

Melton Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft

Charnwood Borough Council – Consultation Response

Charnwood Borough Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Melton Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft prior to its submission for Examination.

Charnwood BC is pleased to note that the Melton Local Plan recognises the objectively assessed need for housing identified through the 2014 Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This was produced jointly by the local authorities that form the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area through the Duty to Cooperate. Policy SS2 – Development Strategy reflects this with a requirement of 245 dwellings per annum.

We also note that Policy SS6 – Alternative Development Strategies and Local Plan Review provides a “trigger policy” which will enable the Plan to respond positively to any changes which are subsequently required to the Local Plan. Alterations to objectively assessed need or the spatial distribution of growth may occur across the wider Housing Market Area (HMA) and under the Duty to Cooperate it may be necessary to undertake an early or partial review of the Plan to accommodate such changes. As you are aware, joint work is currently being undertaken on a Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HEDNA) which will provide an up to date objectively assessed need for homes across the HMA, this may make such changes necessary.

The spatial strategy identified in the Plan appears the most suitable, by focussing large scale development on Melton Mowbray, providing better access to existing services and is the most likely means of achieving sustainable development. However, concern is raised that Policy SS6 – Alternative Development Strategies and Local Plan Review identifies some sites which do not reflect this development strategy or the sustainability appraisal of the reasonable alternative options.

The Sustainability Appraisal (Non-Technical Summary para 1.79) notes that “*The relatively isolated site options at Six Hills and Normanton Airfield would have the least positive sustainability effects of the 12 sites considered - eight potentially significant negative effects were identified for both site options*” yet these sites are identified in Policy SS6 as potential alternative or long term options.

The site at Six Hills is of particular concern to Charnwood Borough being located adjacent to the authority’s boundary in a relatively remote rural location which lacks services, facilities and good public transport links. The overreliance on the private motor vehicle and the need to travel to reach higher level services and facilities could have impacts upon the A46 and the wider road network. No assessments of these

transport impacts and the increased vehicle movements appear to have been undertaken prior to the inclusion of Six Hills as a potential alternative site.

The jobs target set out in the Local Plan (Table 11) does not appear to be consistent with the SHMA 2014 or the PACEC Leicester and Leicestershire Employment Land Study 2012 identified through Duty to Cooperate work. The HEDNA work currently being developed should provide a jobs target and the objectively assessed need for employment land ahead of submission of the plan.

Charnwood Borough Council notes and welcomes the inclusion of the River Wreake corridor as part of the green infrastructure network which connects with that also identified in the Charnwood Core Strategy as an infrastructure corridor.

Charnwood Borough Council

15th December 2016