

Matter 3: Overall requirements for housing and employment land and the long-term growth strategy (Policies SS2 and SS6); affordable housing need and policy targets (Policies C4, SS4 and SS5)

- i) is the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment for Leicester and Leicestershire (HEDNA 2017) an appropriate starting point for setting the requirement in terms of its demographic assumptions ...

The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014 Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), Jan 2017, the Towards and Housing Requirement for Melton report (TAHR), Jan 2017 and its addendum (June 2017) identify Melton Borough as forming part of the Leicester & Leicestershire Housing Market Area.

The HEDNA provides a consistent, objective assessment of need for housing (OAN) following the approach prescribed by Government in Planning Practice Guidance and identifies an Objectively Assessed Need for the equivalent of 170 new dwellings each year from 2011 to 2036 for the Borough of Melton, driven by:

- natural population increase
- more people moving into the area than leaving
- the trend for smaller households, including more people living alone
- existing shortfalls in housing, particularly affordable housing in rural areas
- economic growth trends
- an adjustment for market affordability
- the ability to service the economy with sufficient people of working age

The Melton TAHR indicated that taking account of wider considerations, there was a clear justification for planning for between 5,750 and 7,000 dwellings, equivalent to 230-280 dwellings per annum. The Council has agreed a housing requirement of 245dpa, within that range.

Response

The Plan is unsound due to:-

The HEDNA provides a consistent, objective assessment for housing needs (OAN) and follows the approach prescribed by the Government in its PPG, identifying an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for the equivalent of 170 new dwellings each year from 2011 - 2035 for the Borough of Melton.

After being party to producing the HEDNA and contributing to its cost (£9k) the Council, on realising that the HEDNA was not supporting their figure of 245dpa, then commissioned their TAHR using the same consultant as the HEDNA, at further cost, to justify the original requirement of 245dpa. We are not convinced that there was, or still is "justification for planning for between 5,750 and 7,000 dwellings".

The Plan will cause major harm within the Borough's villages, by focussing on the 4000+ housing requirement in Melton **to finance/justify a relief road** and still maintain a 65% to 35% split between the town and villages.

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The large scale expansion of villages is based on a desktop and tick box sustainability assessments carried out by consultants who have little local knowledge.

The increase in housing within the villages was then divided on a percentage of the existing population making their sustainability assessments meaningless.

A number of villages, which due to past growth without a corresponding investment in infrastructure, are now struggling to accommodate this proposed excessive growth. Water supply, sewage capacity, surface water and watercourse flooding, overloaded, poorly maintained roads, pavements substandard width, parking on pavements, village greens and over junctions, primary schools and Medical Practises have been raised as major problems when actual planning applications have been considered. This highlights the lack of thoroughness in the Local Plan preparation. There has been extensive analysis on Melton's needs and allocations to improve the Melton Town infrastructure along with a new relief road. Considering that 35% of the development will be in the villages, it would have been expected that a proportionate investment in the rural infrastructure would have been planned.

The Plan makes no reference to the amount of traffic that will be generated on the already overloaded rural roads or the negative impact on climate change caused by car travel from remote villages North of Melton on the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire borders to areas of quality employment.

There is an opportunity to produce a Plan without overloading the rural infrastructure, destroying the historic, rural character of the villages by building the fully serviced garden village next to the A46 trunk road at Six Hills. The propose 3000 dwellings could allow the villages to expand at a rate commensurate with local need and wishes in line with the neighbourhood plans; any borough housing shortfall being offset by the Six Hills Garden Village.