**Response to Melton Local Plan, Consultation 2, August 2017**

Bottesford Forum is a group of residents and friends of the villages of Bottesford Parish that exists to ensure that residential developments are in keeping with the needs of the residents, the capability of the village services and do not have a damaging effect on the sustainability of the local area. We have attempted to keep this document brief, factual and to the point to aid understanding and assist Melton Borough Council (MBC) to comprehend the significant concerns facing the villages of Bottesford, Easthorpe, Normanton and Muston.

The revised Melton Local Plan (MLP) has done little to address our concerns about the large number of additional houses expected to be developed over the next 19 years until 2036. In fact, the figures provide for an additional 345 houses to be completed through until 2026 only (as per item 3H, Appendix 2 on the MLP).

The size and scale of the proposed developments will have a devastating impact on the infrastructure, amenities and social development of our parish if nothing is done to improve them before any development takes place. Currently, the revised Melton Local Plan does nothing to address these issues despite us repeatedly presenting them to the Parish Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Melton Borough Council:

- **Development projection**

Based on actual completed development between 2011 and 2017 (reference Table 4 of Appendix 1) and projected numbers (reference Item 3H Appendix 2 of the MLP) the total picture of development within Bottesford Parish is shown on the graph below.

Projection 1 – This is a projection based on MLP planned development figures continuing at heightened levels in the Parish until 2036.

Projection 2 – This is an alternative projection flattening out the planned development rate over the full term until 2036.
Questions

1. Can Melton Borough Council explain which of the above two projections are valid or is there an alternative explanation for the development rate through to 2036 being front-loaded?
2. Do Melton Borough Council believe there will be such a low development profile in the latter part of their 25-year plan?
3. How will Melton Borough Council control or reject any large (non-windfall) developments in the latter part of their 25-year plan?
4. Although the development figures for Bottesford include the windfall applications completed from 2011-2017, why has Melton Borough Council not included any windfall development projections from 2018-2036?

• Traffic and road safety

Bottesford is predominantly a commuter village and a significant part of the workforce for the existing local businesses does not live in the village. This means that the majority of the working population will drive to work through and out of the village. An extra 150 vehicle movements per day through the village will be added each and every year through to 2036 culminating in a total increase of over 3000 daily vehicle movements by the end of the period. These vehicle movements are based on 1.33 cars per household (national statistics) and 7 vehicle movements per day, including deliveries.

The lack of parking in the village centre has already been identified as an issue. A further 504 houses in total across the parish will mean that current on-street and off-street parking will be unable to cope with the demand.

It is no longer safe to cycle or walk through parts of the village due to the increased number of cars and the speed with which they travel through the village (evidenced by local MVAS data).

Many parents are working outside of the village and therefore drop off and pick up their children from the schools. Consequently, the High Street and Barkestone Lane leading to the schools is already in a dangerous state with cars and school buses causing gridlock at peak travelling times.

Heavy delivery lorries regularly flaunt/ignore the 7.5 tonne limit and drive through the village causing even more havoc with parking and access.

Questions

5. What will Melton Borough Council do to alleviate traffic congestion and address road safety concerns in the village?
6. In Spring 2016 Melton Borough Council agreed to investigate if development sites had highway road safety problems. Has this been undertaken, what were the results and how has it affected the Melton Local Plan?
• **Local services**

The possibility of expanding health, retail and other services in the village centre of Bottesford is severely restricted by land availability, the historic street pattern and, in particular, the Conservation Area. It is unlikely that sufficient employment appropriate to the skills of residents can be provided locally, despite the Local Plan stating there are employment opportunities at three small Industrial sites in Bottesford. This is further evidenced by the recent Travel Plan submitted by Belvoir Fruit Farms as part of their relocation to Bottesford. It stated that the majority of their workforce travelled into the village from outside the Parish hence the onsite parking allowance.

A minimum of 1500 additional residents in the villages of the parish increases the overall population by 42% making Bottesford a small town with circa 5100 residents.

**Question**

7. **How does Melton Borough Council plan to ensure that local services meet the development growth and associated population increase?**

• **Education**

Using the 2011 Census figures Bottesford population is 3587 of which 1348 are children attending school (38% of the population).

The primary school’s capacity is 315 and has 259 enrolled in 2016-17. The secondary school has a capacity of 650 pupils with 543 currently enrolled in 2016-17. This is a total of 965 places.

Based on MLP development growth figures and an average of 1.8 children per household (as per 2012 ONS statistics) this equates to an influx of an additional 907 children, totalling an estimated 2255 children in Bottesford Parish by 2036 of which 1503 will require school places (conservatively estimated as two-thirds being of school age between 5 and 18).

This would leave well over 500 (1503 – 965) students not having a place in their local school which also implies that no student places will be available for those living outside of the Parish, in the other Vale villages.

Even though the local authority notes that Section 106 or CIL money will be available to expand the local primary school, with recent separate expansions there is now only space to further expand the school by taking over existing grass and hard-standing playing areas, so depriving the pupils of space to exercise and play.

**Questions**

8. **How can Melton Borough Council justify using the figures of 0.239 and 0.167 children per household requiring primary and secondary school places respectively?**

9. **What is Melton Borough Council’s plan for extending or building new schools?**
10. How is Melton Borough Council going to address secondary education for children in the surrounding villages if all the places will be taken up by children from Bottesford?

11. How does Melton Borough Council propose that these step-changes to the local educational establishment are funded and planned?

- **Flooding**

  According to a recent independent report Bottesford has 413 (28% at the time) properties in flood zone 3 and ranks as one of the highest risk villages in the whole of the East Midlands. The Plan states that “sites at risk of flooding can only be allocated for development if there is insufficient land available in areas with lesser or no flood risk”. Rectory Farm (BOT4) and Grantham Road (BOT3) and their adjacent areas are subject to flooding and are part categorised as being in flood zone 3b (designed to flood as an alleviation method). Consequently, any development on these sites in particular will increase the likelihood of flooding elsewhere in the village.

**Questions**

12. If Melton Borough Council insist on allowing development on areas known to flood what compensation are they prepared to provide villagers whose homes will inevitably flood when the water cannot drain away naturally?

13. Similarly, how will Melton Borough Council recompense or resolve the issue of increased house insurance costs or lack of insurance cover for existing residents due to the impact of new developments on the increased flooding risk?

14. There are many more sites in Melton Borough with a much lower flood risk than Bottesford. Why does the Melton Local Plan place the most significant rural housing volumes in the highest flood risk areas of the rural part of the Borough, i.e. Bottesford?

15. In Spring 2016 Melton Borough Council agreed to investigate if development sites had flood risk problems. Has this been undertaken, what were the results and how has it impacted the Melton Local Plan?

16. Has Melton Borough Council taken into account the independent flood survey commissioned by Leicestershire County Council which highlighted the increased impact of flooding caused by climate change?

- **Public transport**

  Public transport is poor. The ever-decreasing bus service is unlikely to improve with the route to Melton being so tortuous and takes so long that it is not preferred over car travel. Other routes to Bingham, Grantham, Nottingham and Newark, being the preferred locations for employment, retail and leisure activities, are virtually non-existent placing a greater reliance on the car and therefore the associated impact covered above. The bus service to Grantham is reasonable but is limited in the evening and Saturdays and does not run on Sundays, again placing a greater reliance on the car.

  The train service is inadequate being two-hourly for much of the day and non-existent in the late evening and there are currently no definitive plans to allow more trains to stop at Bottesford.
The current frequency and convenience of the bus and train services are unlikely to persuade residents of any new development to use public transport rather than their cars.

**Question**

17. What consultation has Melton Borough Council done to ensure neighbouring authorities will co-operate to improve public transport for Bottesford and neighbouring villages in order to maintain its’ sustainability as a Service Centre?

- **Health and emergency services**

Local Health services are already stretched but will need to cope with an estimated extra 1512 resident. The two GP surgeries have merged and struggle to cope with the demand of the registered 3414 active patients, and under current rules need to accept new patients even though the waiting time for appointments is around two weeks.

The usual arguments apply to Bottesford as do many other remote rural locations for ambulance services feeding into the main hospital centres of Nottingham And Boston.

Fire Services are initially called from outside the County – Lincolnshire (Grantham full-time), Nottinghamshire (Bingham retained), and finally Leicestershire (Melton full-time) – as the number of houses increases there will be a naturally higher risk placed on the safety of the Parish residents.

**Questions**

18. How will Melton Borough Council mitigate the risks to residents’ health in relation to surgery capacity?

19. With even a slight increase in housing there is an associated increased risk of fire, so how does Melton Borough Council plan to mitigate the risk/emergency response?

- **Environment**

The impact of pollution resulting from the large increase in the number of vehicle movements around the centre of Bottesford is significant, especially around the High Street, Grantham Road and Barkestone Lane areas as many more parents drop off their children at the schools and more residents access health and retail services in the village centre. A local study identified that there are currently in excess of 500 vehicle movements on Barkestone Lane alone around both the beginning and the end of the school day. It is likely that this will increase to double this volume by 2025 if the planned development numbers go ahead.

There is very little Grade 2 agricultural land in the Melton Borough, however a significant amount of this exists in and around Bottesford Parish.

**Questions**

20. Can Melton Borough Council evidence how they have investigated the impact of pollution in the critical areas of Bottesford and how they intend to address this health risk?
21. Can Melton Borough Council explain why they have chosen land for preferred development that is prime (Grade 2) agricultural land?

- **Drainage**

  The sewage plant is running to capacity with serious investment required to cope with demand, not to mention all the other utility infrastructure pressures.

  Any overflow from newly developed drainage systems will adversely impact the widely known flooding problem in the village.

  Three serious flood events and a number of more minor events have occurred within the last 20 years. Little has been done to alleviate this risk in respect of culvert sizing or lessening the impact caused by significant housing developments.

**Question**

22. How does Melton Borough Council plan to mitigate the incremental effect of multiple developments having their controlled drainage systems reaching rainwater run-off capacity at the same time, potentially causing and/or exacerbating a flood event in the Bottesford village and immediate area?

- **Personal safety and security**

  Over the past few years the presence of any police force has been much reduced with only two PCSOs covering a beat of over 120 miles around 38 Vale of Belvoir villages, including Bottesford. There has been a recent marked increase in criminal activity that is related to remote rural locations.

**Question**

23. With the recent increased investment through S106 how will Melton Borough Council ensure that subsequent CIL payments will improve the police coverage and effectiveness for the Bottesford Parish?

**Location and sustainability**

Bottesford has been identified as a Rural Service Centre for the Borough, but there has been no attempt to determine whether or not the services and facilities in the village are adequate to meet the needs of an increased population:

- Current schools will be beyond capacity before the end of the Local Plan period and will only be attended by Bottesford children, leaving other Vale villages without local secondary school facilities
- The High Street and other arterial routes through Bottesford are already congested and difficult to navigate
- On/off road parking facilities are inadequate
- Recent flooding events indicate the lack of preventive measures are in place
- Public transport is so poor that car journeys are a necessity and the senior element of our population are increasingly becoming isolated
The health services are beyond capacity with no further plans to expand.

Evidence suggests that the drainage systems are inadequate and may exacerbate known flooding issues in the village.

Villages closer to Melton are by definition more sustainable due to proximity of work opportunities, retail, health services, transport links, emergency service access, significantly reduced flood risk and access to secondary education.

The Housing & Economic Housing Assessment for Leicester and Leicestershire produced in January 2017 identified a household growth in Melton Borough of 14.4% between 2011 and 2036, being 3106 houses (equivalent of 6707 population growth). Bottesford is planned to increase by 504 houses during the period 2011-2036.

Questions

24. Why has Bottesford been identified as the most appropriate location for the most significant element of the rural allocation when the indications are that the proposed Melton Local Plan does not offer a sustainable environment in which to place such significant development volume?

25. Can Melton Borough Council provide evidence that investigations have been carried out into the needs and impact relating to traffic, schools, health facilities, shopping, leisure, infrastructure and employment associated with the estimated population growth, together with the associated actions to mitigate the impact on the residents of Bottesford village?

26. If the HEDNA report of 2017 highlighted an expected growth of 3106 houses in Melton Borough, why is Melton Borough Council still projecting a 6125 housing growth in the Melton Local Plan?

27. If the HEDNA report of 2017 highlighted an expected growth of 14.4% in houses for Melton Borough, why is Melton Borough Council projecting over 30% housing growth for Bottesford in the Melton Local Plan?

BOTTESFORD FORUM

AUGUST 2017

This response is submitted on behalf of the following members of Bottesford Forum. Each member has been contacted either by email, letter or social media and has been given the opportunity to withdraw their name from this submission.
## Appendix 1

### Table of completed and proposed development in Bottesford Parish to 2036

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