

Let's discuss...

Development Site Criteria: Discussion Paper

1 INTRODUCTION



- 1.1 The Melton Local Plan gives details of what types of development we will and will not allow in the area. However, the plan is now becoming out of date and we have decided to review it. While we are reviewing the plan, we would like local people and businesses to have a say in how they would like the area to be developed.
- 1.2 The new plan will be called the Melton Local Development Framework. The plan will cover the period 1996-2016. We started a consultation exercise in March 2003 on a series of discussion papers that we want you to comment on. This is the seventh discussion paper to be published. The others are:
- Aims and Objectives;
 - Development Strategy;
 - Village Envelopes and Important Open Areas;
 - Employment and the Local Economy;
 - Melton Mowbray Town Centre and Shopping; and
 - The Countryside.
- 1.3 Throughout the paper, there are a number of questions that we would like you to consider. There is also a questionnaire attached to this paper which lists the questions. Please fill in the questionnaire and return it to us.

2 BACKGROUND



- 2.1 Land is a scarce resource and in the current climate of national economic and population growth there are many competing demands for the development of land.
- 2.2 The planning system regulates the development and use of land in the public interest. It deals with conflicting demands and makes sure that the right things get built in the right places. It helps to balance the community's needs for development with the need to protect and improve the environment.
- 2.3 One of the most important aims of the Melton Local Development Framework will be to identify development sites for new houses, businesses, shops and leisure and recreation facilities.
- 2.4 The development of land can have considerable social, economic and environmental implications for a local community, and so it is important that new development sites are selected as a result of a detailed assessment of their suitability.




3 THE NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT LAND



- 3.1 The Development Strategy discussion paper (Issue 2) looked at the amount of new development that is planned to take place in the borough up to 2016, and where it should generally be located.
- 3.2 The paper discussed a strategy where most new development would be in or adjoining Melton Mowbray, particularly new housing and business development.
- 3.3 The paper says that sustainability should be the main consideration when choosing locations for development and that large sites for new housing, business uses and retail development should be identified through a sequential approach. The sequential approach is a method of choosing land for development in an order of priority to make sure that previously developed sites (brownfield) in towns and cities are built on before greenfield land.
- 3.4 In line with the principles of sustainability we commissioned a study of urban sites with potential for new housing development. The Melton Urban Housing Potential Study (MUHPS) was completed in August 2003

	<p>3.5 The study identifies sites within the town and some villages that together have potential to accommodate about 1500 new houses over the period to 2016. The emerging Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan currently says that provision should be made in Melton Borough for 4,200 houses between 1996 and 2016. Taking account of the number of houses built since 1996, sites currently with planning permission for housing and the sites in the urban housing potential study, we expect to have to identify additional land for about 1,000 houses in the new plan to meet this requirement.</p>
	<p>3.6 The Employment and the Local Economy discussion paper (issue 4) looks at the amount of business land required over the plan period. Taking into account land for business development that has been completed since 1996, we know that we will need to identify about 30 hectares of land for business uses to comply with the structure plan requirement to 2016.</p> <p>3.7 A borough-wide shopping study was also completed in 2003 and looks at the likely shopping needs of the borough. The study estimates a requirement for 12,000-15,000 sq metres of new shopping floorspace to cater for the needs of the population at 2016. The discussion paper Melton Mowbray Town Centre and Shopping (issue 5) looked at this issue in more detail.</p> <p>3.8 As we consider the development needs of the community over the new plan period, we are aware that we will have to identify sites for a variety of other facilities that include recreation and play areas and other leisure facilities.</p>
	<p>4 OUR MAIN CONSIDERATIONS FOR SITE SELECTION</p> <p>4.1 When we identify sites for development we want to be sure that we make the best use of land and choose sites where the type of development proposed will be of most benefit to the community, contribute to sustainability and minimize any impacts on the environment.</p> <p>4.2 The Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 'Housing' sets out a list of criterion that should be considered when new housing sites are chosen. The criterion takes into account social, economic and environmental considerations. It is generally repeated in Policy 2B of the emerging Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan which establishes the criterion that should be taken into account when sites are chosen in local development frameworks.</p> <p>4.3 The structure plan criterion covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The actual or potential accessibility by non-car modes of transport; • The actual or potential capacity of public transport, utilities and social infrastructure; • Physical constraints including contamination and flood risk; • The impact on natural resources and environmental and cultural assets; • The cost of development, economic viability and resources; • The need to achieve a balance of land uses; • The capacity to strengthen a local community and meet local needs. <p>4.4 With these principles in mind, the main aim of this discussion paper is to consider in more detail the criterion we intend to use to select development sites in the new plan.</p>
	<p>5 SITE SELECTION METHODOLOGY</p> <p>5.1 The new plan will not identify every site that could be developed over the plan period. We expect a significant amount of development to take place on relatively small sites. Only large sites of one hectare or more will normally be identified for housing and employment uses in the new plan.</p> <p>5.2 To assess a site's development potential as objectively as possible, we intend to devise a methodology based on scores given for various criterion that we will apply to each site. The methodology will take into account the positive and negative effects that could result from a development. The criterion may differ according to the type of use involved. A total score will be achieved for each site and the highest scoring sites will normally become our preferred choices.</p>

DO YOU AGREE WITH OUR INTENTION TO USE A CRITERION BASED METHODOLOGY TO ASSESS POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES?

	<p>6</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>6 CRITERION</p> <p>We intend to adopt the following systematic approach to assess the development potential of a site and the preferred sequence in which development should take place.</p> <p>The criterion will come under three broad headings:</p> <p>a) sequential impacts; and b) development impacts; c) potential to support a town bypass</p> <p>Sequential impacts</p>
	<p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p>	<p>Government planning guidance says that local planning authorities should generally follow a search sequence when identifying development sites, starting with sites in town centres and other parts of urban areas, and then sites on the edge of urban areas. The emerging Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan includes a policy that promotes a sequential approach for choosing development land in Melton Borough starting with sites and buildings in Melton Mowbray town centre.</p> <p>The Development Strategy discussion paper (issue 2) covers the sequential approach in more detail and sets out our broad intentions for development in the town and villages. Most new development is expected to take place in and adjoining Melton Mowbray. The villages are placed in three categories according to their suitability for additional development. The discussion paper identifies four villages in Category 1 where land could be allocated for development if it becomes necessary to identify sites outside Melton Mowbray. The Category 1 villages are Asfordby, Bottesford, Long Clawson and Waltham on the Wolds.</p>
	<p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p>	<p>When we assess the sequential impacts of sites, preference will be given to locations in the following order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within Melton Mowbray town centre; • within the urban area of Melton Mowbray; • adjoining the edge of Melton Mowbray; • within a Category 1 village; • adjoining the edge of a Category 1 village. <p>We will also take account of the following as sequential impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the current status of a site as a brownfield or greenfield site; and • the potential to gain good access to main social facilities by transport other than the motor car.

**DO YOU AGREE WITH THE SEQUENTIAL IMPACTS CRITERION?
ARE THERE ANY OTHER SEQUENTIAL IMPACTS CRITERION THAT
SHOULD BE CONSIDERED?**

	<p>6.7</p>	<p>Development impacts</p> <p>The criterion that covers development impacts will generally focus on the particular characteristics of a site and the effects of a development on local economic, environmental and social factors. We will assess the potential of a site against a more detailed list of impacts under the following main headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure; • Environmental issues; • Cultural assets; • Economic issues. • Physical constraints; • Natural resources; • Social issues;
	<p>6.8</p> <p>6.9</p> <p>6.10</p>	<p>Infrastructure and physical constraints</p> <p>Infrastructure issues will cover the capacity of the local road network, the public drainage system, electricity, gas and water supplies and telephone lines. Physical constraints will cover vehicular access to a site, the risk of flooding, ground contamination and land stability.</p> <p>Environmental issues and natural resources</p> <p>Environmental issues and the safeguarding of natural resources will involve potential effects on wildlife and habitat, landscape, mineral deposits, air and water quality and farmland quality.</p> <p>Cultural assets</p> <p>Cultural assets will cover archaeology and the historic built environment including listed buildings, ancient monuments, townscape and historic parks.</p>



- Social Issues**
- 6.11 The social criterion will assess the effects that a development could have on local communities. Development in the right place and at the right time can help to regenerate a community or support new social infrastructure, for example by the provision of new affordable housing, recreation, health or education facilities. It could also increase demand that will support or sustain a variety of local services or other community needs.
- 6.12 The relationship of a site to surrounding land is also an important social consideration as certain developments can have a negative effect if they generate noise, smells or excessive traffic.
- Economic Issues**
- 6.13 Economic criterion may consider and compare site development costs, particularly where excessive infrastructure costs make a site commercially unviable, or the contribution a development can make to the improvement of the road network or other local infrastructure.
- 6.14 In some instances the development of a site can contribute to the physical regeneration of an area or help to revitalise or broaden a local economy. New shopping and commercial developments can in this way contribute to the wellbeing of a town centre.

**DO YOU AGREE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS CRITERION?
ARE THERE ANY OTHER DEVELOPMENT CRITERION THAT SHOULD BE
CONSIDERED?**



- Potential to support a town bypass**
- 6.15 A transport study of Melton Mowbray has recently been completed by Leicestershire County Council. The study looked at congestion in the town centre and concludes that there is a case for a bypass around the town. The study recognizes that the full costs of a bypass are unlikely to be met through public funding. It suggests that the overall case for a bypass could be significantly affected by the way new development in the local development framework is distributed around the town.
- 6.16 We intend to publish a discussion paper on Transport issues in mid 2005. The paper will discuss a bypass and the various route options identified in the transport study.
- 6.17 Given the findings of the study, the implementation of a bypass is likely to rely heavily on contributions made in association with new development, either through the construction of sections of road or financial contributions by developers.
- 6.18 In the event that a bypass proposal is included in the local development framework, potential development sites identified through the systematic strategic approach will be assessed against their potential to contribute to the construction of a preferred bypass.

**DO YOU AGREE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT SITES SHOULD BE ASSESSED
AGAINST THEIR POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO A TOWN BYPASS?**

- 7 YOUR VIEWS**
- 7.1 We would like to hear your views on this discussion paper. Enclosed with the paper is a questionnaire that we would like you to fill in. There is also an extra sheet that you can use to expand on your answers and add more comments.
- 7.2 You can also send comments by letter, e-mail or fax. Your comments should reach us by 22nd April 2005 at the latest. Our address is:

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