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Dear Mr. Beverley

**WALTHAM ON THE WOLDS AND THORPE ARNOLD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
2017 – 2036 SUBMISSION VERSION (JULY 2017)
REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF JELSON LTD**

GVA is planning advisor to Jelson Limited. We were instructed by it to make representations to the Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2036 Submission Version (July 2017) (hereafter referred to as the 'Neighbourhood Development Plan' or 'NDP'). These representations were submitted to the Council on 6 September 2017.

Following the closure of the NDP consultation period, we were made aware that Leicestershire County Council had commenced a consultation on its preferred route of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road. The consultation period runs until 15 October 2017.

We are of the view that the issues raised by the County's consultation on its road proposals will have significant implications for the Neighbourhood Plan, and are concerned that the importance of the distributor road is not currently reflected in the Plan.

Melton Mowbray Distributor Road report

The consultation document entitled '*Melton Mowbray Distributor Road*' first sets out the scheme development history. This commenced in 2014 with a study which looked at how future development within Melton Mowbray would affect traffic congestion in the town centre.

It concluded that the road network in Melton's town centre was close to its capacity and therefore significant improvements would need to be carried out to the local road network in order to accommodate the additional traffic generated by the scale of growth envisaged by the Council in its emerging Melton Local Plan.

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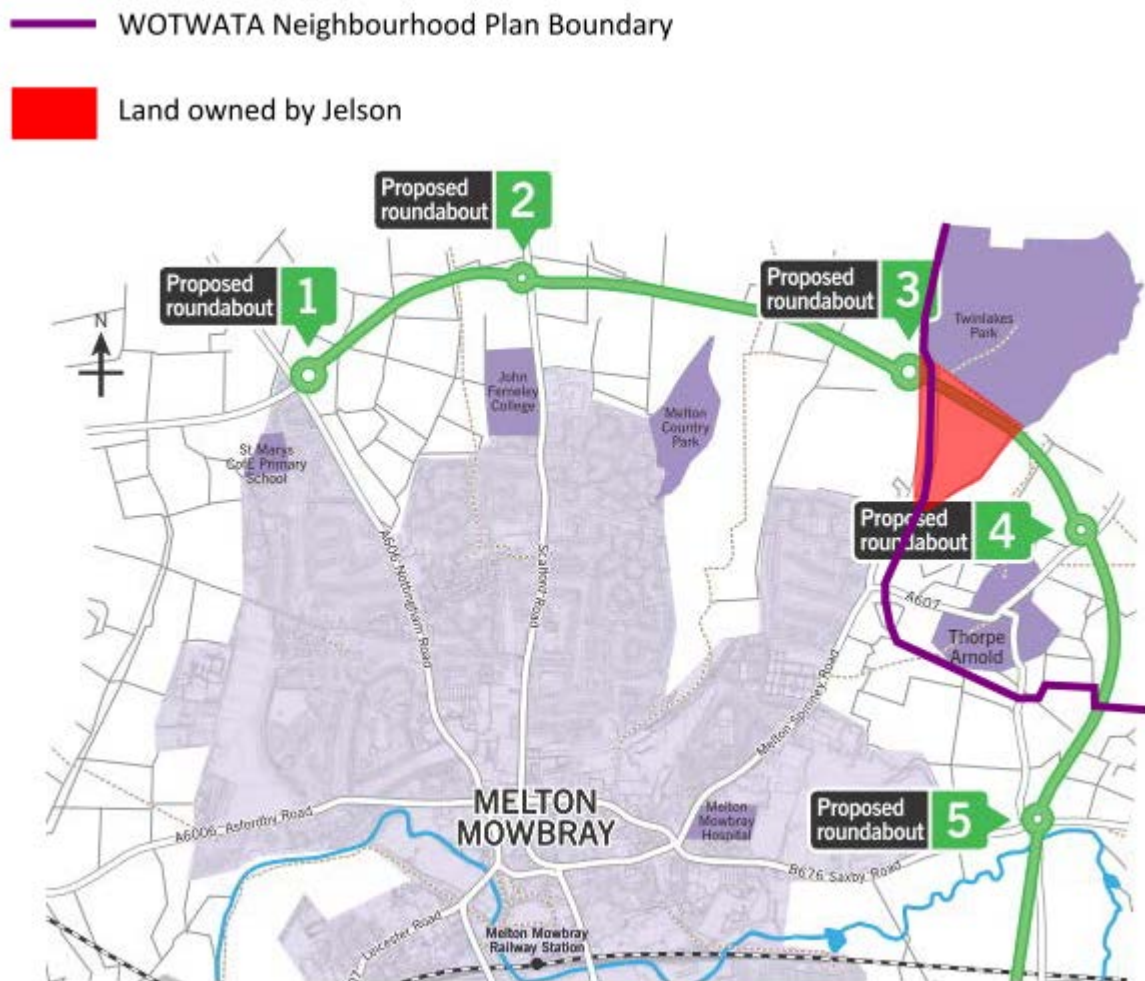
Detailed traffic modelling was then carried out to assess whether the option of an inner or outer distributor road would improve the levels of congestion experience in the town centre and allow for future growth in the Borough, and particular around Melton Mowbray.

The results of this transport technical work indicated that both options would reduce levels of traffic congestion in the town centre but that the outer distributor road scheme would also generate additional highway capacity to support the Borough Council's growth aspirations. Leicestershire County Council's cabinet approved the transport strategy for the outer distributor road in September 2015.

Four options were assessed for an outer distributor road around Melton Mowbray. An options comparison report concluded that an eastern distributor road would provide the greatest benefit to Melton Mowbray. This option was ratified by Leicestershire County Council's cabinet at a meeting in May 2016.

The County Council's preferred option for the route of the distributor road has implications for the WOTWATA Neighbourhood Plan, as the eastern section of the route is proposed to run through the plan area (the majority of the road section between Roundabout 3 and Roundabout 5).

The image below shows the relationship between the WOTWATA Neighbourhood Plan boundary and the proposed distributor road. Also shown in the image below (in red) is land under the ownership of Jelson.



Consultation on the Pre-Submission WOTWATA Neighbourhood Plan

In accordance with Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Neighbourhood Plan Group (NPG) has prepared a consultation statement to support its Submission Version of the WOTWATA Neighbourhood Plan.

Part 2 of the Consultation Statement notes the comments the local highway authority (LHA) (Leicestershire County Council) made at Regulation 14 stage. The LHA stated that the Eastern distributor road is of particular relevance to the NDP as it cuts through the Neighbourhood Plan Area, and is an important infrastructure project that will support future growth and provide relief to the town centre. The LHA went on to express its concerns that, at the present time,

"it would not be possible for the Neighbourhood Plan to fully reflect these policies which would require the proposed route to be identified and safeguarded in accordance with the relevant local plan policies. It is therefore argued that it would be prudent to delay the further stages of the NP as it progresses to adoption in order that a sound plan is delivered which takes full account of the guidance contained within the Framework".

The NPG disagreed with these comments, stating that Planning Practice Guidance allows for Neighbourhood Plans to come forward before Local Plans.

Similarly, the NPG dismissed the comments of Pegasus, who also expressed concerns that the NDP was premature and ought to be delayed until the position of the distributor road was more certain. The NPG responded stating that the Neighbourhood Plan will be continually reviewed, *"but as this [distributor road] is somewhat in the distance it is considered necessary to progress the Neighbourhood Plan without delay"*. It is clear now that the distributor road is at a significant stage in its design development.

Part 1 of the Consultation Statement describes the public consultations and other interventions undertaken as part of the process of creating the Neighbourhood Plan. Upon reviewing this document, we have noted that respondents to the pre-submission NDP were generally supportive of the distributor road, particularly those respondents from Thorpe Arnold.

Section 2.1 of the Consultation Statement (Part 1) confirms that road and traffic issues generated the most comments from respondents. It goes on to say that respondents raised concerns about the speed and volume of traffic using the A607 and they would typically like to see a *"bypass connecting A607 to Leicester Road bypassing Thorpe Arnold"*. Within Section 3, one respondent stated that the congestion on A607 would hopefully be resolved by the bypass.

These concerns are explicitly stated within the Submission Version July 2017 of the NDP. Page 58 of the NDP states that *"in Thorpe Arnold, the respondents' main concern is about safety issues relating to the A607, particularly at the Lag Lane junction including speeding, congestion and parking"*.

Although there are comments from respondents expressing a slight apprehension at such a significant infrastructure project, the general view is that the distributor road will alleviate traffic congestion in and around Thorpe Arnold.

Amendments to the WOTWATA Neighbourhood Plan

As shown on page 2, if the preferred route of the distributor road is approved, it would run through the Neighbourhood Plan Area of the WOTWATA Neighbourhood Plan.

We note that draft **Policy S1** (Limits to Development) has been amended and makes a brief reference to the proposed Melton Mowbray Eastern Distributor Road. The policy states that exceptions will be made for development outside of the 'limits to development' (shown in Figure 3).

This includes development which relates specifically to any infrastructure required to deliver the distributor road.

The supporting text to draft **Policy S1** states that "*the draft Local Plan highlights the development of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road that is likely to be located within the Parish, although the precise location is not yet determined*".

The distributor road has now progressed considerably, and is now at the preferred route stage which is now out for public consultation. Indeed, the *Melton Mowbray Distributor Road* report points to expected timescales for the delivery of the road. Subject to funding, the construction of the scheme is expected to commence in the spring of 2020, and would be completed sometime in 2022.

The WOTWATA Neighbourhood Plan period runs from 2017 to 2036. In its present form (Submission Version, July 2017), we are of the view that the Plan does not make sufficient references or allowances for the distributor road. Accordingly, we suggest that the Neighbourhood Plan is amended to reflect this proposal. Most importantly, we would urge the Parish Council to reassess the impact of the distributor road and, in particular, look into the potential benefits that this significant piece of infrastructure might bring to the residents of the Parish and, in particular, the residents of Thorpe Arnold.

Summary

Clearly, the distributor road has significant implications for the WOTWATA Neighbourhood Plan. If the preferred route of the distributor road is approved in its current form, it would run through the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Although draft **Policy S1** makes reference to the distributor road, it does not take into consideration that the distributor road has now progressed considerably, and is now at the preferred route stage which is now out for public consultation.

Accordingly, we suggest the NPG ought to reassess the impact of the distributor road and, in particular, look into the potential benefits that this significant piece of infrastructure could bring to the residents of Thorpe Arnold.

We would be happy to discuss this matter further and can be contacted using the details provided below.

We would be grateful to receive confirmation of receipt of this letter and thereafter be kept fully informed of the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours faithfully



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