

Melton Borough Local Plan Review

Sustainability Appraisal

SA Report
Regulation 19

December 2024

Quality information

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Melton is a borough in Leicestershire at the heart of the East Midlands, it is named after its principal town Melton Mowbray. Large parts of the borough are rural in nature and support agriculture, with a range of distinct settlements throughout.
- 1.1.2 AECOM is commissioned by Melton Borough Council to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Melton Local Plan review. The SA encapsulates the requirements of a strategic environmental assessment (SEA).
- 1.1.3 The SA is being undertaken alongside the development of the Local Plan Review, with the intention of aiding the decision-making process and discharging legal requirements.
- 1.1.4 At the current stage, the Council has prepared a pre-submission version of the Plan which is being consulted upon in-line with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012. Alongside the Plan, it is a requirement to prepare and consult upon an 'SA Report'.

1.2 This SA Report

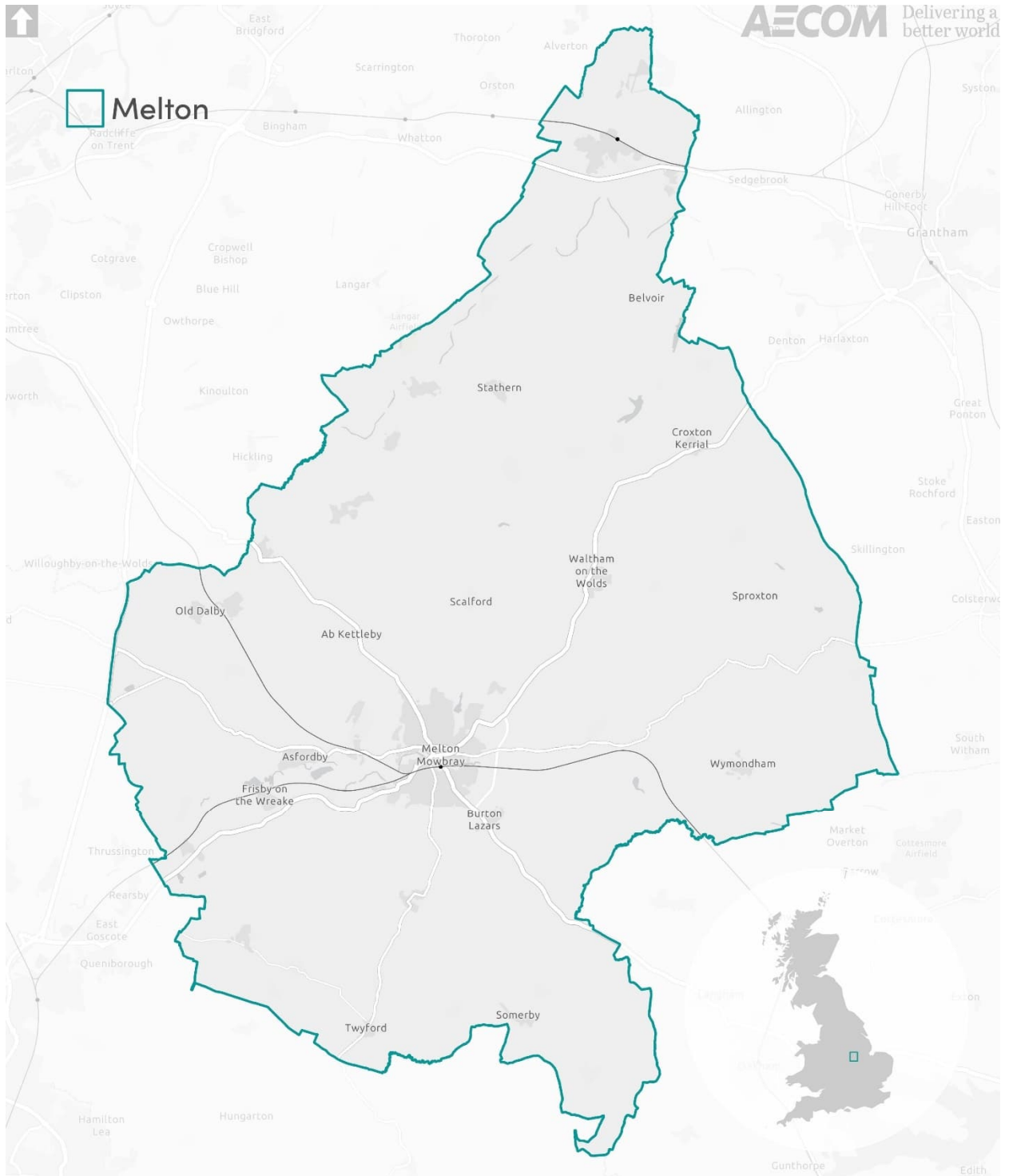
- 1.2.1 This report documents the SA process at this stage. The report is structured as follows:
 - Section 2 Plan details
 - Section 3 What is the Scope of the SA?
 - Section 4 Identifying Alternatives (overview)
 - Section 5 Issues and Options Stage
 - Section 6: Identifying Alternatives (Preferred Options Stage)
 - Section 7: Appraisal of Reasonable Alternatives (Preferred Options)
 - Section 8: Reconsideration of Alternatives (Pre-Submission Stage)
 - Section 9: Appraisal of Reasonable Site Options
 - Section 10: Appraisal of the Draft Plan
 - Section 11: Recommendations
 - Section 12: Next steps

2. Plan details

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Current Melton Local Plan was adopted in October 2018 setting a strategy for the borough up to 2036. Local Plans must be reviewed every five years of the Plans adoption, and therefore, the Council agreed to undertake a review in December 2022.
- 2.1.2 The outcomes of the Plan Review were published in a report in September 2023, which suggests that several aspects of the adopted Plan required updating. The review concluded that the development strategy remains appropriate, and the supply of housing is sufficient. However, there is a need to update the Employment Growth Policy to reflect changes in the use class order and the conclusions of a new Employment Land Study (potentially requiring additional allocations). A range of updates may also be required in relation to specific plan policies to ensure that they reflect current legislation, priorities and prevailing economic, social and environmental conditions.
- 2.1.3 The new Plan will guide development from adoption through to 2036. The Plan area is illustrated on Figure 2.1 below and will cover the whole of Melton Borough.
- 2.1.4 It is necessary to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal alongside the Local Plan update (the requirements of which are discharged through this SA report).

Figure 2.1 The Plan area



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2.2 Plan-making to date

- 2.2.2 The emerging Local Plan is at Pre-Submission stage (Regulation 19), but several steps have already been undertaken to gain a better understanding of the key issues and how these can be addressed.
- 2.2.3 An issues and options consultation was undertaken from 6th November 2023 to the 7th January 2024. This document introduced the key issues facing Melton alongside a range of options to address these.
- 2.2.4 An SA Scoping Report was prepared by the Council alongside the issues and options document which set out the context review, baseline information, key issues and methods.
- 2.2.5 Following the feedback received during the issues and options consultation, the Planning Policy Team have worked closely with members, consultants, stakeholders and statutory consultees to produce sound draft policies.
- 2.2.6 Part of the plan development process has involved the consideration of reasonable alternatives through the SA, which are discussed in subsequent chapters of the SA Report.

3. What is the scope of the SA?

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The aim here is to summarise the scope of the SA, i.e. the sustainability themes and objectives that should be a focus of the SA. Full details of the process and outputs can be found in the [SA Scoping Report](#).

3.2 Consultation

3.2.1 The SEA Regulations require that “when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. As such, these authorities were consulted between October 2023 and November 2023 (as well as making the report available on the Council’s website for wider engagement). Responses received are summarised in the table below and were taken into account when finalising the scope of the SA.

Summary of comments received	Response
<p>Grantham Canal Society queries how the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report ‘moves things on’.</p> <p>It also queries the amount of information provided in relation to Grantham Canal.</p>	<p>The scoping report is a snapshot in time which sets out baseline information at a strategic level. The report provides an update to previous SA work that has been undertaken.</p>
<p>Bottesford is also at risk from the Winterbeck where poor drainage from the Barratt's estate floods Belvoir Rd and water fails to get under the road bridge causing turbulence on the east side which will eventually undermine the bridge.</p> <p>Grantham is an important HMA in relation to Bottesford. Large developments are currently underway in Grantham.</p>	<p>Comments noted and will be taken into account when undertaking further assessment work.</p>
<p>The report does not reflect the reality of economic zones by suggesting Bottesford is within the Leicester employment area when residents of Bottesford area either travel to Nottingham or Grantham or use local Bottesford employers.</p> <p>Secondly I am pleased that the report recommends that Conservation Areas be reviewed especially those last reviewed before the year 2000. I hope that happens and I am willing to help in respect of Easthorpe and Bottesford.</p>	<p>The scoping report draws upon technical studies when referring to the functional employment area of Bottesford. However, it is acknowledged that there are other destinations that residents travel to work.</p>

Summary of comments received	Response
<p>Natural England</p> <p>We would like to specifically draw your attention to the following information which may be relevant to:</p> <p><u>Sections 4 and 5 covering Climate Change:</u></p> <p>NE, EA and FC shared vision to use nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency (2020)</p> <p>NE and RSPB Climate Change Adaptation Manual (2020)</p> <p>Natural England’s climate change risk assessment and adaptation plan (2021)</p> <p>Generally, we agree with the key sustainability issues described within the Scoping document. However, we would advise a few additional Key Sustainability Issues:</p> <p>We acknowledge air quality has been covered in terms of emissions but has not covered air quality impacts from agriculture. 88% of ammonia emissions come from agriculture; ammonia can lead to significant environmental impacts via contributing to nitrogen deposition and eutrophication. In addition, the emphasis appears to be on human health and we consider that there should be greater coverage of the impact of air pollution on the natural environment.</p> <p>Under the SA Framework questions for Biodiversity we suggest that the 4th question should be expanded to reference contributing to the wider Nature Recovery Network, a major commitment in the Government’s 25-year environment plan. i.e., ‘Protect and enhance ecological networks and contribute to the wider Nature Recovery Network’.</p> <p>Within the climate change questions we would like to see a question regarding Nature Based Solutions. For example, a question asking if the option/proposal will contribute to Nature Based Solutions to both mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>As set out in Planning Practice Guidance, your authority should be monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementing the local plan. This should include indicators for monitoring the effects of the plan on biodiversity. It is important that any monitoring indicators relate to the effects of the plan itself, not wider changes.</p>	<p>Suggested information sources have been reviewed and key messages reflected in the SA framework.</p> <p>The SA objective relating to Air Quality already refers to the need to protect environmental features. However, an additional supporting question has been included that explicitly mentions the need to manage pollution from agricultural practices and changes in land use.</p> <p>Fourth supporting question for the biodiversity objective has been expanded as suggested.</p> <p>Two additional questions included under the climate change mitigation and adaptation topics.</p> <p>Comments noted with regards to monitoring indicators.</p>

Summary of comments received	Response
<p>Environment Agency</p> <p>We generally consider that the report constitutes a comprehensive evidence base (with the exception of the issue of land contamination and how it relates to the protection of controlled waters.</p> <p><u>Flood risk section</u></p> <p>The document River basin management plans, updated 2022: challenges for the water environment should be added to this section.</p> <p>Melton Mowbray and the downstream Wreake catchment benefit from two upstream flood storage reservoirs – the Scalford Brook Flood Storage Reservoir and the Brentingby Dam which significantly reduce flood risk. They do however present an elevated residual risk of flooding in the event of failure.</p> <p>SA Framework - How will climate change impact on the existing flood risk infrastructure? Scalford Brook Flood Storage Reservoir and the Brentingby Dam are more likely to overtop with wetter winters.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity section</u></p> <p>Inclusion of riparian zones would emphasise that the need to protect watercourses extends beyond the wetted perimeter. Paragraphs 3.4.3 and 3.51 should refer to blue infrastructure, as well as green infrastructure.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.5.1 should also describe BNG as measurable net gain.</p> <p><u>Land contamination section</u></p> <p>The consideration of land contamination, protection and enhancement of controlled waters via the planning regime is a key consideration. Groundwater is a regional, rather than a local resource and a holistic approach to its protection is more effective at a strategic planning stage. The proactive protection of groundwater resources is key to providing improvements to the aquatic environment and protecting water resources for future use.</p> <p>We would like to recommend that an objective be included where appropriate within the scoping report to ‘Protect and enhance the wider environment’ giving</p>	<p><u>Flood risk</u></p> <p>Key issues and SA Framework have been updated to reflect the potential for climate change to affect flood risk infrastructure.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <p>The SA Framework has been updated to reflect the importance of riparian zones.</p> <p><u>Land contamination</u></p> <p>Land contamination is covered by SA topic Land and Soil. Additional criteria added to strengthen the focus on addressing risk.</p> <p>Groundwater is considered as part of the SA topic ‘Water’. Additional criteria added to emphasise the need to proactively manage resources.</p> <p>It is considered unnecessary to create an additional sustainability objective.</p>

Summary of comments received	Response
<p>particular attention to dealing with controlled waters and land contamination.</p> <p>The documents detailed below highlight best practice and would make a suitable reference to support achievement of the objective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundwater protection Groundwater protection - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) : • GPLC1 – Guiding principles for land contamination Managing and reducing land contamination: guiding principles (GPLC) ; and • Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) guidance, when dealing with land affected by contamination. Land contamination risk management (LCRM). <p>The Environment Agency has been tasked to implement the Water Framework Directive. Under the Water Framework Directive, the environmental objectives for groundwater and surface water bodies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent deterioration in the status of water bodies, improve their ecological and chemical status and prevent further pollution. • Aim to achieve good quantitative and good groundwater chemical status in all water bodies. For a groundwater water body to be in overall 'good' status, both its quantitative and chemical status must be 'good'. • Implement actions to reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in pollutant concentrations in groundwater. • Comply with the objectives and standards for protected areas where relevant. • Hazardous substances must be prevented from entry into groundwater and the entry into groundwater of all other pollutants must be limited to prevent pollution. • Water supply and the disposal of sewage and foul water from any site should be discussed with the relevant water company and the Environment Agency to ensure no deterioration of surface water or groundwater quality. 	

3.3 The SA framework

3.3.1 Table 3.1 presents a list of objectives and supporting criteria that form the backbone of the SA scope. Together they comprise a ‘framework’ under which to undertake assessment. As a result of the scoping consultation, the framework has been updated to reflect feedback from the statutory consultees. Additional text / changes (post consultation) area presented in **blue text** for ease of reference.

Table 3.1: The SA Framework

SA Objective	Appraisal questions <i>Will the option / proposal help to:</i>
<p>Air Quality Protect and improve local air quality and reduce the potential for negative effects on human health and the environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement road traffic measures to reduce air pollution? • Facilitate a move towards low emission / zero emission vehicles? • Improve sustainable transport infrastructure, including walking and cycling routes, and public transport in order to promote healthy, active lifestyles and travel choice? • Protect and promote greenspaces and healthy environments in urban areas to alleviate air pollution? • Manage air quality emissions associated with agricultural land use and changes.
<p>Biodiversity Protect, restore and enhance habitats and their connectivity achieving net gains in biodiversity and positive outcomes for health and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the integrity of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites within and in proximity to Melton? • Manage existing and potential future pressures on habitats and species in Melton? • Protect and enhance priority habitats, as well as the habitats of priority species, during both the construction and operational phases of development? • Protect and enhance ecological networks and contribute to the wider Nature Recovery Network? • Achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity to the potential effects of climate change? • Encourage opportunities for engagement with Melton’s biodiversity resource? • Protect and enhance watercourses and riparian zones?

SA Objective	Appraisal questions <i>Will the option / proposal help to:</i>
<p>Climate Change Resilience</p> <p>Support Melton’s resilience to the potential effects of climate change, particularly flooding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at medium to high risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green and blue infrastructure networks to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water run-off through the use of SuDS, reducing surface water runoff without increasing flood risk elsewhere? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development areas? • Encourage nature based solutions to help adapt to climate change? • Minimise the implications of climate change for existing flood protection infrastructure?
<p>Climate Change Mitigation</p> <p>Take proactive measures to help achieve zero carbon targets for Melton.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Maximise resource efficiency? • Reduce embodied carbon in new developments? • Encourage nature based solutions to contribute to climate change mitigation.
<p>Economy</p> <p>Build upon key industries and support growth, timely investment in infrastructure and economic diversification that has tangible benefits to the lives of local residents whilst addressing social inequalities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet local employment land requirements? • Support traditional and emerging sectors of Melton Borough’s economy? • Enhance the vitality of Melton Borough’s local centres? • Improve accessibility to employment opportunities? • Enhance training and educational opportunities?

SA Objective	Appraisal questions <i>Will the option / proposal help to:</i>
<p>Equality and diversity Support equitable outcomes for all communities by tackling inequalities, embracing diversity and improving accessibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable people from all background to access services and facilities equitably? • Ensure that decisions do not disproportionately affect minority populations in an adverse manner? • Ensure that the needs of all communities and people are met in an equitable way? • Reduce the inequalities suffered by minority groups, including those with protected characteristics? • Reduce sex based discrimination and inequalities?
<p>Health Improve generational health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities between residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the impacts of pollution on health? • Improve healthy life expectancy whilst reducing health inequalities? • Create and maintain safe public spaces? • Maintain and / or enhance the quality of life of all residents? • Create dementia-friendly environments? • Enhance the provision of, and healthy access to, open spaces and green and blue infrastructure?? • Encourage healthy choices and active travel modes, including walking and cycling? • Protect and enhance community facilities, public infrastructure and health care facilities?
<p>Historic Environment Conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets and the contribution made by their settings; whilst supporting engagement and enjoyment of the historic environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting? • Protect and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of conservation areas and their setting? • Protect and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of registered parks and gardens, and their settings? • Protect and, where possible, enhance the wider historic environment, including historic landscapes? • Conserve and enhance archaeological resource, including features listed on the Leicestershire and Rutland HER?

SA Objective	Appraisal questions <i>Will the option / proposal help to:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the environment? • Ensure that, where possible, development contributes to improved public understanding of assets and their settings?
<p>Housing</p> <p>Support timely delivery of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support timely delivery of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures to meet objectively assessed housing need in sustainable locations? • Support delivery of a range of good quality, affordable and specialist housing that meets the needs of Melton’s residents, including older people, people with disabilities and families with children? • Enable managed growth at rural communities where to do so would help improve the sustainability of these settlements?
<p>Landscape and townscape</p> <p>Protect and enhance the character and quality of Melton’s landscapes, townscapes and villagescapes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the distinctive qualities of the NCAs and LCAs within and surrounding Melton? • Protect and enhance key landscape, townscape and villagescape features which contribute to local distinctiveness? • Protect locally important viewpoints contributing to sense of place and visual amenity? • Improve understanding of Melton’s distinctive landscape, townscape and villagescape resources?
<p>Soil and land</p> <p>Protect important soil and mineral resources, promote the effective use and restoration of land and buildings, and sustainably manage waste and minerals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the loss of BMV agricultural land? • Prioritise the re-use of brownfield land where appropriate? • Support the remediation of contaminated land? • Minimise the risk of pollution from contaminated land? • Protect the integrity of mineral resources? • Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction, operation and maintenance of new infrastructure?

SA Objective	Appraisal questions <i>Will the option / proposal help to:</i>
<p>Transport</p> <p>Ensure that provision of transport infrastructure reflects local population and demographic needs, promotes sustainable modes of travel, connects new housing to employment, education, health and local services and maximises accessibility for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve transport infrastructure throughout the borough including active and public transport? • Meet future transport trends and service those of all abilities? • Encourage active transport to improve the communities health in the longer term, whilst benefiting the environment? • Improve transport to ensure sustainable and active modes are most desired as used to connect people to places? • Ensure infrastructure is in place to support flexible working arrangements and positive changes in travel behaviours that emerge in response to crises such as COVID19.
<p>Water</p> <p>Ensure the sustainable management of water resources, helping to protect and enhance value with regards to the environment, human health and economic growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improvements to water quality consistent with the aims of the Water Environment regulations? • Ensure that appropriate drainage and waste water infrastructure is available to serve the borough's needs. • Manage groundwater resources and watercourses proactively and holistically from a strategic viewpoint.

4. Identifying alternatives

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 A key part of the SA process is the consideration and testing of reasonable alternatives. The Regulations do not state what constitutes a reasonable alternative or when in the process reasonable alternatives need to be appraised. However, an important requirement is for alternatives to be tested at a formative stage of Plan-making (this means before important decisions have been made about the content of the Plan such as the spatial strategy and site allocations). In this respect, the Council has explored options from the outset of the process in support of key stages of consultation.
- 4.1.2 It is for Council (as the plan-maker) to determine what alternatives are reasonable (and which are not). The Council has identified what it considers to be reasonable alternatives at each stage of Plan making, and which matters should be the focus of appraisal work. This is discussed below under three topic headings; housing delivery, employment land strategy, and 'other policy areas'.

4.2 Housing delivery

- 4.2.1 The Plan Review concluded that the evidence on housing need supports the view that the local plan target and spatial distribution continues to be appropriate. Furthermore, the review concludes that the housing allocations policy is performing well and flexibility is provided through the existing identified supply, allocations and reserve sites. Though further needs are likely to arise beyond 2036, the Council considered it inappropriate to extend the policy beyond this time period. As such, the Council believes that there are no reasonable alternatives to test through the local plan update in respect of housing strategy, delivery and housing allocations.
- 4.2.2 Comments were received through the issues and options consultation with regards to housing delivery suggesting that further housing allocations should be considered through the Local Plan Update. The reasons quoted are summarised as follows:
- To provide greater flexibility / contingency to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of reserve sites that remain available and deliverable throughout the remainder of the Plan period.
 - There is a need to prioritise a short to medium term boost in housing supply to bridge the gap whilst Melton South is being delivered (owing to slower delivery at the SUE than anticipated).
- 4.2.3 The Council has considered these points and concluded that it is not necessary to identify additional site allocations.

- 4.2.4 The current housing trajectory, as identified in the [Five-Year Housing Land Supply report](#) shows an oversupply of more than 2,000 dwellings by 2036 and residual delivery post-2036 of approximately 900 dwellings more.
- 4.2.5 The Council also confirmed the focus on the delivery of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood as part of this Local Plan Update at the same time that planning permissions are being granted for the Melton North Sustainable Neighbourhood, which provides more certainty to the housing trajectory in the medium and long term. Finally, the Council is also committed to start a new Local Plan after the adoption of this Local Plan Update, and this will imply the allocation of new sites.
- 4.2.6 Since the Issues and Options Consultation, there have been updates to the NPPF, including revisions to the standard methodology calculations. This could have implications for housing delivery in Melton, but the Council consider that this should be dealt with in a new Local Plan (this approach accords with the transitional arrangements for plan making set out in Annex 1 of the NPPF).
- 4.2.7 Annex 1 of the NPPF (December 2024) is concerned with the implementation of the NPPF in the context of plan-making. The policies and housing calculations are to be applied to local plans from the 12th March 2025, unless one or more of several conditions apply. Of relevance to the Melton Local Plan Update is the following:
- The Plan has reached Regulation 19 on or before the 12th March 2025 and the housing requirement meets at least 80% of local housing needs.
- 4.2.8 The Council had already committed to undertaking consultation (Reg 19) before March 2025. However, the new standard method produces a local housing need of 362 dwellings per annum for Melton, which is higher than the target set out in the Adopted Local Plan.
- 4.2.9 The housing target in the Adopted Melton Plan is to provide 6,125 homes between 2011-2036, with a stepped trajectory in terms of the number of homes being delivered annually. On average over the plan period, delivery equates to 245 dwellings per annum, but from 2026 – 2036, the target is 320 dwellings per annum.
- 4.2.10 The overall figure of 288 dpa is 80% (rounded) of the 362 dpa housing need, whilst the 2026-2036 target of 320 dpa represents 88% of need. In this respect, paragraph 235 of the Framework applies, stating that the plan will be examined under the relevant previous version of the Framework. The Council therefore considers that it is unnecessary to revisit the housing strategy and housing allocations through the Plan Partial Update. The Council is also committed to commence a new Local Plan immediately upon adoption of this partial update, which will provide the opportunity to review housing matters.

- 4.2.11 In light of the discussions above, the Council considers that it is appropriate at this time to push ahead with the Local Plan Update based on the 2023 update to the NPPF.
- 4.2.12 The outcomes of the Leicester Local Plan Examination and other sources of evidence gathering are uncertain, but there is a clear framework in place to support the Melton Plan Update at this time.

4.3 Employment land and strategy

- 4.3.1 The Plan review identified the need to review employment strategy and site allocations.
- 4.3.2 The Council has explored a range of individual site options to understand the constraints and opportunities from the ‘supply side’. This forms a ‘bottom up’ understanding of employment land in the borough. The site assessment process is discussed in Section 5.
- 4.3.3 Alongside the assessment of individual sites, the Council has also considered ‘top down’ strategic factors such as the amount of employment land to plan for and the broad distribution of growth. The options are discussed in Section 6.

4.4 Other policy areas

- 4.4.1 The issues and options consultation presented a series of ‘options’ for policies that were scoped in to the Plan update. Many of these are not options that necessitate appraisal through the SA, as they are ‘procedural’ in nature and not likely to give rise to significant effects. A summary of these policy options and the reason no alternatives have been appraised are set out in the table below. It is considered that an appraisal of the emerging policies is sufficient to help understand potential significant effects and to shape the content of the policies.
- 4.4.2 Where new policies emerged subsequent to the issues and options stage, these have been highlighted and discussed also.

Policy and options	SA commentary
<p>SS1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development</p> <p>The options relate to whether the policy should be deleted or amended.</p>	<p>Not reasonable alternatives for SA purposes. The options are procedural in nature.</p>
<p>SS3 Sustainable Communities</p> <p>Three options were proposed in relation to deleting or amending the policy. The preferred approach seeks to realign the policy so that housing supported under this approach is not only supported by an immediate need but contributes to making places more sustainable.</p>	<p>The preferred approach could be slightly more restrictive in terms of housing in the smaller settlements. However, this is unlikely to have significant effects, and the alternative options are considered to be unreasonable as they could</p>

Policy and options	SA commentary
	be too restrictive or allow some 'unsustainable growth'.
<p>Policy SS4 South Melton Mowbray Sustainable Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable as the policy remains an important part of the plan. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a clear need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>Policy SS5 Melton Mowbray North Sustainable Neighbourhood</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable as the policy remains an important part of the plan. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a clear need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>Policy C2 Housing Mix</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable as the policy remains an important part of the plan. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a clear need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>Policy C3 National Space Standard and Smaller Dwellings</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable as this would remove all requirements for space standards in Melton. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>Policy C4 Affordable Housing Provision</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable as the delivery of affordable housing is a key priority. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>C7 Rural Services</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>

Policy and options	SA commentary
<p>C8 Self Build and Custom Build Housing</p> <p>The options involve amendments that would deliver differing levels of provision and standards. The key differences in impact will relate to the housing benefits that could arise versus implications for deliverability/viability.</p>	<p>These are not matters that need to be tested through an appraisal of reasonable alternatives and can be addressed through appraisal of an evidence led policy update.</p>
<p>Policy C9 Healthy Communities</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable as this would leave no guidance. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to better address health impacts. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes</p>
<p>C10I: Health Impact Assessments</p> <p>This is a new policy, which has emerged in response to consultation and plan development.</p>	<p>The only alternative would be to not request HIAs in new development (which is essentially the baseline position). There are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>Policy EC5 Melton Mowbray Town Centre Policy EC6 Primary Shopping Frontages Policy EC7 Retail Development</p> <p>The options for this set of policies relate to whether the policies should be deleted or amended (given that much of the evidence is out of date)</p>	<p>The evidence is out of date and monitoring suggests the policies are not performing well. Therefore, the only reasonable approach is to amend the policies.</p>
<p>Policy EC8 Sustainable Tourism</p> <p>The options seek to provide additional clarity and define sustainable tourism. There could be more of a focus on social and economic benefits, or a more definitive focus on what sustainability means.</p>	<p>It is unreasonable to delete the policy entirely. It is considered appropriate to inform the policy through policy appraisal without further consideration of reasonable alternatives.</p>
<p>Policy EN2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p> <p>There is a particular need to capture biodiversity net gain and other recent developments. The options proposed are concerned with the best way to do this in the Plan update.</p> <p><i>(Policy replaced by EN2A and EN2B – for which no reasonable alternatives identified)</i></p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>Policy EN3 The Melton Green Infrastructure Network</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable as this would leave no guidance. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>

Policy and options	SA commentary
<p>EN5 Local Green Spaces</p> <p>The NPPF Framework requires that policies for managing development within a local green space are consistent with green belt policies. The options relate to how this can be achieved.</p>	<p>There is no alternative in respect of making these updates, as it is a requirement to reflect the NPPF. Any proposed sites for inclusion as new local green space would need to be appraised to ensure that no significant effects arise.</p>
<p>EN7 Open Space, Sport and Recreation</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable as this would leave no guidance. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>EN8 Climate Change</p> <p>Deletion of the policy is considered to be unreasonable as this would leave no guidance. The only reasonable alternative is to amend the policy.</p>	<p>The two feasible options both seek to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. These are procedural options though, and the implications for plan effects would be the same.</p>
<p>EN9 Ensuring Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Development</p> <p>The policy is out of date and largely ineffective. There is a need for updates to be made, but a total deletion of the policy is not appropriate.</p> <p><i>(Policy replaced by EN9A and EN9B – for which no reasonable alternatives identified)</i></p>	<p>Refocusing the policy is considered to be the only reasonable approach. Applying exemplar standards would need to be supported by significant evidence and would likely affect viability significantly. This approach is better explored through an entirely new local plan.</p>
<p>EN10 Energy Generation from Renewable and Low Carbon Sources</p> <p>The policy is out of date and doesn't fully reflect all opportunities for energy projects.</p>	<p>The only sensible option is to update the policy to ensure it is legally compliant and reflects the latest evidence. No other reasonable alternatives exist for SA purposes.</p>
<p>EN11 Minimising the Risk of Flooding EN12 Sustainable Drainage Systems</p> <p>There is a need to update the policies to reflect changes to evidence and to rationalise the policies. Total deletion of these policies is inappropriate given the importance of this topic.</p>	<p>The options presented are procedural and do not represent reasonable alternatives for the purpose of SA. Significant effects can be sufficiently explored through appraisal of draft policies.</p>
<p>IN1 Melton Mowbray Transport Strategy</p> <p>The policy is out of date, but this is still an important part of the strategy for supporting growth. Therefore, deletion of the policy is not appropriate.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>

Policy and options	SA commentary
<p>IN2 Transport Accessibility and Parking</p> <p>The policy is out of date and somewhat ineffective. There is a need for updates to be made, but a total deletion of the policy is not appropriate.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>IN4 Broadband</p> <p>The policy is out of date. There is a need for updates to be made, but a total deletion of the policy is not appropriate.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>
<p>D1 Raising the Standard of Design</p> <p>The policy is out of date. There is a need for updates to be made, but a total deletion of the policy is not appropriate.</p>	<p>The options are procedural in nature, and there is a need to update the policy to reflect updates to evidence and circumstances. Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives for SA purposes.</p>

5. Identifying and appraising site options for employment

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The Plan review concluded that the employment strategy policy should be updated and to explore whether further allocations are necessary to meet identified needs.

5.1.2 Understanding which sites are appropriate to support employment land is an important part of this process. The Council has therefore undertaken a site selection study to assess the Borough's potential employment sites.

5.2 Establishing reasonable sites

5.2.1 In June/July 2023, Melton Borough Council carried out a 'Call for Sites' to help identify additional employment land (e.g. industrial or warehousing) in the borough. A total of 22 potential sites were identified from this process.

5.2.2 The Council applied a site sifting methodology to determine which of these sites would be reasonable options for allocation through the Local Plan Update. Two studies were important to help shortlist the sites.

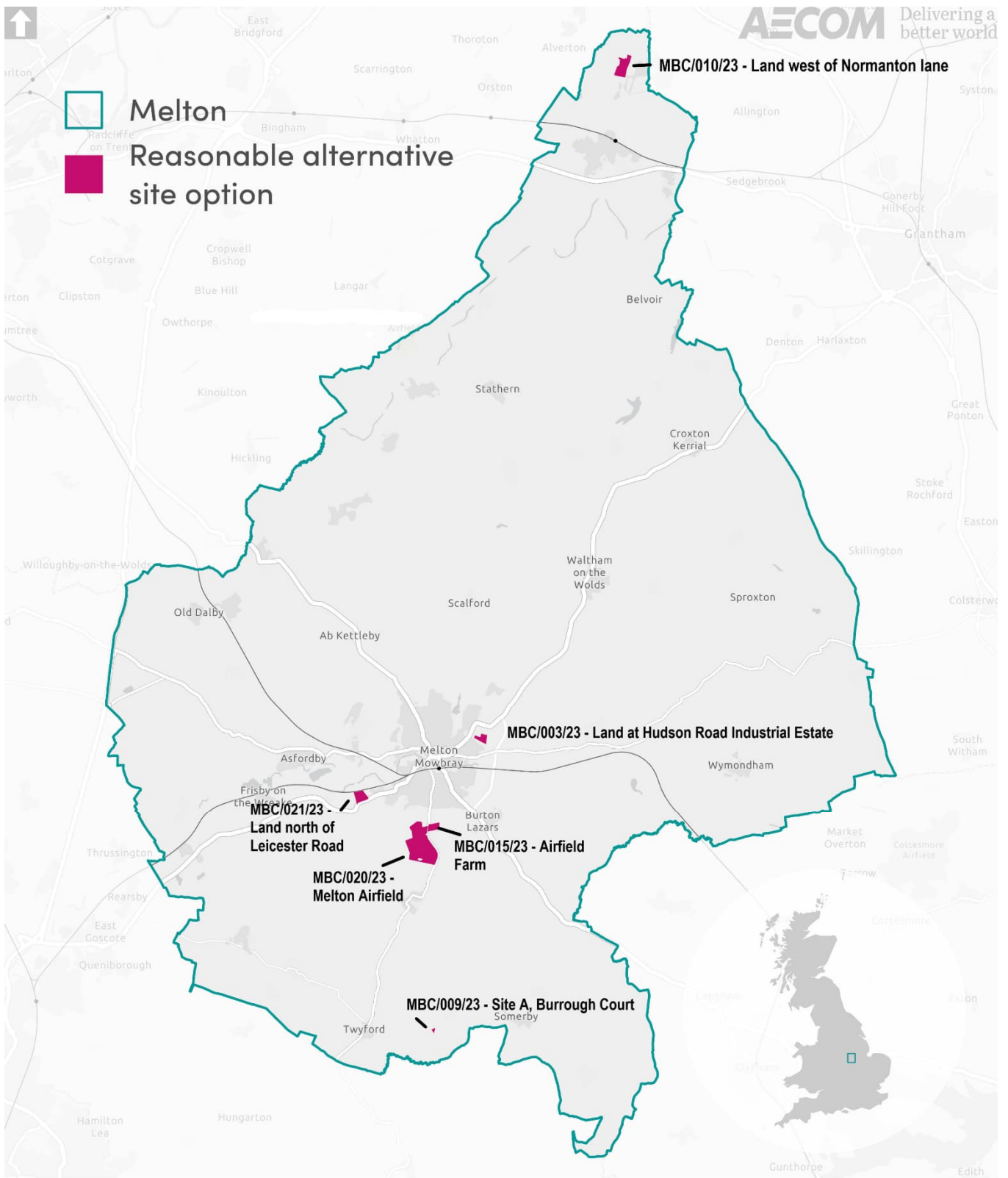
5.2.3 The Strategic Economic Land Availability Assessment was published in April, 2024 and recommended that 19 sites could potentially be suitable for allocation.

5.2.4 The Employment Land Study (June, 2024) appraised the sites with an objective range of 'A+' to 'E'. The study recommended that six sites scoring A+ to B- would be strong candidates for allocation in the Plan. These sites are considered to be the reasonable alternatives for the purposes of the SA. The sites that were categorised below B- are considered to be unreasonable as they would not provide the type of employment land required to best meet local needs.

5.2.5 The reasonable sites are listed below and identified on figure 5.1 below.

- MBC/003/23 - Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate, Melton Mowbray
- MBC/009/23 - Site A, Burrough Court, Burrough on the Hill
- MBC/010/23 - Land west of Normanton lane, north of Normanton
- MBC/015/23 - Airfield Farm, Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray
- MBC/020/23 - Melton Airfield, Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray
- MBC/021/23 - Land north of Leicester Road, Melton Mowbray

Figure 5.1 The reasonable alternative site options



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5.3 Methods

- 5.3.1 As discussed above, the Council has prepared a site selection study to identify and appraise reasonable alternatives for employment land allocation. A stepped approach has been taken to identify six reasonable alternative sites.
- 5.3.2 The six sites deemed to be potential allocations have been assessed consistently against a set of agreed criteria. This has been informed by consultation with technical consultees, utility providers and site contacts.
- 5.3.3 The sustainability appraisal has sought to complement the criteria set out in the site selection study, rather than to provide duplication of effort / an alternative view. The SA therefore adds value to the site selection process, rather than providing a separate assessment.
- 5.3.4 The criteria within the site selection study are listed in **Appendix B** against the corresponding SA Objectives. Where additional information has been gathered through the SA process, this is highlighted. It should be noted that the SA Objectives are covered comprehensively by numerous criteria.
- 5.3.5 The site selection criteria are categorised as either red, amber or green depending upon the characteristics of the site. The detailed rationale for each score can be found in the site selection study report.
- 5.3.6 The additional criteria included in the SA are all based on GIS measurements to ensure objectivity. A red, amber, green or grey score is provided depending upon the thresholds that are set in the site assessment method (see Appendix B). It should be noted that the 'scores' are indicative, and do not take account of mitigation measures. The purpose is to inform the understanding of the sites, rather than to decide which sites should be allocated or not (which is a matter of planning judgement).

5.4 Summary of findings

- 5.4.1 Appendix C presents a matrix illustrating the performance of each site across the site selection criteria and supplementary SA criteria. A brief discussion of each site is provided below, followed by the outline reasons that the Council have selected three sites to allocate in the draft Plan (and to discount the other three sites).

MBC/003/23 - Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate, Melton Mowbray

- 5.4.2 This site has the most 'red' scores in the Council's site assessment and there are four significant issues identified (access arrangements, air quality, flood risk, landscape).
- 5.4.3 In addition, the supplementary SA assessment demonstrates that the site performs less well than comparative sites in Melton Mowbray in terms of e proximity of a SSSI .
- 5.4.4 The site is discounted.

MBC/009/23 - Site A, Burrough Court, Burrough on the Hill

- 5.4.5 The site has no significant issues identified and scores the most 'greens' of any of the assessed sites.
- 5.4.6 The supplementary SA criteria highlight that the site has relatively poor access to sustainable modes of transport and is not close to a significant number of workers. This would be expected given the rural nature of the site though.
- 5.4.7 Though the Council considers the site is suitable for allocation it is not large enough to meet identified needs on its own.

MBC/010/23 - Land west of Normanton lane, north of Normanton

- 5.4.8 The site has the second highest number of 'red' scores and several significant issues have been identified that give uncertainty to the principle of allocating the site. Mitigations including a reduced site may resolve the hedgerow and tree issues, but these provide uncertainty to the developable area of the site. The site having limited economic links with the plan area provides a less favourable context for the principle of allocation. The RAG scoring shows a less favourable context compared with other sites (see 'recommendations' section).
- 5.4.9 In addition, the SA supplementary criteria demonstrate that there is poor access by sustainable modes of transport to the site.
- 5.4.10 The site is considered unsuitable for allocation as part of the Local Plan Update.

MBC/015/23 - Airfield Farm, Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray

- 5.4.11 No significant issues have been identified. The site is large enough to meet identified employment needs and is considered suitable for allocation.
- 5.4.12 In addition, there are no issues raised in relation to the supplementary SA criteria.

MBC/020/23 - Melton Airfield, Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray

- 5.4.13 No significant issues have been identified. The site is significantly larger than the identified employment need, however the Employment Land Study and promoter support the principle of allocating a reduced site area up to 20ha.
- 5.4.14 There are no issues raised in relation to the supplementary SA criteria, which also show that the site is well located in relation to a nearby workforce.

MBC/021/23 - Land north of Leicester Road, Melton Mowbray

- 5.4.15 Three significant issues have been identified that give uncertainty to the principle of allocating the site. Further archaeological evidence is required to support allocation. Mitigations including a reduced site may resolve the hedgerow issue, but this provides uncertainty to the developable area of the site. The RAG scoring shows a less favourable context compared with other sites
- 5.4.16 In addition, the supplementary SA assessment demonstrates that the site performs less well than comparative sites in Melton Mowbray in terms of the amount of workforce within 5km.
- 5.4.17 The site is considered unsuitable for allocation as part of the Local Plan Update.

6. Identifying and appraising reasonable alternatives (Employment growth)

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The plan review concluded that it could be necessary to update the employment growth strategy, potentially involving additional allocations. To identify an appropriate strategy for the delivery of employment land, it is important to understand employment needs and sources of supply. It is also important to reflect upon economic aspirations and factors that influence job creation.
- 6.1.2 This section explores the evidence that has been used to identify a set of reasonable alternatives for testing in the SA.

6.2 Establishing the alternatives

Need / amount of growth

- 6.2.1 With regards to 'need', a key piece of evidence is the Employment Land Study (2024). This document explores different ways of calculating need but concludes that a 'past take-up model' is the most appropriate. The model estimates employment needs over different time periods as follows:
- 2023-2036 – 26.22 ha
 - 2023-2041 – 33.12 ha
 - 2023-2050 – 45.54 ha.
- 6.2.2 The study recommends that Melton needs to both protect its existing allocated and consented supply and identify further supply options of 6-26 ha (depending upon the time period being planned for).
- 2023-2036 – 6.07 ha
 - 2023-2041 – 13.11 ha
 - 2023-2050 – 26.07 ha.
- 6.2.3 A need for up to 1.5 ha of office land is identified and this requirement is not expected to be met in any of the existing allocated employment land supply. However, given the lack of delivery of the previous 1 ha allocation for offices in Melton Mowbray, a further specific allocation to meet office needs is not recommended.
- 6.2.4 The remaining industrial/warehouse need, less existing supply and the office element is:
- 2023-2036 – 5.26 ha
 - 2023-2041 – 12.16 ha
 - 2023-2050 – 24.58 ha

Supply

- 6.2.5 The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2024) identifies a range of sites that have been proposed for employment use to help meet needs. This pool of sites has been considered as a starting point when identifying suitable strategies for employment growth.
- 6.2.6 Each site is categorised according to deliverability, with five being identified as 'deliverable' (0-5 years), 14 sites identified as being developable (6-10/11-15 years) and 3 sites identified as not being developable unless viable mitigation measures are in place.
- 6.2.7 Whilst the outcomes of the SLAA is helpful to understand the likely timeframe of development and broad suitability for employment uses, it does not automatically follow that the sites being identified as most suitable for allocation should form the basis for the employment strategy. It is critically important that the employment land provided matches what is required from the market in terms of location and quality. In this respect, the Employment Land Study (2024) is important, as it recommends that the search for new employment sites (to meet industrial and warehouse need) should focus on A- to B- graded sites (no A+ sites have been identified).
- 6.2.8 The recommended sites for further exploration are listed below in table 6.1

Table 6.1 Sites to be considered for strategic options

Site reference	Site name	Location	Category
MBC/003/23	Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate	Melton Mowbray	B-
MBC/009/23	Site A, Burrough Court,	Burrough on the Hill	B+
MBC/010/23	Land west of Normanton Lane	Bottesford / Normanton	B-
MBC/015/23	Airfield Farm, Dalby Road	Melton Mowbray	B-
MBC/020/23	Melton Airfield, Dalby Road	Melton Mowbray	B-
MBC/021/23	Land north of Leicester Road, Melton Mowbray	Melton Mowbray	A-

The Reasonable Alternatives

- 6.2.9 Taking the quantity of development and the pool of site options listed above, the Council has identified three options for the economic strategy.

Strategic Growth Scenario 1: Align with the Plan period (Reasonable Alternative 1)

- 6.2.10 Allocate 6-12ha of additional land that is Graded A+ to B-. This would ensure that needs are met in the plan period of 2023-2036 but would provide some further flexibility and potential to meet needs up to 2041.
- 6.2.11 With regards to the distribution of employment land, it is presumed that needs would most likely be met on a single site (given that all but one of the site options are larger than 12ha and at this stage smaller parcels of sites have not been identified).
- 6.2.12 The following sites could potentially be allocated under this growth strategy. Ultimately, the merits of each site would inform site selection and only one site is likely to be required. The appraisal therefore focuses on the pool of sites, and the potential to avoid significant effects / maximise positive effects.
- Site MBC/021/23: Land north of Leicester Road, Melton Mowbray (13.27 ha)
 - Site MBC/015/23: Airfield Farm, Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray (17.14 ha)
 - Site MBC/020/23: Melton Airfield, Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray (92.18 ha)
 - Site MBC/003/23: Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate, Melton Mowbray (16.26 ha)
 - Site MBC/010/23: Land west of Normanton Lane, north of Normanton (22.81 ha)
- 6.2.13 An assumption is made that up to approximately 12ha of land would be allocated, and so the developable area of several of these sites would be reduced accordingly (and this is factored into the assessment).

Strategic Growth Scenario 2: Longer term provision

- 6.2.14 A second reasonable approach would be to plan for growth up to 2050. This is a reasonable alternative as it tests the implications of delivering a higher scale of growth that is reflective of longer term needs (and aligns to the Leicester and Leicestershire Growth Strategy). A higher scale of growth would also be more likely to provide flexibility/choice and potentially meet wider needs across the sub-region.
- 6.2.15 At a higher scale of growth, some of the individual site options would not be sufficient to meet needs. Therefore, it is more likely that a combination of sites would be necessary. Two different approaches to distribution have been identified as reasonable.

Reasonable Alternative 2) Focus on Melton Mowbray

Reasonable Alternative 3) Focus on rural locations

Focus on Melton Mowbray

6.2.16 Under this approach there would be a focus on sites in Melton Mowbray, utilising the following four site options. There would be a need for at least two sites to be allocated, potentially more depending on the combination of sites and the amount of developable land in each location.

- Site MBC/021/23: Land north of Leicester Road
- Site MBC/015/23: Airfield Farm, Dalby Road
- Site MBC/003/23: Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate
- Site MBC/020/23: Melton Airfield, Dalby Road (northern part only)

6.2.17 This alternative is reasonable because Melton Mowbray is the principal settlement within the district and has a strong and growing market for high quality employment land, supported by sustainable housing.

Focus on Rural Locations

6.2.18 A second reasonable alternative would be to focus on sites in peripheral locations that rebalance growth away from Melton Mowbray. The sites involved are categorised as 'B grade' in the ELS and would help to strengthen the 'rural economy'. Under this approach, it is assumed that the following sites would be involved, almost totalling needs identified up to 2050.

- Site MBC/010/23: Land west of Normanton Lane, north of Normanton— A large area of relatively unconstrained land which could support a B2/B8 development linked to the A1 and A52 road corridors.
- Site MBC/009/23: Site A, Burrough Court, Burrough on the Hill – Part of an established successful rural business park.

Unreasonable alternatives

6.2.19 The Council considered the following approaches, but ultimately determined that these are unreasonable alternatives for employment growth. Outline reasons why are provided.

Spread provision across a greater number of site allocations

6.2.20 The boundaries for the proposed sites could be reduced in scale and a allocations made at all the reasonable site options to provide a wider range of sites. However, smaller scale sites would be less likely to provide for the large floor plate development that is desirable and the sites would be less 'strategic'. Furthermore, unless a size reduction is agreed with the promoter, the Council does not consider it appropriate to make arbitrary changes to site boundaries that have been submitted to them through the call for sites process.

Widen the pot of sites to include C and D category sites?

6.2.21 This approach is considered to be unreasonable as it would ignore the recommendations of the ELS.

6.2.22 Whilst a wider range of sites could be chosen from, and some of these are deliverable, they are less likely to provide the employment land that is needed to take advantage of growth sectors and aspirations for higher quality employment. In any case, these sites have been appraised individually through the SLAA and SA process.

6.3 Appraisal methods

6.3.1 For each reasonable alternative, an appraisal has been undertaken against the SA Framework.

6.3.2 In determining the significance of effects, professional judgement has been applied, being mindful of key effect characteristics including: magnitude, likelihood, duration, timeframe and cumulative effects. A range of information sources have been utilised to inform judgements:

- Geographical Information Systems data (which sets out a high level appraisal of each reasonable site options).
- Inputs from technical studies.
- Reference to the Scoping Report and first Interim SA Report.

6.3.3 Whilst every effort is taken to predict effects accurately, there is a degree of uncertainty that must be acknowledged given the strategic nature of the appraisal. In particular, the level of detail is less granular with regards to specific on site characteristics, so there is a reliance on higher level datasets (for example, the presence of designated environmental assets).

6.3.4 It is important to ensure a consistent comparison between the alternatives. For this reason, the same high-level assumptions are made with regards to mitigation and enhancement. Rather than taking into account specific scheme details (which may be available for some locations and not others), the appraisal identifies the baseline situation for each site and how development could affect this. This is not to say that such effects could not be different when mitigation and enhancement considerations are fully appreciated.

6.4 Summary of effects

6.4.1 Table 6.1 below presents a visual summary of the appraisal findings for each of the reasonable alternatives. Following this is a discussion of the effects of each alternative and a brief comparison of how they perform comparatively.

6.4.2 The full appraisal is provided in Appendix A.

Interpreting the significance of effects

Major positive	✓✓✓
Moderate positive	✓✓
Minor positive	✓
Neutral	-
Minor negative	×
Moderate negative	××
Major negative	×××
Uncertainty	?

Table 6.2 Summary of significance

SA Topic	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Air Quality	-	×	×
Biodiversity	-	-	-
Climate change resilience	-	-	-
Climate change mitigation	-	×	×
Economy	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Equality and diversity	✓	✓✓	✓
Health	✓	✓	✓
Historic Environment	-	-	-
Housing	-	-	-
Landscape	-	×	×
Soil and land	-	×	×
Transport	-	-	×
Water	-	-	-

Discussion

6.4.3 RA 1 is predicted to have a mix of neutral and minor positive effects. The scale of growth is low and would only involve one additional site. There is a range of sites available that are relatively unconstrained, and for which significant effects on environmental factors could be avoided.

- 6.4.4 The main benefits would be with regards to the economy and the secondary benefits on health and wellbeing and equality. The effects would be more likely to be positive with a focus on Melton Mowbray, as this is the most accessible location.
- 6.4.5 RA 2 and RA 3 involve a higher scale of growth, which could lead to more pronounced effects on a range of sustainability factors due to the cumulative impacts of development. Again, the benefits for both alternatives are confined to 'economy', 'health' and equality and diversity', but the significance of effects is greater for the economy topic in particular.
- 6.4.6 At a higher scale of growth, negative effects in terms of air quality, soil and land and climate change mitigation arise for both RA 2 and RA 3, due to increased use of natural resources. However, neutral effects remain for other environmental topics, as sites are relatively unconstrained.
- 6.4.7 A focus on Melton Mowbray (RA 2) is predicted to have effects of greater significance on the economy and equalities compared to a rural focus (RA 3). The main reason for this is that a greater range of communities are likely to benefit from growth in Melton Mowbray, as well as supporting economic growth in an area with complementary infrastructure investment.

Summary of rank

- 6.4.8 With regards to the 'ranking' of the growth options against each SA topic, the following conclusions are made.
- 6.4.9 The lower growth scenario RA1 ranks as clear first for seven of the SA Objectives. This primarily reflects the wider choice in sites that exists at the lower level of growth and the potential to avoid the more sensitive locations within sites themselves. However, this option performs the worst in terms of economy as it may not meet identified needs / provides less flexibility.
- 6.4.10 RA2 ranks first for three of the SA Objectives, economy, health and equality. This relates to the delivery of a higher scale of growth and the greater benefits to health and wellbeing that would arise through a focus on Melton Mowbray. However, this ranks the worst with regards to soil and land, as there would likely be a loss of agricultural land of higher quality compared to the rural focused approach.
- 6.4.11 RA3 does not rank first for any of the SA Objectives and ranks the worst for 3 SA topics, as it would be less likely to promote accessible locations for growth.

Table 6.3 Summary of ranking

SA Objective	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Air Quality	1	2	2
Biodiversity	1	2	2
Climate change resilience	1	2	2
Climate change mitigation	1	2	2
Economy	3	1	2
Equality and diversity	2	1	2
Health	2	1	3
Historic Environment	1	1	1
Housing	1	1	1
Landscape	1	2	2
Soil and land	1	3	2
Transport	1	2	3
Water	1	1	2

6.5 Summary of the preferred approach

- 6.5.1 The Councils preferred approach aligns most closely with RA2. However, the proposed approach is a 'hybrid' strategy, which takes account of individual site conditions.
- 6.5.2 The Council proposes to allocate three sites and review one of the two existing allocations.
- 6.5.3 The site boundary of the exiting allocation at Leicester Road has been amended to align it with the planning application (reduction from 20ha to 10ha).
- 6.5.4 A small allocation is proposed in Burrough on the Hill, as this site scores well in the site selection study and will help contribute to rural economic growth. However, this site is not large enough to meet identified needs, so additional sites are identified in Melton Mowbray.
- 6.5.5 The site assessments and the SA findings for strategic options both support a focus on Melton Mowbray. The site at Normanton is not as well related to the economy of Melton and would be less accessible compared to the Melton Mowbray sites. The site assessment process also identified significant issues at this site, whilst two sites in Melton Mowbray had none.
- 6.5.6 Significant issues have been identified for two of the four sites in Melton Mowbray, and so the preference is for the sites at Airfield Farm and Melton Airfield (which perform very similarly).
- 6.5.7 The Council has proposed to allocate both of these sites, despite this exceeding identified needs. This will provide flexibility, and provides a proactive approach to growth post 2036, giving greater certainty to the market in advance of the next Local Plan. These sites do not currently have the best accessibility by sustainable modes of transport, but it is expected that this will improve with the delivery of the Melton South Sustainable Community and Distributor Road.
- 6.5.8 Given that the Melton Airfield farm is much larger than required, it is suggested that the boundary is changed to make this more reasonable for allocation as part of the Plan update. The promoter of the site is willing to alter the boundary and this would align with the Employment Land Study recommendations.

7. Appraisal of the Draft Plan

7.1 Background

- 7.1.1 The draft Plan has been appraised in this section of the SA Report. The Plan has been appraised 'as a whole', taking into account the potential for effects associated with new development (primarily the new employment allocations) but accounting for all of the policies within the Plan. This is important for several reasons:
- Plan policies can help to mitigate negative effects and enhance positives.
 - Policies within the Plan work together and can have cumulative/ synergistic effects that need to be identified within the SA.
- 7.1.2 Whilst all the policies have been considered individually, their effects are discussed in overall terms, rather than on a policy-by-policy basis. However, references have been made to specific policies where it is considered that they make a particular contribution to the SA topics.
- 7.1.3 In determining the significance of effects, professional judgement has been applied, being mindful of key effect characteristics including: magnitude, likelihood, duration, timeframe and cumulative effects. A range of information sources have been utilised to inform judgements:
- Geographical Information Systems data (which sets out a high level appraisal of each reasonable site option).
 - Inputs from technical studies.
 - Reference to the Scoping Report and Interim SA Reports.
- 7.1.4 It is also important to recognise what constitutes the 'baseline position' as this provides a benchmark against which the effects of the Plan can be predicted. The baseline position essentially represents what would be expected to happen in the absence of the Plan review. Therefore, any policies within the Adopted Plan that remain unchanged should not be a focus of appraisal or be reflected in appraisal findings (though it is important to consider the interaction between updated / new policies and existing ones).
- 7.1.5 Whilst every effort is taken to predict effects accurately, there is a degree of uncertainty that must be acknowledged given the strategic nature of the appraisal. In particular, the level of detail is less granular with regards to specific on site characteristics, so there is a reliance on higher level datasets (for example, the presence of designated environmental assets).

7.2 SA Objective 1: Air Quality

Appraisal of the draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.2.1 Melton Mowbray and the wider district does not include any AQMA designations. However, there are localised congestion hotspots, particularly where main roads intersect in and around Melton Mowbray town centre, with potential for increased traffic and congestion to exacerbate air pollution. There is also potential for employment uses such as logistics and warehousing which require frequent HGV journeys to increase traffic and local emissions. However, in the long term, technological improvements should support the reduction of road-based emissions and thus support improvements in air quality.
- 7.2.2 The allocated employment sites to the south of Melton Mowbray are located at the periphery of the urban area. These locations have good existing baseline levels of air quality. However, these two sites are somewhat distant to existing communities and are poorly served by public transport and have limited opportunities to support active travel. Therefore, employment growth at these locations is likely to have a higher reliance on the private car which could increase traffic and related emissions (at least in the short term). The sites at Melton Mowbray may also generate journeys to and from the national highway network which could increase pressures on existing congested areas with poorer air quality in the town centre, where main roads intersect.
- 7.2.3 It is important to acknowledge that the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road Scheme will help to address congestion issues in the centre of Melton Mowbray and will also improve access to the two allocated sites. Combined with planned growth at the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood, this will improve links between residential areas and the allocated employment opportunity sites in the longer term.
- 7.2.4 The employment site at Burrough on the Hill is distant to most communities and constrained by poorer road infrastructure and poorer access to public transport. This is likely to lead to an increase in car usage to access employment at this location. The effects on air quality are unlikely to be significant though given that the magnitude of growth is small and the background levels of air quality are good.

Other policy updates

- 7.2.5 The need to mitigate and adapt to climate change has been strengthened in several policies, which ought to have secondary effects in terms of minimising emissions from transport (a key source of air quality issues). This intention is introduced in Policy SS1 as a general aspiration for the borough, and is also brought into consideration through policy IN2, which also seeks to reduce emissions from transportation and provides a stronger approach to supporting active travel and access to services.

- 7.2.6 There is also a general strengthening of the approach to biodiversity net gain and green infrastructure delivery across the Plan, which ought to benefit air quality.
- 7.2.7 The updates are fairly limited in respect of the implications for air quality, and it is therefore expected that there would be neutral effects with regards to the baseline position in this respect.

Recommendations: Make more explicit reference to the need to address air quality through Policy SS1 and IN2.

Other policy updates

- 7.2.8 The increase in employment land will lead to additional vehicular movements, which could lead to some negative effects on air quality in the short term. However, the effects are unlikely to be significantly negative given that baseline levels of air quality are good and the scale of growth is modest.
- 7.2.9 In the longer term, public transport access and active travel is likely to be improved for the Melton Mowbray sites and there is expected to be an overall reduction in emissions from vehicles. The Plan update is also expected to contribute to an overall reduction in emissions from transport in the longer term, and an increase in green infrastructure, both of which should help to offset any increase in employment growth.
- 7.2.10 Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

7.3 SA Objective 2: Biodiversity

Appraisal of the draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.3.1 None of the allocated sites are in close proximity to international or nationally designated habitats and are unlikely to generate direct or indirect effects of significance.
- 7.3.2 The site at Burrough on the Hill is surrounded by priority habitat (woodland), and there could be some potential for disturbance to associated species. However, the plan seeks to ensure that these trees are protected (including roots), and there will be a requirement to implement net gain.
- 7.3.3 At Melton Mowbray, Airfield Farm is adjacent to a small area of woodland and contains some hedgerows and trees that are not protected. The Council has identified that this location as potentially containing Great Crested Newts and Badger Setts, but this is something that needs to be investigated as part of the planning permission process. Considering the need to address any biodiversity impacts and to achieve net gain, it is considered that effects would be neutral or minor.

- 7.3.4 The Melton Airfield site could also potentially include Great Crested Newt habitat but is otherwise not constrained by biodiversity habitats or features. Considering the need to address any biodiversity impacts and to achieve net gain, it is considered that effects would be neutral or minor.
- 7.3.5 None of the sites are likely to have a direct effect on watercourses or riparian zones.

Other policy updates

- 7.3.6 Three key policies (EN2A and EN2B and EN12) have been updated / created that explicitly refer to biodiversity and are most relevant to the discussion under this SA topic.
- 7.3.7 Policies EN2A and EN2B widen the need to consider cumulative effects of developments on all biodiversity (rather than only international sites). The policies are also more explicit with regards to strategies for achieving net gain and the importance of promoting biodiversity through SUDs and water course management measures (which is also strengthened through Policy EN12).
- 7.3.8 There is also explicit mention of specific measures that should be applied to developments to secure biodiversity benefits such as tree planting, breeding and nesting opportunities. It is recommended that native and climate resilient species are promoted and that invasive / non-native species are avoided unless it can be proven they are appropriate.
- 7.3.9 Other policies are likely to have some indirect benefits for biodiversity where they promote green infrastructure protection and enhancement. In particular, Policy EN3 has been amended to include blue infrastructure, which improves the consideration given to water-based environments. This policy has also been strengthened by promoting the extension of networks, a set of standards for delivery, and explicit mention of the need to facilitate wildlife movement and net gain.
- 7.3.10 Policies EC6-7 require that green infrastructure is incorporated into town centres, whilst Policy D1 provides more explicit requirements in relation to the need for trees and hedges in new developments. These will both contribute towards minor improvements in biodiversity in urban areas.
- 7.3.11 Policy EN10 provides greater direction and requirements in relation to different types of renewable energy schemes, with specific mention of the need to consider biodiversity and any net gain that might have occurred prior to decommissioning.

Overall effects

- 7.3.12 The allocated sites for employment growth are not significantly constrained from a biodiversity perspective, but there are some priority habitats nearby or potentially protected species present. Whilst the plan requires impacts to be avoided and mitigated (and compensated for if necessary), there is some uncertainty about negative effects arising.

- 7.3.13 It is expected that any effects would be minor though, and ultimately, there will be a need to achieve net gain.
- 7.3.14 Other Plan updates provide a clearer and stronger strategy with regards to biodiversity protection, enhancement and expansion, as well as specific measures that should help to encourage wildlife movement and improved quality of water-based and urban environments. This should serve to have **moderate positive effects** on biodiversity overall.

7.4 SA Objective 3: Climate change resilience

Appraisal of the draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.4.1 The two sites in Melton Mowbray fall entirely within Flood Zone 1. There are however areas of surface water flood risk on small parts of the site and in surrounding areas. Both sites comprise greenfield land and there is potential for development to change drainage and surface water run off rates. However, employment uses are generally less sensitive to flooding and development should provide opportunities to introduce new green infrastructure and SuDS and be accompanied by a drainage strategy to mitigate potential adverse effects on-site and reduce flood risk downstream. Given the scale of the sites, it should be possible to implement nature based solutions, which would be preferable from a resilience perspective.
- 7.4.2 There is potential for these sites to deliver new green infrastructure enhancements, which can help to mitigate land use changes. However, this may be limited (on site) by the demand for large floor plate employment space.
- 7.4.3 A focus on Melton Mowbray for employment land will further increase the built up area to the south of the town. There is already significant committed growth in this location, which could possibly lead to cumulative effects on urban heating through a loss of green space. However, the town is not particularly dense and contains green and blue infrastructure that will remain. It is unlikely that significant effects would arise in terms of urban heating.
- 7.4.4 The site extension at Borough Court includes areas that are at risk of surface water flooding (0.1% annual chance). Greenfield land will also be built upon, which will change patterns of run-off and infiltration. However, the Plan highlights that areas of flood risk would be avoided, and there will be a need to secure a suitable drainage solution that promotes natural solutions. Given the relatively small scale of growth is it predicted that effects would be insignificant.

Other policy updates

- 7.4.5 The Vision has been updated to so that improving resilience to climate change is now referenced. This provides a general theme that is reflected in several of the policies that have been updated.
- 7.4.6 For example, the role of open space, habitats and green infrastructure with regards to climate change resilience has been highlighted and is a requirement to consider for new development.
- 7.4.7 This is likely to encourage and support development schemes that are better adapted to climate change, as well as improving the resilience of the natural environment. The effects would accumulate over time and are more likely to be noticeable in the longer term.

Overall effects

- 7.4.8 The Plan takes a more proactive approach to the consideration of climate change resilience, and recognises the importance of green infrastructure, biodiversity and the design of new development to ensure that Melton adapts to climate change and becomes more resilient. In this respect, **minor positive effects** are predicted.
- 7.4.9 The allocated sites are not significantly constrained by flood risk from rivers, but there is some limited potential for surface water impacts and there will be a loss of greenfield land. It is expected that appropriate drainage solutions would be secured though, so neutral effects are predicted.

7.5 SA Topic 4: Climate change mitigation

Appraisal of the draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.5.1 Though new employment land will lead to an increase in emissions during construction and operation, development at the site allocations will be required to be delivered to BREEAM standards and to implement other high quality design features. This will help to improve the efficiency of economic activity where these sites replace poorer quality stock. In this respect, neutral effects are predicted with regards to climate change mitigation.
- 7.5.2 In terms of transport emissions, the type of employment land likely to be implemented will lead to an increase in vehicular trips. However, the focus on Melton Mowbray should reduce the length of workplace trips and allow for sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.5.3 In the short term the Plan update will increase emissions, but the effects are unlikely to be significant. In the longer term, the decarbonisation of the grid combined with the electrification of vehicles should mean that transport related emissions fall naturally and neutral effects would be expected.

Other policy updates

- 7.5.4 The vision has been amended to stress the importance of ‘moving quickly’ with regards to climate change. This principle runs through the updated plan, with several policies referring to the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- 7.5.5 Policy EN9 has been strengthened (now split into Policies EN9A and EN9B) as follows:
- The need to achieve BREEAM standards for non-residential development.
 - Major developments need to calculate life cycle emissions and demonstrate how they will be minimised.
 - Support for the reuse of buildings before demolition to reduce embodied emissions being generated.
 - Reducing reliance on fossil fuels.
 - Greater emphasis on climate change resilience.
 - New dwellings must achieve the optional water efficiency standard of 110liters per person per day.
 - Non-residential development needs to incorporate BREEAM credits relating to water efficiency.

- Greater emphasis on managing the need for water and the need for a water butt where appropriate.

7.5.6 Policy EN10 has seen some amendments, which are likely to benefit other sustainability factors (such as more explicit consideration of biodiversity impacts). The changes are unlikely to significantly affect the number of schemes that come forward, and hence in terms of climate change mitigation, the effects are considered to be minimal.

Overall effects

7.5.7 The Plan update is likely to have mixed impacts with regards to climate change mitigation, ultimately leading to **neutral effects**.

7.5.8 On one hand, an increase in employment land provision will increase emissions associated with construction and traffic. However, these are short term impacts. Other plan policies require higher standards of sustainable design in new development, which should lead to a decrease in emissions from the built environment, including at the employment site allocations and new homes.

7.6 SA Topic 5: Economy

Appraisal of the draft Plan

Employment growth

7.6.1 Three additional sites are allocated for employment uses (beyond committed and currently allocated sites). Therefore, development in these locations will contribute substantially to the effects of the Local Plan Update.

7.6.2 The level of growth being planned for will meet local needs, with a buffer for flexibility. The sites in Melton Mowbray will be well located in terms of access to the strategic road network (assuming infrastructure is implemented such as the distributor road), public transport and local communities. The sites will present an opportunity to deliver high quality employment spaces for growing sectors, which will bring about positive effects for the economy.

7.6.3 One site is allocated as an extension to an existing business park in the rural area of Burrough on the Hill, which will help to support rural economic activity in this location.

Other policy updates

7.6.4 In addition to strategic policies, several updates have been made to policies that are likely to have positive effects with regards to the economy.

- 7.6.5 Policy EC1 has been updated to explicitly offer additional support for employment proposals that promote the green economy and high standards of sustainability in design. As well as being a growth sector, the provision of high quality premises will be attractive and helpful for businesses.
- 7.6.6 Policy IN4 has been updated to reference 5G and is more flexible to advancements to broadband speeds and infrastructure. This too will help to support business growth and efficiency and help people work in more flexible ways.
- 7.6.7 Other indirect effects on the economy are predicted to arise due to the Plan's increased focus on climate change mitigation and resilience and environmental enhancement. These measures will contribute towards more resilient infrastructure and should help to reduce the costs to the economy that climate change could have (for example through disruption to transport networks, the comfort of workplaces and homes).

Overall effects

- 7.6.8 The allocation of suitable land for employment will support investment in the borough, particularly in Melton Mowbray, which is the key centre of economic activity. This should lead to jobs that are mostly taken up by local residents.
- 7.6.9 The Plan Update also takes a more proactive approach to sustainable design and the 'green economy', which will be more attractive to investors and employees. There are also likely to be some minor enhancements in relation to infrastructure that is beneficial for businesses and local communities.
- 7.6.10 Overall, a **major positive effect** is predicted.

7.7 SA Topic 6: Equality and diversity

Appraisal of the draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.7.1 The additional employment allocations are likely to benefit communities experiencing multiple deprivation within Melton Mowbray, as well as through broader links to the City of Leicester (i.e. by providing jobs). The allocated sites will be accessible by sustainable modes once the new sustainable neighbourhood is in place and road infrastructure is constructed, which should help to ensure that groups with poorer accessibility are not excluded. These are positive effects in terms of equality.

7.7.2 New job opportunities in rural communities are more limited, with the exception of one site allocation at Burrough Court. Therefore, effects in these locations are predicted to be minimal, particularly where access to jobs in Melton Mowbray by sustainable modes are limited.

Other policy updates

7.7.3 Policy updates will lead to more homes (and care facilities) being built to an appropriate standard in terms of space, which will have particular benefits for lower income communities and people looking for a smaller home, but still require appropriate living standards.

7.7.4 This is likely to be more beneficial for older people, young people and disabled people.

7.7.5 The healthy communities policies are particularly important with regards to equality of opportunity and reducing health inequalities. In some respects, the policy has been strengthened, as there is an increased emphasis on the need for health impact assessments for all developments when deemed necessary (not just for major developments). This will help to address cumulative issues that could arise from several smaller developments. On the other hand, the policy is less prescriptive and no longer highlights the importance of important contributors to health such as amenity, green space, access to jobs and services, safety and local food production. It is probably that such issues would be covered by a health assessment, and these topics are also covered by other plan policies. However, the policy is slightly weaker in this respect. Overall, the changes are likely to lead to neutral effects (given there are some positive additions but some important points have been removed).

7.7.6 Some measures will help to improve health and wellbeing more generally, such as improved green infrastructure. There is a need for schemes to be 'inclusive, safe and accessible to all members of the community', which should help to ensure that those with protected characteristics are considered. The introduction of local accessible green space standards is helpful, as it will improve access for communities that are unable to access greenspace that is further afield. To support people who have the poorest access to greenspace it is recommended that a standard is included to promote good access from the 'doorstep'.

7.7.7 Policy EN10 has been updated to acknowledge the benefits of renewable energy schemes that have garnered community support. This is likely to have some minor positive effects in terms of community cohesion.

7.7.8 There are no other policy changes that are likely to have a particular effect on community groups, equality or diversity. Disproportionate negative effects are not likely to arise as a result of any policy changes.

Overall effects

7.7.9 The Plan is not likely to have disproportionate negative effects on any group with protected characteristics, or on any particular communities.

- 7.7.10 The most notable effects will arise in Melton Mowbray, with the new employment allocations providing job opportunities that could be accessed by deprived communities.
- 7.7.11 Other Plan policies are likely to have positive effects on development more generally by improving space standards and living environments. This is likely to have benefits for elderly and disabled people (which are protected characteristics).
- 7.7.12 In combination, **moderate positive effects** are predicted.

7.8 SA Topic 7: Health

Appraisal of the draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.8.1 Improvement in employment opportunities should support the reduction of unemployment and help reduce deprivation and related social issues including crime in the long term, both of which are contributors to general health and wellbeing. The majority of floor space is proposed in Melton Mowbray, which is more accessible to deprived residents.
- 7.8.2 The site allocations in Melton Mowbray are distant to existing communities and are not suitably located to support active modes of travel. In particular, there are currently no pedestrian footpaths or safe cycle routes to several of the site opportunities. However, the delivery of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood will expand transport infrastructure, making sites such as Melton Airfield and Airfield Farm into closer proximity to suitable active travel and public transport infrastructure. Therefore, in the longer term, this could help to support access to job opportunities by active modes and public transport.
- 7.8.3 None of the sites will result in the loss of public recreation space or facilities. In this respect, effects on wellbeing are limited.
- 7.8.4 None of the proposed allocations are intersected by Public Rights of Way, and so disturbance of recreation routes is also likely to be limited. The site at Burrough is currently used as a private open space (a dog field) and this would be lost to employment development, which is negative, but not significant in terms of health outcomes.
- 7.8.5 In terms of amenity impacts, the sites are suitably located away from residential locations (existing and planned) and / or are appropriately screened. Therefore, impacts on amenity are considered likely to be limited. Cumulative impacts such as noise, traffic and air quality could have some minor negative implications for residents in the Melton South communities due to growth at Melton Airfield and Airfield Farm. However, the magnitude of effects is likely to be low.

Other policy updates

- 7.8.6 The first significant change to note is that wellbeing is brought front and centre in the Vision, and this is reflected in several policy updates that have been made. With the overall aim of improving Melton for people, for the local environment and the planet, there are positive effects in terms of health in the short, medium and long term.
- 7.8.7 Policy updates will lead to more homes (and care facilities) being built to an appropriate standard in terms of space. This will have positive effects on health and wellbeing.
- 7.8.8 The healthy communities policies are particularly important with regards to improving wellbeing and reducing health inequalities. In some respects, the policy has been strengthened, as there is an increased emphasis on the need for health impact assessments for all developments when deemed necessary (not just for major developments). This will help to address cumulative issues that could arise from several smaller developments. On the other hand, the policy is less prescriptive and no longer highlights the importance of important contributors to health such as amenity, green space, access to jobs and services, safety and local food production. It is probably that such issues would be covered by a health assessment, and these topics are also covered by other plan policies. However, the policy is slightly weaker in this respect. Overall, the changes are likely to lead to neutral effects (given there are some positive additions but some important points have been removed).
- 7.8.9 Other plan policies have been strengthened in terms of the emphasis on healthy and safe environments. This includes IN2, which highlights the need for travel routes to be healthy and safe and policy D1, which seeks to achieve healthy neighbourhood design. It is recommended that explicit mention is given to the need for dementia friendly design, as this will further strengthen the focus on pedestrian links, well designed buildings and public open spaces.
- 7.8.10 There is also a general strengthening of the approach to biodiversity net gain and green/blue infrastructure delivery across the Plan, which will have positive effects on human health and wellbeing by promoting active travel and recreation in natural places.

Overall effects

- 7.8.11 The allocation of additional employment land to support jobs growth will bring positive effects as employment is a wider determinant of health. The majority of additional floor space is proposed at Melton Mowbray, which correlates with areas of greater deprivation (though the borough as a whole has relatively low levels of deprivation). The release of the sites for employment are unlikely to have significant negative effects in terms of health and wellbeing as the sites are not valuable with regards to recreation and unlikely to bring about amenity issues for nearby communities.

7.8.12 Other Plan policies are likely to have positive effects on development more generally by improving space standards, enhancing green infrastructure and seeking to achieve healthy neighbourhoods. Overall, the policies are predicted to work together to achieve **moderate positive effects** on health outcomes.

7.9 SA Topic 8: Historic environment

Appraisal of the Draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.9.1 None of the proposed site allocations contain designated or locally important heritage asset and neither are they within the setting of any nearby heritage assets. In this respect, neutral effects are predicted.
- 7.9.2 Melton Airfield could be considered to have some historical value given that it was formerly an important site during World War II and as a strategic missile site between 1959-1963. Much of the original infrastructure at the site does not remain, and it used as a small industrial area to the north. The main feature that remains are parts of the runway and access roads, which are likely to be incorporated into a development (or could be). Only a small part of the site is allocated too, and so it is likely that some evidence of the site being an airfield will remain.
- 7.9.3 Overall, neutral effects are predicted.

Other policy updates

- 7.9.4 The policies in the adopted plan that deal explicitly with heritage have not been updated. In this respect, there are limited effects on the historic environment.
- 7.9.5 Consideration of heritage has been strengthened in relation to the delivery of SUDs (Policy EN12), and more generally in the design of developments by considering the heritage credentials of a site (Policy D1).
- 7.9.6 None of the other updates to the Plan are likely to be incompatible with efforts to protect and enhance the historic environment. Indeed, it is more likely that measures such as green and blue infrastructure enhancements, urban greening, biodiversity net gain and a greater focus on climate change would have positive effects on the setting of heritage assets by helping to create more attractive and resilient environments.

Overall effects

- 7.9.7 Overall, it is considered that the Plan update is likely to have a **neutral effect** in terms of the historic environment. The site allocations are not constrained by heritage assets and development is unlikely to significantly alter the historic environment. There are some minor changes to plan policies that reference the need to consider heritage in relation to SUDs and design more generally, but these are unlikely to have a significant effect.

7.10 SA Topic 9: Housing

Appraisal of the Draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.10.1 The delivery of employment land is on sites that are more appropriate / suited for employment uses and would not otherwise be attractive for housing development. Therefore, it is unlikely that any good opportunities for longer term housing growth would be lost through the economic strategy.
- 7.10.2 An increase in jobs will potentially attract more people to Melton, leading to an increased demand for housing. However, this is unlikely to be significant as the employment needs are calculated in the context of population growth and commuting patterns.

Other policy updates

- 7.10.3 There are no changes in relation to the spatial strategy or housing allocations. In this respect, effects upon the amount of housing are likely to be limited. However, several policies have been updated / written that will improve the quality of housing provided.
- 7.10.4 Firstly, there is greater clarity on the need to deliver the National Space Standards for both market and affordable housing. This should ensure that new homes are of a decent standard. There is also a strengthening of the self-build and custom building policy so that plots are considered for affordable units should they not be taken forward as self-build units.
- 7.10.5 The threshold for self / custom build provision has also reduced from developments of 100 or more homes down to just 20 or more homes. This should provide greater opportunities to deliver homes that people need.
- 7.10.6 The Plan (through Policy SS6) update commits to commencement of a new Local Plan immediately following the Adoption of the Partial Review. This will allow for trends and new evidence to be taken into account in relation to housing delivery, which ought to be positive in relation to housing.
- 7.10.7 Taken together, the measures above are predicted to generate minor positive effects in terms of the housing SA topic.

Overall effects

- 7.10.8 The Plan updates are unlikely to have any significant effects upon housing delivery, but the quality of new homes should be improved (given changes relating to space standards, affordability and self / custom build housing). There is also a commitment to commencing a new local plan and an early plan review, which present opportunities to address any changes in housing need. These are **minor positive effects**.

7.11 SA Topic 10: Landscape and townscape

Appraisal of the Draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.11.1 The allocated sites in Melton Mowbray are not significantly constrained by landscape. Both are relatively well screened and there are some existing industrial uses that already shape the character of these locations. Though these sites are close to one another, it is considered unlikely that the cumulative effects of both sites being developed would be significant. There will still be open landscape to the south of these sites that should prevent coalescence with Great Dalby in the Longer Term (though it will be necessary to ensure that employment uses are restricted to the northern parts of RAF site). With sensitive development and appropriate mitigation, minor negative effects are predicted.
- 7.11.2 The site extension at Burrough Court is very well screened, and so neutral effects are predicted with regards to landscape.

Other policy updates

- 7.11.3 The landscape policy (EN1) has not been amended as part of the Plan update. In this respect, there are unlikely to be any significant implications regarding new developments and impacts on the most important landscapes in Melton.
- 7.11.4 An increased focus on green and blue infrastructure (Through several policies) will likely change the character of landscapes and townscapes, particularly within the urban areas and in the sustainable communities at Melton Mowbray. The changes are more likely to be positive, given the intention to create more attractive environments that benefit people and the planet.

Overall effects

- 7.11.5 The Plan is predicted to have **minor negative effects** on landscape as a result of the new site allocations. Whilst the sites are not significantly constrained and there will be a need to implement appropriate mitigation, it is likely that residual effects will remain given that there will be change in land use and the sites are adjacent to each other. However, the Plan seeks to implement enhancements to green and blue infrastructure, which ought to minimise effects and lead to positive effects throughout the borough.

7.12 SA Topic 11: Soil and land

Appraisal of the Draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.12.1 The additional employment allocations comprise greenfield land, some of which is categorised as Grade 3 agricultural land. There will be a loss of 1ha of Grade 3 Land at Burrough Court, which appears to be agricultural. Part of the Airfield Farm site and Melton Airfield are also categorised as Grade 3 land, and it is likely some of this is Grade 3a (which is best and most versatile). In total, less than 20ha of greenfield land would likely be permanently lost, with this likely being Grade 3a. This constitutes a minor negative effect.
- 7.12.2 There are no land contamination, minerals or waste issues for any of the sites proposed for allocation.

Other policy updates

- 7.12.3 An increased focus on the expansion of habitats and green-blue infrastructure networks ought to be positive in terms of promoting soil stability. This has knock on benefits in terms of biodiversity, flood risk management and other natural processes. However, there are no updates directly relating to soil, land, minerals or agriculture. Therefore, neutral effects are predicted in this respect.

Overall effects

- 7.12.4 The Plan update is likely to have mixed effects. On one hand there will be a permanent loss of agricultural land/ greenfield land, but the Plan is also more proactive in relation to green infrastructure enhancement (which could have some indirect benefit for soil). On balance, **minor negative effects** are predicted, owing to the loss of agricultural land which is categorised as best and most versatile (or is likely to be).

7.13 SA Topic 11: Transport

Appraisal of the Draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.13.1 The site allocations to the south of Melton will likely attract additional traffic through Melton (business related travel and workplace commuting). Currently, the sites are not accessible by public transport or pedestrian routes, and so sustainable modes of travel are unlikely until links are strengthened. The development of the Melton South neighbourhoods and the Melton East and South Distributor Road will likely involve improvements to road infrastructure as well as bringing a new homes close to new employment opportunities. Therefore, in the longer term, access to jobs is likely to be improved and additional traffic is unlikely to lead to significant congestion through the urban area of Melton Mowbray. This constitutes neutral effects overall.
- 7.13.2 The site at Burrough Court is unlikely to be accessible on foot, even for those living in nearby villages. There is also no bus stop nearby, so it is likely access will be via private vehicles. Whilst additional growth will generate increased traffic and car usage, the magnitude of effects is small and so overall, neutral effects are predicted.

Other policy updates

- 7.13.3 There have been several updates aimed at further promoting sustainable modes of transport and active travel. Taken together, these measures are predicted to bring about a minor positive effect on the SA topic. The effects are likely to increase from minor in the short term to moderate in the long term as more developments are built out that reflect these principles. The effects are not permanent, as travel behaviours can be influenced by other factors and trends could reverse. Nevertheless, creating environments that are accessible to all will at least give people the choice to adopt more sustainable travel habits.
- 7.13.4 Policy D1 seeks to achieve safe and effective highways access for all users, and specifically mentions the need to consider walking, wheeling and cycling. This concept is extended to the design of building entrances and public spaces, seeking to achieve inclusivity with regards to the movement needs of all. This is an improvement on the current policy, which is only explicit in the need to provide for car users.
- 7.13.5 Policy IN2 takes a stronger approach with regards to addressing carbon emissions from travel and reinforces the importance of settlement accessibility when locating development. This should help to reduce the amount of unnecessary trips, shorten trip length and limit the environmental impact of travel.

- 7.13.6 Policy IN4 will facilitate improved broadband provision, which will help support a continuation of trends that reduce the need to travel such as working from home, video calls etc.
- 7.13.7 Policies EC5/6/7 refer to the need for developments to make adequate provision for car parking. It is recommended that the policy is expanded to include provision for other forms of movement such as wheeling.

Overall effects

- 7.13.8 The Local Plan update is predicted to have minor positive effects overall. On one hand it is likely that additional employment land will be located in areas that encourage car trips (at least in the short term), but the effects are unlikely to be significantly negative. Conversely, the Plan takes a more proactive approach to supporting sustainable modes of travel more generally, and this is likely to have positive implications for development across the borough. Overall, **minor positive effects** are concluded.

7.14 SA Topic 11: Water

Appraisal of the Draft Plan

Employment growth

- 7.14.1 None of the additional sites proposed for allocation overlap with Groundwater Source Protection Zones or Drinking Water Safeguard Zones. There is also no overlap with priority areas in terms of nitrites, pesticides and phosphates. In this respect, it is predicted that development would not lead to significant effects on water quality.
- 7.14.2 All three sites fall within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone, but this is the case for much of the Midlands, and there are no particular issues raised in the Level 2 SFRA in this respect. If anything, there will be a change in land use from agricultural, which should reduce the potential for nitrate pollution.
- 7.14.3 There is surface water flood risk overlapping with the site at Burrough Court, and smaller overlaps at Melton Airfield and Airfield Farm. This could potentially lead to some minor increases in the risk of pollution through flood events. However, it is expected that measures will be incorporated into development to adequately manage drainage, flood risk and pollution. Therefore, neutral effects are predicted.

Other policy updates

- 7.14.4 A key policy with regards to water quality is EN12 which deals with sustainable drainage systems. In some respects, changes are positive as they refer explicitly to the need to manage pollution (which is missing from the current policy wording). The policy also better reflects the need to adopt SuDS infrastructure, its multifunctional purpose and the need for long term maintenance. These measures will help with regards to water quality (and flood risk).

- 7.14.5 Conversely, the policy no longer requires ‘all development’ to achieve a net decrease in surface water run off rates. The policy is less prescriptive in this respect, but the outcome is unlikely to be significant when taking into account the additional points discussed above. Therefore, neutral effects are predicted overall.
- 7.14.6 A range of other policies should help to better manage water consumption and water quality. For example, Policy EN2B seeks to ensure that development is designed with nature in mind, with water management explicitly referenced as a key consideration. A general focus on the enhancement of blue and green infrastructure is also likely to have positive effects in terms of water quality and management.
- 7.14.7 Another important policy is EN9(b), which introduces the need for residential developments to achieve a higher standard of water efficiency and for non-residential developments to achieve BREEAM credits for water. The policy also extends support for water efficiency measures in existing buildings and the need to submit a water resource assessment, which should help to demonstrate how measures will be implemented.

Overall effects

- 7.14.8 The employment land allocations are not likely to lead to water pollution or negative effects on resource use.
- 7.14.9 Several policies have been updated to ensure that water efficiency is improved for new developments, whilst a range of policies should also have indirect positive effects on water quality through an enhancement of green and blue infrastructure. Overall, potential **moderate positive effects** are concluded.

7.15 Summary of Plan effects

- 7.15.1 The Plan Update is predicted to have mostly positive effects across the SA Framework. The effects of greatest significance relate to the economy, driven mostly by the allocation of enough land to meet identified needs and provide longer term flexibility. A number of policy changes are also likely to support enhancements to the environment, infrastructure and resilience of Melton to climate change, which will help to ensure that it remains able to support economic growth in a sustainable way.
- 7.15.2 The Plan is also likely to have significant positive effects on health and equality by providing land to support jobs growth in locations that are accessible to communities. The Plan also seeks to improve standards for new homes and is predicted to lead to enhancements in green infrastructure, which are also positive for health and wellbeing.
- 7.15.3 The sites allocated for employment land are not sensitive in terms of heritage, and there are limited other changes to the Plan in this respect. Therefore, neutral effects are predicted for the historic environment.
- 7.15.4 Though there is an increase in employment land and likely transport related emissions, it is expected that the quality of development will offset this increase, and so neutral effects in terms of air quality and climate change mitigation are predicted. In the longer term, positive effects on transport could arise due to a stronger emphasis on sustainable travel.
- 7.15.5 The only negative effects predicted relate to landscape and townscape and soil and land. These relate to the change of use of land outside of the urban area from greenfield to employment land. Though the sites are not very sensitive to change, and appropriate mitigation will be required, residual negative effects are unavoidable. Given the low magnitude of effects and the sensitivity of the receptors, only minor negative effects are predicted.

Table 7.1: Summary of appraisal findings

SA Topic	Summary of effects
Air quality	Neutral effects
Biodiversity	Moderate positive?
Climate change resilience	Minor positive
Climate change mitigation	Neutral effects
Economy	Major positive
Equality and diversity	Moderate positive
Health	Moderate positive
Historic environment	Neutral effects
Housing	Minor positive
Landscape and townscape	Minor negative
Soil and land	Minor negative
Transport	Minor positive
Water	Moderate positive?

8. Recommendations

- 8.1.1 The sustainability appraisal (SA) of the Melton Local Plan review has been an iterative process, in which proposals for mitigation and enhancement have been considered.
- 8.1.2 The following recommendations are made in relation to the draft Plan. These seek to address the minor negative effects identified, as well as enhancing the positives. The Council's response to each recommendation is provided.

Table 8.1 Recommendations

Recommendations	Council response
It is recommended that native and climate resilient species are promoted and that invasive / non-native species are avoided unless it can be proven they are appropriate.	The principle of resilient trees/planting is reflected in the supporting text of Policy D1 under the heading 'New and Replacement trees'. This includes: 'Policy D1 sets out that trees should be retained as a priority, but where trees are lost from development that they should be replaced with native species or an appropriate species that is resilient to flooding or high temperatures'.
To support people who have the poorest access to greenspace it is recommended that a standard is included to promote good access from the 'doorstep'	Policy EN3 provides accessible greenspace standards for green and blue infrastructure indicating that 'access to green and blue infrastructure is within a 15-minute walk from home, taking into account safe crossing points'
It is recommended that explicit mention is given to the need for dementia friendly design, as this will further strengthen the focus on pedestrian links, well designed buildings and public open spaces.	Policy EN7 and the evidence underpinning this policy implicitly cover this point by taking into account safe crossing points to measure access standards in urban and rural areas. Also, Policy D1 includes criteria for inclusive and healthy neighbourhood design within the supporting text, making specific reference to dementia. Policy EN3 seeks for provision of new or enhanced green and blue infrastructure to be inclusive, safe and accessible to all members of the community including those with disabilities.

Recommendations

Council response

Policy EC5 refer to the need for developments to make adequate provision for car parking. It is recommended that the policy is expanded to include provision for other forms of movement such as wheeling.

Policy EC5 makes reference to providing a legible and walkable areas with appropriate car park provision. This is also covered by Policy D1, which states that 'proposals should result in safe and effective highways for all users, in accordance with the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide or other current Government endorsed documents, providing appropriate access, parking, and movement for vehicular traffic and active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling)'.

It is recommended that the highest viable standards of energy and resource efficiency are required for new strategic employment sites, as these will form an important part of the longer term supply for Melton.

Policy EN9A reflects this recommendation by requiring non-residential development to achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' and encouraging 'excellent' and 'outstanding'. This is in the context of the Council's viability assessment which suggests that there is limited scope to seek higher environmental standards.

9. Monitoring

- 9.1.1 There is a requirement to outline the measures envisaged to monitor the predicted effects of the Plan. In particular, there is a need to focus on the significant effects that are identified.
- 9.1.2 It is important to track predicted effects to ensure that positive effects are realised and to identify any unforeseen negative effects that may occur.
- 9.1.3 Table 9.1 below sets out monitoring measures under each SA Objective which are intended to be used to monitor any significant effects and to track the baseline position. If the effects are not predicted to be significant (i.e. minor or neutral), no additional measures are proposed in the SA Report. However, these topics are likely to be monitored more generally through the Local Plan monitoring framework.
- 9.1.4 At this stage the monitoring measures have not been finalised, as there is a need to confirm the feasibility of collecting information for the proposed measures. Wherever possible, measures have been drawn from the Local Plan monitoring framework to reduce duplication.
- 9.1.5 The monitoring measures will be finalised once the Plan is adopted and will be set out in an SA Statement in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

Table 9.1 - Monitoring the effects of the Plan

SA Objective	Proposed Monitoring Measures
Air quality	
Neutral effects are predicted as employment growth is not likely to lead to air quality deterioration.	As no significant effects are predicted, it is considered unnecessary to identify additional monitoring indicators.
Biodiversity	
Moderate positive effects are predicted as the Plan takes a proactive approach to biodiversity protection and enhancement.	% net gain delivered overall. % developments requiring a minimum of 10% net gain that are delivered on site.
Climate change resilience	
Minor positive effects as the Plan highlights the importance of green infrastructure, biodiversity and resilient design in terms of climate change adaptation.	As no significant effects are predicted, it is considered unnecessary to identify additional monitoring indicators.

SA Objective	Proposed Monitoring Measures
Climate change mitigation	
<p>The Plan update is likely to have mixed impacts with regards to climate change mitigation, ultimately leading to neutral effects.</p>	<p>As no significant effects are predicted, it is considered unnecessary to identify additional monitoring indicators.</p>
Economy	
<p>Major positive effects are predicted due to the provision of employment land and improvements to the quality of developments.</p>	<p>Employment land completions Planning applications on site allocations.</p>
Equality and diversity	
<p>The Plan will have moderate positive effects by improving space standards and living environments and job opportunities for communities in need.</p>	<p>% of new homes built to the appropriate space standards. Levels of multiple deprivation. Employment rates.</p>
Health	
<p>The Plan will have moderate positive effects on health by increasing jobs, enhancing green infrastructure and seeking to achieve healthy neighborhoods.</p>	<p>% of new homes built to the appropriate space standards. All major (and other relevant type/location) development to provide screening statement</p>
Historic environment	
<p>The Plan is predicted to have neutral effects, as the site allocations are not significantly constrained. There are no other major changes to policies likely to affect the historic environment.</p>	<p>As no significant effects are predicted, it is considered unnecessary to identify additional monitoring indicators.</p>
Housing	
<p>Minor positive effects are predicted as new housing will be of an improved standard.</p>	<p>As no significant effects are predicted, it is considered unnecessary to identify additional monitoring indicators.</p>

SA Objective	Proposed Monitoring Measures
Landscape and townscape	
<p>Minor negative effects are predicted related to the site allocations.</p>	<p>As no significant effects are predicted, it is considered unnecessary to identify additional monitoring indicators.</p>
Soil and land	
<p>Minor negative effects are predicted in relation to the loss of greenfield / agricultural land.</p>	<p>As no significant effects are predicted, it is considered unnecessary to identify additional monitoring indicators.</p>
Transport	
<p>Though some increase in vehicular travel is likely, the Plan takes a more proactive approach to supporting sustainable modes of travel. Overall, a minor positive effect is predicted.</p>	<p>As no significant effects are predicted, it is considered unnecessary to identify additional monitoring indicators.</p>
Water	
<p>Moderate positive effects are predicted as the Plan will improve water efficiency in new developments and water quality through environmental enhancements.</p>	<p>% of major housing developments achieving 110 litres per person per day standard.</p> <p>% of residential applications permitted with an Energy and Sustainability Statement</p> <p>Water quality monitoring.</p>

10. Next steps

- 10.1.1 This SA Report has been prepared to accompany the Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan. The report draws together all the SA outputs that have been prepared to date as well as discussing additional appraisal work that may need to be undertaken at future stages.
- 10.1.2 The final Plan will be 'Submitted' for Examination in Public (EiP). The Council will also submit a summary of issues raised (if any) through representations at the Publication stage so that these can be considered by the Government appointed Planning Inspector who will oversee the EiP. At the end of the EiP, the Inspector will judge whether or not the Plan is 'sound'.
- 10.1.3 Further SA work may be required to support the Plan-making process as it moves through Examination (for example the preparation of SA Addendums to deal with changes / modifications).

Appendix A: Appraisal of alternatives

Air Quality

Melton Mowbray and the wider district does not include any AQMA designations. However, there are localised congestion hotspots, particularly where main roads intersect in and around Melton Mowbray town centre, with potential for increased traffic and congestion to exacerbate air pollution. There is also potential for employment uses such as logistics and warehousing which require frequent HGV journeys to increase traffic and local emissions. However, in the long term, technological improvements should support the reduction of road-based emissions and thus support improvements in air quality.

Employment sites around Melton Mowbray are located at the periphery or outside the urban area. These locations have good existing levels of air quality. However, these locations are somewhat distant to communities (except for Site MBC/003/23) and are poorly served by public transport and have limited opportunities to support active travel. Therefore, employment growth at these locations is likely to have a higher reliance on the private car which could increase traffic and related emissions. All sites around Melton Mowbray may also generate journeys to and from the national highway network which could increase pressures on existing congested areas with poorer air quality in the town centre, where main roads intersect.

It is important to acknowledge that the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road Scheme will help to address congestion issues in the centre of Melton Mowbray and will also improve access to some of the opportunity sites. Combined with planned growth at the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood, this will improve links between residential areas and employment opportunity sites in the longer term. Employment sites in rural areas are also distant to large communities and constrained by poorer road infrastructure and poorer access to public transport, which is likely to increase congestion and related emissions.

The scale and potential distribution of growth under RA1 is predicted to have limited effects on air quality, as growth can be accommodated at a single site, or several sites in locations that have some access to communities and public transport. There is sufficient choice in sites to avoid those that are less accessible, and the overall scale of growth involved is unlikely to generate significant traffic or employment use related emissions either on its own or cumulatively.

The higher scale of growth under RA2 will require the use of more than one site, with a focus on Melton Mowbray. Concentrating growth on sites to the south of Melton Mowbray could add pressures on existing congestion points along the B6047 and at the Junction with the A607. This could result in localised deterioration of air quality. However, a distributed approach should be able to avoid this to an extent, and the planned Distributor Road will help to alleviate congestion. Nevertheless, the higher scale of growth will generate an increase in journeys and employment use related emissions. Therefore, RA2 is predicted to have a potential **minor negative effect**.

RA 3 involves higher levels of growth in rural areas. The baseline air quality in rural areas is very good. The distribution and scale of growth under this option is not predicted to have significant adverse effects on human health or overall air quality. However, despite the absence of existing agricultural related emissions, a localised deterioration in air quality is likely around Normanton from new employment uses and increased road journeys (particularly where these involve HGVs). Therefore, a **minor negative effect** is predicted for Option 2b.

RA2 and RA3 are ranked on par with each other. Though RA3 directs development away from areas with poorer air quality issues, it is more likely to involve car trips. RA2 directs growth to a more congested part of the network, but this is mitigated to an extent by planned improvements to transport infrastructure.

	RA1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	x	x
Rank	1	2	2

Biodiversity

None of the opportunity sites are significantly constrained in terms of biodiversity designations, with the majority consisting of farmland and / or previously used land. There are some priority habitats that overlap with sites partially, as well as ecological features such as hedgerows / shrubs and trees. However, these are mainly confined to the boundaries of the sites and it ought to be possible to avoid their loss and disturbance, particularly if enhancement zones are introduced to expand these features and keep a buffer between new buildings and infrastructure.

Some of the site options could also contain protected species or be used by birds and these issues would need to be explored and addressed regardless of the sites that are chosen.

It should be possible to achieve mitigation in the context of plan policies and the need to secure at least 10% net gain. For sites that are close to opportunity enhancement zones, there may be a greater potential to secure meaningful enhancements to ecological networks; such as along the River Eye near Melton Mowbray.

For RA1, the scale of growth is low, and only one site would be necessary to allocate. The potential for cumulative effects would therefore be fairly limited (taking into account committed growth is already assumed to be part of the ‘future baseline’ position. None of the sites are significantly constrained and regardless of which is chosen, it is expected that effects would be **neutral**.

For RA2 several sites would be involved in the Melton Mowbray area. The potential for cumulative effects is slightly higher compared to RA1, but none of the sites are likely to combine to create a significantly worse impact on local biodiversity in terms of severance. The main issue would be an overall increase in urbanisation around Melton Mowbray, and a loss of greenfield land that could have some ecological value. However, it is expected that mitigation and enhancement would ensure that neutral effects are achieved as a minimum. There is potential for net gain to lead to positive effects in the longer term, but this is recorded as an uncertainty as it is uncertain if, when and where enhancements would be achieved.

For RA3, the sites involved in the rural area are not significantly constrained and are distant from one another, so cumulative effects are not likely. Therefore, like RA 2, neutral effects are predicted (with potential for net gain to improve this outcome over the longer term).

	RA1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	?	?
Rank	1	2	2

Climate Change Resilience

None of the opportunity sites are considered to be significantly constrained by flood risk and the scale of growth under all options can be accommodated on sites not in areas at significant risk of fluvial flooding.

The northern part of Site MBC/021/23 partially overlaps a large area within Flood Zones 2 and 3 along the River Wreake. There is also an area of Flood Zones 2 and 3 adjacent and to the west of the site at Hudson Road Industrial Estate (Site MBC/003/23). These sites comprise greenfield land and there is potential for development to change drainage and surface water run off rates. However, employment uses are generally less sensitive to flooding and development should provide opportunities to introduce new green infrastructure and SuDS and be accompanied by a drainage strategy to mitigate potential adverse effects on-site and reduce flood risk downstream. In-combination effects are also unlikely to be significant as potentially vulnerable sites are dispersed from one another.

There is potential for all sites to deliver new green infrastructure enhancements, which can help to mitigate land use changes. However, achieving substantial improvements is likely to be more challenging for smaller sites that require much of the site area to be part of the developable area. In this respect, the wider range of site choice around Melton Mowbray compared to the rural site opportunities makes RA 2 preferable to RA 3 in terms of resilience.

A focus on Melton Mowbray is more likely to present urban heat island issues compared to a rural focus, particularly as there is already significant committed growth which could give rise to cumulative effects. However, effects are unlikely to be at a scale that will lead to significant effects.

Overall, all options are predicted to have **neutral effects** with regards to climate change resilience. There is sufficient site choice to avoid areas at risk of flooding for all three options, and the scale of growth is not likely to lead to significant cumulative effects in terms of flood risk, urban heating or other resilience factors.

Though some sites overlap with areas at risk of flooding, these are only small parcels of land and can be avoided. It should also be possible to secure the necessary mitigation to avoid increased flood risk due to a change in land use (i.e. less greenfield land).

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	-	-
Rank	1	2	2

Climate Change Mitigation

The discussion in relation to climate change mitigation is split between the main contributors to greenhouse gas emissions likely to arise as a result of employment growth in key sectors for Melton.

Emissions from transport are likely to increase with the development of new employment land, particularly if this is in sectors that involve logistics and warehousing. There would be an increase in the amount of HGV movements as well as workforce movements. The location of sites will influence the magnitude of effects, with those in the rural areas likely to lead to a greater amount of workforce travel. The scale of growth is also important in determining the significance of effects.

For RA 1, the scale of growth is relatively low, and unlikely to lead to significant effects in respect of transport emissions. For RA2 and RA3, an increase in growth is involved, which will increase emissions associated with transport regardless of the site location.

A focus on Melton Mowbray is likely to lead to lower emissions related to workforce travel compared to a rural based approach.

With regards to construction and changes in land use, development in any of the greenfield locations will involve a loss of land and associated carbon sequestration capabilities. Embodied carbon is also likely to be similar regardless of site location as the methods of construction and design of development will be influenced by building regulations and planning policies. New development in attractive locations for employment growth are likely to support sustainable design features that lead to more efficient operations compared to existing employment sites, which is likely to offset embodied carbon emissions to an extent. Overall, the carbon footprint associated with employment land is predicted to be greater for the higher growth options, but the distribution of growth is unlikely to lead to a significant difference in emissions. Minor negative effects are predicted for RA 2 and RA 3, with neutral effects for RA 1 (which involves a lower scale of growth).

It is recommended that the highest viable standards of energy and resource efficiency are required for new strategic employment sites, as these will form an important part of the longer term supply for Melton. Opportunities to incorporate renewable energy features should be maximised.

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	x	x
Rank	1	2	2

Economy

All of the sites involved as part of the strategic alternatives are graded as A+ to B- in the employment land study and are therefore likely to be attractive to market. Under RA 1, the scale of growth would meet identified quantitative needs, and provides a small surplus (which is useful should existing sources of employment land supply be lost/ not delivered as anticipated). Only one site would be necessary to allocate, so the effects are unlikely to be of major significance at this scale of growth.

Nevertheless, there would be benefits in terms of access to jobs and investment in traditional and emerging sectors. A wider range of communities are likely to benefit from access to job opportunities if the site selected is around Melton Mowbray (given that this is a more densely populated settlement better served by public transport). At a higher scale of growth, the significance of effects is greater, as there would be provision planned based on longer-term needs. This would bring increased job opportunities to local communities in the plan period, with associated benefits in terms of inward investment.

RA 2 which focuses growth in Melton Mowbray is likely to better support agglomeration and use of existing infrastructure in the key settlement within Melton. These sites fall in a core market area where there is good, reported demand for light industrial units and larger industrial properties. Several sites are also located on strategic routes close to high grade employment areas and major employers, with further growth planned. The sites will also benefit from improved transport infrastructure in the medium term and beyond through the delivery of the Distributor Road Scheme and Sustainable Neighbourhoods.

RA 3 would involve growth in 'rural' locations, which will help to support smaller sectors. The site in Normanton also has good access to the strategic road network and would be attractive to market.

Sites in Melton Mowbray would be within closer proximity to a larger workforce when compared to a focus on 'rural' sites and would benefit more from infrastructure investment. In this respect, major positive effects are predicted for RA 2. RA 3 also delivers employment land to meet longer term needs, but would be less accessible to communities, and thus moderate positive effects are predicted.

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>Higher growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Rank	3	1	2

Equality and Diversity

The key equality issues relating to employment growth are whether any groups (particularly those with protected characteristics) are likely to be disproportionately affected in terms of access to new jobs, or any negative implications such as amenity / air quality.

Groups without access to a private car are more likely to be affected if new employment sites are not accessible by public transport and active modes of travel (and this often includes groups from lower income groups and with disabilities). Melton has relatively low levels of deprivation, with areas of greater need being located in Melton Mowbray. In this respect, placing employment growth here is likely to help to close inequalities better than a rural focus. Furthermore, Melton Mowbray has good links to Leicester, which opens-up employment opportunities to a wider range of communities by public transport. This is less the case for rural areas which are more heavily reliant on private transport.

With regards to Melton Mowbray, site opportunities to the south are likely to be accessible on foot / cycle and public transport to some of the more deprived communities, particularly once the new sustainable neighbourhood is in place and infrastructure is enhanced. Therefore, RA 2 is likely to have minor positive effects.

RA 3 is unlikely to have a significant positive effect for groups with protected characteristics as the opportunities would most likely be in traditional sectors and would be in car dependent locations. That said, there is unlikely to be any negative effects and some communities and demographics would benefit from employment opportunities.

RA 1 involves lower of growth, but this could be targeted towards an accessible location, leading to minor positive effects.

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>Higher growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	✓	✓✓	✓
Rank	2	1	2

Health

Improvement in employment opportunities should support the reduction of unemployment and help reduce deprivation and related social issues including crime in the long term, both of which are contributors to general health and wellbeing.

Therefore, all options should derive some long-term positive effects in principle. Whilst positive, effects are unlikely to be significant, as Melton Mowbray and the wider district has broadly lower levels of deprivation and unemployment. However, sites that offer access via public transport to locations further afield such as Leicester could open up opportunities for a wider range of communities. In this respect, sites that are close to Melton Mowbray train station (or accessible via onward travel) are more likely to be of benefit than those in rural locations.

Other than Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate (MBC/003/23), site options nearby Melton Mowbray are distant to existing communities and are not suitably located to support active modes of travel. In particular, there are currently no pedestrian footpaths or safe cycle routes to several of the site opportunities. However, the delivery of the Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood will expand transport infrastructure, making sites such as Melton Airfield and Airfield Farm into closer proximity to suitable active travel and public transport infrastructure. Therefore, in the longer term, this could help to support access to job opportunities by active modes.

The site opportunity at Normanton has poor access by active modes of travel, as there are no public footpaths or designated cycle routes. Therefore, car travel is likely to be encouraged, and benefits to health are limited in this regard.

None of the sites will result in the loss of public recreation space or facilities. In this respect, effects on wellbeing are limited.

Aside from Land North of Leicester Road, the sites are not intersected by Public Rights of Way, and so disturbance of recreation routes is also likely to be limited. The site at Burrough is currently used as a private open space (a dog field) and this would be lost to employment development, which is negative, but not significant in terms of health outcomes.

In terms of amenity impacts, the opportunity sites are located away from residential locations (existing and planned) and / or are appropriately screened. Therefore, impacts on amenity are considered likely to be limited. Cumulative impacts such as noise, traffic and air quality could have some minor negative implications for nearby communities where multiple sites / higher levels of growth are involved at Melton Mowbray.

Overall, RA 1 is predicted to have minor positive effects. There is sufficient choice of sites that can be delivered in accessible locations that promote active travel, and the scale of growth should deliver improved opportunities to access employment for some communities. The benefits are more likely to arise if growth is focused at Melton Mowbray rather than rural locations.

For RA 2, the focus on Melton Mowbray should lead to better access to new jobs for a range of communities (both within and outside of the town). The focus on key areas of growth in the district should further help to support social infrastructure, benefiting a greater number of people and the more deprived communities in the district.

There is sufficient site choice to avoid negative effects on amenity, but there may be a need to incorporate mitigation such as screening and re-routing of public rights of way (depending on sites involved). Overall, a minor positive effect is predicted (reflecting the benefits of accessible new jobs, but the potential implications of higher growth in terms of noise / amenity).

RA 3 is likely to have some minor positive effects in terms of job opportunities, but these would not be accessible to many communities. The potential for cumulative negative effects on amenity are limited given the isolated nature of development under this strategic option. Overall, minor positive effects are predicted.

Though all three alternatives are predicted to have minor positive effects, it is considered that RA 2 is most preferable on balance of the positive and negative implications. RA 2 will have a more widespread effect on health through better access to jobs compared to RA 1 and RA 3 (this is considered to outweigh any negatives). Option RA1 is least preferential as it involves lower levels of growth and therefore fewer job opportunities.

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>Higher growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	✓	✓	✓
Rank	3	1	2

Historic Environment

The sites involved in the three growth options do not include or fall within the curtilage of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas or other statutory or non-statutory historic designations and assets. The sites also consist of mainly greenfield land adjacent or outside of urban areas. Therefore, development is unlikely to have any significant impact on the townscape character of Melton Mowbray or other settlements in proximity to sites in rural areas. However, there are some indirect / secondary effects to consider for certain sites.

The site at Normanton is separated from the settlement and Conservation Area by two fields, and therefore direct effects on significance of heritage assets ought to be manageable. However, it is probable that increased traffic would be generated through Bottesford and Normanton, which could have secondary / indirect effects on settlement character.

Though not formally designated, it is worth noting that the former Melton RAF Airfield had historic significance as a major site during World War II and the Cold War. Comprehensive redevelopment would remove the physical evidence that an airfield existed in this location. However, it is likely that only a smaller portion of the northern part of the site would be involved (if allocated).

At a higher scale of growth, the potential for secondary (cumulative) effects is slightly higher, as there is likely to be an increase in traffic through areas that contain heritage features. For the option that concentrates growth at Melton Mowbray there is already considerable employment land and committed growth. However, the employment sites would likely be accessed along established / new road infrastructure rather than passing through smaller, quieter villages, so the extent of effects would not be significant in this respect.

In the rural areas, development is more likely to affect the setting of settlements unless routing of HGVs avoids this.

For RA 1, **neutral effects** are predicted as the scale of growth is relatively low and the site options involved are not constrained in term of heritage.

For RA 2 and RA 3, the effects are also predicted to be **neutral**. Though there is an increase in growth (and the number of sites involved), it is still possible to utilise sites that are unconstrained, and cumulatively, effects related to traffic and urbanisation are not likely to be significant (though RA 3 is less preferable to RA 2 in this respect).

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	-	-
Rank	1	2	3

Housing

Other than Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate (MBC/003/23), all sites under all scenarios involve growth outside and 'distant' to the existing urban area of Melton Mowbray.

Sites outside the urban area are distant to existing neighbourhoods and public transport, employment and community facilities and services, and thus are not ideally located for housing. Given the peripheral nature of the sites, it is also unlikely that employment growth would 'sterilise' opportunities for future housing development nearby. To the south of Melton, it should be acknowledged that there is significant growth planned including residential areas, a local centre and some employment land, which would be close to the Melton Airfield and Airfield Farm sites. The proposed new distributor road would separate residential areas from any new employment at these sites though.

Site MBC/003/23 is nearby existing communities to the north east of Melton Mowbray and in proximity to some local services and community facilities, and thus could potentially support housing in the long term. However, it is adjacent to an existing industrial estate, and housing uses would likely be inappropriate on this site too.

The scale of growth under all options should be able to avoid sites that may potentially be suitable for housing growth in the longer term. Therefore, **neutral effects** are predicted for all reasonable alternatives and they are ranked the same.

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	-	-
Rank	1	1	1

Landscape

At Melton Mowbray, the sensitivity of the sites and potential for impacts is mixed. The effects would therefore depend upon the sites involved.

The sites North of Leicester Road, Melton Airfield and Melton Airfield Farm do not have any policy constraints in the current Plan and are partially screened from development. However, they each contain areas of open space and present the potential for negative effects that would need to be mitigated. Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate (MBC/003/23) falls partly within an Area of Separation and is categorised as being of 'medium' sensitivity. Therefore, effects here could potentially be more significant.

The site at Burrough on the Hill is significantly screened and effects are unlikely to be significant.

The site at Normanton Road is partially screened, and industrial uses are established within the landscape setting. Therefore, whilst negative effects could arise, it is unlikely that they would be significant with appropriate mitigation in place.

At a lower scale of growth, it would be possible to make use of any of the sites discussed above. It would be possible to avoid the most constrained site (i.e. at Hudson Road), and with suitable mitigation, it is predicted that **neutral** or potentially **minor negative effects** would arise.

With a focus on Melton, there would be a need for a higher scale of growth, which could be more likely to give rise to cumulative negative effects. Therefore, for RA2, **minor negative effects** are predicted with a greater degree of certainty.

With a focus on the rural sites, the majority of development would need to be focused at Normanton, which could also give rise to **minor negative effects**.

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	x	x
Rank	1	2	2

Soil and Land

All sites under RA 1 include Grade 3 agricultural land, with Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate (MBC/003/23) and Land North of Leicester Road (MBC/021/23) also comprising of some Grade 2 agricultural land (according to provisional surveys and using nearby surveyed land as a proxy). The scale of growth under this alternative should be able to avoid land in agricultural use and can be accommodated on sites with some previously developed land such as at Melton Airfield or Airfield Farm. The amount of potential loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land resources is also not significant at this scale of growth, even if more sensitive sites are utilised. Therefore, RA 1 is predicted to have a **neutral effect**, with potential to have minor positive effects where this supports the re-use of previously developed land (i.e. it is dependent on the choice of site).

For RA 2, the site options involved at Melton Mowbray all overlap with land categorised as Grade 3 agricultural land. It is uncertain whether this is Grade 3a or 3b, but surveys of nearby land and inspection of aerial photography suggest that some Grade 3a land is likely to be present. Therefore, regardless of the site options selected, there would be a loss of soil resources and greenfield land which constitutes **minor negative effects**. If Land at Hudson Road Industrial Estate / North of Leicester Road are involved, the potential for effects is slightly higher given that these could contain Grade 2 land.

Growth under RA 3 will also involve the use of Grade 3 agricultural land, including the loss of the best and most versatile land in agricultural use at Land West of Normanton Lane (MBC/010/23). Similar to RA 2, the scale of loss of agricultural land resources is predicted to derive a **minor negative effect**. However, the loss in Melton has potential to be Grade 2 land, which makes RA 2 the least preferable in terms of rank.

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	×	×
Rank	1	3	2

Transport

The opportunity sites have varied access to public transport, and so the effects will be dependent upon the site(s) chosen for allocation.

In Melton Mowbray, most opportunity sites are currently difficult to access by walking, cycling and public transport. Though sites are relatively close to existing communities, there are no pedestrian links to several of the sites. However, this will change following the development of new neighbourhoods and supporting road infrastructure. Access to new development is therefore likely to be through a mix of transport modes on sites within Melton Mowbray.

In the rural locations, access is more likely to be by private transport given that public transport is more limited. For the Normanton site in particular there are no walking or cycling links, and car travel would dominate.

In terms of traffic and congestion, a focus on Melton Mowbray could put pressure on the network in areas that already experience issues. However, the delivery of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road scheme should help to alleviate pressures in the central areas and help to support additional growth. The infrastructure also exists to support a degree of walking, cycling and public transport use.

In the rural locations, the sites involved are not in close proximity to active / frequent bus stops. Though there is a train station nearby to Normanton at Bottesford, the onward travel options are limited, and so it is more likely that employees would need to access jobs by car. This would be unlikely to lead to significant congestion or traffic issues, as the site has good access to the strategic route network.

In conclusion, RA 1 is predicted to have a neutral effect with regards to transport. The effects will be determined by site selection to an extent, but the scale of growth involved is unlikely to lead to significant congestion whether in rural locations or Melton Mowbray.

For RA 2, a higher amount of growth directed to Melton Mowbray could have some negative implications in terms of traffic and congestion, but this is offset by the accessibility of the sites and planned infrastructure. Therefore, neutral effects are predicted overall.

For RA 3, the effects are unlikely to be significant with regards to congestion or traffic, but car based travel is likely to increase. This constitutes a minor negative effect.

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	-	x
Rank	1	2	3

Water

None of the site opportunities involved overlap with Groundwater Source Protection Zones or Drinking Water Safeguard Zones. There is also no overlap with priority areas in terms of nitrites, pesticides and phosphates. In this respect, it is predicted that development would not lead to significant effects on water quality.

Though some of the site opportunities are adjacent to or overlapped by areas of surface water flood risk, this could be avoided through layout and design. It would also be expected that mitigation and an appropriate drainage strategy would be implemented to control potential contamination to water courses or groundwater.

The Melton Mowbray Sewage Treatment Works (STW) is undergoing a significant upgrade to enhance its capacity and efficiency, and it will be able to accommodate an increase in employment land and economic activity. In this respect, neutral effects are predicted for growth focused around Melton Mowbray under RA 1 (potentially) and RA 2.

For RA 3, different waste water treatment facilities are involved, and it is unclear what the headroom is or whether there are plans for investment. Though the scale of additional effluent from economic growth would not be expected to be significant, there is a greater degree of uncertainty for this option.

	RA 1 <i>Lower growth</i>	RA 2 <i>Higher growth, Melton Mowbray focused</i>	RA 3 <i>High growth, Rural areas focused</i>
Significance	-	-	?
Rank	1	1	2

Appendix B: Site Appraisal Methods

LPA SA Topics	Site Selection Study topics	AECOM supplementary Site Assessment Criteria
Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental health (air quality) 	Air quality management areas
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural environment • Trees and hedgerows 	Proximity to SPA, SAC, RAMSAR, SSSI, NNR, LNR
Climate change resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding water quality and drainage 	Flood zone overlap
Climate change mitigation	Building emissions will depend upon design rather than location. Transport emissions addressed under transportation.	/
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market fit • Proximity to existing employment uses • Viability, land ownership, infrastructure 	Workforce within 750m, 1500m, 3000m, 5000m
Equality and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood plans 	Index of multiple deprivation
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental health (noise, odour) • Open space and public rights of way 	Walking distance to public rights of way Distance to national cycle network
Historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic environment 	/
Housing	Not applicable as sites being assessed for employment uses.	/
Landscape and townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape, topography and visual impact 	/
Soil and land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing use • Land contamination, minerals, waste and stability • Agricultural land classification 	Contaminated land Agricultural land
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and access • Relationship with host settlement 	Walking distance to active bus stop Walking distance to rail station
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding water quality and drainage 	Proximity to source protection zones

SA Topic	Site criteria	Scoring mechanism
Air quality	Environmental health (air quality)	R: Site-specific issue difficult to resolve with mitigation A: Site-specific issue that can be resolved with mitigation G: No site-specific issues
	Air quality management areas	Overlap = Red , >400m = Green
Biodiversity	Natural environment	R: Probable loss of designated biodiversity site A: Potential impact on designated biodiversity site or ecological constraint that requires mitigation G: No issues identified
	Proximity to SPA, SAC, RAMSAR	Relative scoring, red within 200m or green over 3500m.
	Proximity to SSSI, NNR	Relative scoring, red overlap or abut to or green over 1000m.
	Proximity to LNR	Relative scoring, red overlap or abut to or green over 400m.
Climate change resilience	Flooding water quality and drainage	R: Flooding constraints are significant and require significant mitigations A: Flooding constraint may be resolved with mitigations that may significantly reduce the developable area of the site G: Flooding constraints can be resolved with minor mitigation such as appropriate design
	Overlap with Flood Zone 2	Relative scoring, green for >2% or red for 100% . Relative scoring, green for >2% or red for 100% .
	Overlap with Flood Zone 3	Relative scoring, green for >2% or red for 100% . Relative scoring, green for >2% or red for 100% .
	Market fit	R: Site has limited economic links with the rest of the Borough A: Site has economic links with the Borough but outside of the core Melton Mowbray area G: Site is within the core Melton Mowbray area

	Proximity to existing employment uses	<p>R: Site is isolated from existing employment uses</p> <p>A: Site contains or is in proximity to existing non-protected employment uses</p> <p>G: Site adjoins an existing protected employment use</p>
	Viability, land ownership, infrastructure	<p>R: Viability, land ownership or infrastructure issues identified with unclear mitigations</p> <p>A: Viability, land ownership or infrastructure issues identified with mitigations</p> <p>G: No issues identified</p>
	Workforce within 2000m	<p>G: More than 2000 people</p> <p>A: 501 – 2000 people</p> <p>R: Less than 500 people</p>
	Workforce within 3000m	<p>G: More than 8000 people</p> <p>A: 2000 – 8000 people</p> <p>R: Less than 2000 people</p>
	Workforce within 5000m	<p>G: More than 15000 people</p> <p>A: 5000- 15000 people</p> <p>R: Less than 5000 people</p>
Equality and Diversity	Neighbourhood Plans	<p>R: Policies do not support the principle of allocation</p> <p>A: Policies introduce a significant constraint that could be resolved through the planning process</p> <p>G: Policies do not conflict with the principle of allocation / no neighbourhood plan</p>
	Lowest IMD decile on site	Grey for no overlap, green for part or full overlap with communities within top 20% deprived areas.
Health	Environmental health (noise, odour)	
	Open space and public rights of way	<p>R: Complete loss of designated open space or public right of way will require changing</p> <p>A: Partial loss of designated open space or potential impact on public right of way</p> <p>G: No loss of designated open space or no impact on a public right of way</p>
	Distance to national cycle network	Relative scoring (green within 400m)
Historic Environment	Historic environment	R: Potential harm or loss of heritage asset that requires investigation prior to allocation

		<p>A: Potential harm to heritage asset that requires mitigation prior to planning consent</p> <p>G: No issues identified</p>
Landscape and townscape	Landscape, topography and visual impact	<p>R: Visual impact has little existing mitigation and further mitigation may be necessary or site protected within an 'Area of Separation'</p> <p>A: Visual impact is partly mitigated by existing visual screening although further mitigation may be necessary</p> <p>G: No issues identified</p>
Soil and land	Existing use	<p>R: All or most of site is greenfield</p> <p>A: Site is part brownfield, part greenfield</p> <p>G: All or most of site is brownfield</p>
	Land contamination, minerals, waste and stability	<p>R: Issues unlikely to be resolved with mitigation</p> <p>A: Issues can be resolved with mitigation</p> <p>G: No issues identified</p>
	Agricultural land classification	<p>R: Site is Grade 1 to Grade 3a agricultural land classification (Best and Most Versatile Land)</p> <p>A: Site is Grade 3b to Grade 5 agricultural land classification</p> <p>G: Site is not in agricultural use</p>
Transport	Transport and access	<p>R: Site-specific issue difficult to resolve with mitigation</p> <p>A: Site-specific issue that can be resolved with mitigation</p> <p>G: No site-specific issue</p>
	Relationship with host settlement	<p>R: Site is isolated from a settlement with no pedestrian provision</p> <p>A: Site is in proximity to a settlement with opportunities for pedestrian provision</p> <p>G: Site adjoins a settlement with pedestrian provision</p>
	Walking distance to active bus stop	<p>G: Within 400m</p> <p>A: Within 1200m</p> <p>R: More than 1200m or no reasonable pedestrian access (or prospect of)</p>
	Distance to rail station	<p>G: within 2.5m</p> <p>A: within 5km</p> <p>R: More than 5km</p>
Water	Proximity to source protection zones	>2% overlap with zone one , two , three or four . Or, no overlap .

Appendix C: Site Appraisal Matrix

Sourced from the Site Selection Study
Supplementary criteria

	003/23	009/23	010/23	015/23	020/23	021/23
Environmental health (air quality)	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Air quality management areas	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Natural environment	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Proximity to SPA, SAC, RAMSAR	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Proximity to SSSI, NNR	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Proximity to LNR	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Trees and hedgerows	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red
Flooding water quality and drainage	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Overlap with Flood Zone 2	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Overlap with Flood Zone 3	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Market fit	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green
Proximity to existing employment uses	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Viability, land ownership, infrastructure	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green
Workforce within 2000m	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green
Workforce within 3000m	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Workforce within 5000m	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Neighbourhood Plans	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Multiple deprivation	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Environmental health (noise, odour)	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Open space and public rights of way	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Walking distance to public rights of way	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green
Historic environment	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red
Landscape, topography, visual impact	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Existing use	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red
Contamination, minerals, waste and stability	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Agricultural land classification	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red
Transport and access	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Relationship with host settlement	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Walking distance to active bus stop	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Distance to rail station	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Proximity to source protection zones	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

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