

Chapter 5: Achieving Sustainable Development – Our Spatial Strategy

Core Strategy Policy 1

Spatial Strategy for Development in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston

In order to deliver the regeneration of the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston and their associated communities and to achieve the objectives of the Leicester Principal Urban Area the Borough Council will:

- Allocate land for the development of a minimum of 1,800 new dwellings (90 dwellings per annum) between 2006 and 2026;
- Identify land for the development of 5,800 square metres of office floor space to be provided in the centres of Wigston and Oadby and 1.3 hectares of industrial and warehousing land between 2008 and 2026. Freehold land and premises should account for at least 25 per cent of the total requirement;
- Focus development in the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston. Provide a target of approximately 170 new dwellings within the centre of Wigston, 80 new dwellings in Oadby and 150 new dwellings in South Wigston. Achieve the development and redevelopment of suitable previously developed land and buildings and the implementation of the proposals within the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan areas and within the South Wigston Masterplan area through:
 - the adoption of the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plan Development Plan Document(s);
 - the adoption of the Allocations Development Plan Document (in the case of South Wigston);
 - the preparation of development briefs;
 - working in partnership with other bodies; and,
 - assembling sites where necessary, including the use of compulsory purchase powers in appropriate circumstances.
- Provide a target of approximately 200 new dwellings on suitable land outside of Oadby and Wigston Town Centre Masterplan areas and outside of the South Wigston Masterplan area but within the Leicester Principal Urban Area. Suitable sites will be identified in the Allocations Development Plan Document;
- Make provision for one Direction for Growth of approximately 450 new homes adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area on land to the south east of Wigston in the Allocations Development Plan Document. This will reinforce the role of Wigston as the Borough's main town. The Direction for Growth will include in the region of 2.5 to 3.5 hectares of new B1 and/or B2 employment land which will eventually replace the equivalent amount of poor quality employment land located within existing Identified Employment Areas in the Borough. A mix of uses will provide local services, affordable housing and a range of housing types to cater for the Borough's needs. High quality public transport links should be in place to provide fast and frequent links to Wigston Town Centre and Leicester City Centre;





- **Prioritise development within the Leicester Principal Urban Area to support the regeneration of the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston and their associated communities. To achieve this development of the Direction for Growth will be programmed not to start before 2017;**
- **Ensure high quality sustainable design and layout that makes the most economical use of land and respects the local context and community safety. Within the Leicester Principal Urban Area, new development will make good use of previously developed land and buildings. Housing development on sites of 0.3 hectares and above should, where viable and appropriate, achieve an average density of 40 dwellings per hectare or more;**
- **Work in partnership with other agencies and organisations to identify and coordinate the provision and funding of infrastructure and facilities (including Green Infrastructure) required to meet the needs of planned development and to safeguard and enhance key existing biodiversity, environmental, social, cultural and economic assets; and**
- **Seek opportunities to achieve the regeneration of the Identified Employment Areas in the Borough. The main focus will be on providing land for smaller employment uses and for existing employment uses to expand within the Borough where this is the most sustainable approach. Until such time that replacement employment land has been delivered, Identified Employment Areas will be retained for employment use. Where it is recognised to be the sustainable approach, existing employment land and premises outside of Identified Employment Areas will be retained for employment uses.**

This Policy will assist in the delivery of all of the Spatial Objectives

- 5.1** The Spatial Strategy for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston derives from the Vision and Spatial Objectives. It is, therefore, underpinned by the Spatial Portrait of the Borough and the Vision and Priorities of the Oadby and Wigston Local Strategic Partnership and Leicestershire Together which are set out in their respective Sustainable Community Strategies.
- 5.2** The Spatial Strategy also takes account of the policy context relating to the Borough as set out in Chapter 2. One of the main policy drivers that has shaped the Spatial Strategy is the fact that the built up part of the Borough is wholly located within the Leicester Principal Urban Area. The Spatial Strategy reflects the key role that the Borough of Oadby and Wigston plays in shaping the Leicester Principal Urban Area, both in supporting the regeneration of Leicester and in the spatial relationship that exists between the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the main towns in Leicestershire. It is recognised that this relationship is of benefit to the whole of the Leicestershire Housing Market Area, including Oadby and Wigston, particularly in terms of supporting the local economy, strategic green infrastructure and shaping how people go about their daily lives.



- 5.3 All development should be consistent with the creation of balanced mixed communities and provide a safe and attractive environment in keeping with the surroundings.

Housing Growth

- 5.4 The Spatial Strategy makes provision for a minimum of 1,800 new dwellings (90 dwellings per annum) between 2006 and 2026. The need for this amount was fully evidenced through the process of the preparation of the revoked East Midlands Regional Plan and the amount is consistent with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's representations made in respect of this. Provision will be made for this level of growth within the various Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework.
- 5.5 Figure 3 shows the position with regard to the delivery of the total housing allocation for Oadby and Wigston. The table indicates the number of dwellings required to be delivered having taken account of completions and existing commitments. It shows where the remainder of the dwellings to be delivered will be provided in line with the Spatial Strategy for the Borough. Actual site allocations will be made in the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plan Development Plan Document and in the Allocations Development Plan Document. Figure 5 illustrates these figures graphically as a housing trajectory (see also Appendix 1).

Housing Requirement for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston: 2006-2026	1,800	
Housing Completions: 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2009	285	
Existing Housing Commitments as of 31st March 2009	479	
Remaining Housing to be provided: 2009-2026	1,036	
Housing opportunities identified in the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan areas and within the South Wigston Masterplan area	393	
Masterplan dwelling breakdown	Wigston	166
	Oadby	81
	S Wigston	146
Housing opportunities identified within the Leicester Principal Urban Area outside of the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan areas and outside of the South Wigston Masterplan area	191*	
Direction for Growth adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area to the south east of Wigston	452	

Figure 3: Oadby and Wigston Spatial Strategy – Approach to Housing Delivery

*Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, August 2009, Table 1: Deliverable and Developable Sites within 5 years and Developable Sites within 5-10 years (excluding remaining Allocations)

figures do not sum due to rounding

- 5.6 The Borough Council will apply the Plan Monitor Manage approach to deliver the Spatial Strategy.



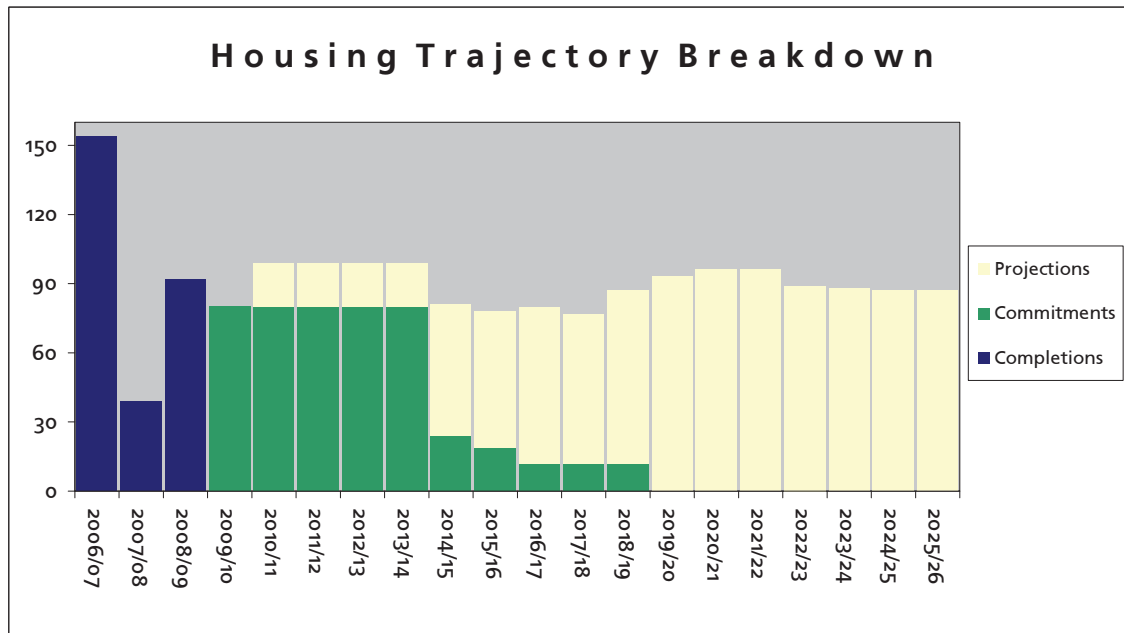


Figure 4: Housing Trajectory

- 5.7** Although the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is likely to take into account many sites that would previously have come forward as windfalls, given the urban nature of the Borough and the location of the built up area entirely within the Leicester Principal Urban Area windfalls are still expected to come forward. For example, residential conversions and single dwellings in the curtilage of an existing dwelling.
- 5.8** Planning Applications involving proposals for windfalls should be considered in the context of Strategy Policy 1 which sets out the most sustainable approach to the location of residential development in the Borough. Consistent with paragraph 59 of Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing (2010), a windfall allowance has not been taken into account within the Spatial Strategy’s approach to housing delivery. Any windfalls coming forward from 1st April 2009 will therefore be additional to the Housing Requirement for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston of 1,800 dwellings between 2006 and 2026.
- 5.9** The Spatial Strategy provides sufficient flexibility to accommodate additional dwellings coming forward as windfalls. They will be taken into account through an annual review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and the Borough Council will continue to Plan Monitor Manage the housing supply during the plan period through the preparation of an Annual Monitoring Report.



Employment Growth

- 5.10** A Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area Employment Land Study was published in October 2008 with the involvement of all of the Leicestershire district councils, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership. Its aim was to pull together a number of other employment land studies (including an Oadby and Wigston Employment Land and Premises Assessment published in March 2006) and to establish a joint approach to employment land planning and delivery up to 2026.
- 5.11** The report concludes that being situated within the Leicester Principal Urban Area Oadby and Wigston forms part of the wider Leicester office, industrial and warehousing market. The supply demand gap analysis suggests an additional requirement for 11,500 square metres of offices and 9* hectares for industrial and warehousing development.
- 5.12** The scope for meeting these requirements within the Borough is limited. The main opportunities are: for up to 5,800 square metres of offices as proposed within the Masterplans for Oadby (1,125 square metres) and Wigston (4,675 square metres) town centres; 1.3* hectares of industrial and warehousing land (comprising 0.8 hectares at the Sports Field off Tigers Way completed in 2009 and 0.6 hectares at Land West off Magna Road, Magna Industrial Estate an outstanding allocation); and, through the more intensive use of the existing stock. The 3.1 hectare Wigston Railway Triangle site is constrained by the need for a railway bridge and cannot be considered as part of the available development land.
- 5.13** Based on the outcome of the Oadby and Wigston Employment Land and Premises Assessment published in March 2006, 25per cent of employment land and premises should be provided as freehold because there is currently a lack of freehold land and premises available in the Borough.
- 5.14** In the absence of additional suitable land in the Borough, the balance of 5,700 square metres of offices and 7.6* hectares of industrial and warehousing land will be added to effective demand in the City of Leicester and the neighbouring districts of Blaby and Harborough. This demand is reflected within the proposed employment land allocations identified in the report for the New Business Quarter, Leicester and Sustainable Urban Extensions in Blaby and South Charnwood.
- 5.15** Therefore, the employment land requirement set out within the Spatial Strategy is consistent with the outcomes of this study.

*figures do not sum due to rounding





Regenerating Identified Employment Areas

- 5.16** The Borough's Identified Employment Areas accommodate development falling within Use Classes B1, B2 or B8. The areas have developed and evolved over a number of decades and the premises are often not appropriate for more technology or knowledge based activities. To bring them up to an appropriate standard will require significant and comprehensive regeneration. The State of Oadby and Wigston report published in October 2008 notes that the Borough's economy is small in scale, productivity is low and there has been a gradual decline in earnings and employment in recent years. However, the Borough's economy is underpinned by a strong local business culture. There are high levels of skilled residents, many of whom are employed outside of the Borough due to a weak knowledge economy in Oadby and Wigston. It is a priority of the Oadby and Wigston Local Strategic Partnership to improve the economic performance of the Borough. In 2009 the Borough Council published an Economic Development Strategy with initiatives that will support the Borough's economy.
- 5.17** The Oadby and Wigston Employment Land and Premises Assessment, published in March 2006, found that the majority of businesses in the Borough are small with only 10 per cent employing more than 50 people. As paragraph 3.32 of the Spatial Portrait identified there is a particular need for small business units in the Borough and therefore provision of smaller units should be a priority when regenerating existing employment land and/or when establishing new employment land.
- 5.18** The poor availability of suitable land and premises is seen as a constraint to growth and companies are particularly concerned about the poor environment and image of employment areas and congestion problems, both within Identified Employment Areas and more generally across the Borough. This has led to poor take up of employment land and premises for employment uses; a consequential increase in non employment uses in the Identified Employment Areas; and a decline in the overall quantity and quality of employment land within the Borough.
- 5.19** The Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area Employment Land Study, published in October 2008, indicates that a large proportion of the industrial and commercial stock was developed prior to 1970.
- 5.20** Both the Oadby and Wigston Employment Land and Premises Assessment and the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area Employment Land Study identify a lack of land in the Borough to provide significant allocations of new employment land. The Leicestershire Housing Market Area Employment Land Study redistributes the employment land requirements arising from need generated within the Borough but which cannot be met in the Borough to the New Business Quarter, Leicester and Sustainable Urban Extensions in Blaby and South Charnwood.



- 5.21** Given this background, the Spatial Strategy provides the flexibility for a detailed review of land and premises within the Borough on non identified and Identified Employment Areas to inform the Allocations Development Plan Document. It is planned that a study will be commissioned of all of the Identified Employment Areas within the Borough to determine an implementation plan in relation to sites where environmental and other improvements would regenerate the employment areas to provide a climate to counter the trends identified in the State of Oadby and Wigston report.
- 5.22** The study will also identify sites where it may be more appropriate to stop protecting the Identified Employment Areas and to allow a change to other uses. It will inform the Allocations Development Plan Document in terms of the amount of replacement employment land that is to be provided as part of the Direction for Growth and the type of employment land that should be provided, in particular the split between B1 and B2 employment land taking into account that which is to be or has already been lost, demand for new employment land and the nature of the mix of uses within which the new employment land is to be located.
- 5.23** An overriding principle in relation to the Direction for Growth is the need to establish a balance between the amount of employment land and housing provided. Whilst precision is difficult due to the varying economic climate and uncertainty over the types of businesses that might wish to locate within the Direction for Growth at the time of its development, evidence suggests that in the region of 2.5 to 3.5 hectares of employment land is appropriate. It is intended that masterplanning will further inform the actual amount of employment land to be provided within the Direction for Growth which will be allocated in the Allocations Development Plan Document.
- 5.24** In order to achieve the regeneration of the Identified Employment Areas a high standard of design and landscaping will be required in relation to all employment development. Some of the Identified Employment Areas in the Borough are located very close to residential areas. In such cases employment development should not have a detrimental impact upon those residential areas.
- 5.25** Waste management uses can have similar characteristics to those industrial uses best suited to Identified Employment Areas. Consistent with Planning Policy Statement 10 (July 2005) and the Leicester and Leicestershire Waste Development Framework waste management uses may be suitably located within Identified Employment Areas.
- 5.26** For development likely to result in the contamination of land, water or air, particular consideration will be given to proposals to mitigate the effects upon future occupants and/or the environment through the Development Control process.

Growth of the Centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston

- 5.27** The Spatial Strategy is set around the principle that the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston will be the focus for new development up to 2026. This means they will accommodate a significant amount of growth up to 2026 and that development elsewhere in the Borough should have regard to the Spatial Objectives associated with these centres. This will assist in their regeneration which is a key principle upon which this Core Strategy is based, reflecting the Vision and Spatial Objectives.





- 5.28** In order to achieve this strategy Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has already prepared Masterplans for all three centres. The Borough Council has also ensured that the Masterplans have been incorporated into the Local Development Framework in order to assist with their effective implementation and therefore, delivery of the Spatial Strategy. The Masterplans for Wigston and Oadby have been incorporated into the Area Action Plans process from the outset and the Masterplan for South Wigston will be incorporated into the Allocations Development Plan Document process (which will cover the whole Borough with the exception of the centres of Oadby and Wigston).
- 5.29** The Masterplans make provision for a wide range of different uses including almost 40 per cent of the remainder of residential development and the majority of the new employment land to be provided in the Borough. Furthermore, additional retail, services, cultural and civic facilities will be supported. The Masterplans also take account of public realm, traffic and transport issues in order to make spending time in the centres a more pleasant experience for the local community. They also aim to create a complementary offer between all centres to ensure that they do not begin to compete with each other and that they can operate within the wider retail hierarchy. Wigston is the largest of the three centres and the Spatial Strategy aims to reinforce this role through the approach to housing delivery in the Borough set out in Figure 4.
- 5.30** Given the importance of all three centres to the delivery of the Spatial Strategy, the Borough Council is committed to working with its partners to deliver the Masterplans and associated policy framework through mechanisms such as the Local Strategic Partnership and its associated Local Infrastructure Partnership. Development Briefs will also be prepared and if necessary, compulsory purchase powers will be used to assemble sites.

Growth of the Principal Urban Area outside of the Centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston

- 5.31** The Spatial Strategy supports housing development on suitable land within the Leicester Principal Urban Area outside of the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston. This reflects the Spatial Objectives to provide new housing development in locations that are easily accessible to the centres in order to support their regeneration.
- 5.32** However, as well as housing, these locations play an important role in supporting a wide range of other uses, for example, Identified Employment Land, employment premises, local shops, places of worship, public houses, doctor's surgeries and dental practices. Often it is important that these facilities are available locally and contribute towards a mix of land uses within the Principal Urban Area. Therefore, whilst the encouragement of new housing development in these locations forms an important element of the Spatial Strategy, the Development Control process will provide the mechanism for ensuring a sustainable mix of uses in the Leicester Principal Urban Area outside of the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston and that where necessary and appropriate, non residential uses are retained, and new non residential uses established, to maintain this mix of uses.



- 5.33** The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is the main way in which the Borough Council identifies the capacity of the Leicester Principal Urban Area to accommodate new housing growth and this is kept up to date on an annual basis. However, due to the nature of the Leicester Principal Urban Area, even with such a detailed assessment, it is very difficult to identify how much land is likely to come forward up to 2026.
- 5.34** Given the uncertainty over being able to plan for future housing land availability within the Leicester Principal Urban Area it is acknowledged that the estimate of dwellings to be delivered in the Principal Urban Area outside of the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston will be subject to change either through sites accommodating more development than anticipated, detailed evidence to be prepared for the Allocations Development Plan Document indicating that sites are unsuitable, or unanticipated windfall sites.
- 5.35** However, the Spatial Strategy is flexible enough to be able to accommodate some fluctuation. The effect of any significant higher housing delivery on infrastructure will be closely monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report and should be taken into account when determining future housing provision for the Borough.
- 5.36** With regard to unanticipated windfall sites, a key consideration in relation to the development control process will be an assessment of the extent to which proposals are consistent with, and will not hinder, the spatial strategy and the overall approach to housing delivery in the Borough as set out in Figure 4.

Direction for Growth to the South East of Wigston

- 5.37** The Direction for Growth will form an extension to the Leicester Principal Urban Area within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. This is necessary because it is not appropriate or possible to accommodate all of the housing growth to be provided in the Borough within the Leicester Principal Urban Area and because there is a need to provide some new employment land in the Borough, as previously demonstrated in figure 4 and paragraphs 5.16 to 5.26.
- 5.38** The term Direction for Growth is used within this Core Strategy to describe the identification of greenfield land on the edge of the Leicester Principal Urban Area for mixed use development. It is significantly smaller in comparison to the Sustainable Urban Extensions that are likely to be provided in a number of district council areas. However, despite this distinction the general principles in relation to Sustainable Urban Extensions will still apply in that development, infrastructure and stakeholders will be required to come together to provide a highly sustainable development.
- 5.39** For consistency, given that in the context of the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area the Direction for Growth in the Borough is not of sufficient size to be considered a 'strategic allocation' in terms of the Core Strategy, it will be allocated in the Allocations Development Plan Document. A Masterplan and/or Development Brief will also be required. No development should take place on the land identified for the Direction for Growth until the land has been allocated and the Masterplan and/or Development Brief approved.
- 5.40** In preparing the Core Strategy a number of different options for accommodating a Direction for Growth were identified. These took account of location and the number of separate Directions for Growth that might be required. The refinement of these options into the Spatial Strategy has been influenced through consultation, preparation and analysis of evidence.





- 5.41** The requirement for only one Direction for Growth was established early on in the process of preparing the Core Strategy. The amount of housing growth to be provided in the Borough would not require significant levels of development adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area and evidence relating to infrastructure provision and the sustainable accommodation of greenfield growth indicated that a single Direction for Growth would offer the most sustainable approach.
- 5.42** The Spatial Strategy incorporates a Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston because this best fits with the Vision and Spatial Objectives for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.
- 5.43** Wigston Town Centre is identified as the Borough's main town. It has the greatest potential for growth and the Town Centre Masterplan makes provision to reinforce this by encouraging greater national retailer representation and civic function, whilst continuing to support independent retailers in Wigston. A complementary role for Oadby is proposed, catering for smaller independent and specialist shops, cafes and restaurants.
- 5.44** The Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston lies within a fifteen minute walk of Wigston Town Centre and, combined with the housing growth proposed for Wigston Town Centre itself within the Town Centre Masterplan, will directly contribute towards the Vision and Spatial Objectives for Wigston Town Centre and the Borough as a whole.
- 5.45** An Assessment of Highways and Transportation Implications for Oadby and Wigston Borough and Harborough District was published in April 2009 with the involvement of Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and The Highways Agency. It identifies the Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston as having the potential to accommodate growth without having significant negative impacts on the wider highway network.
- 5.46** The Assessment identified the following benefits of providing the Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston:
- improvement to existing bus priority provision which is a key element of being able to provide competitive advantage over the car;
 - direct access to University, Hospital, major education facilities and employment opportunities;
 - direct links to the Borough's largest centre (Wigston) with an associated higher level of local facilities. The provision of local services can help reduce the need to travel and the urban fringe areas of the Welford Road corridor are within comfortable walking and cycling distance of Wigston Town centre;
 - the Borough's only rail station is within relatively close proximity and readily accessible by cycle; and
 - additional traffic generation on to the Welford Road corridor does not impact the existing significant air quality issues concentrated on the London Road/A6 corridor although some impact on the Welford Road Air Quality Management Area would be generated.



- 5.47** The Assessment identified that any development adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area would require some mitigation works and these will need to be consistent with the mitigation strategies and overall approach set out in the Assessment. Any development which would create significant new traffic generation directly onto Newton Lane would likely need to provide improvements to the Newton Lane/Welford Road junction. There is limited ability to provide physical enhancements at this junction for side road movements without requiring third party land. As a result, development which incorporated a direct linkage to the Welford Road would be advantageous.
- 5.48** Consistent with Wigston being the Borough's main town, there is currently better capacity within existing infrastructure to accommodate a Direction for Growth and also better opportunities to develop new infrastructure in support of housing growth. A Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities Growth Infrastructure Assessment was published in May 2009 with the active involvement of a wide range of local authorities and service providers.
- 5.49** It identified, for example, that there is currently greater capacity in the existing schools and colleges in Wigston to accommodate growth. In addition, a Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston will be closer to the state of the art facilities that will be offered at the new South Leicestershire College in South Wigston from 2010. These facilities will provide learning and skills development opportunities for a wide cross section of the community.
- 5.50** The Growth Infrastructure Assessment also identified as a significant challenge, the costs of assembling the necessary funding for the establishment of new infrastructure to support growth and the need for carefully planned solutions. The Spatial Strategy achieves this by linking growth in Wigston, the Borough's main town, to the growth of the Leicester Principal Urban Area on land to the south east of Wigston. Therefore, any additional infrastructure requirements can be established so as to support the regeneration and growth of Wigston Town Centre and the Direction for Growth.
- 5.51** The Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston will be within easy walking distance of Kilby Bridge. It therefore relates directly to the Strategic Objective of enhancing access to and understanding of the Grand Union Canal and its environs through the provision of a Regeneration Scheme which should be prepared for this area (see Core Strategy Policy 3). A River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy was published in June 2009 with the involvement of all local authorities responsible for the stretch between Kilby Bridge and Loughborough Meadows, Leicestershire County Council, British Waterways and a number of other organisations. This forms the basis for linking growth to the south east of Wigston to a major green infrastructure asset running through Leicester and Leicestershire and for directing funding towards enhancement of its value both in terms of biodiversity and access to the natural environment.





- 5.52** Similarly, the Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston will be within easy walking distance of Limedelves Site of Special Scientific Interest and Barn Pool Meadow Local Wildlife Site, part of which is also designated a Regionally Important Geological Site. These sites form part of the environs to the Grand Union Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest which should also be given consideration within the Regeneration Scheme.
- 5.53** Currently, the sites are lacking favourable management which could be improved to maximise their landscape and biodiversity value. The Direction for Growth, therefore, provides an opportunity for them to play a much greater role in the context of strategic green infrastructure within the Borough and the wider area. Benefits to green infrastructure could include improvement to water quality, improved habitat management for priority species (as identified in the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan) and increase in biodiversity gain. Such opportunities are identified in the Borough Council's Green Infrastructure Plan. The Allocations Development Plan Document along with the Masterplan and/or Development Brief related to the Direction for Growth must include measures to achieve these benefits, limit any potential harmful effects on the sites and if necessary to mitigate against them.
- 5.54** The Spatial Strategy also takes account of the wider context in terms of growth to the south and south east of Leicester. The revoked East Midlands Regional Plan required the vast majority of growth in Harborough District to be located at Market Harborough and adjacent to the Leicester Principal Urban Area. Although the spatial strategy for Harborough District is yet to be agreed development in these locations is likely to put additional pressure on the A6 which is already congested, particularly through Oadby and towards Leicester City Centre.
- 5.55** The Spatial Strategy to locate development to the south east of Wigston will reduce the pressure placed on the A6 arising from development in the Borough. This will allow the necessary level of growth to be delivered in the general locations described above with the least possible disruption to existing infrastructure.
- 5.56** It should be noted that a number of other locations within the Borough were considered to accommodate a Direction for Growth but, following consultation, were disregarded either due to significant constraints and/or because they did not contribute towards the Spatial Strategy to the same extent as land to the south east of Wigston.
- 5.57** The Borough has suffered in the past because a limited number of small housing developments have only made very small contributions to new infrastructure provision either on or off site. They contribute little to the principles of sustainable development. Although development of the scale of a Sustainable Urban Extension is not appropriate in Oadby and Wigston, the Borough Council is keen that similar principles of sustainability are applied to any greenfield development adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area.
- 5.58** Therefore, given the total amount of housing development allocated to Oadby and Wigston and the Spatial Strategy's approach to housing delivery, a Direction for Growth consisting of about 450 dwellings (25 per cent of the total housing allocation) together with in the region of 2.5 hectares – 3.5 hectares of employment land is considered to be of an appropriate scale.
- 5.59** This level of development is consistent with the Spatial Strategy that the focus for development will be in the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston and for housing development, also within the remainder of the Leicester Principal Urban Area. However, it also allows for the Direction for Growth to be of a sufficient scale to achieve provision of infrastructure, local services and facilities on site as well as strengthening provision off site.



5.60 Evidence supporting the Core Strategy, such as the Landscape Character Assessment and the Assessment of Highways and Transportation Implications also indicates that a Direction for Growth of this scale would be sustainably accommodated adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area to the south east of Wigston.

Phasing of Development and the use of Brownfield and Greenfield Land

5.61 The Spatial Strategy is based on the principle that the focus for development will be on the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston. Initially, this is likely to require some intervention and partnership working to get some of the sites underway.

5.62 Therefore, in order to effectively achieve the Spatial Strategy it is important that development is primarily focused on the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston and elsewhere within the Leicester Principal Urban Area. This will ensure that efforts can be concentrated on improving the quality and levels of services and facilities along with directing investment towards infrastructure provision in the centres before significant development at the Direction for Growth takes place. In order to achieve this, development within the Direction for Growth should not start until 2017.

5.63 The Allocations Development Plan Document and if necessary a specific Development Brief and/or Masterplan for the Direction for Growth will include the following information:

- guidance on remaining infrastructure required to accommodate the Direction for Growth both on site and off site including within Wigston Town Centre
- the position with regard to the Borough Council's approach to housing delivery. If, for example, the housing opportunities identified within the Leicester Principal Urban Area outside of the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan areas and outside of the South Wigston Masterplan area have not come forward as expected, then consideration could be given to increasing the amount of housing proposed for the Direction for Growth. This demonstrates the flexible approach that this Spatial Strategy provides
- guidance on the density and mix of uses that will be expected to comprise the Direction for Growth including the amount of employment land required, the type of employment uses that will be catered for and how employment uses will be integrated into the wider development
- guidance on access to and movement through the Direction for Growth and the location of the various uses.

5.64 The Spatial Strategy is also based on the principle that housing growth will come forward relatively evenly up to 2026, at around 90 dwellings per annum. This is set out in the housing trajectory in Appendix 1 and shown in Figure 4. For the first 7 years (2010/11 to 2016/17) this will be delivered through housing opportunities identified within the Leicester Principal Urban Area. Initially, it is anticipated that this will arise mainly from housing opportunities identified within the Leicester Principal Urban Area outside of the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan areas and outside of the South Wigston Masterplan area. Given that it is anticipated to take some time to complete the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plans, the Allocations Development Plan Document and to assemble sites, housing opportunities identified in the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan areas and within the South Wigston Masterplan area are anticipated to come forward from 2014. This is consistent with the Spatial Strategy to prioritise development within the Leicester Principal Urban Area to support the regeneration of the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston and their associated communities.





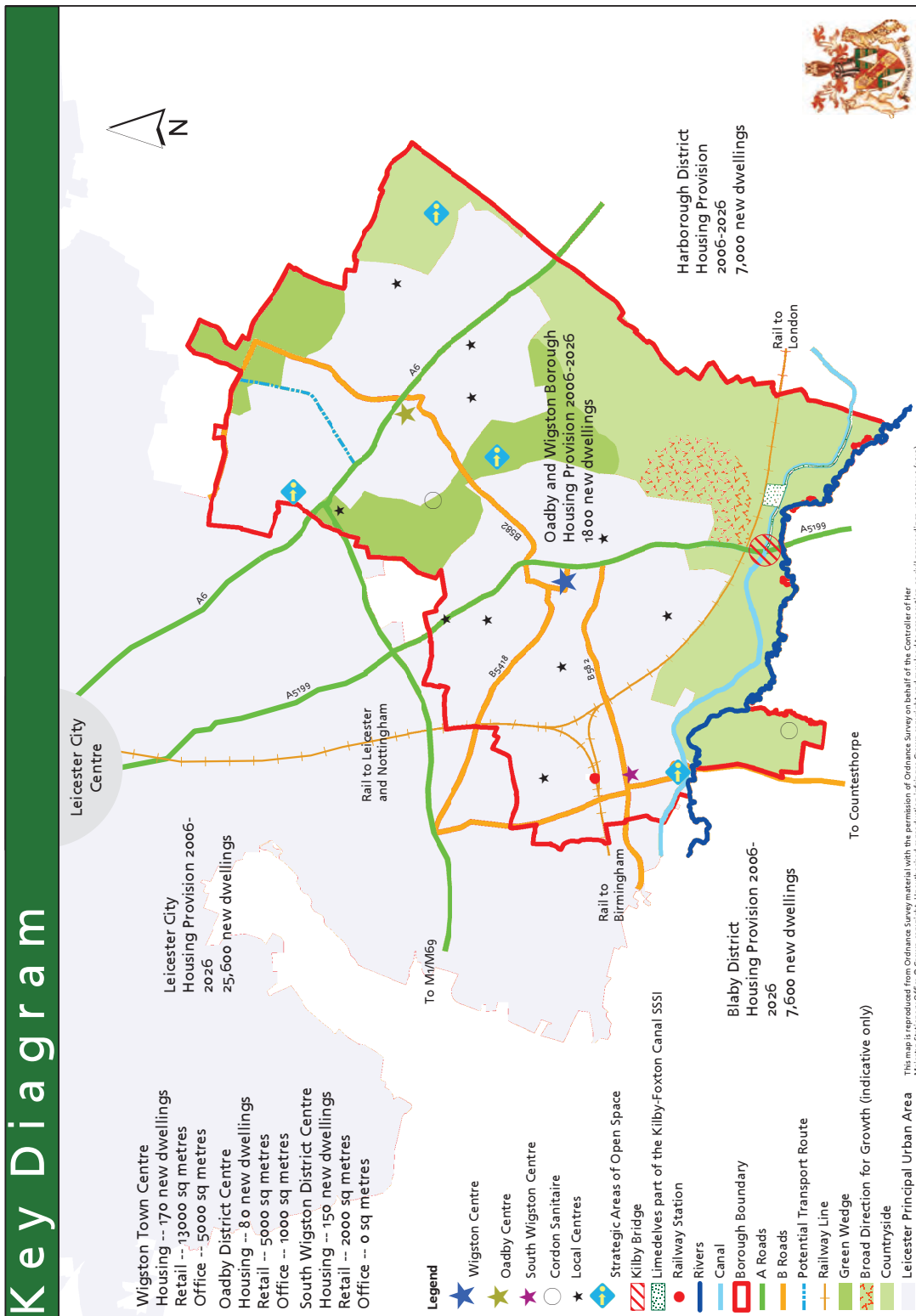
- 5.65** For the last 9 years (2017/18 to 2025/26) housing growth will arise from the Direction for Growth adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area on land to the south east of Wigston.
- 5.66** The Spatial Strategy offers some flexibility to account for the impact of the recession that began in 2008 by accounting for housing growth that is likely to involve larger or more difficult sites towards the middle and end of the plan period. Housing growth in the earlier years is likely to arise from smaller sites and sites currently underway. Nevertheless, a dip in the number of completions is still expected but, given the location of the Borough in relation to the Leicester Principal Urban Area, this is likely to right itself once the state of the economy begins to improve.
- 5.67** Generally residential development should be built to an average of 40 dwellings per hectare or more on sites of 0.3 hectares and above. This is consistent with the standards that have previously been applied in the Borough and is reflective of its location entirely within the Leicester Principal Urban Area where higher densities should be achieved, for example, because of generally better access to public transport and more opportunities for cycling and walking.
- 5.68** However, this figure should be seen as a benchmark, within town and district centres it is likely that will be exceeded, particularly where apartments are developed. In some parts of the Borough a lower figure may occasionally be appropriate where the landscape or townscape character justifies this. This approach to density will ensure that the Borough Council meets and exceeds its target to provide at least 60 per cent of new development on previously developed land. With the Direction for Growth accounting for 25 per cent of the Borough's total housing allocation, 75 per cent is proposed to be developed on brownfield land.
- 5.69** The possibility of contamination from a previous use will be one of the factors taken into account in assessing the suitability of land. It is important to ensure that any contamination is dealt with as part of the re-development process, to ensure there are no adverse effects on future occupants and/or the environment. If it is possible that contamination may be present on a site, further more detailed investigation will be required.

Key Diagram

- 5.70** The Key Diagram (Figure 5) provides a graphical illustration of the Spatial Strategy, illustrating the various locations for development and amounts of development proposed up until 2026. The Key Diagram fulfils an important role in demonstrating the spatial relationship that exists between the Borough, Leicester City and neighbouring districts, particularly in the context of the Leicester Principal Urban Area. The Key Diagram also demonstrates the relationship that exists between some of the other policies in the Core Strategy and the Spatial Strategy, for example, Green Wedges, Sustainable Transport and Accessibility and the Countryside. It should be noted that the Key Diagram is not to scale and is diagrammatic. The Allocations Development Plan Document will identify specific land allocations and boundaries on the Proposals Map.



Figure 5: Key Diagram





Core Strategy Policy 2

Development in the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston

The role of Wigston as the Borough's main town centre and the roles of Oadby and South Wigston as district centres will be sustained and enhanced. In order to enhance the existing blend of facilities and promote competitive town and district centres, mixed use developments that include, retail, employment, residential, community, leisure, culture and tourist facilities, will be supported.

The Borough Council will work with the community and stakeholders to implement Area Action Plans and Masterplans for Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston centres that will deliver regeneration, investment, growth, and establish Oadby as a small town centre.

Approximately 6,000 square metres of office floorspace (gross) will be provided in the centres of Wigston and Oadby. The approximate split between the centres will be as follows:

Wigston: 5,000 square metres (gross)

Oadby: 1,000 square metres (gross)

Approximately 20,000 square metres of retail floorspace (gross) will be provided in the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston. The approximate split between the centres will be as follows:

Wigston: 13,000 square metres (gross)

Oadby: 5,000 square metres (gross)

South Wigston: 2,000 square metres (gross)

In considering proposals for new retail development, the Borough Council will apply the sequential approach to site selection. It will be essential that any new development does not have an adverse effect on existing centres within the Borough. New development should be integrated within the existing infrastructure where feasible and should conform to the priorities of the Leicestershire Local Transport Plan.

Efficient use of land and buildings within town and district centres will be achieved through the implementation of high density schemes where appropriate. Priority will be given to proposals that incorporate mixed use and seek the reuse or redevelopment of previously developed land and buildings.

All new buildings and public spaces within town and district centres should be of high design quality, promote vitality and maximise economic potential. Any development proposals that would compromise the viability of town, district and local centres will not be permitted.

The Borough Council will seek to retain and, where necessary, identify new small scale local shopping opportunities to meet the everyday needs of local people. Provision will be made for local services and community facilities within local centres.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 1 Regeneration of Town and District Centres; Spatial Objective 2 Wigston Town Centre; Spatial Objective 3 Oadby Town Centre; Spatial Objective 4 South Wigston District Centre; Spatial Objective 5 Improved Employment Opportunities; Spatial Objective 7 A Balanced Housing Market and Spatial Objective 8 Sustainable Design and Infrastructure.



- 5.71** As emphasised by the Government in Planning Policy Statement 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (December 2009), the key objective for town and district centres is to promote their vitality and viability. This is achieved through the planned growth, promotion and enhancement of existing centres and by encouraging a wide range of services in a high quality environment that are accessible to all.
- 5.72** Town and district centres will seek to enhance consumer choice by;
- making provision for a range of shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet needs of the entire community, in particular socially excluded groups;
 - supporting efficient, competitive and innovative retail, leisure, tourism and other sectors, with improving productivity; and,
 - improving accessibility, ensuring that existing or new development is, or will be, accessible and well served by a choice of transport modes.
- 5.73** In January 2007, Taylor Young, in conjunction with BE Group and Faber Maunsell and in association with White Young Green, were commissioned by the Borough Council to prepare Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plans for the centres of Oadby and Wigston and a Masterplan for South Wigston centre. The three centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston are distinctly different from one another and perform a variety of functions that provide;
- a number of diverse range of shops and services;
 - are centres of employment for the Borough;
 - provide entertainment and leisure facilities; and
 - are a focus for public transport links.
- 5.74** Consistent with the Spatial Strategy, development will be focused in the Borough's existing town and district centres in order to strengthen and regenerate them. Promotion and management of change will be achieved through the emerging Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plans that have been prepared for Wigston and Oadby, and the South Wigston Masterplan which will be incorporated into the Allocations Development Plan Document. Alongside regeneration of employment land within town and district centres, residential development will be encouraged. The Spatial Strategy seeks the provision of 393 new dwellings spread across the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston, as well as providing locations for new employment land.
- 5.75** The emerging Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plans for Wigston and Oadby and the South Wigston Masterplan will include policies and proposals to develop and manage the evening and night time economy. In particular, these will focus on establishing a range of complimentary uses which appeal to a wide range of age and social groups; which contribute towards the regeneration of the centres; and, which are consistent with the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy.
- 5.76** In terms of retail provision within the Borough, Wigston town centre has the most. The Spatial Strategy identifies Wigston as the Borough's main town and key centre for development. Due to Wigston's position in the retail hierarchy and its nearby location to the Direction for Growth, it plays a key role in the sustained and continued growth of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.





5.77 The retail floorspace figures contained within the Policy were derived from the Oadby and Wigston Retail Capacity Study by Savills, which was carried out in 2008. In view of the economic difficulties experienced nationally since the study was completed, the figures currently appear ambitious. However, over the fifteen year plan period, economic recovery is likely with rising prosperity and a return to increasing retail expenditure. Detailed masterplanning will ensure that the exact scale and character of new development is broadly consistent with the Core Strategy but does not undermine the character or the vitality and viability of the established centres.

5.78 Through the implementation of the Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plans, the Borough Council will be seeking the establishment of Oadby district centre into a small town centre, focusing on provision of services for local people as well as provision of shops, services and facilities that would serve a more specialist market. Therefore, the progression of Oadby centre into a small town centre will not detract from Wigston’s role as the Borough’s main town centre. Both centres will be unique in style, design, amenities and provision and will work in tandem with one another.

5.79 In line with Government policy and the Borough’s Spatial Strategy, any development that takes place within the town or district centres will need to use land efficiently, where appropriate, through implementation of high density schemes. Any proposals comprising mixed uses and the reuse of previously developed land will generally be supported. Mixed use proposals could include retail, employment, residential, community, leisure, cultural and tourism facilities. Although development is to be focused within town and district centres, local centres still play a key role in everyday quality of life. These smaller centres provide access to essential but more limited services, for residents that do not have easy and efficient access to town and district centres, whether it is through choice or lack of transport links.

5.80 All centres within the Borough and some significant centres outside of the Borough have been characterised using definitions set out in Planning Policy Statement 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (December 2009), as illustrated below;

City Centres	City centres are the highest level of centre identified in development plans. In terms of hierarchies, they will often be a regional centre and will serve a wide catchment. The centre may be very large, embracing a wide range of activities and may be distinguished by areas which may perform different main functions.
Town Centres	Town centres will usually be the second level of centres after city centres and, in many cases, they will be the principal centre or centres in a local authority’s area. In rural areas they are likely to be market towns and other centres of similar size and role which function as important service centres, providing a range of facilities and services for extensive rural catchment areas. In planning the future of town centres, local planning authorities should consider the function of different parts of the centre and how these contribute to its overall vitality and viability.
District Centres	District centres will usually comprise groups of shops often containing at least one supermarket or superstore, and a range of non-retail services, such as banks, building societies and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library.
Local Centres	Local centres include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette. In rural areas, large villages may perform the role of a local centre.

Figure 6: Characterisation of Centres



5.81 The various definitions establish a Retail Hierarchy. The Spatial Objectives and Spatial Strategy place a great deal of emphasis on the role of the Borough's town and district centres in delivering the Core Strategy and therefore it is important that the retail hierarchy for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston is consistent with the retail hierarchy that exists in the Leicester Principal Urban Area and in the south of Leicestershire. This will ensure that the various centres can relate to one another spatially, maintain their vitality and viability whilst providing a different offer to the local community.

City Centre	Leicester City Centre
Town Centres	Wigston; Beaumont Leys; Market Harborough
District Centres	Oadby; South Wigston; Blaby; Broughton Astley; Narborough Road; Melton Road and Belgrave Road; Evington Road; Uppingham Road
Local Centres within the Borough	Little Hill; Rosemead Drive; Leicester Road; Gloucester Crescent; Kelmars Road; Glen Road and Highcroft Avenue; Carlton Drive and Castleton Road; Severn Road; Queens Drive
Local Centres outside of the Borough	Narborough; Enderby; Dog and Gun Lane; Clarendon Park; Kibworth Beauchamp; Ashtree Road; London Road South; Asquith Boulevard; Queens Road; Swinford Avenue; The Exchange; Southfields Drive; Saffron Lane and Cavendish Road; Aylestone Village; Needham Avenue; Glen Parva; Station Road, Countesthorpe; Leicester Road, Glen Parva; Main Street, Great Glen; Aylestone and Cavendish Road; Allandale Road and Francis Street; Saffron Lane and Burnaston Road; Saffron Lane and Duncan Road; Welford Road and Gainsborough Road

Figure 7: List of Retail and Shopping Centres within and Beyond the Borough Boundary

Note: Regional and Sub Regional Shopping Centres consist of Fosse Park, St George's Retail Park, Grove Farm Triangle





5.82 In order to be successful in the future and withstand competition from neighbouring facilities, the centres have to evolve and move forward. Despite the significant growth of 'out of town' retailing and 'online' internet shopping, high street retailers within the town and district centres have continued to prosper and currently account for 50 per cent of total money spent by consumers, which is almost identical to the share in 1998. This inevitably means new and improved retail floorspace that better accommodates the needs and demands of modern retailing is needed, as well as suitable, sustainable, effective and efficient public or 'green' transport links.

5.83 Consistent with the Leicestershire Local Transport Plan, the Borough Council is seeking to tackle the six key priorities, directly, in the town and district centres. The priorities are:

- tackling congestion, both currently and in the future;
- access to facilities, especially for the most deprived;
- reducing road casualties and improving air quality, with particular emphasis on the link between congestion and air quality;
- reducing the impact of traffic; and
- transport assets.

These are enshrined within the emerging Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plans for Wigston and Oadby and the South Wigston Masterplan.

5.84 Town and district centre boundaries will be defined within relevant town centre Masterplan Area Action Plans and the Allocations Development Plan Document.

5.85 The sequential approach to site selection, as set out in Planning Policy Statement 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (December 2009), will be applied for all new proposed retail development that is not within an existing centre nor allocated within the Allocations Development Plan Document. For sites that are located outside of existing centres, developers will need to take account of the impact assessment framework as also defined in Planning Policy Statement 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (December 2009).



Core Strategy Policy 3

Regeneration Schemes

Where large scale change or regeneration schemes are proposed, for example, the Wigston Direction for Growth, and the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston, the Borough Council will require the production of Masterplans, Development Briefs and/or other appropriate plans or strategies, which should where applicable;

- identify sites suitable for new development or redevelopment and appropriate uses;
- establish a spatial and sustainable pattern of growth;
- identify constraints to development and set out how they will be overcome;
- identify sensitive features and sites, with measures to protect them;
- identify relevant access, transportation issues and solutions;
- establish priorities for implementation, timescales and sources of funding;
- take account of local landscape and/or townscape character in the design of the scheme; and,
- take into account other relevant factors including sustainable construction and design; public open space; community and green infrastructure; biodiversity; health; community safety; education and training; sustainable waste management; recycling; and, accessibility.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 1 Regeneration of Town and District Centres; Spatial Objective 2 Wigston Town Centre; Spatial Objective 3 Oadby Town Centre, Spatial Objective 4 South Wigston District Centre; Spatial Objective 5 Improved Employment Opportunities; Spatial Objective 6 Growth of the Principal Urban Area; Spatial Objective 8 Sustainable Design and Infrastructure; Spatial Objective 9 An Accessible Borough; Spatial Objective 14 Enhancing Local Heritage.

- 5.86** Proposals for new regeneration schemes and initiatives that lead to large scale change will be identified and coordinated in association with the Local Strategic Partnership and its associated Local Infrastructure Partnership, to ensure that key stakeholders and representatives of the wider local community are involved throughout the planning and implementation process.
- 5.87** The key areas within the Borough for retail provision and potential large scale new development or regeneration schemes are the town centre of Wigston, and the two district centres of Oadby and South Wigston, as illustrated within the Retail Hierarchy. Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plans will be brought forward for the centres of Wigston and Oadby and a Masterplan that has been prepared for South Wigston will be taken forward through the Allocations Development Plan Document.
- 5.88** Much of the University of Leicester's student accommodation, conferencing facilities and sports and recreational facilities are based at their campus in Oadby. The Borough Council supports the general principle of the continuing enhancement of the University of Leicester's Oadby Campus and the preparation of a long term framework for its future development in accordance with the guiding principles set out in this Policy. This should be in the interest of education, skills, enterprise, academic growth and of the wider Borough community.





- 5.89** Regeneration schemes elsewhere in the Borough will be encouraged through Masterplanning and/or Development Briefs. Such planning will provide an organised, streamlined and sustainable approach that will prevent ad hoc development out of context with the general character and structure of the area, from being detrimental or unproductive. Some Masterplans may be able to be adopted as Area Action Plans by the Borough Council and form part of the Local Development Framework, where appropriate.
- 5.90** In large scale developments or schemes that are proposed, such as the Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston, proposals will need to include a mix of uses and take account of any existing local landscape or townscape character. Mixed use should include residential dwellings, on site employment opportunities, recreation and leisure, community facilities and convenience provision. Such a mix of uses will contribute to sustainable development as set out in government guidance and will play a role in reducing the effects of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases on climate change.
- 5.91** Although development on previously developed land and buildings may be related to some existing infrastructure, provision of new and/or improvements and enhancements to existing community infrastructure may be required to ensure carrying capacities are not breached. Community Infrastructure is defined in Core Strategy Policy 10 and the Glossary.
- 5.92** Kilby Bridge is the Borough's only rural settlement and is located in the floodplain of the River Sence. It contains a number of uses which do not contribute positively towards the character of the settlement. Therefore, it is important that only appropriate development, such small scale leisure, tourism and canal based development occurs within the settlement in the future. A Regeneration Scheme should be prepared for Kilby Bridge and its environs covering these issues, plus Strategic Green Infrastructure issues including The Grand Union Canal and Limedelves Site of Special Scientific Interest, Barn Pool Meadow Local Wildlife Site and its associated Regionally Important Geological Site and linkages between the Direction for Growth and Kilby Bridge. More detail regarding a Kilby Bridge Regeneration Scheme and its implementation will be provided in the forthcoming Allocations Development Plan Document.

Core Strategy Policy 4

Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

Development should be located and designed so as to reduce the need to travel, enhance the safety of pedestrians and road users, and improve accessibility for residents particularly in locations where there is poor transport choice and availability. In all new built schemes, developers must consider the highways and transport infrastructure requirements needed to support and service the proposed development. There will be a need to demonstrate, that adequate capacity currently exists or will be provided through appropriate mitigation that meets necessary infrastructure requirements.

Where development is considered to be of a significant scale or type, a transport assessment and/or a travel plan, will be required.



Support will be given for the following sustainable transport initiatives:

- High quality public transport links between the Direction for Growth, Wigston Town Centre and Leicester City Centre
- A new public transport interchange in Wigston Town Centre to facilitate changes between north-south and east-west journeys
- The route of the Eastern District Distributor Road will be safeguarded as a potential transport route pending a review of its capability to meet local needs for more sustainable travel, and its viability
- Innovative schemes for public car parking in the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston which comply with the County Council's parking standards, make efficient use of land and achieve high quality design.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 6 Growth of the Principal Urban Area and Spatial Objective 9 An Accessible Borough.

- 5.93** It is essential that all new development can be successfully integrated into existing transport and highways infrastructure and has minimal detriment to the local area. In line with the Borough's Spatial Strategy, new development is to be directed to the most sustainable locations, for example, the town and district centres, the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Direction for Growth.
- 5.94** The Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston is the most sustainable location for such a development, when set in the context of the overall Spatial Strategy for the Borough. This is evidenced by the fact that Wigston is identified as the Borough's main town and the Assessment of Highways and Transportation Implications for Oadby and Wigston Borough and Harborough District (2009) concludes that this part of the Leicester Principal Urban Area has the greatest potential for growth with minimal impact on the existing highways network and air quality.
- 5.95** As emphasised within The Transport White Paper, The Future for Transport published in 2004, increasing demand for transport must be managed. Whilst accepting that good transport is vital to a successful thriving economy and facilitating better access and greater mobility, the evidence stresses the need to balance the increasing demand for travel against protecting the environment effectively and improving the quality of life for everyone. The Spatial Strategy for the Borough achieves this aim by making provision for main routes to the strategic road network outside of the Borough, such as the M1, M69 and A14, to be accessed when necessary. It also encourages development and use of public transport links which will increase capacity on the highway network.
- 5.96** The revoked East Midlands Regional Plan included the Regional Transport Strategy which focused on encouraging the development of sustainable travel patterns through; reducing the need to travel, especially by car; managing traffic growth and congestion; improving opportunities for walking and cycling; promoting a step change improvement to the reliability, capacity, quality, accessibility and coverage of the public transport network; making better use of existing transport networks through better management; and, only developing additional highway capacity when all other measures have been considered. These principles are important locally in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston and The Core Strategy, other Development Plan Documents within the Local Development Framework, the Local Transport Plan and the Local Strategic Partnership will work together to deliver them.





- 5.97** Leicestershire County Council's policy document, the 6Cs (6 County/City Authorities – see Glossary) Design Guide aims to achieve the delivery of quality developments. It includes the maximum car parking standards that apply to proposals for development in the Borough, including proposals arising through Local Development Framework Documents. Proposals for development should take this document into account alongside the Sustainable Transport and Accessibility policy.
- 5.98** This Policy will contribute towards the spatial objectives relating to public transport in the Borough which include improving east west public transport links between South Wigston, Wigston and Oadby, ensuring that new development is integrated into this link and establishing fast and frequent public transport links to key services, facilities and the retail centre of Leicester. The Spatial Strategy which focuses development within the town and district centres, the Leicester Principal Urban Area and a Direction for Growth to Wigston directly supports achievement of these spatial objectives by ensuring that growth occurs in the main population centres adjoin the public transport routes.
- 5.99** It is also of note that the Wigston Town Centre Masterplan incorporates a proposal for a public transport interchange that will provide a transport interchange between Wigston town centre, an east west bus route to South Wigston and Oadby and a north south bus route between the Direction for Growth and Leicester.
- 5.100** South Wigston Railway Station provides links to Nottingham, Derby and London via Leicester and to Nuneaton and Birmingham. Increasing the number of services stopping at South Wigston would boost the use of rail as a method of public transport by those living and working in the Borough. The Core Strategy supports this principle by ensuring that growth is directed to locations that will increase the potential pool passengers wishing to use train services through:
- Initiatives connected to the regeneration of South Wigston, such as the relocation of South Leicestershire College to the centre
 - the Spatial Strategy which focuses development in the centre of South Wigston, the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Direction for Growth to the south east of Wigston which is within cycling distance of the railway station
- 5.101** Travel Plans aim to ensure the delivery of sustainable transport objectives including 'smarter choices', the reduction of car usage and increased use of public transport, walking and cycling as part of new development. They should be submitted alongside any planning application that is likely to have significant transport implications such as employment, leisure, educational and major residential developments. Therefore, a Transport Assessment and/or a Travel Plan may be required to accompany some planning applications, in particular those that would constitute a major application.
- 5.102** This policy enables the protection of routes that will allow the future expansion and enhancement of transport infrastructure in the Borough. The Eastern District Distributor Road is one such link that has been identified in previous plans but has not been delivered.
- 5.103** Whilst there are currently no plans to progress the Eastern District Distributor Road, Leicestershire County Council, as the local highway authority, wish to see the continued safeguarding of this route within the Borough. This is because the County and City highway authorities face significant challenges in continuing to develop local transport systems. At a strategic level this includes, amongst other things, supporting and deliver housing and economic growth, improving peoples' access to services whilst reducing impacts on the environment and seeking to minimise the effects of climate change. At a local level, there are issues regarding traffic conditions on Stoughton Drive South and on the A6 between Leicester and Oadby.



- 5.104** Nationally, transport policy has evolved considerably since the Highways Authority last reviewed the position with regard to the Eastern District Distributor Road. Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council are in the very early stages of thinking about future transport policy and strategy through the next Local Transport Plans. The Highways Authority considers that the completion of a route along the Eastern District Distributor Road line within the Borough might help to meet strategic challenges and address local issues. This could be as either a general traffic route and/or one that helps to deliver improved public transport, walking and cycling. However, future work will be required to provide evidence to underpin policy and strategy choices (for example through a Leicester Principal Urban Area wide transport study).
- 5.105** Given that the original Eastern District Distributor Road route is most unlikely to come forward as planned, the safeguarded route identified on the Key Diagram is referred to as a 'potential transport route'. The potential transport route will be allocated in the Allocations Development Plan Document.

Core Strategy Policy 5

Green Infrastructure

The Borough Council will seek a net gain in Green Infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of assets and the creation of new multifunctional areas of green space.

The Borough Council will:

- **safeguard and enhance Strategic Green Infrastructure corridors connecting locations of natural heritage, green space, biodiversity and other environmental interest;**
- **actively promote the creation of new Strategic Green Infrastructure corridors and the restoration, recreation and enhancement of existing Green Infrastructure corridors and the biodiversity that they support, particularly where the opportunity exists through new development;**
- **seek opportunities to link fragmented habitats, protect vulnerable habitats and integrate biodiversity within communities;**
- **protect and conserve species and sites of ecological and geological significance; and**
- **work in partnership to enhance the value of Strategic Green Infrastructure corridors that are also of significance outside of the Borough, such as the Grand Union Canal and River Sence.**

To enable optimum conditions for the creation and protection of wildlife species and habitats, development must accord with the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and Nature Conservation Strategy.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 9 An Accessible Borough; Spatial Objective 10 Promoting Healthy Lifestyle; Spatial Objective 12 Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure; Spatial Objective 13 Green Wedges and the Countryside; and, Spatial Objective 14 Enhancing Local Heritage.





- 5.106** Natural England defines Green Infrastructure as “*networks of multi-functional green space and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages*” and play a key role in delivering sustainable communities. Green Infrastructure also plays an important role in terms of climate change mitigation (e.g. through carbon storage) and climate change adaptation (e.g. through moderating urban temperature extremes). Further guidance on climate change is provided in Core Strategy Policy 8: Climate Change and Renewable Energy.
- 5.107** Green Infrastructure is regarded as a vital part of urban infrastructure and a positive way of conceptualising green space planning. The Borough Council’s aim is to increase the quality of its natural green assets as well as to ensure a net gain in its quantity.
- 5.108** Well designed and integrated Green Infrastructure is essential in improving environmental quality, health, wellbeing and community cohesion. It also offers significant opportunity for exercise, sport and informal recreation. Green infrastructure should contribute to and enhance the quality of life of existing and future residents and visitors to the Borough. Opportunities to achieve this include:
- providing a focus and attractive environment for the increased population proposed within the three cities growth area, and specifically in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston;
 - providing improvements that respect existing landscape character and that will assist in attracting and retaining inward investment;
 - protecting and enhancing existing biodiversity, creating new areas for biodiversity and reversing the fragmentation of habitats by restoring the connectivity between them;
 - providing continued, new and enhanced links to the countryside; and,
 - coordinating the use of green space to optimise its use for leisure, biodiversity, drainage, flood management and other socio economic activities.
- 5.109** In the Borough of Oadby and Wigston the Green Infrastructure consists of many diverse elements. It includes the countryside around the Leicester Principal Urban Area, the Green Wedges and areas of open space that run from the countryside into the Leicester Principal Urban Area, river corridors, canals and railway lines. These Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridors are illustrated in Figure 8.
- 5.110** Current provision of Green Infrastructure within the Borough includes formal and informal open spaces, cemeteries, sports fields, golf courses, Leicester Racecourse, local wildlife sites, local nature reserves, country parks and allotment sites.
- 5.111** The Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standard is widely regarded as being the best fit to Green Infrastructure planning. This has been taken into account in setting the local standards in the Borough Council’s Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Study, published in 2009.
- 5.112** Green Infrastructure can contribute to the high quality natural and built environment that fosters sustainable communities. Biodiversity is protected by ensuring Green Infrastructure is networked through corridors of green space. As well as biodiversity, Green Infrastructure includes sites of ecological, geological and historical interest. Within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston these sites include:



Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- The Grand Union Canal and Limedelves Site Of Special Scientific Interest, located east of Kilby Bridge between Kilby and Foxton

Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)

- Kilby Bridge Pit Regionally Important Geological Site, located between Wigston and Kilby Bridge, east of Welford Road.

5.113 The Borough of Oadby and Wigston has two important advantages in terms of promoting biodiversity as part of Green Infrastructure. Firstly it has urban, suburban and rural habitats in close proximity and secondly two Green Wedges, which bring these habitats closer together. This enables species to use features within all these elements of the rural and urban landscape.

5.114 The main habitats and species that comprise the Borough's Green Infrastructure Assets, and which have been identified through the Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit published in 2005 include:

Habitats

- Veteran trees
- Trees of special interest (those with the potential for bat roosts)
- Hedgerows
- Woodland
- Ponds
- Wildlife Sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Nature Reserves
- Gardens
- Grand Union Canal
- River Sence
- Washbrook

Species

- Otters
- Water voles
- Farmland Birds
- Bats
- Great crested newts
- Marbled White Butterfly
- Brown Hares

5.115 Furthermore, all proposals for development should accord with the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and Nature Conservation Strategy. The Biodiversity Action Plan highlights the important habitats and species in the Borough that contribute to the United Kingdoms biodiversity conservation targets. The Nature Conservation Strategy, published in 2007, sets out the framework of nature conservation targets to focus on the Borough Council's commitment to safeguarding nature conservation within the Borough. It encourages the use of native species (ideally of local provenance) in the establishment of new habitats and Green Infrastructure.





- 5.116** In order to build on this framework, a Green Infrastructure Plan (2009) has been prepared. This provides a detailed compilation of the various components of Green Infrastructure within the Borough and identifies the new Green Infrastructure that is required in the Borough in order to accommodate growth up to 2026. It establishes what needs to be done and by when, who needs to do it and what the priorities for action are. Where possible it identifies capital and, where appropriate, revenue costs together with sources of funding. It is intended that the Green Infrastructure Plan will contribute towards the delivery and implementation of this policy and that it will assist in the determination of planning applications in the Borough.
- 5.117** The Green Infrastructure Plan consists of important evidence for the Local Development Framework to ensure that the environmental and social importance of the network of green infrastructure continues to serve the population of the Borough.
- 5.118** The proposed Direction for Growth south east of Wigston should establish new Green Infrastructure corridors to link growth to the existing Green Infrastructure network. All new Green Infrastructure corridors should tie in with, connect and enhance existing corridors of green space, for example, the nearby Grand Union Canal and River Sence corridors. Provision of new Green Infrastructure is an important contribution that developers can make when sites are developed. For example, to improve the robustness of the Green Infrastructure or restore it where this is necessary. The Community Infrastructure Policy in Chapter 7 provides more guidance on this.
- 5.119** The Spatial Strategy aims to develop links between areas of Green Infrastructure into Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston and also into Leicester City. Similarly, proposals for Kilby Bridge should retain or enhance linkages to the Grand Union Canal and River Sence, and take into account the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy.
- 5.120** The Borough has two Green Wedges: the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge separating the townships of Oadby and Wigston and the Oadby, Thurnby, Stoughton Green Wedge encompassing the land to the northern boundary of the Borough. These ensure that green corridors through the Borough and into neighbouring districts are maintained. Green Wedge Strategies (Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge Strategy (2004) and the Oadby, Thurnby, Stoughton Green Wedge Strategy (2005) provide the Borough with a framework for managing the green wedges.



Figure 8: Strategic Green Infrastructure

