

# Draft Housing Strategy Consultation Report

October 2021

## Who was engaged?

Direct email contact was made with large number of key stakeholders and members of the public who had previously registered interest in strategic consultations with additional contacts derived from service managers and other officers across the Council. In total over 500 potential consultees were directly contacted, they included;

- People on the Local Plan consultation database, including developers, agents and other statutory/non-statutory organisations with interest in strategic planning/housing as well as members of the public
- Additional members of the public who took part in the Corporate Strategy consultation and registered an interested in taking part in future consultations
- Registered providers of social housing with housing stock in the Melton Borough and others known to be actively engaged with housing officers
- Private sector landlords and local estate and letting agents, including the two largest private sector landlords (Belvoir and Buckminster estates)
- Local climate interest groups
- Directors and other key officers from Leicestershire County Council.
- Variety of organisations that provide housing related support services including homelessness and domestic violence organisations.
- Wide variety of local groups that work with or represent a wide variety of people, including those with protected characteristics under equality legislation.

All groups and organisations contacted were offered the opportunity to have a 1-2-1 discussion about housing issues that their organisation or the people they represent face. Targeted approaches to individual organisations were also made to ensure that a wide variety of housing related sectors were represented in housing interviews that supported the consultation process.

In addition, a press release and regularly social media posts were published to publicise the consultation.

## Consultation Responses

In total there were 56 survey responses plus 6 additional non-survey detailed comment responses submitted. A total of 14 additional interviews with key sector groups which represented a cross section of local housing related organisations was also undertaken, these allowed a deeper exploration of local housing issues and other organisations objectives. The interviewees are listed below.

- Active mid to large scale developer with developments in rural, Melton Mowbray and sustainable neighbourhood
- Small scale developer/landowner
- Two architects who work extensively in the Borough
- Social housing: developer
- Social housing: tenant engagement
- Social housing: support and care/tenancy management
- Private sector landlord
- Homelessness support and accommodation
- Domestic violence support and accommodation
- Money advice service
- Citizen Advice Bureau
- Two locally based climate action/sustainability groups
- LCC Adult Social Care
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland CCG

This report looks at the responses to the survey, the 6 detailed written responses have been incorporated into the survey commentary.

## Stakeholder Interviews

Feedback from the 14 stakeholder interviews has not been transcribed or incorporated into this report directly, given that they were free and frank informal discussions. However, the interviewees were encouraged to respond to the survey and there was a large degree of crossover. Informal interviewee feedback was considered and incorporated into the modifications made to the final housing strategy.

## Survey Respondents

75% of respondents were members of public and the remaining 25% were a mix of organisations and local groups (Leicestershire County Council, homelessness organisations, local climate groups, architects, Parish Councils, church groups, housing associations, health organisations, domestic violence organisations and local schools).

## Housing Issues

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of housing issues on a scale of 1 to 5 stars, these responses were then averaged and collated into the charts below which ranks the importance of each issue to respondents overall.

# Views on level of importance of a selection of housing issues

Chart 1: Average importance of each housing issue – All respondents

The next second chart then breaks down these rankings for members of the public who responded, to gain greater insights into local people’s views (number of respondents in other respondent category groups were too small for detailed analysis).



**Chart 2: Average importance of each housing issues - members of public**



'The climate emergency' and 'infrastructure to support development' were the two top issues overall and for members of the public, however infrastructure was rated slightly higher by members of the public. The least important local housing issues were, 'impacts from the coronavirus pandemic' (3.4/5), more 'housing to meet the needs of the growing population' (3.8/5) and 'supporting home ownership and first-time buyers' (3.9/5).

It is noteworthy that both members of the public and local organisations and groups felt that sufficient good quality rented housing was more important than supporting home ownership and first-time buyers, however this difference was much larger for organisations/groups (0.8 difference) compared to the public (0.2 difference). This likely reflects the mix of

organisations/groups that responded, some of whom confirmed access to the private rented sector and sufficient affordable housing to rent was a key issue for them or the people they work with. Members of the public were also more likely to give higher importance to protecting historic buildings and local character and quality of existing homes.

In addition to ranking the housing issues listed in the consultation survey, respondents were invited to make comments on these or other local housing issues, a selection of these are set out in the table below, grouped by topic. (These comments include comments made in other sections of the survey where they best fitted in this section).

**Table 1: Comments made on local housing issues**

<b>Respondent Comments</b>	<b>Summary and Response</b>
<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I cannot stress enough the importance of the infrastructure, there are problems with Doctors in Melton without adding more people.</li> <li>• The infrastructure MUST include a bypass.</li> <li>• INFRASTRUCTURE. As mentioned above, this would include the roads and a bypass before building even more houses.</li> <li>• Placing far too much pressure on local parish councils to accept large scale developments which impact heavily on existing local infrastructure</li> <li>• Increase doctors, school and hospital in same area as cannot cope presently this needs sorting before more houses are finished.</li> <li>• There are already a lot of house building on many sites all over Melton... There is no longer a credible case to allow any more without... a lot more infrastructure - doctors, schools, parking etc.</li> <li>• Too many new house developments in the villages -far too big for the size of the villages. Lack of review of infrastructure (roads/schools/sewage/GP etc..)</li> <li>• Roads in poor state and cannot take more traffic.</li> <li>• Poor public transport in villages.</li> <li>• You are taking money from developers for the schools, but done appear to be doing anything with it</li> </ul>	<p>The right infrastructure is identified as a key housing issue within the housing growth section of the document. We are also working closely with our partners in health and education to help them improve healthcare and education facilities. The bypass is also specifically mentioned within the document to highlight its importance as well as within the delivery section. We are working closely with the County Council using secured grant funding to drive the delivery of the bypass.</p> <p>Comments on infrastructure reflect frustration within local people around the quality of existing infrastructure as well as pressures that new developments can have particularly in rural areas.</p> <p>These comments support stronger wording with the strategy to highlight the need to continue to work in partnership with providers/deliverers of health, education and highways infrastructure to drive forward improvements for local people to meet existing inadequacies as well as the need to additional provision to meet the needs arising from housing growth.</p> <p>It is noted that specific health care concerns have increased within overall infrastructure responses, which has in the past been more dominated by concerns over highway infrastructure.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• better medical facilities in Melton to avoid unable to work due to health issues</li> <li>• Growth is fine but we must get the infrastructure right.</li> <li>• [my village] will be radically changed with the planning permissions which have already been given. There will not only be a change in the physical look of the villages but a change in the makeup of the community. As far as I am aware there is to be no improvement in the sewage system or in the water supply. If these are not taken into account, we will be back decades prior to the last improvements.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Affordable Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes affordable for young adults who are unable to afford their own house or rent on the wages they earn for full time employment</li> <li>• Affordable housing, either to buy or rent are the most important, to allow younger people to live in the area they grew up in if they wish to</li> <li>• Affordable housing for people on a basic wage would be a great start also only available to local people. Not to be sold for rent.</li> <li>• The placement of affordable homes in villages away from the main amenities the town offers and away from access to places of worship for many. Affordable homes, preferably council homes should be in the town, within easy access of amenities and transport.</li> <li>• Affordable housing in sensible locations</li> <li>• those who need affordable housing need shops near/in town</li> <li>• Significant waiting times for access to social housing, as a result of a lack of suitable and/or affordable housing.</li> <li>• Concerned about significant waiting times for people to be able to join the housing register.</li> </ul>	<p>Some respondents made links between having sufficient affordable housing options as being important to retain (young) people to the area.</p> <p>The location of affordable homes, in close proximity to services and employment was also raised as an issue. The housing strategy concurs with this point and discusses the need to rebalance affordable housing supply towards the town whilst still meeting rural local peoples affordable housing needs.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about how long it took to get an affordable home or even join the housing register. These issues are addressed within the strategy which recognises that not enough affordable homes have been built to meet local needs which in turn impacts housing advice and assistance services.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have made a fabulous job of modernising Beckmill Court, keep going with the rest</li> <li>• We need more mixed tenure housing</li> <li>• Our concern is... viability can reduce the level of affordable housing delivery which is a key priority within the growth agenda. We would request consideration of this when appraising affordable housing developments</li> <li>• Concerned about First Homes and impact on the delivery of other affordable housing tenures on planning gain sites</li> <li>• you need to be focussing on more low cost but high quality rental housing</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Domestic violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for victims of domestic abuse - either existing council tenants or those applying under Homeless legislation</li> </ul>	<p>We note and agree with these comments, domestic violence is specifically mentioned within the strategy in relation to people who may need support, advice and assistance with housing and is set out within the first bullet point of the supporting people objective. This is set out in general terms to ensure that it should be specifically considered in all situations, including all tenures and in all housing related services.</p>
<p><b>Social housing tenancy management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social housing needs to be monitored more closely by local Authorities. The social housing on our estate is run by a housing association and raising issues about problem tenants is a very difficult process.</li> <li>• Recognition by MBC that village locations are not to be seen as 'dumping grounds' for difficult/problematic tenants</li> <li>• Ensure that wherever tenants are placed the infrastructure can support their needs.</li> <li>• Not everyone can afford to buy and section 106 is tricky to manage when you have owner occs complaining about tenants from the start, they always feel more entitled.</li> </ul>	<p>Effective tenancy management can improve social cohesion and outcomes for individual tenants and their families. The current strategy has been reviewed and it is agreed that additional text to address these comments should be added to the document.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenancy sustainment, lower void costs, more efficient compliance testing is needed, your notices in communal areas are poor</li> <li>• Designing homes to minimize service charges to support affordability and creating defensible space and reduce anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Make sure people in council homes do not have mouldy homes to live in. It is not good for their health</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Impact of Coronavirus – temporary/supported housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of coronavirus on housing and future homelessness could see significant increases meaning temporary and supported accommodation may be further in demand.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted and agreed, this specific risk has been explicitly highlighted with the strategy.</p>
<p><b>New Housing Development - Open space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New building needs to have more support from the council as we were told when we bought our new build 5 years ago that the estate would be adopted once finished, however the landscaping and general upkeep once all occupied is dreadful. Also, we pay a maintenance charge AND full council tax this is totally unfair when we are reliant on the house builder maintaining the estate which isn't happening. The council have let us down by having nothing to do with these estates once the money has changed hands.</li> <li>• The council having no interest in new build estates once they are paid, is a major issue. Also, the amount of council tax we pay... a maintenance charge needs addressing as we do not benefit from things like grass cutting, hedgerow maintenance, litter bins, to name a few. The developers should not be able to abandon these estates and let the green areas promised fall into overgrown, rubble filled dumps. If they promise a play park a survey of the ages of children likely to be using them would have been useful. We have one overgrown play area which is only suitable for one child at a time.</li> </ul>	<p>Comments reflect frustration about the quality of finished new open spaces and the cost/management of their maintenance upon completion. The current strategy has been reviewed and it is agreed that additional text to address these comments should be added to the document.</p>



## Climate Emergency/Environmental Sustainability

- Build houses that must be eco-friendly high insulation airtight, Rainwater harvesting, Heat recovery ventilation, Solar PV, I feel that these stipulations must be incorporated as a miming when a new house is built
- eco homes to supply the demands for future need i.e. charging cars at home
- Making new build energy efficient
- Environmentally friendly development
- Include carbon-neutral homes for each application... plus compulsory solar panels on all dwellings.
- Climate emergency is an increasingly urgent area to be addressed.
- Design and energy efficiency is the most important issue the rest will come naturally with policy written by the council
- A Declaration of Climate Emergency needs an explicit separate strategy to deal with the detail of this... ambitious and time targeted plans need putting in place
- Retro insulate all homes by 2030
- Mandate no new dwellings (or extended dwellings) should use or have a fossil fuel source (i.e., no gas or oil) ahead of the Government date (now 2025)
- If the Council is serious about the climate emergency and is to act, then it should be unashamedly requiring the highest energy performance standards of any new or extended or re-purposed buildings
- Nothing special will happen for Melton unless it leads, differentiates and makes a meaningful difference to the way that development standards are set.
- plan for and initiate the development of local services (schools, shops, etc.) that are accessible to people by walking or cycling from their homes in villages and hamlets so that people across the Borough

The climate emergency/sustainable housing is clearly a priority to many people who responded to the consultation. This supports the approach taken in the strategy, which sets out the climate emergency as a cross cutting theme underlying the entire strategy as well as an objective in its own right.

Many respondents set out specific design features/technologies that should be sought within housing, however this is beyond the current powers of a local authority, which is required to work within the government's regulatory frameworks, including their preference for a national building regulation led approach.

The role of the housing strategy is to set out the higher-level objectives to be delivered through other plans and policies. Many of the matters raised in relation to new build housing design will be addressed through the next review of the Melton Local Plan and the strong sustainability theme of the Housing Strategy should be reflected within it.

There is a need to set out links more strongly in the Housing Strategy to the Councils planned Climate Change Strategy and work it already does in this regard.

Utilising the Councils trusted enabler role, to help provide advice and assistance to help people improve the energy efficiency of their homes is strong theme within the strategy.

<p>live in 15 minute neighbourhoods and are able to become less car dependant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you need to work with neighbouring councils and businesses to train and support contractors and businesses in quality green retrofit/carbon reduction skills... and for individuals give a clear recommendation of good quality local companies who carry out this work would be very helpful</li> <li>• Ensure all newly built homes are carbon neutral and water efficient</li> <li>• Support local people to access clear advice and services to retrofit existing houses and those on low incomes and in poorly insulated properties to access funding such as Green Homes Grants</li> <li>• should require (not just support) carbon neutral development</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Green/Brownfield development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No further impacts on the countryside any building needed should be redeveloping already built on sites, utilising ex commercial premises</li> <li>• any building on farmland should be stopped as once built on can never have any environmental benefit again.</li> <li>• Minimise the impact on local communities by using brown field sites</li> </ul>	<p>Making the best use of land, particularly previously used land (brownfield) can help reduce impacts of housing growth on greenfield sites which can have benefits in relation to sustainability. The current strategy has been reviewed and it is agreed that additional text to address these comments should be added to the document.</p> <p>The role of the housing strategy is to set out the higher-level objectives to be delivered through other plans and policies. Many of the matters raised in relation to green/brownfield development will be addressed through the next review of the Melton Local Plan.</p>
<p><b>Car Parking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where houses are split into multiple properties parking needs to be a consideration</li> <li>• Require new developments to include measures to actively discourage the use of cars as well as encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport.</li> </ul>	<p>The role of the housing strategy is to set out the higher-level objectives to be delivered through other plans and policies, this specific issue is one that needs to be considered at the appropriate level of planning and planning policy. The housing strategy's better homes and climate emergency objectives should help ensure parking provision and</p>

	<p>support for sustainable travel are addressed in planning policies.</p>
<p><b>Affordability/Sustainability of rural housing development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop building houses in villages, these are not affordable for people</li> <li>• Too many new house developments in the villages -far too big for the size of the villages... with un- affordable new houses being built; attracting people living in cities- not local residents</li> <li>• Allowing new homes in unsustainable rural villages where appropriate, to enable young people to remain in villages where they wish to live, and to enable the rural community to thrive</li> <li>• What is required is a 'joint partnership between the Council and Developers to build shared ownership or council rented housing in the town itself.</li> </ul>	<p>The concerns raised were around the scale of development in some rural areas as well as its sustainability, in both environmental and social terms (need to use a car to access services/employment and related to this the costs to do so for those in affordable housing). The respondents were also identifying perceived mismatch between the cost/types of new homes being built and local people's needs.</p> <p>The location of new housing is a matter for the local plan, rather than the housing strategy, which clearly sets out the need to consider sustainability when setting such policies.</p>
<p><b>Mix of housing types needed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small 1-2 bed houses/bungalows with small gardens needed</li> <li>• Too much emphasis on 2&amp;3 bed new builds. With an ageing population and stretched and unviable care and domiciliary care, more ageing generations will need to spend their latter years in younger family member homes. This requires more emphasis on 3&amp;4 BED NEW BUILDS</li> <li>• Housing needed for the first-time buyer.</li> <li>• No affordable houses in villages for local residents</li> <li>• mobility can be supported by ensuring a range of size, cost and tenure of homes and apartments in a street. This can be achieved using a housing density of above 60dph - not everyone wants or needs a garden, car parking spare bedrooms at every stage of life</li> </ul>	<p>There were a mix of views in terms of the size of housing required, some supported more smaller homes, particularly bungalows, whilst others suggested that the more flexibility is required particularly around the aging population, which could actually increase the need for larger homes to enable multi-generational families to live together, to provide care and support, as the population continues to age. This was directly contrary to many comments made against large expensive housing being delivered in rural villages in particular that were not affordable for local people.</p> <p>Views were expressed around being in a point of time where society was changing and that the types of housing required as a result may also change, including in response to climate change, aging population and affordability. That people's choices and need for space, parking, garages, annexes and gardens may alter over time. The</p>

	<p>housing strategy does not prescribe any types or sizes of housing, rather that it should help to ensure overall new housing supply helps to ensure the right type of homes are being building the right places, the strategy will also be regularly reviewed to ensure that it can address any such changes should they occur.</p>
<p><b>Private Rented housing -Accessibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The private rental market is inaccessible for many due to cost.</li> <li>• ...access to rental accommodation which is often out of reach to those with poor credit/low income and other measures associated</li> </ul>	<p>Many respondents highlighted issues with accessing the private rented sector which were in line with those already set out in the housing strategy, where access/affordability in the sector is seen as a key local issue. Comments for a variety of service providers concurred with our assessment and associated problems it brings.</p>
<p><b>Private Rented housing -Local Housing Allowance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst we appreciate that it is the government who set the Local Housing Allowance rates, it is the gap between the LHA and rental prices that prevents people from accessing such [private rental] housing.</li> <li>• The specification that Under 35's can only claim a single room rate, coupled with the lack of smaller house types further leads to unaffordable, and inaccessible housing for many.</li> </ul>	<p>This issue was set out broadly in the housing strategy as a key local issue in the private rented sector. The specific issue with under 35's rate and links between affordability and makeup of the housing stock are specific issues that affect younger people which should also be highlighted in the strategy.</p>
<p><b>Private Rented housing - other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need... perhaps agreements with local landlords to rent out their properties to the council for the local housing allowance paid direct in exchange for the council taking on repairs and servicing contracts, some landlords want long term lets.</li> <li>• Work with landlords to ensure that properties for rental meet EPC rating of C or above, if necessary, make this a licencing requirement.</li> </ul>	<p>The role of the housing strategy is to set out the higher-level objectives to be delivered through other plans and policies, these specific issues need to be considered at the appropriate level rather than within the housing strategy. For example, the Council has worked with private landlords in a variety of ways, including as suggested and the strategy aims to promote any type or tenure of housing that is a secure available and affordable for those</p>

	<p>whose needs cannot be met without assistance.</p> <p>working to get all rented housing to EPC C or above is a key part of the strategy, licencing should be considered as part of our private housing standards remit however it may be challenging given the make up and geographic spread of privately rented homes in the Borough.</p>
<p><b>Health impacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...concerned about supply of housing suitable for older people as the projected growth is substantial... [and]... risk of poor health outcomes e.g. older people on low income and facing fuel poverty etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Health comments generally concurred with those outlined within strategy, it is right to highlight those with multiple risk factors as per the comments.</p>
<p><b>Design quality, local character and heritage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I live in a conservation village which is located in a very rural area. There is a danger that the village loses its inherent character due to overdevelopment which affects the views, environment, surrounding fields.</li> <li>• The conservation assessment for the village was undertaken in 1977 and many of its findings are out of date.</li> <li>• New houses architecture: does not fit in villages - too modern</li> <li>• Planning need to look into big sites they approved they should currently be ashamed.</li> <li>• community safety is greatly enhanced by neighbours knowing and interacting with each other, and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods support more people to interact and get to know each other as well as supporting active travel.</li> </ul>	<p>The role of the housing strategy is to set out the higher-level objectives to be delivered through other plans and policies, which is why local character and design of housing were highlighted throughout the strategy at a strategic level. Specific issues raised are primarily a matter for the Melton Local Plan and its Design supplementary planning document, including next the local plan review.</p>
<p><b>Need for Housing Growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to build more houses to allow the economy to develop on the area</li> <li>• [will] MBC will be revisiting the areas currently approved for development to see</li> </ul>	<p>This is discussed in the strategy document, particularly in relation to the aging population and expected fall in economic activity associated with it.</p>

if they are justified [in light of the new housing strategy]

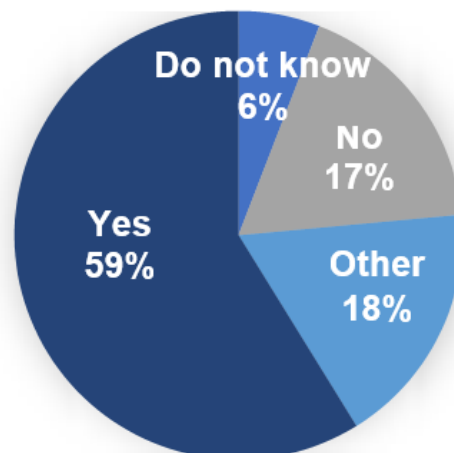
- suggest it may be pertinent for the Council to set out the role of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan within the draft Housing Strategy

The role of the housing strategy is to set out the higher-level objectives to be delivered through other plans and policies, including the Melton Local Plan, which sets out planning policies for new development to which your comments relate. However, the evidence bases for both documents is largely the same and the government prescribes minimum house building targets. The Melton local plan review process will start shortly, it will consider whether there is a need to review delivery and location of new housing development

A reference to the Strategic Growth Plan will be added to the strategy

## Feedback on the draft objectives

Chart 3: 'Do you think we have set out the right objectives'



The survey asked respondents whether they felt the objectives it sets out were correct.

59% agreed but 18% felt they were incorrect. None of the people who stated that they were incorrect suggested alternative objectives.

The remaining 24% responded either 'don't' know' (6%) or 'other' 18%. However, most of those who responded other were broadly in support of the objectives with provisos or comments on specific housing issues these and other comments on the draft objectives are shown below.

### Responded 'other':

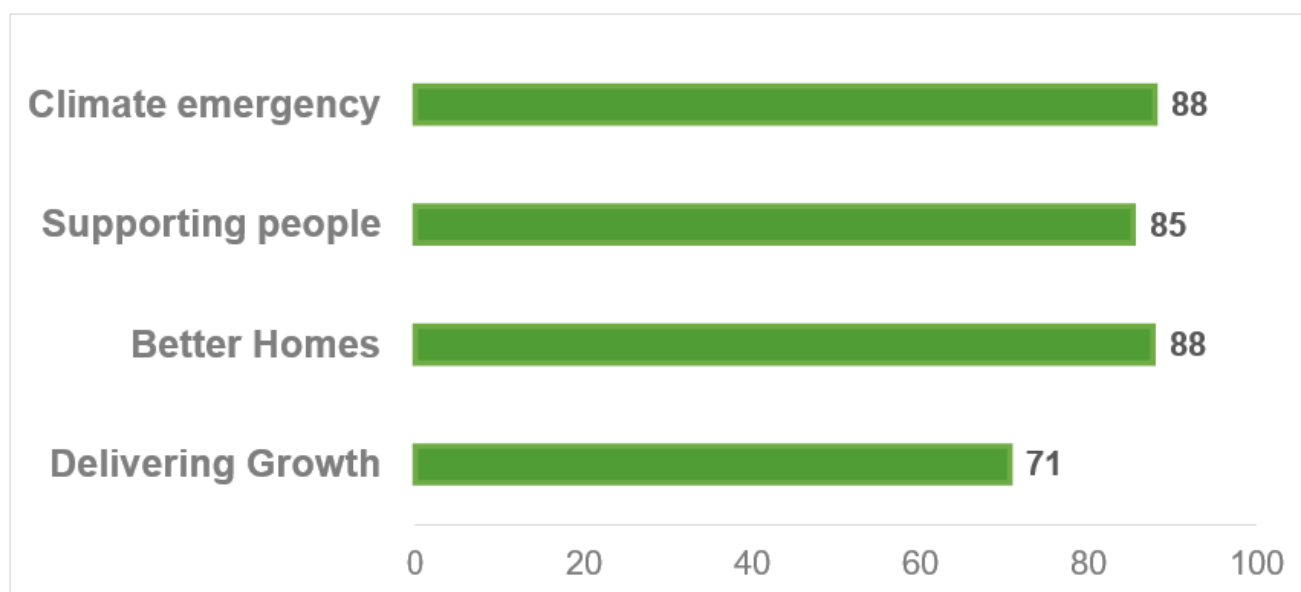
- Yes, but ensure that existing communities are not adversely affected by the need to house.
- Yes, but not being done correctly. There are existing poor buildings that need improving or converting before building.

- Yes, but so long as the climate emergency is classed as equal to other objectives and sustainable energy is incorporated to housing and other developments e.g. solar panels, air source heat pumps etc
- Objectives are correct, but questionable if you can deliver

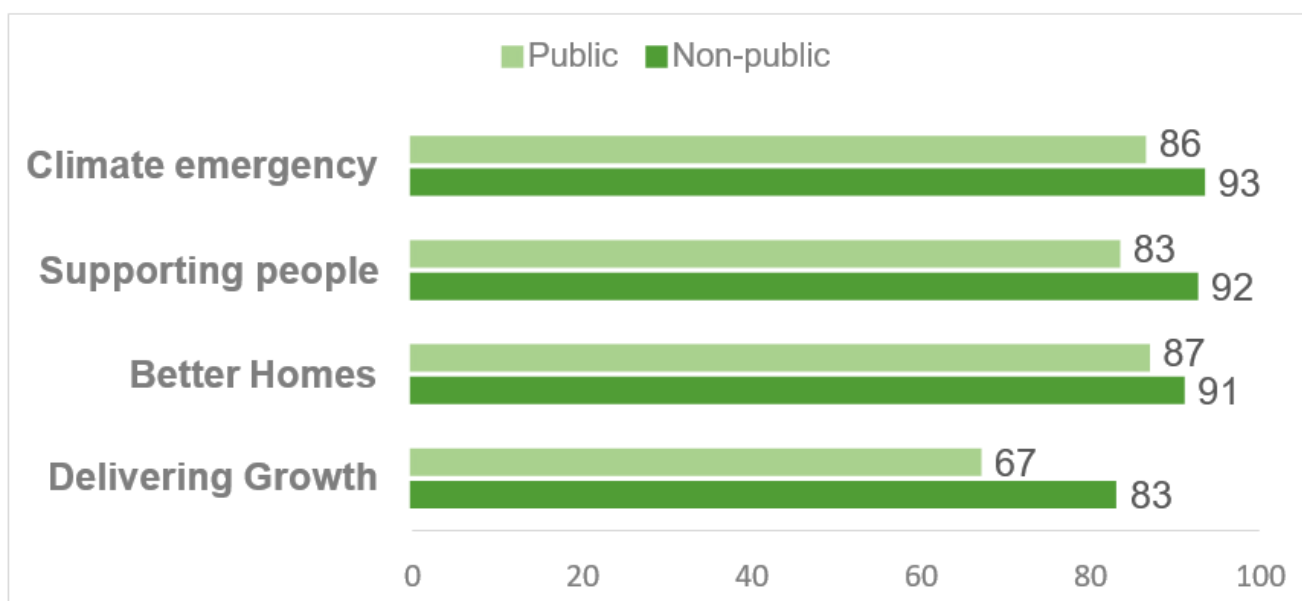
## Support for the draft objectives

Respondents were asked on a scale of 0-100 to rate each of the four proposed objectives, the responses are summarised in the two graphs below.

**Chart 4: All Respondents support for each objectives (on scale of 0-100)**



**Chart 5: Support for each objectives (scale: 0-100) by type of respondent**



There was strong overall support for each of the objectives, the Climate Emergency, Supporting People and Better Homes objectives all scored highly, 85-88 out of 100. Members of the public tended to score slightly lower than other respondents and considerably lower for the 'Delivering Growth' objective (67/100), this likely links to the comments made by members of the public expressing concerns about the impacts and quality of recent housing developments, discussed later on within this report.

The next section sets out a selection of key comments made by respondents in relation to each of the objectives.

## Comments made on each objective

### Delivering Growth Objective

Delivering sustainable and inclusive housing growth that meets the needs of current and future residents in Melton

Comments made in relation to the Delivering Growth objective

- new housing has to be good quality and sustainable, which mean energy efficient homes in the right places
- Appropriate homes, generally, smaller, built in higher density are required, to increase affordability and enable individuals or small households to vacate older properties suitable for larger families or to accommodate families who may not wish to have or not need the domestic space traditionally desired such as a garage and parking for several cars.
- We believe the focus should be upon rebalancing the purpose of new housing, to better meet local need and therefore increase availability of social housing.
- Good quality housing needs to be a priority for young people/couples, families, the elderly and infirm.
- This needs to be linked to employment opportunity
- Agree and would like to consider 'healthy' developments e.g. active travel etc.
- Too many developments in the villages- far too large for the size of the villages. Infrastructure not adapted to the growth.
- There is no need to deliver more growth and further house building approvals should be stopped.
- There is a high demand for more homes to be built
- To include consultation with existing communities where they already exist i.e. villages
- Housing growth should be for people who work locally. Not for those with long commutes to neighbouring cities.
- I agree that prices do not correlate to residents' wages. That working in partnership is a good strategy
- Growth is all good but without the correct infrastructure and services it will not work
- This creates a vicious circle. More housing for "future" residents means more jobs needed, more jobs means more houses. etc. Why does Melton need to constantly expand?
- Again, not being done correctly, there are so many sites that can be used in sensible locations
- These are often developed without proper resourcing, by sacrificing hedges and trees, by not providing environmentally friendly open spaces, with poor design and



without sustainable energy provision. If this were to change then I would be more supportive of this objective.

- So called affordable homes do not need to be included in high spec high pricing housing. It's not fair on a family buying a £500k home, and those in the starter homes should not be subjected to the high prices homes in the area
- Not just Melton, but the rural villages too. There is too much emphasis on the town
- Working with planning to achieve good design which is also financially viable to deliver is key to promoting this approach.
- [housing association] is looking to use its land led programme to develop quality homes and neighbourhoods.. we have more control than for S106 opportunities

## **Better Homes Objective**

*Ensure that as many homes as possible, in all tenures, are of good quality and support good health and wellbeing*

### **Comments made in relation to the Better Homes objective**

- Lead my example and ensure all council homes are good standard and affordable to heat
- How will owners of older homes be assisted to improve their quality and efficiency and thereby help the borough to achieve this objective?
- Good housing is needed to ensure people can effectively look after their health and wellbeing. Get the housing right, and this reduces the burden on other areas of public spend.
- Should include them being environmentally sustainable
- Agree this is important, would be keen to focus on improving poor quality in particular
- This objective should have included a requirement for homes to be environmentally sustainable - current and future. There needs to be an objective for adaptation of homes not just a 'catch-all' statement under each objective.
- And are very highly energy efficient
- All new housing should be built to a high standard. There have been far too many examples over the years of poor standards of housebuilding backed up by inadequate inspection procedures.
- Need particular emphasis on providing good quality social housing, preferably council houses.
- Energy efficiency is the most important aspect of this.
- I like the proposition of cycle routes and green spaces. One of Melton's best features is its green spaces which everyone can enjoy
- Ensure that good quality and wellbeing include the provision of sustainable energy e.g., solar panels, air source heat pumps, double glazing, insulation
- It's important but why did you allow the timber framed houses on... They are not high quality, and those seeking to move on or buy one of those homes in 10 years' time will find it difficult, not only because mortgage lenders won't give them a mortgage, but it's also constantly flooding

- Increase support for updating older housing stock to maintain character of an area
- There is a conflict between naturally wanting better quality starter homes and their affordability.
- this should include an emphasis on insulation and renewable energy generation as these both reduce bills and make housing healthier during heatwaves, storms and low temperatures

## Supporting People Objective

*Support people to access and sustain housing appropriate for their needs*

### Comments made in relation to the Comments on the supporting people objective

- Could the Lightbulb project be an example of a wrong approach to supporting people and hampering the growth objective... [by encouraging] older, probably larger houses to be altered to cater for a resident's changing needs, rather than build more suitable homes to provide a better solution
- We completely agree with this objective however the strategy should take a more holistic approach to supporting people...[needs] to be carried through into the steps that MBC will take, to support people... should place more emphasis upon the importance and impact of supporting people's mental and physical health needs.
- The assessment of needs requires closer consultation with specific groups, such as those over 60 years of age
- We're seeing some local concerns around mental health (though not directly tied to housing). Also note the data on relatively low income in the area and the impact on housing access and fuel poverty.
- I am concerned about the policies for the elderly population
- MBC must consider the needs of the existing communities where proposed new development or the sighting of 'challenging tenants' is concerned.
- When needs change the options are non-existent. Needs of young adults to be independent. Additional members to family. When blended families are created. When elderly live with family.
- Need more homes near schools and doctors, all I'm seeing is building in villages it does not make sense and they cost too much, they are not affordable homes e.g. Old Dalby, Nether Broughton these new homes will be so expensive!
- Supporting everyone, regardless.
- Need greater emphasis on assisting ageing population to stay in their own homes, or to downsize locally or close to family members
- Joint working is required to identify the requirements for adapted housing and maximising use of these homes
- Social care agenda – linking up health, housing and social care and revenue funding to support vulnerable groups. Attractive job opportunities and skilled / diverse workforce in care and support.
- Ending homelessness and rough sleeping... through wider partnerships and collaboration e.g., RSI4 initiative

## Climate emergency Objective

*Ensure climate change implications are considered at all stages of planning, delivery and occupations of homes*

### Comments made in relation to the climate emergency objective

- Community energy schemes such as solar parks or district heating schemes. District heating using new technologies could help rural communities... move away from solid fuel and oil heating.
- Green and blue mitigations... such as tree shading and the use of water should have a higher profile.
- the Draft Design SPD fails to require new housing to be built with greater energy efficiency... so how can this objective be achieved?
- This is essential for the future of our population
- The use of the term 'emergency' has been used by environmental activists recently, but many would dispute this term. Environmental Sustainability, a term used in the MBC Local Plan, is a far better phrase to describe the long-term change in behaviour and requirement to implementation new technologies in all housing plans.
- Homes being built now should have green heating solutions such as heat exchangers, solar panels or ground source pumps. Homes should be well insulated including underfloor and triple glazed windows. Such measures will help alleviate fuel poverty too – one of the objectives.
- Note the relatively low numbers of people cycling as a form of transport in Melton!
- I do not think 'emergency' is the right term. Emergencies are short acute problems to be solved. I'd prefer 'Reducing environmental impact and adaption to climate change' as the objective.
- We need to address and adapt to climate change, responding fast to new technologies and ensuring all homes comply with the evolving technology.
- All new homes should be being built with underground water storage, solar panels, electric chargers, triple glazing and underfloor insulation.
- As long a pragmatic choice is not blocked by overzealous application e.g., not using older buildings due to environmental considerations.
- Allowing building of homes on fields currently or very recently being used for crop growing is irresponsible and highly damaging for our climate. Simply stating Melton Council will "support sustainable developments that consider local wildlife and biodiversity and minimise future flood risks" while at the same time allowing large areas of good growing land to be concreted over makes this a meaningless statement. "Sustainable transport options" also fails to impress. The bus services have reduced over the years and seldom go to where jobs are located so the car is the only viable option. Thousands more houses mean thousands more cars, all adding to pollution and harming the environment. The current strategy falls far short of delivering a strong environmental policy able to meet or exceed Government targets.
- Admirable aim but not at the expense of providing sufficient and suitable homes for those on council waiting lists and the homeless. Don't expect private landlords to fill the gaps.

- Number one issue
- There is nothing more important than doing everything possible to sustain the Earth for all its occupants.
- Climate change is all good but nobody seems to be looking at the bigger picture to where all the services are coming from. If everyone in our road plugged in a car charger the grid would fail due to overload and demand
- Any future housing should include zero-carbon dwellings and make solar panelling compulsory.
- Not just considered but actioned and sometimes at the expense of developers profits i.e. build less houses on a plot of land to create wildlife sanctuaries improving health and wellbeing as well as supporting the environment. Ensure trees and hedges are retained and enhanced not destroyed to fit more houses on the development site. Make it mandatory to build houses with solar panels, ground source/heat source heat pumps etc.
- You are not taking adequate steps to ensure flooding will not be an issue, example when was the last time you sent out the gulley clearing vacuum trucks... various areas are flooding constantly
- We have to take climate change seriously so we need to consider this at every stage
- Difficult to know what the future holds, but climate extremes seem to be a factor for the future and it's important to have catchment area studies for all our watercourses and feed findings into the planning system
- you need to specify that homes "in the right places" would both have strong active and public transport links, and would only be allowed where 15 minute neighbourhoods are possible.. set housing density targets of above 60 dwellings per hectare for new housing developments.
- Energy efficiency advice should be extended to everyone – it is the people on higher incomes who might have the resources to retrofit their homes now if they are supported to know what to do and who reliable local installers are
- Set in place housing related carbon targets and auditing system to monitor the implementation of the strategy

## Alternative objectives suggested

Respondents were asked if they would like to propose any alternative objectives, comments made are shown below. These were largely comments in relation to specific housing issues rather than the suggestion of an alternative objective.

- To provide open play areas on all housing developments
- Environmental Sustainability
- Reducing environmental impact and adapting to climate change
- How do you intend to support the influx of people, medical, schooling, community care? These must be taken into consideration before build more houses.
- Minimise the impact on local communities by using brownfield sites etc.
- Any housing development should be within already developed areas for instance re-purposing unused commercial properties rather than developments on greenfield sites.

- Stop more building on agricultural land. Concentrate new buildings on brownfield sites, e.g. Melton Airfield, a site identified many years ago as capable of holding 1000 houses.
- To consider creating a university in Melton which will increase leisure facilities, create higher paid residents, inspire young to aim high
- I think you should look at how digitally advanced your team are... just imagine how much money you would save and it improves customer relations if they can manage their home online, report repairs, request permissions etc
- We need to build not just estates but communities, too many larger developments are just bolted on to existing with bog standard plans that the developer has used elsewhere. These tend to be driven by the need to reward shareholders above the needs of communities

## Other comments on the objectives

Respondents were also asked if they would like to make any other comments on the proposed objectives, comments made are shown below.

- We have also noted many of the issues identified in the strategy including growth in older population, the need for additional local service provision in response to housing growth, relatively low income in Melton and the link to housing access, the need to improve cycling rates locally and the need for new development to promote healthy lives e.g. through active travel, ease of access to local services, communal and green spaces etc.
- Melton Borough has an ageing profile and is 5% higher than the average for England in those who are over 45 years of age (48.1%). As an active pensioner I do not agree with the description of homes being 'under occupied' when lived in by the elderly [work part-time, require office space, family and friends coming to stay; space for 'in-home care'] ... I have benefited from down-sizing from a large 4 bedroomed home to a 3 bedroomed bungalow, which is fully occupied as we are both still engaged in active outside work and families/friends visiting... older people do not want to downsize to one bed-roomed tiny properties, but rather to live in bungalows.
- New developments need to be multi-generational and include more bungalows for the elderly. This would free up many 'second home purchases', which in turn would free up 'first time home purchases'.
- So much more focus has been given to affordable housing for new starters in the Plan but little real consideration for the older residents and a multi-generational approach... we need more mixed living for elderly residents with multi-purpose care centres that include individual homes, warden assisted and full care services.
- The current Local Plan took into account Developers' views that they couldn't afford to build affordable properties in the town... This resulted in most affordable homes being planned to be built in villages... it is totally unsuitable for young families and young people. All main amenities, employment and social support services are in Melton... what about those who do not have access to their own transport.. The bus not catering for those in employment or even recreation and it is too far to walk and cycling is unsafe.
- The objectives are fine however delivering it correctly to suit the area is not covered. The current infrastructure cannot cope and I could not see where that had been addressed

- Overall an excellent, objective-based document and easy to read
- What focus is being put on building new GP surgery or improving hospital facilities and schools. An increase in people living in the area will need this urgently rather than being sent out to other areas!

## Action required

The last section of the report asked respondents about the action they would like to see, they were asked what they would like to see the Council do as well as who else they thought needed to take action and what they thought they needed to do, comments made are shown below.

## What respondents wanted the Council to do...

### Lead by example

- lead by example, use its assets for sustainable exemplar housing projects.
- Develop/support exemplar projects in borough - retrofit and new builds - promote awareness locally with borough at all levels.
- MBC should lead by example - set high bar to which private developers need to follow.
- Council can use its land to support development of affordable homes, quality, design and energy efficiency measures.
- Council could give capital funding support for affordable homes, higher energy standards, adapted homes etc.

### Lobby government

- Lobby government for support, funding and powers to address local housing issues identified.

### Stronger partnership working

- From an Adults and Communities perspective I'd like to see a stronger emphasis on working in partnership with the County Council to ensure housing options are available locally for the vulnerable citizens of Melton across all age groups. This partnership should focus on planning, developing, delivering and sustaining housing for vulnerable people.
- Tread the tightrope between developer and community and landlord and tenant by bringing the two different parties, in both cases, together to understand the drivers for each.

### Adequate Infrastructure in place now

- Ensure infrastructure supports local housing needs within the rural community
- Make sure infrastructure is adequate
- Concentrate on improving the infrastructure first, well before allowing any more building. The doctors surgery is full way beyond capacity, the indoors shopping centre, the Bell Centre has mostly empty shops when it should be thriving centre, the number of parking places has fallen, when, with growth predicted, it should have been increased. These are just some of the issues to be addressed. Let the current ongoing housing projects be completed and the houses all sold, address the

infrastructure issues then think about further growth in housing. At present it appears to be a race to get as many houses as possible built without first addressing the infrastructure needs.

- Need to stop taking about new school places, and new medical facilities etc... plans need to be drawn up. I have not seen any plans proposed for a new school to house all these new children, not even to extend the facilities we have now... neither have you drawn up any plans for a new doctor's surgery. Latham house cannot cope now, let alone in the future
- There is a need to ensure good infrastructure. More work on roads, bus routes, adequate schooling, variety of shops, improvement of services from \Latham house and a new independent doctors' surgery

### **Health and exercise**

- Provide fit gyms in outdoor areas so everyone can access fitness without gym fees. Ensure new housing estate plans contain provision for fitness, play areas, etc

### **Bring forward reviews for supporting plans**

- timescale for bringing policy to support these objectives needs to be quickened - review at 2024 seems to late?

### **More affordable housing in Melton Mowbray**

- More council houses in Melton itself and look at where there is demand in rural areas for council houses to enable those born in the village to continue living.
- set up a joint partnership between the Council and Developers to build shared ownership or council rented housing in the Town itself.
- As a church we are particularly concerned about those that need social services, other amenities, or support. This includes the vulnerable as well as those struggling with poverty and also many of the elderly. Through working with other churches in the town we have been able to develop and support additional activities to those offered through the Borough. Looking to the future, our concern is how such people are catered for and where in the Borough they are housed. The recent Local Plan seems to place most affordable housing in the villages rather than in the town itself. It is clear that Housing Developers will wish to maximize their profit and claim they can't afford to build affordable homes in the town, but this is where they are needed. Villages require you to drive and have your own transport. To access employment, places of worship, supermarkets (cheaper food, medical services, social and support services, entertainment and sports facilities a car is absolutely essential if living in a village. This is because the bus services from villages to Melton town are in the main daytime only and none on a Sunday, and don't start early enough to get people to work, or cater for those who do shift work. There are also no buses to further afield employment centres.
- It's great to have the CCG and Public Health contributing to discussions on plans and developments and we appreciate you taking the time to have these conversations with us. I think the best solutions are often found through joint working and so we'd be keen for you to continue to do this. We're keen to continue to seek S106 contributions linked to the statement below and would appreciate your ongoing support.

### **Deliver more environmentally sustainable housing/developments now**

- ensure all new homes have environmentally sustainable technology and facilities now.
- Make all new housing very energy efficient
- Insist on high level of energy efficiency for new homes; promote and subsidise improvement in efficiency of existing stock

### **Housing growth mix/needs**

- scrap the term 'under-occupation' and re-assess the housing needs of the more elderly population, taking account of the changes in society.
- work with care home developers to build multi-site areas catering for the independent older person as well as those needing intervention and support.
- Ensure new housing developments have sufficient bungalows/single story/future proofed homes and are truly multi-generational communities.
- Assess all unoccupied and under-utilised properties in the borough.
- Need to consider the needs of local people especially young adults and the different needs of multi-generational living together
- Concentrate on housing needs for "present" and not future residents.

### **Location of Housing Growth**

- Review all brown field locations for appropriate re-use.
- stop building so many houses in villages, the infrastructure cannot sustain the growth: roads, lack of public transport, GP, schools
- Ensure the protection of the countryside and stop any poorly planned developments
- Rethink the whole strategy. Maintain Melton as a small market town.
- Build in sensible locations and stop building in villages the locations make no sense they cost too much, and you upset current residents who chose to be in a small village.... there must be balance.
- Look at empty property or convert one of the many empty shops. People living in the town would also have easy access to public transport which also needs to be improved.

### **Take action to deliver objectives we have set out**

- Look at the details requirements to achieve these objectives
- Ensure it meets the targets set timeously and on budget
- Keep current people happy and make sure there is suitable housing and make current homes meet good standards.
- Deliver Housing growth ambitions

### **Social housing tenancy management**

- Drug issues and anti-social behaviour needs to be addressed. State of people's homes gardens etc. Repairs undertaken to outside of properties. Working with tenants to provide things they need.
- Consider those in existing communities re: the sighting of difficult or challenging tenants. Where I live there are 4 council properties and only one keeps their property in good order.



- Village communities are not to be used as dumping grounds (out of sight, out of mind) for individual families that cannot be managed in other areas of Melton borough.

### **Improve council performance**

- Get their act together
- have more officials who actually live in the town and have the good of the town at heart.

### **Communicate with local community**

- To listen to the needs and voices of the local community
- Listen to the public
- Homeowners do not seem to be considered as partners in the strategy

### **Provide more supported housing**

- Create more HMOs for supported housing for single people who are unable to live alone but could manage in a shared house.

### **Homelessness**

- More help for people not in priority need they often fall through the housing gap
- Ensure suitable temporary and supported accommodation within Melton to meet the needs
- Increase single person accommodation to move people from homelessness to independence through move on agreements when ready
- Look at a Housing First model
- Regular Homeless Strategy meetings to co-ordinate all service in the area, increase awareness and collaboration.

## **Who else respondents wanted to take action...**

### **Government**

- Government needs to bring forwards additional powers to local authorities to address the issues in the strategy, its hands are tied, in [particular in terms of borrowing limits and limited planning powers to secure more sustainable new housing]
- Government - low cost / interest loans retrofit?
- I believe the government needs to consider more grants to local authorities to support the building of council homes. However, these need to be integrated within new estates rather than as an 'add-on' which can make them look like second class areas.
- Government. Clear support for policy of reducing our carbon footprints both individually and as an authority

## **Developers**

- Developers in the area need to be held accountable not just for housing but for but also providing open areas for fitness, exercise and play areas  
can CIL provide income to fund this? larger developers contributions.
- Responsibility of developers to build the houses to a high efficiency - they will cut every corner possible to save money when building houses and flats.
- Developers with better infrastructure

## **Clinical Commissioning Group**

- CCG to look at options to resolve the growing demand on primary care.

## **Voluntary Sector**

- Explore potential partnerships with the voluntary sector

## **Landlords (social and private sector)**

- The vetting of tenants before they are housed to ensure they will fit in with the local community, where very few community facilities exist, leading to boredom and the potential for increased crime.
- Householders and rental property owners need to be aware of their responsibilities on energy efficiency
- Landlords need to make rents affordable at every level

## **Local People**

- Individuals in the town need to take more interest in the town and hold councillors and borough council officials to account.
- If we all work together, we can achieve more.
- The residents themselves.
- Members of the public

## **Service providers/public services, including Leicestershire County Council**

- Local councils, better road access, tram service around Melton and surrounding areas
- LCC with lighting the streets.
- All public services need to work together to deliver the strategy
- Service providers, can Melton cover this proposal at this this current time, no.

## **Local Businesses**

- trade associations to participate and share good practice and business benefits
- More job creation, business enterprise, more local apprenticeships for young people to gain work experience
- more inspirational figures to engage young persons in Melton