

27 November 2023
Response on Behalf of Barwood Land



Planning Policy
Melton Borough Council
Parkside, Station Approach
Melton Mowbray
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Dear Sir / Madam,

**Melton Borough Council, Local Plan Partial Update Issues and Options Consultation, November 2023
Response on Behalf of Barwood Land**

I write to provide this response to the above consultation on behalf of Barwood Land.

Background

Barwood Land is one of the UK's leading land promotion businesses. Barwood Land has land interests across the Midlands including part of the Melton North Sustainable Neighbourhood (MNSN).

Under Policy SS5 of the Melton Local Plan (adopted October 2018), the MNSN is allocated for around 1,700 new homes and constitutes approximately 25% of the overall housing requirement of the Borough. The Melton North Sustainable Neighbourhood Masterplan was approved by the Borough Council in October 2021. This provides a framework to guide consideration of planning applications in the MNSN.

Parts of the allocation already have planning permission, including in 2018 Taylor Wimpey was granted planning permission for up to 200 houses (planning reference: 14/00808/OUT) on land off Melton Spinney Road.

Barwood Development Securities Ltd being part of Barwood Land submitted a planning application for part of the remainder of the MNSN in August 2021 and this has been registered under planning reference: 21/00973/OUT. This application is making progress and the aim is to secure planning permission early in 2024.

Barwood Land are supportive of positive planning to help create sustainable places for the future and have engaged in plan-making in Melton Borough over many years. We welcome the opportunity to comment on this issues and options consultation. Our response is tailored to matters of relevance to Barwood Land's land interest in the MNSN only and hence this does not respond to every aspect of the consultation document. This response is structured as per the consultation document.

Introduction

We note the timetable for preparation of the Local Plan Partial Update in the September 2023 Local Development Scheme projects consultations prior to examination and adoption in 2025. Whilst the LDS identifies these are indicative timescales, we consider the latter part of the timetable to be quite ambitious and hence it will need to be kept under review. The current LDS timetable is relevant for the policy and guidance framework for the MNSN.

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Vision and Objectives

We do not have concerns about the vision and objectives but would question the proposed plan period to 2036. At the projected point of adoption in late 2025, this would only give up to 11 years for the reviewed local plan and this could be less if more time is taken to reach adoption. This is especially relevant given the stated intention in the LDS to not commence an update to the local plan until as soon as possible after adoption of this partial local plan update. Whilst this new local plan might be subject to new plan-making regulations and hence might be subject to a requirement for local plans to be prepared and adopted within 30 months this could still take us through to late 2028 or early 2029 to reach adoption of a new full local plan for the Borough.

Policy SS1. Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

We support the proposal to amend the policy in line with the latest definition within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy SS5. Melton Mowbray North Sustainable Neighbourhood

We note the proposal to refer to use the shorthand of 'NSN' to refer to this development in the local plan update. We consider it would be helpful to continue to refer to the 'MNSN' as it is described in the current adopted local plan and in the masterplan document.

We agree that deletion of the policy as explained under option 1 is not appropriate.

Option 2, which is the preferred option, is to amend the policy to reflect the 2021 masterplan. We agree with this approach and would welcome sight of proposed policy wording, ideally tracked changed from the current version. Such changes necessary to the policy wording might go beyond reference to the content of the masterplan document and the policy would benefit from being made more concise. It is notable that the length of this policy is not touched upon but it is commented on elsewhere such as for Policy SS6.

The explanatory text at 6.2.2. states in part that 123 dwellings have been completed, planning permission exists for 883 dwellings and there are a further 1,230 dwellings under planning applications. We assume, although it is not explicitly stated, that this just refers to land within the MNSN as allocated and request confirmation of the position here.

We request a clearer presentation and explanation of the data here for the MNSN for example use of a table to present the summary including a total row/column. The explanation should include what the total number of dwellings is (is it 2,236 dwellings?), what the projected delivery timescale is and what this means for the review of the plan overall and the policy in particular? Does the Council anticipate delivery of the total number of dwellings identified, both in total and how many in the plan period, and what are the implications for infrastructure provision?

Policy SS6. Alternative Development Strategies and Local Plan Review

We note mention that this policy is not binding on the Council. This is a major issue with development plan policy which attempts to explain a plan review. There is reference to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations but these came into force on 15 January 2018. Examination hearings into the adopted local plan were held between 30 January and 9 February 2018 following submission in the previous October and the main modifications included reference to these regulations. Whilst there is this mention in the policy already, we agree that a review of this policy is necessary, rather than deleting the policy. The scope of the review will inform consideration of the changes to be proposed. It is difficult to state a preference for either a locally specific criteria or additional criteria at this stage. We do consider that specific and measurable triggers and more precise wording are prepared for consideration. For example, reference to adoption of a Strategic Growth Plan and Memorandum of Understanding is very broad and there is no explanation of the status of the plan or MOU.



Whilst the review of the local plan looks likely to be dealt with under the current local planning regulations, it would be reasonable for a review of this policy to account for the Government intention for preparation and adoption of local plans within 30 months.

Policy C2. Housing Mix, Policy C3. National Space Standard and Smaller Dwellings and Policy C4. Affordable Housing Provision

We agree that these policies should be amended to take account of the latest evidence locally and to take account of the latest national planning policy and guidance.

I look forward to receiving confirmation of receipt of this submission.

Yours faithfully



**David Bainbridge MRTPI
Planning Director**

Copy. Barwood Land