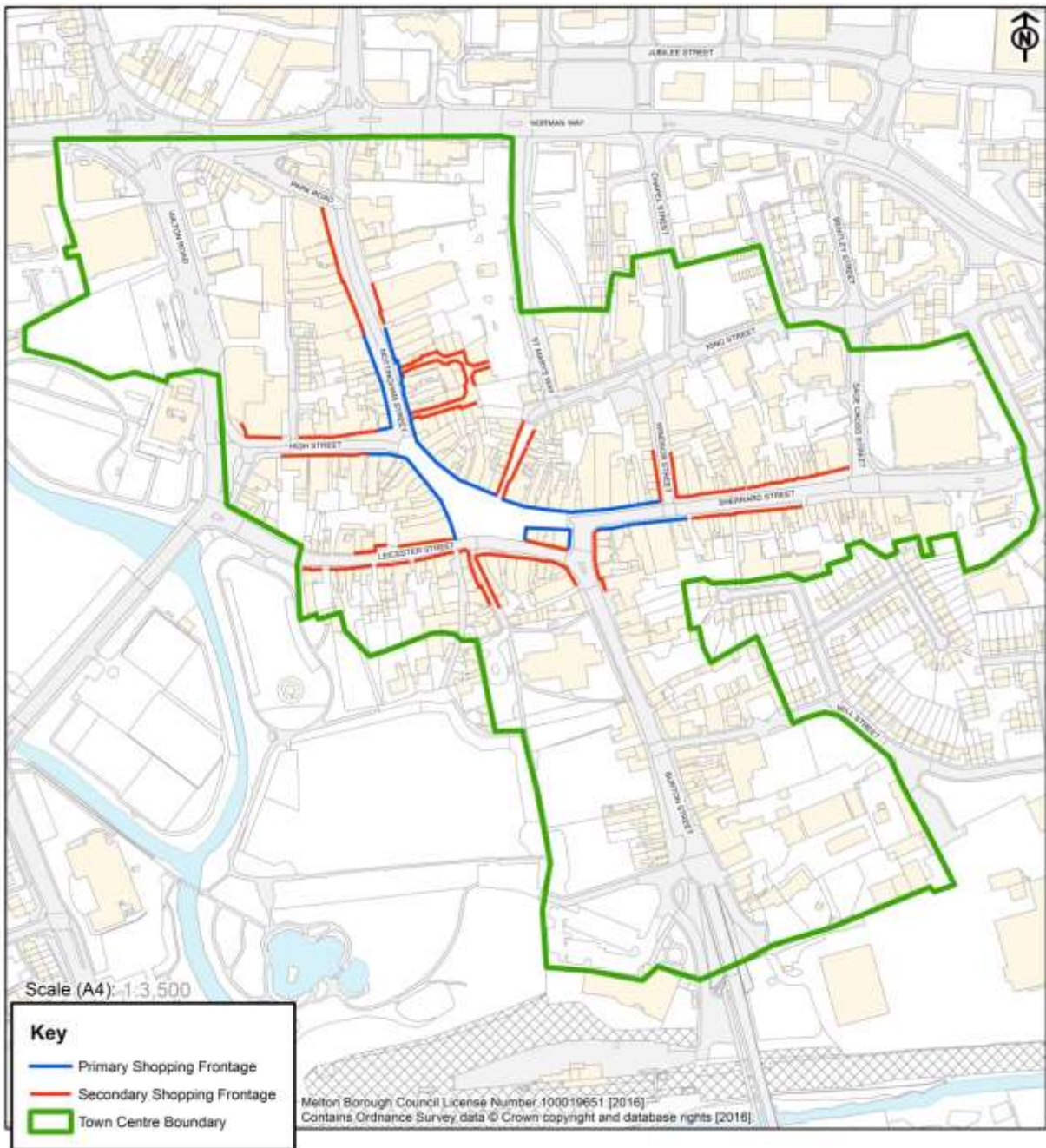
town centre uses' (as defined by the NPPF), including retail uses, leisure uses and offices, are directed towards town centre locations.

- 6.15.3 Over the last twenty years, the role of the town centre as a destination to buy goods and services has been affected by factors such as the growth in online retail and services and the cost of travel. One effect is that uses that provide for social meetings, such as coffee shops and cafes, have increased, whereas shops have declined. This change in retail and the role of town centre is happening nationally. However recent developments around the centre of Melton Mowbray, such as the Premier Inn, Sainsbury's, Lidl, the redevelopment of Brooksby College and the Parkside Offices at Burton Street have had a positive impact upon the town centre.
- 6.15.4 The Melton Borough Retail Study (2015), and 'benchmarking data' for the Town Centre have indicated that Melton Mowbray town centre has proved relatively resilient. Vacancies remain low; the busy market and the 'Rural Capital of Food' brand may be the reasons for its continued resilience. The Local Plan considers the general need for change in and around the town centre over the next 15-20 years, how it could happen, how the role of the town centre will continue to change, and how to ensure that change is positive.
- 6.15.5 Balanced against the growing convenience of accessing services and shopping through the internet, the Local Plan must ensure a flexible approach to planning for the development of the Town Centre. Such an approach must ensure that advantage can be taken of key assets that will enable the Town Centre to remain a destination that people continue to want to visit, enjoy and spend time and money.
- 6.15.6 The shopping function of Melton Mowbray's town centre is its prime activity and is vital in securing a competitive town centre that provides customer choice and a diverse retail offer. The market place and its immediate surroundings are the hub of Melton Mowbray's shopping area and a focal point for pedestrians, particularly on market days.
- 6.15.7 Leisure facilities, restaurants, entertainment, banks and other over the counter services also play a part in attracting people to the town centre and contribute to its viability and vitality. It is important that these uses are located in parts of the town centre which would not weaken the shopping function and experience. Residential development often also plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres, but consideration of residential amenity (see Policy D1) and the noise and disturbance of other town centre uses will be important in determining appropriate locations for this



- 6.15.8 Local Planning Authorities are required to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on the primary and secondary shopping frontages in designated centres, and to set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations. Figure 9 shows the extent of the Town Centre and primary and secondary shopping frontages, as recommended by the Melton Borough Retail Study 2015.
- 6.15.9 The viability and vitality of a town centre can be adversely affected by the loss of retail uses to non-retail uses along primary shopping frontages. The Council wishes to maintain flexibility in the mix of uses, whilst protecting the vitality, viability and character of the town centre.
- 6.15.10 The Borough Council works closely with local businesses, including a successful BID (Business Improvement District) which was established in 2011. The BID has established a number of projects tasked with improving business performance in the town, including a Melton Loyalty Card, Car Parking Campaigns, Media and Advertising Campaigns and a Business Directory.

**Figure 9: Melton Mowbray Town Centre Boundary and Shopping Frontage**



## Policy EC5 - Melton Mowbray Town Centre

Melton Mowbray Town Centre will be the focus for retail growth in the Borough of Melton. The extent of the town centre and primary retail frontages is defined on the Policies Map.

As part of a wider strategy to promote and enhance the town centre, the Council will work proactively with business and property owners within and on the edge of the town centre to identify development, redevelopment and site

assembly opportunities to meet the identified needs for 12,670m<sup>2</sup> net of additional comparison retail floorspace by 2036.

A sequential approach will be applied to the location of proposals for main town centre uses which prioritises sites within centres ahead of edge of centre sites. Out of centre locations will only be considered if sequentially preferable sites are not available **within the town centre or on the edge of the centre and if the location is accessible and well connected to the town centre**

Retail impact assessments will be required to accompany proposals in Melton Mowbray for main town centre uses in edge of centre or out of centre locations where the gross floorspace proposed is above 200sqm.

Proposals for new retail, leisure and other 'town-centre' developments will be allowed within the defined town centre where they:

1. Enhance the compact, legible and walkable character of the town centre;
2. Maintain a vibrant and active continuous shop frontage in and around the retail core;
3. Incorporate a high quality of shop front and advertisement design;
4. Are sympathetic to the numerous heritage assets within and adjacent to the town centre; and
5. Make adequate provision for car parking where possible and appropriate.

In primary shopping frontages, proposals for new, or change of use to:

- a. A1 retail uses will be encouraged, subject to the proposal incorporating a high quality design of shop front and advertisements.
- b. A2 – A5 uses will be allowed where this does not have an adverse impact on the character and/or sustainability of the primary frontage.

Outside of primary shopping frontages, but within the defined town centre, proposals for commercial leisure uses, restaurants, bars & pubs and hot food takeaways will be supported where these support day and evening activity and the main retail use of the town centre.

## Policy EC6 – Primary Shopping Frontages

The Primary Shopping Frontages of Melton Borough Council, as designated on the Policies Map, are where the majority of A1 retail uses will be focussed over the Local Plan period.

Unless permitted development rights (or any successor) indicate otherwise, ground floor A1 units in the Primary Shopping Frontages should be retained

predominantly for retail use. Proposals that would involve the loss, by change of use or re-development at ground floor level will be supported provided that:

1. It makes a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the Primary Shopping Area, as shown on the Policies Map;
2. It would not result in non-A1 retail uses within larger units being grouped together in such a way that it undermines the retail role of the frontage;
3. It would not result in a loss of A1 retail floor space or frontage of a scale harmful to the shopping function of the area;
4. It would positively restore and/or enhance the character and appearance of the unit; and
5. It would allow upper floors to be effectively used, including the possibility of independent use, where appropriate.

## **6.16 Retail development in other locations**

6.16.1 A number of the larger villages in the Borough have a range of retail premises which help them act as service centres as follows:

- Asfordby
- Bottesford
- Waltham on the Wolds; and
- Long Clawson

'Town centre'<sup>5</sup> development located in and adjoining these centres which is of an appropriate scale to the existing centre and which contributes to supporting the sustainability of such places will be supported.

6.16.2 The retail study has identified a need for some small scale local retail provision as part of the development of the Southern Sustainable Urban Extension in Melton Mowbray. This should form part of the provision of a local centre. It may also be demonstrated that some small local retail will be required as part of the development of the Northern Sustainable Urban Extension. Any proposals for this type of development will need to be supported by a retail impact assessment.

## **Policy EC7 – Retail Development in the Borough**

In other settlements with an existing retail offer that acts as a service centre, town centre<sup>5</sup> developments will be supported where they would be physically integrated, be of an appropriate scale and not have an adverse impact on the character of the village.

A retail impact assessment will be required for all retail proposals in these locations. Assessments will be used to ensure that retail proposals do not adversely affect the vitality and viability of Melton Mowbray town centre and other retail facilities within service centres. Small independent village shops, post offices and social enterprises and farm shops up to 200 square metres are exempt from this requirement.

Outside of Melton Mowbray town centre and service centres, in all cases a retail impact assessment will be required to accompany applications.

## 6.17 Tourism

6.17.1 Tourism makes a vital contribution to the economy of Melton Borough via direct spending and in creating jobs. In 2015, £85.4 million was generated within the local economy through visitor and tourism business expenditure which helps support around 1200 full-time equivalent jobs. This expenditure represents an increase of 6% on the previous year. Tourism in Melton Borough is centred on the character of Melton Mowbray as an attractive market town, its food heritage, the wider quality of the rural landscape and heritage assets such as Belvoir Castle. This is supplemented by family attractions such as the Twinlakes Amusement Park. Improving Melton Borough's tourism offer is integral to the wider economic strategy for Leicestershire. The Local Plan seeks to plan positively to support the growth of sustainable tourism in the area.

### Policy EC8 – Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism, visitor and cultural development proposals will be supported where they improve the facilities for visitors, including attractions and accommodation subject to the proposal:

1. being of an appropriate scale in the context of the host settlement; and
2. having benefits to local businesses in creating the potential to generate revenues.

Attractions and facilities of a significant scale should be located firstly within the town centre, then on the edge of the town centre, and then at other accessible locations.

Melton Borough Council will support, where appropriate, the restoration of the Grantham Canal. Moreover the Borough Council will resist planning applications which will have an adverse impact on tourism across the Borough, but with particular protection applied to valued attractions such as

the Vale of Belvoir, Belvoir Castle and Burrough on the Hill Iron Age Fort, two of the most valued tourist attractions in the Borough.

Larger proposals for tourist attractions/accommodation outside of Melton Mowbray, Service Centres and Rural Hubs may be supported, provided it can be proven to add significantly and demonstrably to the Borough's economic or tourist offer and can be demonstrated that a suitable more sustainable location is not available or practicable.

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#### KEY EVIDENCE:

2011 Census

Melton Retail Study 2015

Melton Employment Land Review 2015

Leicestershire and Leicester Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment, GL Hearn, 2017

Towards a Housing Requirement for Melton and its addendum, both GL Hearn, January and June 2017

NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics, Office of National Statistics

Leicestershire Rural Economy Evidence Base, Rose Regeneration, June 2014

Local Futures District Profile: An Economic Social and Environmental Summary of Melton Borough

Leicester and Leicestershire Employment Land Study, PACEC, 2012

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