

Examination of Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Draft Matters and Issues for Examination

Tuesday 27 April - Matter 1: Context and General Approach

Key Issues and Questions:

1. Does the Core Strategy satisfy the legal requirements, in particular:
 - Has it been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme?
 - Has it been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and the Regulations?
 - Has it been subject to sustainability appraisal?
 - Overall, has it emerged from an open and transparent process that demonstrates how and why its elements were selected, in consultation with the public and other stakeholders?
 - Has it had regard for national policy, and does it conform generally to the East Midlands Regional Plan (RSS)? Has the Regional Planning Body confirmed its conformity?
 - Has it had regard for the Sustainable Community Strategy?
 - Is the relationship to the Local Plan, in particular the saved policies which are to be superseded, adequately explained?
2. Does the Core Strategy address the first 2 elements listed in paragraph 4.1, PPS12 satisfactorily ie. (1) an overall vision; (2) strategic objectives?
 - Does the Spatial Portrait satisfactorily describe the principal physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the Borough?
 - Is it clear how the issues listed in paragraph 3.2 and the Sustainable Community Strategy's (SCS) priorities described in this chapter relate to the Spatial Portrait? Precisely what are the challenges for the Core Strategy to address?
 - Do the Vision and Spatial Objectives always follow logically from the Spatial Portrait, issues and SCS priorities? For example, paragraphs 3.22-3.26 describe the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston, making no reference to any degeneration or inadequacies which would justify Spatial Objectives 1-4?
 - Is paragraph 4.4 with its reference to Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plans sufficiently clear that these are 'emerging' planning policy documents which should follow from the Core Strategy?
3. Should the Key Diagram be placed earlier in the document to assist the reader who is unfamiliar with the geography of the Borough?

Chapters 1-4: Introduction, Policy Context, Spatial Portrait, Vision and Spatial Objectives; Appendix 3

Tues 27 April - Matter 2: The Spatial Strategy for Development

Key Issues and Questions:

1. Is the Spatial Strategy for Development sufficiently spatial?
2. Does it set out clearly how much development is intended to happen where and when?
3. Is it founded on a credible evidence base and demonstrably the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives?
4. Is it compatible with the plans of neighbouring Authorities?
5. Is the proposed Direction for Growth consistent with promoting sustainable development in the Borough and wider sub-region?
6. Are there any potential constraints which could prevent delivery; and/or does the Core Strategy need to say more about delivery?
7. Is the proposal to hold back development to 2017 justified and in accordance with national planning policy in PPS3?
8. Are the references to an Eco Town justified?
9. Is Core Strategy Policy 3 justified? What “regeneration” schemes might arise other than those identified in Policy 2?

Chapter 5, CS Policy 1: Spatial Strategy; Policy 3: Regeneration Schemes

Wednesday 28 April - Matter 3: Housing

Key Issues and Questions:

1. With reference to PPS3, Housing, is the Core Strategy likely to deliver a flexible, responsive supply of housing land over the plan period? Are there sufficient specific deliverable sites for the next 5 years?
2. Are the expectations for delivery of existing commitments reasonable?
3. Are the expectations for delivery of housing opportunities in the town/district centres and elsewhere in the Principal Urban Areas reasonable?
4. Is the housing trajectory realistic, especially for the immediate future before the town centre plans and Direction for Growth sites start to deliver?
5. If potential windfalls for the 11-15 year phase were considered, would there still be a need for the Direction for Growth?
6. Is there flexibility in the plan to deal with changing circumstances?
7. Are the policies for re-use of previously developed land, and for housing density, appropriate?
8. Does the Core Strategy provide satisfactorily for affordable housing, setting appropriate targets and thresholds, and proportions for social rented and intermediate housing, which relate to considerations of both local need and likely economic viability?
9. Is the lack of a plan-wide target and the reference to “minimum thresholds” in Policy 11 in line with PPS3 and locally justified?
10. Is there a conflict between paragraph 3.39 which refers to a “significant shortfall in affordable housing” and paragraph 3.12 which suggests that the affordability of housing makes the Borough an attractive place to live?
11. Is Policy 12 sufficiently clear and robust to deliver new residential development which will address “the need for differing household sizes and for diverse groups”?
12. Is Policy 13 to provide for gypsies & travellers reasonable, fair and in accordance with national and regional policy? Should gypsies and travellers be expected to comply with Policy 8 on measures to combat climate change and promote use of renewable energy?

Chapter 5, CS Policy 1: Spatial Strategy; Policy 11: Affordable Housing; Policy 12: Housing Needs of the Community; Policy 13: Provision of Gypsy & Traveller Sites; Appendix 4

Thursday 29 April - Matter 4: Economic Development

Key Issues and Questions:

1. Does the recently published PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4) necessitate any major or minor changes to the Core Strategy?
2. Having regard for PPS4, and the Spatial Objectives of the Core Strategy, is it clear how the Core Strategy will make provision for the local economy to grow and prosper?
3. Is the approach to employment land provision in the Core Strategy justified in advance of completing the employment land and premises review referenced in paragraph 5.21?
4. How will the Core Strategy secure the optimum retention and expansion of employment land and premises for particular sectors and types of business within the Borough over the plan period?
5. Are the figures in Core Strategy Policy 1 for office floor space, industrial and warehousing land, and freehold land and premises founded on credible evidence?
6. What is meant by an "Identified Employment Area" in the Direction for Growth (paragraph 5.58 of the Core Strategy)? Should decisions on the uses and amount of employment land there be deferred to a future DPD as implied in paragraph 5.63?
7. In paragraph 5.26, does mitigation include avoidance and selecting alternative sites ie. if contamination is likely to adversely affect people and the environment, should suitable location be the first consideration?
8. Are the policies for the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston founded on good evidence of town centre hierarchy, and the need for retail and other town centre uses including leisure & office development?
9. Should cultural activities including the theatre, museums and libraries be referenced?
10. Is the use of language to describe the main centres in the Borough consistent and in line with PPS4?
11. Should Policy 2 make clear how much new development for the various town centre uses is being sought in each of the 3 main centres, and when, over the plan period?
12. Does Core Strategy Policy 2 address the sequential approach correctly (it seems to imply that proposed development within the centres will be subject to it)?
13. Are the roles and relationships of the Core Strategy and Area Action Plans described appropriately?
14. Are the policies for the centres backed by a delivery strategy consistent with section 4 of PPS12?

15. Does the Core Strategy take sufficient account of the future plans for development of the University of Leicester (the “Development Framework Plan” mentioned in paragraph 5.87)? Or should expansion of the Oadby campus be resisted because it would be harmful to an area of open space and unsustainable?

Chapter 5: Policies 1 & 2 & 3

**Tuesday 4 May (1300 start) - Matter 5: Climate Change and Renewable Energy;
Flood Risk and the Water Environment**

Key Issues and Questions:

1. Do the policies in the Core Strategy on climate change and renewable energy add to national and regional policy?
2. Does the Core Strategy accord with national and regional policy on these matters, including the Supplement to PPS1?
3. Is there evidence to support the approach to SPD outlined in paragraph 6.14, and is this a statement of policy rather than explanatory text material?
4. Should paragraph 6.24 indicate that the Study covered a number of local authority areas as well as Oadby & Wigston?
5. Should the policy refer to the promotion of sustainable travel as a means to combat the impact of climate change?
6. Should the Core Strategy refer to potential contributions from local farms?
7. Is Policy 9 compliant with PPS25? Is it accepted that the Core Strategy has taken account of flood risk (through the SFRA 2007) and avoided new development in areas at high risk of flooding?
8. Should the Core Strategy be amended in respect of its reference to the Water Cycle Study and/or the links between Green Infrastructure policies and flood risk?

Policies 8 & 9

Tuesday 4 May - Matter 6: Countryside, open and green spaces

Key Issues and Questions:

1. Do policies for green infrastructure, green wedges, the countryside and open space and facilities for leisure, recreation and tourism comply with national planning policy in PPS7, PPS9, PPG17, the Tourism Good Practice Guide, PPG2 and with RSS policies?
2. Do they adequately support and complement the development proposals in the Core Strategy?
3. Are the purposes of green infrastructure corridors clear, and does Policy 5 reflect all purposes adequately, in addition to promoting biodiversity?
4. Are green wedges justified, and are they urban not countryside features?
5. Are they too restrictive of farming and leisure activities?
6. Is Policy 7 locally distinctive, or merely reformulating national policy? And does it conflict with RSS and the proposed Direction of Growth?
7. Does the Core Strategy adequately address the future of Kilby Bridge? Is there consistency between the several references (eg. paragraphs 3.65-8, Spatial Objective 14, paragraph 5.91 and Policy CS17)?
8. Does Policy 17 protect existing open space appropriately, or could it prejudice sustainable development for housing or employment use?
9. On Kilby Bridge, can the aims for (1) protecting the environmental and historic assets and (2) promoting leisure and tourism both be achieved? Is the potential impact of proximity to the Direction for Growth adequately addressed?
10. Can all the above policies deliver (evidence of stakeholder support and potential funding)?

Chapter 5: Policy 5: Chapter 6: The Natural Environment, Policy 6; Policy 7; Policy 17

Wednesday 5 May - Matter 7: Transport

Key Issues and Questions:

1. Does the Core Strategy set out sufficiently clearly the implications of its development proposals for the transport network?
2. Spatial Objective 6 and the Direction for Growth refer to high quality public transport links to Leicester and the centre of Wigston and perhaps a tram link. How exactly is it intended to deliver these public transport improvements?
 - Is the Spatial Strategy founded on a credible evidence base and demonstrably the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives?
 - Is the proposed Direction for Growth consistent with promoting sustainable development in the Borough and wider sub-region?
3. How will the Core Strategy contribute to delivering the improved east west public transport links referenced in paragraph 5.97? And the proposed public transport interchange (paragraph 5.98)? Do the County Council and PT operators support these measures?
4. Will Policy 4 deliver more sustainable travel patterns which are sought by the Regional Transport Strategy and summarised in paragraph 5.95? If so, how, when and by what means?
5. Is the final paragraph of Policy 4 (safeguarding land for unspecified future highway schemes) justified?
6. Is Policy 4 overly concerned with development control, and insufficiently geared towards delivering specific and sustainable outcomes?
7. Should the Core Strategy give more consideration to safe cycling routes, and to cycling and walking in the green wedge/ rural areas?
8. Does the Core Strategy address car parking appropriately?

Chapter 5: Policy 4

Wednesday 5 May - Matter 8: Infrastructure and Delivery

Key Issues and Questions

1. Having regard for PPS12 (paragraph 4.4 advises that the delivery strategy is central in a Core Strategy and 4.45 expands on the notion of deliverability), does the Core Strategy focus enough on delivery and implementation?
2. Are the links between Chapter 5, Chapter 8 and Appendix 2 sufficient to give a clear picture of intentions for delivery?
3. Do the Local Infrastructure Plan, other work with stakeholders and investigation of funding sources support the Core Strategy policies and proposals, and show that they are realistic?
4. Does the Core Strategy address funding issues satisfactorily (public sector funding and developer contributions)?
5. Has the Core Strategy adequately addressed the impact on policing and the needs of Police Infrastructure of the development policies?
6. Is paragraph 7.12 on the Community Infrastructure Levy satisfactory (in the light of latest Government statements)?
7. Is the Core Strategy flexible, and has it had regard for circumstantial changes which might occur over the plan period?
8. Are there clear arrangements for monitoring progress in respect of delivering the Core Strategy, with clear targets or measurable outcomes which could aid management?
9. Are all the policies in the Core Strategy written to show how the vision, objectives and strategy for the area will be delivered and by whom, and when? Are some, particularly Policies 14, 15 & 16, designed to control rather than promote development? If so, should this be recognised? Are some lacking in local distinctiveness, and repetitive of national or regional policy?

Chapter 5: Policy 1&2; Chapter 7: Policy 10, Policy 14, Policy 15, Policy 16; Chapter 8: Delivery and Monitoring Framework; Appendix 2

Jill Kingaby
INSPECTOR
March 2010