

**NEW LOCAL PLAN – ISSUES AND**  
**OPTIONS**

**REGULATION 18**  
**CONSULTATION**



***Oadby and Wigston***  
***Borough Council***  
***Leicestershire***

## Contents Page

1.	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
2.	<b>Relationship to other plans, guidance and policies</b>	<b>6</b>
3.	<b>Promoting sustainable development and combating climate change</b>	<b>8</b>
4.	<b>The key challenges and potential options (separate Chapter documents)</b>	<b>10</b>

**Overarching policy areas (strategic challenge)** (see separate document)

The Plan period and cooperation

Where should development go?

**Housing (strategic challenge)** (see separate document)

Housing need

Housing density

Affordable housing

Gypsy and traveller need

Older persons housing

**Employment (strategic challenge)** (see separate document)

Employment need

Identified Employment Areas (new and existing)

**Economy (strategic challenge)** (see separate document)

Retail hierarchy

Retail need

Town and district centres and their boundaries

Local centres

**Green infrastructure (strategic challenge)** (see separate document)

Green infrastructure

Green wedges

Countryside

Sustainable drainage and surface water

Flood risk

**Environment and sustainability (strategic challenge)** (see separate document)

Habitats and biodiversity

Climate change

**Infrastructure (strategic challenge)** (see separate document)

Highway capacity

Highway infrastructure need

Sustainable transport

Developer contributions

Viability

High quality communications

Education

Walking and cycling infrastructure

Public transport



<b>Housing (local challenge)</b>	(see separate document)
First home	
Technical housing standards	
Self and custom build	
Sustainable homes	
Housing choices	
Urban infill	
<b>Design and character (local challenge)</b>	(see separate document)
High quality design	
High quality construction and use of materials	
Landscape and character	
Local green spaces	
Design codes	
Renewable and low carbon energy production	
Public realm	
Shop fronts (including shutters)	
<b>Economy, retail and leisure (local challenge)</b>	(see separate document)
Cafes, restaurants etc (night time economy and dwell time)	
Delivering retail	
Local impact threshold	
Primary and secondary frontages	
Tourism	
<b>Health and wellbeing (local challenge)</b>	(see separate document)
Open space, sport and recreation facilities	
Built leisure facilities	
Built health facilities	
Health impact assessments	
<b>Local services (local challenge)</b>	(see separate document)
Car parking and electric vehicle car parking	
Community facilities	
Cemetery and burial space	
<b>Heritage (local challenge)</b>	(see separate document)
Conservation areas	
Listed buildings and locally listed buildings	
<b>Masterplanning (local challenge)</b>	(see separate document)
Large scale change and place making	

**5. Next steps**

**11**



## **1. Introduction**

Over the coming years, the Borough of Oadby and Wigston will need to undergo change and transformation. The Borough not only needs to provide for its ever-expanding local communities, but also needs to allow for business growth, change and adaptation. In order to manage this change and transformation effectively, the Council must produce a new Local Plan.

A Local Plan is one of, if not, the most important document that a local planning authority produces. It is the sole document that guides all forms of development for many future years within the Borough area.

It is a document that is required by national government and must be kept up to date. If a local authority does not keep its Local Plan up to date, it is at risk of un-sustainable and un-planned development that its communities cannot have a say on.

It is therefore, essential that local planning authorities ensure that its Local Plan is up to date, robust and has been produced with significant community involvement.

### **What is this document and why are we asking for your help?**

- 1.1 The current Borough of Oadby and Wigston Local Plan was adopted in April 2019. The current Local Plan sets out the policies that the Council uses to manage growth and change as well as determine Planning applications. The Local Plan helps direct new development to the right places. New development includes, but is not limited to; new housing; new and existing employment land; new community facilities and services; new retail; and, new leisure and tourism development.
- 1.2 A Local Plan is not a static document, it is a fluid document that needs to change with the times, therefore is a document that needs reviewing and updating on a regular basis. The Council has already begun work on the new Local Plan. This Issues and Options (Key Challenges) exercise is the second stage that the Council must carry out as part of the new Local Plan. The consultation will help the Council understand your views on the different issues affecting development in the Borough and how you think these should be tackled now and in the future.
- 1.3 The initial consultation exercise for the new Local Plan was the Call for Sites consultation that took place between Midday Friday 25th September 2020 and Midday Friday 20th November 2020. The sites submitted through this first stage of consultation are being consulted upon alongside this Issues and Options document.
- 1.4 Similar to the current Local Plan, the Council is seeking to ensure that there is a balanced strategy that encourages sustainable development and growth across the Borough area, whilst helping to tackle climate change and protecting those areas that most need it.
- 1.5 The starting point for this Issues and Options (Key Challenges) consultation document is to look at, what are the most apparent issues and key challenges that the Borough will face cover the coming years. The document will propose a number of potential options to tackle these apparent issues and challenges, and will ask the local communities and local businesses for their views and comments.





## **What are we asking of you?**

- 1.6 This consultation document will set out what the Council considers that the key challenges are for the Borough area and will then offer a set of potential options that can be chosen to help address these challenges.
- 1.7 As part of this, this Council needs you to say which of the potential options you prefer, as well as any challenges that you consider have been missed. You can also suggest your own alternative potential options which will achieve the objectives and tackle the challenges that are mentioned. It is important that where indicated you try and give some explanation for your choices, as the more feedback and detail the Council receives, the more informed the Council's decisions can be.
- 1.8 You will need to carefully read the sections below to help you understand how to answer the consultation questions posed. You do not have to answer all of the questions, but it would help the Council gain a better understanding of the overall picture if you could answer as many as you feel able to.
- 1.9 The Council is proud of its Borough and the communities that reside and work within it, and really wants to make a positive difference to people's lives. The Council would like to thank in advance all of the people and organisations that take the time to respond to this consultation.

## **The current Local Plan**

- 1.10 The Council's current Local Plan was adopted on the 16th April 2019 and currently sets out the Council's most up to date planning policy position. In addition to the Local Plan, the Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), that supplement the policies contained within the Local Plan. Supplementary Planning Documents include;
- Public Realm Strategy SPD 2021
  - Identified Employment Land SPD 2020
  - Residential Development SPD 2019
  - Conservation Areas SPD 2019
  - Developer Contributions SPD 2019
- 1.11 Further, the Council has an up to date Local Development Scheme, an up to date Statement of Community Involvement and an up to date Annual Monitoring Report.

## **Timetable for new Local Plan production**

- 1.12 In the production of any Local Plan, local authorities have to follow nationally set legislation in relation to consultation milestones. Legislation prescribes, not only when a local authority should be consulting on a Local Plan, but also the minimum requirements on how it consults. How the Council will consult is also set out within the Council's latest Statement of Community Involvement.
- 1.13 A summary of the timetable for the Council's new Local Plan is set out below, however is set out in more detail in the Council's latest Local Development Scheme, which is available on the Council's website – [https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/local\\_development\\_scheme](https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/local_development_scheme).

<b>Timetable (key stages)</b>	
Initial Call for sites	September 2020 to November 2020
Regulation 18 (Issues and Options)	August to September 2021
Regulation 18 (Preferred Options)	May to June 2022
Pre-Submission Consultation	May to June 2023
Submission to the Planning Inspectorate	June 2023
Examination Hearing Sessions	August / September 2023
Receipt of Inspectors Report	September / October 2023
Adoption	December 2023



## **2. Relationship to other plans, guidance and policies**

### **National planning policy and guidance**

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), *'sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced'*. Further, *'planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan<sup>2</sup>, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions'*.
- 2.2 The NPPF, suggests that the planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Further, it goes onto suggest that local authorities Plan's should be succinct, up-to-date and should provide a positive vision for the future of an area.
- 2.3 Specific to Local Plan's, the NPPF states that Plans should:
- 'a) be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;*
  - b) be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable;*
  - c) be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees;*
  - d) contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals;*
  - e) be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation; and*
  - f) serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)'*.
- 2.4 The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which is a web-based resource that sets out the Government's planning guidance on a number of topics. The NPPG adds, further guidance and information to the policies set out within the NPPF. The NPPG is updated regularly and will be used to help provide further detail within the Local Plan.

### **Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan**

- 2.5 The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) was jointly prepared and published by the eight local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership. The SGP sets out a longer term strategy and aspirations for delivering growth and development in Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) up to the year 2050. It is a non-statutory strategic plan that provides a framework to guide individual Local Plans.
- 2.6 The SGP focuses on four key matters: delivering new housing, supporting the economy, identifying essential infrastructure, and protecting the environment and built heritage.

## The Borough of Oadby and Wigston Corporate Plan

2.7 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out the Vision, Objectives and Values for the Council, for the period 2019 to 2024.

2.8 The Corporate Plan, sets out three main Objectives for the Council. These are:

Corporate Objective One – *'Building, Protecting and Empowering communities – Be proud of your Borough as a place to live'*.

This objective seeks to ensure that the local communities have suitable housing and accommodation to meet their needs. It also seeks to build and protect local communities, by tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as address any health inequalities that are apparent. Further, the objective seeks to empower local communities through positive engagement, and greater responsibility for where they live, work and play.

Corporate Objective Two – *'Growing the Borough economically – Realise the aspirations of the Borough, benefiting those who live and work here'*.

This objective sets the aim for the Borough – *'to be the best it can be economically'*. The objective seeks to work with as many businesses as possible within the Borough to help them develop and grow. In addition, the objective seeks to attract new businesses and provide better employment opportunities for local communities. Further, the objective seeks the Council to be more commercial regarding income generation so that frontline services are protected.

Corporate Objective Three – *'Providing excellent services – Delivering those services needed to the highest standard whilst providing value for money'*.

This objective seeks to *'put the customer first'* and provide services that are of the highest standards. In addition, the objective suggests that the Council will utilise smart technology to ensure that local communities have access to improved services that are safe, needed and effective.



### **3. Promoting sustainable development and combating climate change**

- 3.1 The drive to provide (and ensure delivery of) sustainable development has been one of the golden threads running through national planning policy and guidance for a number of years, ever since the introduction of the first National Planning Policy Framework in 2012.
- 3.2 The most up to date National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), states the following; -
- '7. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection.*
- 8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*
- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'*
- 3.3 In 'The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019', the government committed to becoming a net zero emitter of greenhouse gases by 2050.
- 3.4 In order for the government to realise its commitment of becoming a net zero emitter, carbon emissions must be minimised. In order to do this, each local authority area within the United Kingdom needs to help.
- 3.5 The new Local Plan has a critical part to play in helping the government, not only, meet its targets in lowering greenhouse gas emissions, but also in providing sustainable development at a local level for its communities. Therefore, much like the NPPF, the Council wishes to ensure that one of the golden threads running through the entire new Local Plan is the want to achieve sustainable development and combat climate change.



- 3.6 It is important to note, that when you are thinking about and commenting on the key challenges and options set out in this document, you should keep in mind how the options help with achieving the ambitions and requirements set out above.





## **4. The key challenges and potential options**

- 4.1 The following topic areas (see separate Topic documents) will outline what the Council considers to be the key issues and challenges that the Borough area is likely to face over the coming years. In addition, a number of potential options for tackling the issues and challenges highlighted are also set out. Further, a number of questions are posed to you also.
- 4.2 The Council would reiterate, that the issues, challenges, potential options and questions posed, are by no means a definitive list; they are very much an initial highlighting of the Council's considerations and if you consider that there are things or topics that have been missed, please do feedback to the Council.
- 4.3 National planning and guidance is very clear, in that Local Authority areas should have both strategic and non-strategic planning policies. It goes on to state that Local Plans should be explicit in which policies are strategic and which are not.
- 4.4 In terms of non-strategic policies, the NPPF suggests that these policies should be used to set out more detail on specific topic areas, for example, design principles, conserving local heritage and ensuring there is plenty of open space areas for community use. They are in essence more localised development management policies.
- 4.5 The following (Topic documents) key challenges and potential options are set out in clear and distinct topic areas, as well as whether the Council considers the issue or challenge to be of a strategic nature or a non-strategic nature.
- 4.6 Each challenge or issue topic area is set out in a consistent manner, and follows the format–
- What the government says – gives a summary of what national government says about the topic area, for example national policy contained within the NPPF and guidance principles set out within the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
  - What the Council says – gives a summary of the Council's thoughts on the topic area.
  - Potential options – sets out a number of potential options for tackling the issues or challenges that have been highlighted.
  - Questions – poses questions to the reader that are pertinent to the potential options posed.



## **5. Next steps**

- 5.1 The new Local Plan Issues and Options document will be on public consultation for an 8 week period. During this period, the Council will be seeking feedback from as many local residents, businesses and other interested parties as possible.
- 5.2 Once the consultation period has ended, the Council will collate all of the comments and feedback submitted, and take account of it all in the next stage of Plan making, which is Preferred Options stage.
- 5.3 The Council would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to read through the Issues and Options document and submitted comments and feedback. Each comment and each bit of feedback that is sent into the Council will help shape the future of the Borough area.



# OVERARCHING POLICY AREAS (STRATEGIC CHALLENGES)

The Plan period and cooperation  
Where should development go?



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*

## The Plan period and cooperation

### What the Government says:

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), sets out that strategic policies set out within Local Plan's should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from the date of adoption. It is suggested that this is required so that Local Plans can anticipate and respond to long term requirements and opportunities.
- 4.2 In addition, to the above, planning over an extended period of time, provides certainty and clarity for the public and local communities, as well as landowners, developers and any other interested parties.
- 4.3 Further, the NPPF states that *'strategic policy-making authorities should collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters which they need to address in their plans...effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere...in order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.4 The Council is fully aware of the positives that planning over an extended period of time bring, however planning for such an extended period of time is extremely challenging and requires a vast amount of community input, cooperation and evidence base.
- 4.5 The current Local Plan period runs up to the year 2031. With a proposed adoption date of the year 2023 for the new Local Plan, the lifespan of the new Plan must run until at least 2038.
- 4.6 Producing a Local Plan is extremely challenging for Local Authorities due to the amount of evidence base required to underpin the Plan and the need to regularly consult. Bearing this challenge in mind, the Council is proposing the new Local Plan has a Plan period that runs up to the year 2041. This will ensure that, should Plan preparation slip for any reason, the Plan at adoption will still have at least a 15 year lifespan. It also ensures further certainty and clarity for an extended period.
- 4.7 Local Plans have to be underpinned by an up to date evidence base, therefore whatever the Plan period is, the evidence will need to cover that period also. Currently, strategic evidence being produced by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities, covers the time period of 2041.
- 4.8 As part of the new Local Plan process the Council will engage with all Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities (including Leicestershire County Council), in particular, its direct neighbours of Leicester City, Blaby District and Harborough District. Under the Duty to Cooperate, the Council will cooperate with all relevant stakeholders and will produce a number of Statements of Common Ground that will be signed off by all relevant partner organisations. Currently the Council has an agreed Statement of Common Ground with all Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities, including Leicestershire County Council that sets out how the collection of authorities will collaborate and deal with Leicester City's declared unmet need.



Potential options:

- The new Local Plan time period will run from date of adoption until the year 2041, to ensure that there is at least a 15 year life span on the Plan.
- The Council will produce and sign off Statements of Common Ground where relevant to do so. This will ensure that the Council both understands all the issues and challenges, and meets the Duty to Cooperate.

Questions:

- Is the suggested Local Plan time period of 'date of adoption to the year 2041' appropriate?
- Who should be the key stakeholders that the Council enters into Statements of Common Ground with?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Where should development go?

### What the Government says:

- 4.9 NPPF suggests that local authority areas should plan to meet their own local needs in full within the area. It goes on to say that *‘Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:*
- a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
  - b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
  - c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and*
  - d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.’*
- 4.10 Further, the NPPF suggests that *‘planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses...strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land’*. In addition, the NPPF says that planning policies should *‘give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land...promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings...and support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes’*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.11 The Council’s current Local Plan focusses development in the existing urban areas, and only in greenfield areas when necessary. The focus for development is very much within the town centre of Wigston, the district centre of Oadby, the district centre of South Wigston, and then the remaining urban areas that surround these centres.
- 4.12 The Borough is a relatively compact and highly urbanised area that lies directly adjacent to the City of Leicester, Harborough District and Blaby District. To put its size into context, it is the 11th smallest local authority area (out of 406) within the United Kingdom, however the 3rd smallest (behind the Isles of Scilly and Watford) when the smaller inner London Boroughs are removed from the list.
- 4.13 Due to the Borough’s urban nature, there must be a focus on urban regeneration, however, because the Borough area is so compact, there is a point where more greenfield development needs to take place as there just isn’t enough available land remaining within the urban areas. In addition, the Council considers that the Local Plans should identify a mix of sites for development, rather than ‘putting all its eggs in one basket’.
- 4.14 The Council invited submissions of land to be considered for new developments in the Borough for the period 2031 and beyond, as part of the most recent Call for Sites public consultation that ran for 8 weeks from Midday Friday, 25 September 2020 until Midday Friday, 20 November 2020.





- 4.15 The Council invited the submission of any land parcel(s) (no minimum site size threshold) from all interested parties, including local residents; businesses; landowners; developers; and, agents. A number of sites were submitted and all of the sites submitted will help the Council to identify potential sites for consideration for development, through the production of the new Local Plan.
- 4.16 The Borough of Oadby and Wigston's 'Call for Sites: Site Collation and Initial Assessment' document has now been published on the Council's website. To view this publication, please visit the Council's website to view the pdf document or click on the link below:
- [https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/call\\_for\\_sites](https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/call_for_sites)
- 4.17 Due to the unique nature of the Borough, the Council would welcome the submission of any further suitable land parcels (no minimum site size threshold) and invite any interested parties to identify potential sites for consideration for development which could comprise part of the Borough's housing and economic development land supply, post 2031.

Potential options:

- Concentrate new development within the existing urban areas, particularly the town and district centres, until such land has been fully utilised, only then will greenfield land be used for development.
- Focus new development towards the greenfield areas of the Borough only, for example many of which that have been put forward for consideration to the Council and are included in the 'Call for Sites: Site Collation and Initial Assessment'.
- Take a balanced approach to the location of new development with a mix of urban development and greenfield land development.

Questions:

- Which of the proposed options illustrated above should be used in determining the location of new development within the Borough area?
- Should all new development incorporate an element of housing, shops, leisure and employment, or should shops and employment remain in designated areas, for example town centres and identified employment areas?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



# HOUSING (STRATEGIC CHALLENGES)

Housing need  
Housing density  
Affordable housing  
Gypsy and traveller need  
Older persons housing



***Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire***

## Housing Need

### What the Government says:

- 4.1 NPPF states that in order to *‘support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay’.*
- 4.2 Further, the NPPF suggests that *‘to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for’.*

### What the Council says:

- 4.3 Across Leicester and Leicestershire, the local planning authorities are working collaboratively to plan for long term housing needs of the Leicester & Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA). A Strategic Growth Plan looking forward to the year 2050 has been produced and signed up to by each of the Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities.
- 4.4 Leicester City Council has indicated that it will be unable to deliver its full housing need. All local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire are working together to produce a Statement of Common Ground that will address the issue of Leicester City’s unmet need. Due to the nature of the Borough area, it is not expected that any of Leicester City’s unmet need could be provided within the Borough area, however this has yet to be determined.
- 4.5 The Council’s current Local Plan sets out a housing requirement of 148 new homes per year within the Borough area. Currently the Council has sufficient land available to meet the need of 148 new homes per year. However, due to the urban compact nature of the Borough, it is a consistent challenge for the Council to provide sufficient housing to meet local community needs.
- 4.6 Over recent years, the Council’s annual housing requirement has increased from circa 50 new homes per year, to 90 new homes per year, to 148 new homes per year. These increases equate to an approximate percentage increase of 196 per cent. Each of the previous requirement figures have been evidenced by a Leicester and Leicestershire local housing need evidence base.
- 4.7 Currently the Council is working with all local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire to produce a local housing needs assessment, in the form of a Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (HENA). Currently no housing need information is available from this project, however when complete, the HENA will set out the local housing need for each of the local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire.
- 4.8 Using the Government’s standard method for calculating housing need, the need for the Borough area is 180 new homes per year. This standard method output figure is a further 22 per cent increase to the Borough areas current housing need of 148 new homes per year.



4.9 As mentioned earlier, the Council has consistent struggles to meet its housing requirement in full. Any further increase to the current housing requirement figure will significantly impact the Council's ability to meet its need, as well as significantly impact the Borough areas green open areas. In addition, assessment work relating to highway capacity and infrastructure would need to evidence that the levels of growth required could be accommodated on an already congested highway infrastructure network.

Potential options:

- continue to use the current housing requirement of 148 new homes per year
- use the housing need figure of 180 new homes per year calculated by the Standard Method
- use the outputs of the HENA before making any firm decisions on housing need

Questions:

- Is there any robust evidence to suggest that the Council should continue to use the current housing requirement of 148 new homes per year set out within the current Local Plan?
- Should the Council use the housing need figure of 180 new homes per year calculated by the Standard Method?
- What should the Council do if the HENA outcomes suggests that there should be a diversion from the Standard Method?
- What do you consider is the evidenced housing need for the Borough area?
- Should the Borough area be taking any of Leicester City's declared unmet housing need?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Housing density

### What the Government says:

- 4.10 The NPPF states that *'planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land...where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities'*.
- 4.11 Further, the NPPF suggests that *'plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible...and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.12 The Borough area is one of the smallest in the UK. It is compact and urban in nature, with very little 'surplus' land. Due to this, the Council has always sought development to be built at a high density, however still respecting the local vernacular and character of the area in which it is built.
- 4.13 The Council's current Local Plan sets out a split minimum density target depending on the location of development. Local Plan Policy 12 – Housing density states that –

*'The Council is committed to delivering new homes in an effective and efficient manner. The Council is also committed to locating people close to much needed services and facilities as well as jobs. To ensure that the Borough provides the required number of homes for its communities, the Council will adopt the following density targets on all new development sites that involve the provision of new homes.*

*Proposed development sites that have a gross site size of 0.3 hectares and larger and are located within the town centre boundary of Wigston or the district centre boundaries of Oadby and South Wigston will be required to achieve an average density of at least 50 dwellings per hectare.*

*Proposed development sites that have a gross site size of 0.3 hectares and larger and are located outside of the town centre boundary of Wigston or district centre boundaries of Oadby and South Wigston, but within the Leicester PUA will be required to achieve an average density of at least 40 dwellings per hectare.*

*Proposed development sites that have a gross site size of 0.3 hectares and larger and are not situated within any of the above locations will be required to achieve an average density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare.*

*Where a development is otherwise acceptable but an independent viability appraisal and / or an independent character and design appraisal demonstrates that the required density cannot be achieved, the Council will work with the applicant to ascertain whether there are alternative approaches. If the Council requires its own independent viability assessments to verify outcomes of the applicants assessment, it will be at the applicants cost'.*



4.14 Since the adoption of the current Local Plan in April 2019, the Council has been successful in achieving development that meets the prescribed minimum density targets. Because of this, it is expected that the current Policy relating to housing density, will be 'rolled forward' to the new Local Plan. It is envisaged that minor wording amendments will be made, to ensure that it is up-to-date with national planning policy and guidance. However, should the Council be applying a single density across the entire Borough area?

Potential options:

- 'roll forward' the current minimum density targets set out in the current Local Plan
- Decrease or increase the minimum density targets depending on location
- Have a single density target that applies consistently across the Borough area

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Local Plan policy relating to housing density ensuring that it is up-to-date with national policy and guidance?
- Should the Council be seeking to increase the minimum density targets in the new Local Plan?
- Should the Council be seeking to decrease the minimum density targets in the new Local Plan?
- Should the Council be applying a single density target across the Borough area? If so, what is the evidence to suggest this is the case?
- Should the Council be applying maximum density targets?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate, please explain.





## Affordable housing

### What the Government says:

- 4.15 The NPPF suggests that local authorities, through strategic policies, *‘should set out the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for...housing (including affordable housing)’*. The NPPF goes on to suggest that Local Plans should *‘set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required’*...such policies however should not undermine the deliverability of the plan.
- 4.16 Further, the NPPF goes on to state that *‘where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required’*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.17 The provision of affordable housing is a key priority for the Council and the Borough area. Ensuring that the local communities within the Borough area are catered for, in every sense, is imperative. The provision of affordable housing ensures that those people who cannot necessarily afford to purchase a market home, have a well-equipped, safe and high quality home.
- 4.18 The Council’s current Local Plan, at Policy 13, sets out a split target for affordable housing provision depending on the developments location. Currently on qualifying developments (those of 11 or more new homes), 30 per cent of the total number of new homes should be affordable for developments located in Oadby, 20 per cent of the total number of new homes should be affordable for developments located in Wigston, and 10 per cent of the total number of new homes should be affordable for developments located in South Wigston.
- 4.19 The main reason for the split target is the vastly different land values apparent in each of the Borough areas settlements. Since the adoption of the current Local Plan in 2019, a good number of affordable homes have been delivered across the Borough. However, the Council wishes to continue to provide affordable homes for its local communities. Bearing this in mind, the Council is proposing to retain the split provision target across each settlement in relation to affordable home targets, however will assess whether or not it would be appropriate to have a single Borough wide target.
- 4.20 The current qualifying threshold set out in the Local Plan, reflected government policy and guidance at the time, for example ‘major development’ was defined as 11 new homes or more. However, the NPPF has amended the definition of ‘major development’ to 10 or more new homes. It is expected that the Council will amend the qualifying threshold to reflect the current NPPF definition of ‘major development’.
- 4.21 It should be noted, that any developer contributions sought by the Council through the new Local Plan will be subject to Whole Plan Viability testing to ensure that they are appropriate and do not render development proposals unviable.

### Potential options:

- Maintain the current split target for the three settlement areas of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston.
- Increase each of the targets in an attempt to increase further the provision of affordable housing within the Borough.



- Remove the split targets for each settlement area and introduce a single Borough-wide target and policy approach.
- Reduce each of the split targets if viability evidence suggests a need to do so.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Local Plan policy relating to affordable housing ensuring that it is up-to-date with national policy and guidance?
- Should the Council be applying a single Borough wide percentage target and policy approach?
- Should the Council be seeking to increase the minimum affordable housing percentage targets in the new Local Plan?
- Should the Council be seeking to decrease the minimum affordable housing percentage targets in the new Local Plan?
- Is the Council correct in amending the qualifying threshold to reflect the current definition of 'major development' as set out in the NPPF?
- What do you consider to be the most appropriate affordable housing target(s) for the Borough area?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Gypsy and traveller need

### What the government says:

- 4.22 The NPPF suggests that Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS, 2015) sets out how gypsies and travellers and travelling show peoples housing needs, in line with the policy in the PPTS, should be assessed. It also acknowledges that a five year supply of deliverable sites for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of the PPTS is assessed separately to the mainstream five year housing land supply. The PPTS states that *'for the purposes of this planning policy, "travellers" means gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople'*.
- 4.23 Although Local Authorities now have a duty to ensure a 5 year land supply to meet the identified needs for Traveller sites, the PPTS also notes in Paragraph 11 that *'where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria-based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of Travellers, while respecting the interests of the settled community'*.
- 4.24 In addition, the Housing and Planning Act (2016) makes provisions for the assessment of need for those Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople households living on sites and yards who do not meet the planning definition – through the assessment of all households living in caravans.

### What the Council says:

- 4.25 The Council's current Local Plan, at Policy 16, sets out the Council's current policy approach to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. In 2017, a Gypsies' and Travellers' Accommodation Needs Assessment was prepared in partnership with other authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire to help understand the latest accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople within the Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities involved. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council was one of the local authorities involved in the assessment of need.
- 4.26 The needs assessment identified a need for the Borough of 0 (zero) at that time, both for static and transit pitches. Therefore, in line with Paragraph 11 of the PPTS, the current Local Plan Policy (Policy 16) is a criteria based policy seeking to ensure that sites, if needed, are accommodated in sustainable locations with access to a range of essential services, such as education, healthcare, welfare, shops, water and sewerage facilities, where possible.
- 4.27 It is expected that the Council will continue to utilise the criteria based policy set out within the current Local Plan, as there is currently no change to the Borough areas housing need in relation to gypsy and travellers.

### Potential options:

- 'Roll forward' the current criteria based policy set out at Local Plan Policy 16 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- Seek to understand if there is any current housing need in the Borough for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People who meet the definition for planning purposes.



Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Local Plan policy relating to Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People with minor wording amendments ensuring that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- The most up-to-date assessment of gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople in the Borough area is 0 (zero). Do you have any evidence to suggest that there is a housing need for gypsy, travellers and travelling showpeople within the Borough area?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Older persons housing

### What the government says:

- 4.28 Government states that the need to provide housing for older people is critical. It goes onto suggest that people are living longer, and that older people need better choices of accommodation.
- 4.29 The NPPF suggests that Local Authorities should assess and determine the minimum number of homes that are needed for its local communities. It states that *‘to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment...within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to...older people...)*’.
- 4.30 In terms of the NPPF definition of older people, it states - *‘Older people: People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs’*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.31 The Council is committed in providing sufficient homes that are of the right type, tenure and size for its local communities.
- 4.32 According to population projections, the over 65 year old age group within the Borough area is to increase by nearly 45 per cent up to the year 2039. It is by far the largest population age group increase within the Borough area. Put in context, the 0 – 19 year old age group is to increase by 11 per cent, the 20 – 44 year old age group decrease by 1.5 per cent, and the 45 – 64 year old age group decrease by over 5 per cent.
- 4.33 Over the past 5 – 10 years, the number of homes (and / or accommodation) provided for the older population age groups, has been relatively low within the Borough area. Previous plans and strategies have been effective in providing the right homes and accommodation for the Borough’s communities at the time, and therefore did not necessarily seek to provide large number of homes (and / or accommodation) for the older population.
- 4.34 With the Government push for more (and better) homes for the older populations and evidence suggesting that the Borough area is to see a significant increase in the numbers of people within the over 65 age group, the Council seeks to provide more older persons housing (and / or accommodation) within the new Local Plan.

### Potential options:

- Set out in new Local Plan Policy that all residential developments that meet the ‘large site’ threshold of 10 or more dwellings, must provide homes and / or accommodation for the Borough’s older population.
- Set out in new Local Plan Policy that all residential developments that meet the ‘large site’ threshold of 10 or more dwellings, will be encouraged to provide homes and / or accommodation for the Borough’s older population.
- Introduce a new Local Plan Policy that requires the provision of an off-site contribution from all sites that meet the ‘large site’ threshold of 10 or more dwellings.

- No policy wording encouraging or requiring the provision of homes and / or accommodation for the Borough's older population.

Questions:

- Should the Council require applicants to provide older persons housing and / or accommodation, on all development sites regardless of size?
- Should the Council require applicants to provide older persons housing and / or accommodation, on only large development sites that meet the NPPF definition of major development?
- Which option from the above set of potential options would be the most appropriate for the Borough area?
- Should the Council be considering the housing needs for younger persons as well as the housing needs for older persons?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.





# EMPLOYMENT (STRATEGIC CHALLENGES)

Employment need  
Identified Employment Areas (new and existing)



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*

## **Employment need**

### What the Government says:

- 4.1 NPPF suggests that *'strategic policies should set out the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for...employment development'*. Guidance set out in the relevant parts of the NPPG, suggest that strategic policy making authorities must prepare a robust evidence base to understand local business need, market signals and market conditions.
- 4.2 Further, the NPPF suggests that new homes should be provided in locations that will support a sustainable community with sufficient access to service and employment opportunities.

### What the Council says:

- 4.3 Across Leicester and Leicestershire, the local planning authorities are working collaboratively to plan for the long term employment needs of the Leicester & Leicestershire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA). A Strategic Growth Plan looking forward to the year 2050 has been produced and signed up to by each of the Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities.
- 4.4 Leicester City Council has indicated that it may well be unable to deliver its full employment need. All local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire are working together to produce a Statement of Common Ground that will address the issue of Leicester City's unmet need. Due to the nature of the Borough area, it is not expected that any of Leicester City's unmet need could be provided within the Borough area, however this has yet to be determined.
- 4.5 The Council's current Local Plan sets out an employment land requirement of just over 8 hectares within the Borough area over the Plan period to 2031. This level of need was set out within the Employment Land and Premises Study that was a local piece of evidence produced for the Borough area only. Currently the Council has granted planning permission for some 5 hectares of the 8 hectares required. However, as of now, none of the 5 hectares permitted has progressed further than the planning stage.
- 4.6 Even though evidence suggested to the contrary, over recent years, the Borough has not seen significant demand for large scale or strategic employment growth. The main types of employment change has been associated with smaller scale extensions to existing employment use properties and churn involving demolition and rebuilding of redundant properties or properties that are near 'end of life'. Also the Council is not aware of any significant anecdotal need for additional employment land.
- 4.7 The vast majority of the Borough's employment land is situated on designated sites, known as 'Identified Employment Areas'. These areas are dominated by B1, B2 and B8 Uses, and are appropriately managed to ensure that they remain in predominant employment use.
- 4.8 Currently the Council is working with all local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire to produce a local employment land needs assessment, in the form of a Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (HENA). Currently no employment land need information is available from this project, however when complete, the HENA will set out the local employment need for each of the local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire.



Potential options:

- Subject to an employment need being identified, concentrate additional employment land allocations adjacent to existing areas of employment use.
- Subject to an employment need being identified, focus new employment development towards the greenfield areas of the Borough only. In essence, creating a new employment area.
- Take a balanced approach to the location of new employment development with a mix of urban development and greenfield land development.

Questions:

- Should the Council use the outputs of the HENA to specify the employment need of the Borough area or produce an up-to-date Employment Land and Premises Study?
- Is there any other method for calculating the Borough's employment need?
- Where should additional employment land development be located if a need arises?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## **Identified Employment Areas (new and existing)**

### What the government says:

- 4.9 NPPF states that local authorities and planning policies *‘should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt...the approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future’*.
- 4.10 Further, NPPF suggests that planning policies *‘should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations’*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.11 Within the Borough area, the Council ensures that sufficient land is available for a number of different uses, including, housing, retail, leisure and employment.
- 4.12 To ensure that the Borough area has sufficient land supply of much needed B Class (employment) Uses, the Council allocates specific areas, or clusters, known as ‘Identified Employment Areas’; which are mapped on the Council’s Adopted Policies Map. The Borough area has 8 of these areas. Alongside the Health and the Education sectors, Manufacturing employs the highest number of people within the Borough area (13.2 per cent each). The ‘employment sector’ (B Class Uses) as a whole, employs over 20 per cent of all those people with jobs in the Borough. Thus, B Class employment businesses are vitally important to the Borough’s workforce and local community.
- 4.13 The Identified Employment Areas within the Borough have been designated for over 20 years and are areas that have the highest concentration of larger scale, long standing employment uses. Policy and guidance at a national level, suggests that these areas should be safeguarded from inappropriate development that negatively affects the critically important role that they play within the local economy, as once lost or diluted it would be very difficult to replace.
- 4.14 In addition, due to the nature of employment uses, for example, the times at which they operate and the regular vehicle movements, it is fitting to have all such uses within the same areas or clusters, as it is, for example with leisure and retail uses within town and district centres.
- 4.15 The Council is aware that national policy and guidance, suggests that local authorities should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. The Council is proactive in its approach, and does not protect employment land for the ‘sake of protecting it’. The Local Plan includes a hierarchy of Identified Employment Area categories.
- 4.16 Each of the Identified Employment Areas within the Borough has been assessed and has been classified within a specific category. The site categories are ‘Core’, ‘Base’ and ‘Release’. Each of the three categorisations are explained in more detail in the Council’s Identified Employment Land Supplementary Planning Document.



4.17 The Council has current policy relating to the protection of Identified Employment Areas set out in the current Local Plan. Local Plan Policy 25 – Protecting Identified Employment Areas is a criteria based policy that allows for change and evolution of a site depending on the Identified Employment Areas categorisation in which it is located within and the need for the sites retention and / or renewal.

Potential options:

- Continue to designate the Identified Employment Areas within the Borough area, and carry forward the current Local Plan policy approach ensuring that it is up-to-date with current national planning and guidance.
- Continue to designate the Identified Employment Areas within the Borough area, but change the policy approach, for example, amend the criteria that is currently set out within current Local Plan policy.
- Reassess all of the Identified Employment Areas to see whether or not the current categorisations are accurate and up-to-date.
- Discontinue each of the Identified Employment Areas within the Borough and have no specific planning policy approach for protection of employment land.

Questions:

- Which of the above potential options would be the most appropriate approach for managing the supply of employment land within the Borough area?
- If you consider that the most appropriate approach is to continue to designate Identified Employment Areas, but amend the policy criteria, what criteria do you consider should be used within a new policy approach?
- If you consider that the most appropriate approach is to discontinue each of the Identified Employment Areas within the Borough and have no specific planning policy approach, how do you consider that the Council best protects employment land for B Class employment businesses to locate, evolve and grow?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



# ECONOMY (STRATEGIC CHALLENGES)

Retail hierarchy

Retail need

Town and district centres and their boundaries

Local centres



***Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire***



## **Retail hierarchy**

### **What the government says:**

- 4.1 NPPF states that *‘planning policies should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation’*. It goes on to state that *‘planning policies should - define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters’*.
- 4.2 NPPF goes on to suggest that local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses (as defined in the NPPF), which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Further, it details that main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.

### **What the Council says:**

- 4.3 In order to plan positively to promote the vitality and viability of the town centres, the Council is required to identify a local retail hierarchy for the Borough area that sets out the role and function of each of the centres identified.
- 4.4 The Council’s current Local Plan, sets out a retail hierarchy of centres and specifies what role each centre plays. In addition, the policy sets out what types of development will be supported within the hierarchy of centres identified.
- 4.5 It is expected that current Local Plan Policy 23 – Retail Hierarchy will be ‘rolled’ forward into the new Local Plan with some amendments. The policy has been effective in managing change within the Borough areas identified centres and the approach that it takes is, in the main, consistent with current national planning policy and guidance. The presumption will be that any proposals for a main town use will have to follow the ‘sequential test’.
- 4.6 However, to ensure that the hierarchy of centres remains up-to-date and relevant, the Council will undertake a review of: the existing hierarchy list of centres; and, the role that each of the centres play, as it is apparent that each of the main centres play very different roles and have very different offers.

### **Potential options:**

- Continue with the hierarchy list of centres that is illustrated within the current Local Plan.
- Carry forward the existing policy wording set out within current Local Plan Policy 23 Retail Hierarchy, ensuring that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance.
- Introduce other centres into the hierarchy list should evidence justify a need to do so.
- Remove centres from the hierarchy list should evidence justify a need to do so.
- Amend the role that centres play with hierarchy list should evidence justify a need to do so.

Questions:

- Do you consider that the existing list of centres, set out within the current Local Plan, is up-to-date and relevant?
- Do you consider that the existing list of centres needs amending to reflect changes that have occurred within the Borough area?
- Do you consider that the existing policy wording set out within Local Plan Policy 23 Retail Hierarchy reflects current national planning policy and guidance?
- Do you consider that the apparent differences in the Borough's three main centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston are reflected appropriately, for example should both Oadby and South Wigston, be designated 'District' centres, or should the difference between them be better reflected?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Retail need

### What the government says:

- 4.7 The NPPF states that strategic policies contained within Local Plans should set out the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for...retail.
- 4.8 The NPPF goes on to suggest that local planning authorities should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a proactive and positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.
- 4.8 The document also states that planning policies should *'allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed, looking at least ten years ahead. Meeting anticipated needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses over this period'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.9 The Council will continue to recognise the town and district centres of the Borough as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality. Further, the Council will ensure that the town and district centres are recognised, grown and protected for now and future generations.
- 4.10 In 2016 the Council commissioned Nathaniel Litchfield & Partners (NLP) to undertake a Retail Capacity Study for the Borough, to serve as local evidence to support local planning policy. The study underpinned the retail need requirements set out in the current Local Plan.
- 4.11 Due to changing shopping habits and the Covid pandemic, it is expected that the new Local Plan will be evidenced by an updated Retail Capacity study that will set out up-to-date need requirements for the Borough area in relation to retail.
- 4.12 In terms of retail provision within the Borough, it is expected that a 'town and district centre first' approach will be applied. Proposals for main town centre uses will be prioritised within the town or district centres, however, it is expected that some flexibility will be allowed for edge of centre locations if the main centres cannot accommodate the retail provision proposed.
- 4.13 The Council's current retail need requirements are set out within Local Plan Policy 22 Delivering Retail. It is expected that the retail need policy set out in the new Local Plan will follow a similar approach, however will be updated with up-to-date retail need requirements.
- 4.14 It is worth noting that to this date, none of the sites allocated for retail development have been built out since the current Local Plans adoption in April 2019. Recent retail development within the Borough area has consisted of retail churn and changes of use of un-allocated sites.

### Potential options:

- Maintain the Council's town and district centre first approach to retail development.
- Carry forward the existing Local Plan town and district centre allocations in relation to retail provision.
- De-allocate the current retail allocations and allocate other sites within the Borough area subject to evidence suggesting a need to do so.



- Concentrate new retail provision within one of the town and district centre, rather than spread new provision across each of the three main centres.

Questions:

- Which of the above potential options do you consider is / are the most appropriate for the Borough area?
- Should the Council be allocating any further sites for retail provision, bearing in mind that the existing allocations have yet to be built out?
- Should the Council be concentrating retail development within just one of the three main centres, rather than spread across all three?
- Should the Council be promoting a greater mix of uses within its main centres, rather than having a retail dominant approach, taking account of the changing shopping habits of its local communities?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## **Town and District centres and their boundaries**

### **What the government says:**

- 4.15 The NPPF states that planning policies should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities. It goes on to suggest that planning policies should take a proactive approach to town centre growth, management and adaptation. Further the NPPF states that – planning policies should; define a network and hierarchy of town centres...define the extent of the town centres and primary shopping areas...allocate a range of suitable sites within town centres to meet need arising...and recognise that residential development plays a key role in ensuring vitality.
- 4.16 The NPPF goes on to suggest that town centres should be dominated by ‘main town centre’ uses and should apply a sequential test to proposals for main town centre uses that are not located in a town centre.

### **What the Council says:**

- 4.17 The Council’s current Local Plan and Adopted Policies Map, sets out tightly drawn town and district centre boundaries. The Council considers that focusing opportunities within the core of the town and district centres, with a balance of development types including retail, commercial, leisure, residential, civic and public realm, will ensure that the centres function for longer during any given 24 hour period.
- 4.18 This will be achieved through town centre living, increased footfall and more attractive centres. Increasing the number of people that live and visit the centres, will not only positively affect the local economy, but will also improve security, through natural surveillance.
- 4.19 The concentration of development within the town and district centre boundaries will promote the vitality and viability of the town and district centres and sustainable communities.
- 4.20 The current Local Plan, is evidenced by the retail capacity work that Nathaniel Lichfield undertook. The evidence base work, reviewed all of the existing town and district centre boundaries within the Borough area. The review illustrated that no change was required to the existing town and district centre boundaries, and that the tightly drawn boundaries positively impacted town and district centre vitality due to concentration of similar uses, rather than a diluting, if the centres were more spread.
- 4.21 It is therefore expected that the town and district centre boundaries, as currently defined, will continue to be drawn tightly. It is considered that this approach will continue to deliver a well-defined and focussed core that contains the majority of existing and proposed town and district centre use floor space. This also ensures that any retail development on the edge of the centres that could undermine the vitality and viability of the centres - and therefore achievement of the spatial objectives and the vision - is resisted and / or managed appropriately.
- 4.22 Although it is expected that the Covid pandemic may well impact retail need, shopping habits and requirements, it is not expected that the pandemic will impact how tightly the boundaries are drawn.



4.23 In terms of moving forward, the Council is proposing to 'role' forward the current planning policy (Policy 29 – Town and District centre boundaries) set out in the Local Plan, as it has been effective in managing growth within the town and district centre areas over the past few years. However, it is expected that the new Local Plan will have a greater emphasis on town and district centre living. This will be achieved through the provision of high quality new homes that are of a good size, as well as the regeneration of the open spaces and public realm, and the offer that is provided to the visitor.

Potential options:

- Maintain the current tightly drawn boundaries of the town and district centres.

Questions:

- Should the Council continue with the current tightly drawn boundaries of its town and district centres?
- If the answer is no to the answer above, how do you consider that the Council should approach town and district centre boundaries?
- Do you consider that more high quality new housing should be provided within the Borough areas three main centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.





## Local centres

### What the government says:

4.24 The NPPF states within its Glossary that any references to town centres or centres apply to city, town centres, district centres and local centres, but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance.

### What the Council says:

4.25 In the context of the Borough area, local centres are centres that include a range of shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, Local Centres might include, amongst other retail uses, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and / or a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaways and a launderette. For the purposes of defining Local Centres, the Borough Council has set a threshold of 3 units (minimum) in order to be classified as a designated Local Centre. The Borough areas local centres are defined on the current Adopted Policies Map.

4.26 Although the Council defines local centres, it could be argued that the definition that the Council uses, does not meet the definition set out within the NPPF, as the local centres within the Borough area are small parades of shops that are of purely neighbourhood significance.

4.27 Irrespective of whether the NPPF recognises the Borough areas local centres, the Council considers that local centres within the Borough area play a significant role in local communities everyday way of life and want to protect (and enhance where possible) them from inappropriate development and / or loss. On a regular basis the Council undertakes an assessment of the local centres within the Borough area, to ensure that they remain relevant and of neighbourhood significance.

4.28 It is not expected that a retail need figure will be identified for local centres within the Borough area, as it will for town and district centres, however it is envisaged that they will continue to be identified on the Adopted Policies Map, relating to the new Local Plan. A full list of Borough centres can be found in the current Local Plan Policy 23 Retail Hierarchy.

### Potential options:

- Continue to define the local centres of the Borough area and protect them (and enhance where possible) from inappropriate development and / or loss.
- As they are not defined within the NPPF, remove the designation and not have any policy considerations relating to the Borough areas local centres.

### Questions:

- Should the Council continue to define local centres and protect them (and enhance where possible) from inappropriate development?
- Should the Council remove the designation and not have policy considerations relating to local centres?
- Are there any currently designated Local centres that should be removed?
- Are there any areas within the Borough area that you consider should be designated as Local centres?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE (STRATEGIC CHALLENGES)

Green infrastructure  
Green wedges  
Countryside  
Sustainable drainage and surface water  
Flood risk



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*

## Green Infrastructure

### What the government says:

- 4.1 NPPF defines Green Infrastructure as *'a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity'*.
- 4.2 NPPF states that *'strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for... conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation'*.
- 4.3 Further, NPPF suggests that *'planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which...enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling'*.
- 4.4 Also, NPPF suggest that *'Plans should...take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.5 The Borough Council's aim is to continually improve the quality of its natural green assets as well as to ensure a net gain in its quantity. All new development should maximise existing Green Infrastructure and create new areas of green space that contribute towards the overall network of Green Infrastructure.
- 4.6 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).
- 4.7 Throughout the Borough there is a network of existing areas of strategic Green Infrastructure falling into different categories which are important to the character of both the urban and rural areas; and provide valuable spaces for formal and informal recreational activities in our communities, as well as spaces and networks from a biodiversity and ecology point of view. These strategic areas include, but are not limited to; the countryside around the Leicester PUA, the green wedges, river corridors (and their riparian habitats), canals (and their riparian habitats), railway lines, sports field, cemeteries and burial grounds, country parks, golf courses, hedgerows and woodland.
- 4.8 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 improvements that respect existing landscape character, 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.

4.9 The provision of accessible Green Infrastructure is seen as increasingly important to regeneration and creating places that are based upon local distinctiveness. Quality environments also attract quality investment in terms of housing, jobs, skills and visiting attractions.

4.10 Green Infrastructure can contribute to the high quality natural and built environment that fosters sustainable communities. Biodiversity is preserved and enhanced 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.

4.11 The Council's current Local Plan Policy 8 Green Infrastructure seeks a net gain in Green Infrastructure through the preservation and enhancement of open spaces and assets that comprise the Borough's Green Infrastructure and its network. It is expected that the Council will continue to maintain the current policy position in relation to Green Infrastructure in the new Local Plan.

#### Potential options:

- Maintain the current Local Plan policy position relating to Green Infrastructure with minor wording amendments to ensure that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance.

#### Questions:

- Do you think that the Council should maintain the current Local Plan policy position relating to Green Infrastructure, in the new Local Plan, with minor wording amendments to ensure that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Green wedges

### What the government says:

- 4.12 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that *'Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision ... d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation'*.
- 4.13 Green wedge policies were first introduced in the County of Leicestershire in the Leicestershire Structure Plan of 1987, and ever since have been supported through Regional, Sub-regional and Local Plans.

### What the Council says:

- 4.14 Green wedge designations, in short, are locally designated strategic areas of undeveloped land between the urban areas that prevent the merging of settlements, provide 'green' access into the countryside from the urban areas, and, are locations for open space and recreational facilities.
- 4.15 As well as guiding development form and effecting residents positively, Green Wedges are key green areas within the Borough's Green Infrastructure network and support the Borough's biodiversity. The Green Wedges within the Borough act as important strategic green infrastructure corridors linking green areas within the urban area to the countryside as well as other key strategic green infrastructure corridors such as the Grand Union Canal and railway corridors.
- 4.16 There are currently two Green Wedges situated within the Borough, both of which cross administrative boundaries into neighbouring Local Authority areas. To ensure that the green wedge designations remain up-to-date the Council undertook a Green Wedge Review for the current Local Plan, that assessed both of the Borough's green wedges in their entirety against a Leicester and Leicestershire wide agreed methodology.
- 4.17 The Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge spans the administrative boundary with Leicester City to the north west. The green wedge in its entirety is just shy of 210 hectares, with the Borough's designation being circa 168 hectares in size and separating the urban settlement areas of Oadby and Wigston entirely. The green wedge runs north west to south east from Leicester City out towards the open countryside to the south of Oadby and east of Wigston. As well as farm land and open countryside the green wedge comprises of many appropriate leisure activity uses including sports grounds and training facilities, a racecourse, a golf course and a country park.
- 4.18 The Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge is situated to the north east of Oadby and crosses administrative boundaries with Leicester City and Harborough District. The overall area of the green wedge is circa 467 hectares. The Borough's designation makes up approximately 93 hectares of the total designation size. The area of green wedge that lies within the Borough runs from a north west to south easterly direction and begins at the Borough boundary close to the B582 Gartree Road and extends out towards the countryside to the north of Manor High School in Oadby. Land uses currently situated within the Borough's green wedge area include sports pitches, open fields and a private hospital.
- 4.19 With the Borough being relatively compact and urban in nature, Green Wedges are extremely important; they play major roles in shaping the character of the environment and help stimulate leisure and tourism whilst improving residents and visitors quality of life.





4.20 It is expected that the Council will continue to maintain the green wedge designations within the Borough area through retaining related planning policy set out in the new Local Plan. Current planning policy relating to green wedges is contained within the Local Plan Policy 42 Green Wedges.

Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach and retain the Green Wedge designations, as set out in the Council's current Local Plan and its evidence base.
- Consider whether or not to undertake a Green Wedge Review in order to establish whether or not to retain, create new or amend the boundaries of the existing Green Wedges in order to take account of the new Local Plan proposed site allocations and any other factual updates.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Local Plan policy relating to Green Wedges with minor wording amendments to ensure that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Should the Council consider whether or not to undertake a Green Wedge Review in order to establish whether or not to retain, create new or amend the boundaries of the existing Green Wedges in order to take account of the new Local Plan proposed site allocations and any other factual updates?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.





## Countryside

### What the government says:

- 4.21 The NPPF is clear that Local Plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. Further, the NPPF suggests that where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify and set out their special characteristics.
- 4.22 The NPPF goes on to suggest that, in specific circumstances, sustainable growth of business and growth associated to sustainable tourism and leisure developments would be acceptable along as the development proposed respects the character of the countryside.
- 4.23 Further it suggests that planning policies should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless in exceptional circumstances, however the cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.

### What the Council says:

- 4.24 The Council's current Local Plan seeks to protect the designated countryside areas of the Borough from inappropriate and unsustainable growth and development. The Plan sets out that, although the Borough area is predominately urban, countryside areas play an important role in providing residents of the Borough open access to open and undeveloped landscape areas, that benefits local communities everyday life, health and wellbeing. Further, the countryside areas can play an important role in stimulating leisure and tourism.
- 4.25 It is paramount that the Council continues to protect the countryside areas of the Borough, for the local communities and biodiversity and geodiversity, however the Council is aware that some forms of development may be required within countryside locations.
- 4.26 The current Local Plan, sets out a criteria based approach (based on need and requirement) to development proposals that are proposed within countryside locations. The current Local Plan also makes reference to policy principles set out within the NPPF.
- 4.27 In terms of moving forward, the Council is proposing to role forward the current planning policy (Policy 43 – Countryside) set out in the Local Plan, as it has effectively managed growth within countryside areas over the past few years.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing criteria based policy approach set out within the current Local Plan.
- Expand the policy approach to allow more forms of development within countryside locations, however being specific to what other forms of development is allowed.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in current Local Plan Policy 43 – Countryside, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Are any of the other options set out above appropriate?
- What forms of development do you consider should be allowed in countryside locations of the Borough?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Sustainable drainage and surface water

### What the government says:

4.28 The NPPF suggests that Local Plans should seek to identify likely developer contributions expected to mitigate the impact of development over the Plan period to deliver necessary infrastructure, including water and sustainable drainage systems. It goes on to suggest that policies developed should not undermine the viability of the Plan, but should seek to proactively mitigate and adapt to possible climate change factors and events that could arise over the Plan period.

4.29 According to the PPG:

*‘Sustainable drainage systems are designed to control surface water run-off close to where it falls and mimic natural drainage as closely as possible. They provide opportunities to:*

- *Reduce the causes and impacts of flooding;*
- *Remove pollutants from urban run-off at source; and,*
- *Combine water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife’.*

### What the Council says:

4.30 The theory that sits behind Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is that they seek to replicate the natural movement of water from a development by reducing flood risk, improving water quality and often create desirable features that can make towns and cities more attractive places to live in by enhancing the quality of life.

4.31 In addition, the European Water Framework Directive requires careful management of water resources through sustainable protection of water quality. Development proposals that are likely to impact surface or groundwater should consider the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. SuDS offer an interesting and cost effective solution in delivering the Directive’s requirements.

4.32 For all developments of 10 or more residential units or 1,000+ square metres of floor area, as well as the provision of SuDS, the creation of new habitats, the planting of appropriate trees, and the creation of new woodland are all currently considered as mitigation options by the Council as they can also help to reduce the danger of both fluvial and surface water flooding.

4.33 However, all proposals for systems and solutions are sought in accordance with the latest National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems and in agreement with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Leicestershire.

4.34 In terms of moving forward, the Council is expecting to role forward the current planning policy wording (relevant parts of Policy 39 – Sustainable Drainage and Surface Water) set out in the current Local Plan, as it has been effective in managing growth within areas at risk of surface water flooding over the past few years, as well as implementing sustainable drainage solutions.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within current Local Plan Policy 39 Sustainable drainage and surface water.

- Only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan (relevant parts of) Policy 39 – Sustainable Drainage and Surface Water, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Flood risk

### What the government says:

- 4.35 The NPPF sets out fundamental tests to protect local communities and property from the risk of flooding. It states that when the tests are not met, it is quite clear that development should not be allowed.
- 4.36 The NPPF states that *‘the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change’*. It goes on to state that *‘inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere’*.
- 4.37 NPPF suggests that *‘strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards’*. Further, NPPF states that all Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk based approach to the location of all forms of development.

### What the Council says:

- 4.38 Within the Borough there are two main occurrences of Flood Zone 2 and 3; one along the River Sence corridor (which is a tributary of the River Soar), adjacent to the Grand Union Canal to the south of the Borough; and, one along The Wash Brook corridor which flows west to east between north Wigston and Oadby. There is one further lesser occurrence along the Evington Brook corridor north of Oadby and Stoughton Grange.
- 4.39 Land that is at risk of significant flooding is not appropriate for most forms of development. The Council is committed in providing new development that is not located within areas of significant flood risk, unless it cannot be avoided (and fully mitigated). The Council’s current policy stance set out within the Local Plan, suggests that development should not be located within areas at risk of flooding, unless certain policy criteria can be met. The policy goes on to state that development proposals within areas of flood risk must submit a detailed Flood Risk Assessment.
- 4.40 The Council’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2014) was prepared in liaison with the Environment Agency and has the aim of providing sufficient information for the application of the Sequential Test and to identify whether application of the Exception Test is likely to be necessary. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment involves a broad scale assessment of areas at risk of flooding within the Borough, be it fluvial or other forms of flooding and includes advice on sustainable drainage techniques and other flood risk solutions. The study also predicts likely increased flooding risk in these areas due to climate change.
- 4.41 The Council is currently in the process of deliberating whether to update the existing Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in its entirety or review and only up-date the existing study as and where necessary.
- 4.42 In terms of moving forward, the Council is proposing to role forward the current planning policy wording (relevant parts of Policy 38 – Climate Change, Flood Risk and Renewable Low Carbon Energy) set out in the Local Plan, as it has been effective in managing growth within areas at risk of flooding over the past few years.



Potential options:

- Continue with the existing criteria based policy approach set out within the current Local Plan (relevant parts of Policy 38 – Climate Change, Flood Risk and Renewable Low Carbon Energy).
- Remove the policy approach and only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Questions:

- Should the Council ‘roll forward’ the current policy approach set out in Local Plan (relevant parts of) Policy 38 – Climate Change, Flood Risk and Renewable Low Carbon Energy, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Remove the policy approach and only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance?
- Do you consider that the Council should be undertaking a full review of the existing Strategic Flood Risk Assessment or review and only up-date the existing study as and where necessary?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.





# ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (STRATEGIC CHALLENGES)

Habitats and biodiversity  
Climate change



*Oadby and Wigston*  
**Borough Council**  
*Leicestershire*

## **Habitats and Biodiversity**

### What the government says:

- 4.1 The NPPF states that *'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment'*. It also states that in order *'to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should: a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity'*.
- 4.2 National planning practice guidance calls for local authorities to work collaboratively with key partners to deliver strategic approaches to protecting and improving the natural environment based upon local priorities, seeking to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. The Government published a 25 Year Environment Plan in 2018, which sets out actions and objectives aiming to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, as well as to protect threatened species and to provide richer wildlife habitats.
- 4.3 National planning practice guidance also states that *'locally designated 'Local Wildlife Sites' and 'Local Geological Sites' are areas of substantive nature conservation value and make an important contribution to ecological networks and nature's recovery. They can also provide wider benefits including public access (where agreed), climate mitigation and helping to tackle air pollution. They can be in rural, urban or coastal locations, can vary considerably in size, and may comprise a number of separate sites. National planning policy expects plans to identify and map these sites, and to include policies that not only secure their protection from harm or loss but also help to enhance them and their connection to wider ecological networks. Local planning authorities can take a lead in establishing and maintaining partnerships and systems to identify, manage, enhance and safeguard local sites. The positive engagement and co-operation of land owners and their representative bodies can contribute significantly to the success of these partnerships'*.
- 4.4 Further, NPPF suggests that planning policies should protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity and be positive in identifying, pursuing and securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

### What the Council says:

- 4.5 The Borough area has a number of nationally and locally designated sites including Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and other valuable wildlife sites. These areas are invaluable to the Borough and will be protected from development.
- 4.6 Any development proposals that have a significant negative impact on important areas or result in significant habitat loss within the Borough will not be permitted for development. If a development proposal has a less significant impact that can be mitigated through appropriate mitigation measures, for example habitat re-creation, the proposal will not be refused from the outset and discussion will take place between the applicant, the Council the County Council, the Woodland Trust, the Environment Agency and Natural England.
- 4.7 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Candidate Local Wildlife Sites (cLWS) and Potential Local Wildlife Sites (pLWS) are non-statutory designated sites that occur within the Borough which have been designated due to the significance of the species and habitats present.



- 4.8 The Council is aware that Local Plans, and particularly those containing strategic policies, can be used to set out a suitable approach to both biodiversity and wider environmental net gain, how it will be achieved, and which areas present the best opportunities to deliver gains.
- 4.9 Such areas could include those identified in: natural capital plans; local biodiversity opportunity or ecological network maps; local green infrastructure strategies; strategic flood risk assessments; water cycle studies; air quality management plans; river basin management plans; and strategic protected species licensing areas. The Council will also consider local sites including where communities could benefit from improved access to nature.
- 4.10 The Council has current planning policy set out in the Local Plan relating to the Biodiversity and Geodiversity (Policy 37) that takes account of the recommendations as set out in the Council's Extended Phase One Habitat Survey (2017) as well as the relevant national policies at the time of publication.
- 4.11 In terms of moving forward, the Council is proposing to roll forward the current planning policy (relevant parts of Policy 37 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity) set out in the Local Plan, as it has been effective in managing growth within the Borough over the past few years. However, the policy approach will need to be updated to take into account relevant amendments to national Policy objectives, as well as the greater emphasis now placed on biodiversity net gain.
- 4.12 The Council is committed to achieving genuine and demonstrable biodiversity net gain through new development.

Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the current Local Plan, taking account of up-to-date national planning policy and guidance.
- Only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan (relevant parts of) Policy 37 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- In what ways do you consider that the Council could ensure genuine and demonstrable biodiversity net gains on all new development sites?
- Should the Council be making use of Natural England's Biodiversity Metric, or are there more appropriate ways of calculating biodiversity net gain?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

## Climate change

### What the government says:

- 4.13 The Government's Climate Change Act (2008) contains the world's first legally binding National commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions. It was passed by an overwhelming majority (463 to 3). The headline target was originally an overall cut in emissions of at least 80% by 2050, relative to 1990. However, in 2019 this was amended with a target of achieving net zero emissions (100%) by 2050.
- 4.14 In its bid to achieve sustainable development, in the context of sustaining the environment, the NPPF states that the planning system must *'protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy'*.
- 4.15 In terms of Plan making, the NPPF goes on to state that *'all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.16 The Council, together with all public and private sector agencies, has a responsibility to plan for and implement a strategic approach that will:
- Ensure new developments adapt to, and mitigate for, the potential impact of climate change upon the natural and built environment;
  - Increase the energy efficiency of all new developments and major refurbishment, by respecting nationally prescribed sustainable standards, thus reducing carbon emissions; and,
  - Proactively seek to utilise more renewable and low carbon energy solutions within the Borough.
- 4.17 Planning has an important part to play in mitigating the negative effects of, and adapting to, climate change. The Council's Local Plan will seek to give a strong policy steer, setting out what measures can be realistically taken at a local level. This will need to support the national transition to a low / zero carbon future and contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.18 The Council has a current Policy in the Local Plan relating to Climate Change, Flood Risk and Renewable Low Carbon Energy (Policy 38) that requires all development proposals to make use of sustainable resources and reduce their impact upon climate change by meeting high standards of sustainable design and construction. In addition, for all major developments, applications must be accompanied by a Sustainability / Energy Statement, demonstrating how harmful emissions will be addressed and minimised.
- 4.19 Since its adoption, the Policy has been effective in managing growth and the approach to tackling climate change within the Borough over the past few years. However, the Policy will need to be updated to take into account relevant amendments to national Policy objectives.

Potential options:

- Continue with the existing or similar Policy approach, as set out within the current Local Plan, ensuring that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance.
- Consider setting a requirement for sites (of a certain size) to provide a percentage of their energy requirements through onsite renewable / low carbon energy generation sources.
- Only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan (relevant parts of) Policy 38 – Climate Change, Flood Risk and Renewable Low Carbon Energy, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Should the Council draft a new Policy to address Climate Change and to take account of up to date national planning policy and guidance?
- Should the Council remove the Policy approach and only apply the Policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.





# INFRASTRUCTURE (STRATEGIC CHALLENGES)

Highway capacity  
Highway infrastructure need  
Sustainable transport  
Developer contributions  
Viability  
High quality communications  
Education  
Walking and cycling infrastructure  
Public transport



***Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire***



## **Highways capacity**

### What the government says:

- 4.1 The NPPF states that the *'planning system should actively manage patterns of growth... Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making'*.
- 4.2 The NPPF also suggests that planning policies should be prepared in cooperation with key stakeholders, including:
  - The local highways authority;
  - Other transport infrastructure providers and operators; and
  - Neighbouring councils.
- 4.3 Collaborative working on strategies and investment plans is deemed to be critical for supporting the delivery of sustainable transport options and aligned growth patterns throughout the country.
- 4.4 Further, NPPF suggest that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of Plan making so that the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed.

### What the Council says:

- 4.5 The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is a relatively small, compact and urbanised Borough that shares its boundaries with Leicester City, Blaby District and Harborough District. The entire urban area of the Borough sits within the area known as the Leicester Principal Urban Area (PUA). The Leicester PUA is defined as the built up area that is centred on Leicester. With the Borough area also being directly adjacent to the City of Leicester, the two share a strong spatial relationship, despite the differences in size and population.
- 4.6 The Borough is crossed by three main transport routes that serve the City of Leicester; the A6, the A5199 and the B5366. The B582 serves as the only transport route linking the settlements of Oadby and Wigston and one of only two routes linking Wigston with South Wigston, the other being B5418. The A563 links the very northern parts of Wigston and Oadby with Leicester City and provides a form of access to the M1 and M69 motorways. In general the Borough's access to main arterial routes such as the M1, A14 and the A47 is poor. Due to this poor access to main arterial routes and the fact that the three routes into Leicester City from the south pass through the Borough, the Borough's roads suffer from significant congestion, particularly at peak times.
- 4.7 Significant congestion is apparent at many of the junctions within the Borough, as well as along its routes. At peak times, traffic flows along a number of the main routes within the Borough are significantly hampered by congestion.



- 4.8 In recent history, there has been isolated and / or ad-hoc highway and transport improvements related to new developments, but nothing of a strategic scale that positively impacts the existing highway and transport infrastructure, and / or relieves pressure on the highways network. Therefore, new development continually adds pressure to the, already stretched, existing transport and highways network. Should this continue, there will become a time whereby the existing highway and infrastructure network just cannot cope with the demands placed upon it. As evidence for the current Local Plan, the Council, in partnership with Leicestershire County Council and other neighbouring authorities, produced the South East Leicestershire Transport Strategy (SELTS). The strategy set out how growth impacted the existing highway network and identified possible (larger scale) mitigation measures. It is expected that the SELTS work will be updated to take account of additional growth over the new Plan period.
- 4.9 To ensure that the Borough's highways and transport network can cope now, and for years to come, larger scale strategic intervention needs to occur. The proposals set out within the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan allows for this larger scale strategic intervention, however does rely on cooperation between all Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities to deliver it. The Strategic Growth Plan proposals are situated within other local authority areas, therefore the Council does not have sole control in terms of bringing the proposals forward. Further, the proposal would need to be brought forward by the County Council as the local highways authority.
- 4.10 Currently, the Council is working with all local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire to produce a strategic transport assessment (STA). Currently no transport modelling data information is available from this project, however when complete, the STA will set out the strategic transport need for each of the local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire. In addition, the Council will be working with the County Council as the local highways authority and neighbouring local authorities to produce more localised transport evidence to underpin the new Local Plan.

Potential options:

- Seek to deliver larger scale transport and highway interventions, for example, those set out within the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan, in an attempt to reduce congestion and traffic within the Borough area.
- Continue to implement smaller scale isolated remedial works that do not take account of the overall strategic highway network, and which could 'shift' congestion rather than mitigating it.

Questions:

- Should the Council and the County Council (as the local highways authority) be seeking delivery of larger scale transport and highway interventions in an attempt to reduce the current levels of congestion within the Borough area?
- Should the Council and the County Council (as the local highways authority) be accepting that congestion will only ever increase over the Plan period as and when new development comes forward?
- What transport and highway interventions do you think the Council and the County Council (as the local highways authority) should consider to improve congestion within the Borough area?



## Highways infrastructure need

### What the government says:

- 4.11 The NPPF states that the *‘planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making’.*
- 4.12 The NPPF also suggests that planning policies should be prepared in cooperation with key stakeholders, including:
- The local highways authority;
  - Other transport infrastructure providers and operators; and
  - Neighbouring councils.
- 4.13 Collaborative working on strategies and investment plans is deemed to be critical for supporting the delivery of sustainable transport options and aligned growth patterns throughout the country.

### What the Council says:

- 4.14 Currently, the Council is working with all local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire to produce a strategic transport assessment (STA). Currently no transport modelling data information is available from this project, however when complete, the STA will set out the strategic transport need for each of the local authorities within Leicester and Leicestershire. In addition, the Council will be working with the County Council as the local highways authority and neighbouring local authorities to produce more localised transport evidence to underpin the new Local Plan.
- 4.15 Following on from the Borough Council’s most recent Call for Sites exercise, the Council actively engaged with all key stakeholders and statutory consultees in summer 2021, highlighting to all parties from the outset, where the known potential growth options may come forward. The exercise took place to ascertain whether or not there were any ‘showstoppers’ that would prevent any of the potential sites coming forward should they be needed.
- 4.16 The Borough Council will continue active and ongoing engagement and dialogue throughout the preparation of the new Local Plan to ensure that the potential growth options that come forward are appropriately assessed and that any highways infrastructure requirements are factored into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Whole Plan Viability Assessment where known.
- 4.17 The Council’s current planning policy position on the delivery of Sustainable Transport and Initiatives is set out in Policy 26 of the adopted Local Plan. It recognises that the Council is committed to encouraging sustainable methods of transport. A key principle in achieving sustainable travel patterns and transport methods is the implementation of travel plans for developments that have a significant traffic impact. Accordingly, travel plans are currently expected in support of all major development proposals.



Potential options:

- Set out in Local Plan Policy that all residential developments that meet the 'large site' threshold of 10 or more dwellings, must provide contributions to support the delivery of local / strategic highway infrastructure solutions.
- Set out in Local Plan Policy that all residential developments regardless of size will be required to provide contributions to support the delivery of local / strategic highway infrastructure solutions.
- No policy wording encouraging or requiring the provision of contributions to support the delivery of local / strategic highway infrastructure solutions.

Questions:

- Should the Council require all development to provide contributions to support the delivery of local / strategic highway infrastructure solutions?
- Should the Council encourage applicants to provide contributions to support the delivery of local / strategic highway infrastructure solutions?
- What transport and infrastructure solutions do you consider are required so that growth can come forward in the future?
- Which option from the above set of potential options would be the most appropriate for the Borough area?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Sustainable transport

### What the government says:

- 4.18 The NPPF is clear in that it states that transport issues and infrastructure solutions should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals. In doing so, plans can seek to address any potential transport impacts, encourage more sustainable forms of movement and embrace changing transport technology. In addition, cross-boundary and agency solutions can also be better aligned to deliver the most sustainable growth patterns across the wider area.
- 4.19 With regards to sustainable transport solutions, the NPPF recognises that *‘opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use’* should be identified and pursued. The Framework also states that Plans should contain policies that seek to *‘provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans)’*.
- 4.20 The Department for Transport states that economic growth is one of the biggest challenges for transport. Transport’s role in this is hugely important – getting people to work and to services such as education and healthcare providers, as well to leisure activities and shops, is crucial to quality of life and wellbeing.

### What the Council says:

- 4.21 Due to the predominantly urban nature of the Borough and its spatial relationship with Leicester City and the wider strategic transport network, the Borough’s road network can become extremely congested, particularly at peak times. This leads to delays and at times, poor air quality in some local ‘hotspots’. The main routes into the City of Leicester, namely the A6 and the A5199, as well as the Boroughs east to west routes leading to the surrounding network, experience significant delays during peak-traffic times.
- 4.22 The Council’s adopted Local Plan recognises that the importance of addressing these issues via its spatial objectives relating to public transport in the Borough, as well as Policy 26 – Sustainable Transport and Initiatives. The Policy approach in the current Local Plan seeks to improve east west public transport links between South Wigston, Wigston and Oadby, and to establish fast and frequent public transport to key services, facilities and the retail centre of Leicester. It also safeguards the Potential Transport Route (former EDDR) in Oadby.
- 4.23 The Council’s current Local Plan also seeks to prioritise the use of ‘sustainable modes’ of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport, over private cars, through requiring all development to comply with Leicestershire County Council’s latest version of the Highways Design Guide, which includes car parking standards that apply to any proposals for development in the Borough.

### Potential options:

- Set out in Local Plan Policy that all residential and / or large scale non-residential developments must provide on-site infrastructure or an off-site contribution to support the delivery of local / strategic sustainable transport solutions.
- Continue with existing policy approach, as per the Council’s adopted Local Plan Policy 26: Sustainable Transport and Initiatives, ensuring that it is up-to-date with national planning policy and guidance.



- No policy wording encouraging or requiring the provision of on-site infrastructure or an off-site contribution to support the delivery of local / strategic sustainable transport solutions.

Questions:

- Should the Council continue with existing policy approach (or similar) in the current Local Plan?
- Should the Council develop a Local Policy requiring that all residential and / or large scale non-residential developments must provide on-site infrastructure or an off-site contribution to support the delivery of local / strategic sustainable transport solutions?
- Should the Council develop a Local Policy that actively promotes and encourages sustainable transport and discourages the use of the private car?
- Should the Council promote improved technology and traffic management solutions to address congestion, delays and air quality issues in the Borough?
- Should the Council allow for development and accept that junctions and links will continue to operate above capacity?
- Which option from the above set of potential options would be the most appropriate for the Borough area?
- Should the Council continue to safeguard the Potential Transport Route (former EDDR) in Oadby? If so, please provide justification / evidence of its need.

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate, please explain.





## Developer contributions

### What the government says:

- 4.24 The NPPF states that *'plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure). Such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan'*.
- 4.25 As set out in Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following three tests: a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; b) directly related to the development; and c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 4.26 Local planning authorities should seek to consider the implications that new growth will place upon an area and to ensure that the economic, environmental, social and other infrastructure demands are in place to support the needs of new residents, as well as the wider community.

### What the Council says:

- 4.27 Developer contributions (sometimes also referred to as planning obligations) are used to address specific planning issues arising from a development scheme that cannot be mitigated through planning conditions. Developer contributions are set out in legal agreements under the provisions of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). They may be agreed between the Council, the County Council, landowners and developers, or, they may also be unilaterally proposed by a landowner and agreed by the Council.
- 4.28 In addition to affordable housing and transport infrastructure, there will be substantial requirements for other forms of infrastructure such as new schools, health facilities, open space and community buildings, as well as other types of infrastructure associated with 'utilities' such as power, water and telecommunications. Some schools and health facilities in the Borough are operating close to, or above, their optimum capacity. Further growth in areas with capacity constraints has the potential for adverse impacts on new and existing communities and therefore the impact of new growth must be mitigated accordingly.
- 4.29 The Council's current Local Plan Policy 46 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions seeks to ensure that all new growth is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure. This is identified in policies associated with allocations and in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 4.30 The Council will always ensure that the appropriate enabling infrastructure is provided where any development has a negative impact. The Council will seek contributions through onsite provision, or via off-site contributions whether they be physical provision or financial contributions.

### Potential options:

- Tackle capacity constraints within some services and facilities, such as health facilities and schools, by seeking contributions from all new development to accommodate increases in the population, therefore necessitating increases in capacity for these services and facilities.
- Ensure that all new development has access to all necessary services and facilities.
- Seek to establish trigger points to meet the infrastructure needs in a timely and viable manner and have certainty of delivery and ongoing management.



- Ensure that all new development has access to all necessary utilities including water, power, and telecommunications.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Local Plan policy relating to Infrastructure and Developer Contributions ensuring that it is up-to-date with national policy and guidance?
- Should the Council seek to develop a new Policy approach to meeting its infrastructure and developer contribution needs?
- Should the Council only allow development where there is demonstrable capacity or certainty of delivery of infrastructure such as schools / health services etc?
- What do you consider to be the most important service or facility and should all development contribute towards the service or facility regardless of its cost?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Viability

### What the government says:

4.31 The NPPF states that *‘all viability assessments, including any undertaken at the plan-making stage, should reflect the recommended approach in national planning guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available’*. In addition to this, the NPPF also states that *‘planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability’*.

4.32 The importance of the role that viability assessments play in plan making and decision taking cannot be underestimated. The Government recognises that viability assessments require collaboration and discussions from all sectors to get it right. The National Planning Practice Guidance states that:

*‘The role for viability assessment is primarily at the plan making stage. Viability assessment should not compromise sustainable development but should be used to ensure that policies are realistic, and that the total cumulative cost of all relevant policies will not undermine deliverability of the plan.*

*It is the responsibility of plan makers in collaboration with the local community, developers and other stakeholders, to create realistic, deliverable policies. Drafting of plan policies should be iterative and informed by engagement with developers, landowners, and infrastructure and affordable housing providers.*

*Policy requirements, particularly for affordable housing, should be set at a level that takes account of affordable housing and infrastructure needs and allows for the planned types of sites and development to be deliverable, without the need for further viability assessment at the decision making stage.*

*It is the responsibility of site promoters to engage in plan making, take into account any costs including their own profit expectations and risks, and ensure that proposals for development are policy compliant. Policy compliant means development which fully complies with up to date plan policies. A decision maker can give appropriate weight to emerging policies. The price paid for land is not a relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan. Landowners and site purchasers should consider this when agreeing land transactions’.*

### What the Council says:

4.33 As the Plan preparation progresses, the Council will seek to engage with all key stakeholders and delivery partners to ensure that the development of new policies and allocations will allow the Council to explore options for delivering growth, whilst seeking the necessary infrastructure. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be used in order to identify the type of infrastructure required, its cost, delivery agency, phasing and funding sources.

4.34 Due to the complexity of the viability assessment production process, it will be crucial that the Council seeks to proactively engage with all sectors of the industry to ensure that sustainable developments and prosperous growth ensues. Ultimately, the Council needs to ensure that the new Local Plan contributes all it can to the local community, whilst ensuring that all development and growth proposed can be delivered.



4.35 The Council's current Local Plan policy seeks to ensure that all new growth is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure, services and facilities. This is identified in policies associated with allocations and in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Potential options:

- Seek to develop a Whole Plan Viability Assessment in collaboration with all key stakeholders, developers and the community.
- Seek to establish a prioritisation of infrastructure requirements in the Borough to ensure that critical infrastructure comes forward in a timely manner to support the delivery of successful and sustainable growth.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Local Plan policy relating to Infrastructure and Developer Contributions ensuring that it is up-to-date with national policy and guidance that takes into account the requirement to develop a whole Plan Viability Assessment?
- Should the Council seek to develop a new Policy approach to meeting its infrastructure and developer contribution needs that takes into account the requirement to develop a whole Plan Viability Assessment?
- Do you consider that there is a piece of infrastructure, service and / or facility that needs to be delivered regardless of the cost?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## High quality communications

### What the government says:

4.36 NPPF states that *'advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution)'*.

### What the Council says:

4.37 The Council is committed in ensuring it does all it can do in relation to providing local communities and businesses with high quality and reliable communications.

4.38 The current Local Plan does not set out any planning policy requiring development proposal to provide high quality communications, however it is expected that the new Local Plan will.

### Potential options:

- Require all development proposals to provide the infrastructure for 5G phone service and / or high speed fibre broadband to every new home or unit.
- Not have a requirement to provide the infrastructure for 5G phone service and / or high speed fibre broadband.

### Questions:

- Should the Council require all development proposals to provide the infrastructure for 5G phone service and / or high speed fibre broadband to every new home or unit?
- If the Council was to require all development proposals to provide the infrastructure for 5G phone service and / or high speed fibre broadband to every new home or unit, what evidence would the Council need to underpin / justify this requirement?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Education

### What the government says:

- 4.39 The NPPF states that *‘to ensure faster delivery of other public service infrastructure such as further education colleges, hospitals and criminal justice accommodation, local planning authorities should also work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted’*.
- 4.40 National Planning Practice Guidance states that local authorities with education responsibilities should forecast the need for new school places and report this to the Government through an annual school capacity survey. They consider natural population change such as birth rates, the effects of parental choice, and estimate additional needs from new housing with reference to pupil numbers from recent developments and other evidence.
- 4.41 The Department for Education has published the ‘Securing developer contributions for education’ guidance for local authorities on estimating pupil numbers from new housing and securing contributions for the creation of additional school places for all education phases (age 0-19 years and special educational needs) over the plan period’.

### What the Council says:

- 4.42 By working positively with Leicestershire County Council, as the Education Authority, the Council will seek to ensure that the Education Authority takes into account ‘Securing developer contributions for education’ guidance and as part of its ongoing engagement in the new Local Plan production.
- 4.43 The Council will continue to engage with all of its partners from the Local Education Authority, Public Health, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group / NHS, Leicestershire Police and other infrastructure delivery partners as the preparation of this new Local Plan progresses. Under the Duty to Co-operate process and at the appropriate time with individual site promoters, it will also be appropriate to assess the deliverability and ongoing management of infrastructure in the Borough.
- 4.44 Policy 3 – Regeneration Schemes and Large Scale Change, in the current Local Plan recognises the importance of collaboration and communication with all statutory consultees, in particular, in relation to assessing infrastructure needs to support the delivery of sustainable growth and place making. It states, *‘where regeneration schemes or large scale change is proposed, the earliest liaison between the applicant, the Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council Highways Department and Education Department (and Leicester City Council where relevant) is essential’*.
- 4.45 The Council will need to revisit and review its Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) as part of the production of the new Local Plan. The Council’s current IDP contains a ‘live’ infrastructure project list that will need updating. The document will identify all local and strategic infrastructure deemed necessary to support sustainable growth in the Borough over the new Plan period, including provision of education facilities.
- 4.46 At this time, a piece of work is being undertaken on behalf of all Leicester and Leicestershire Local Planning Authorities to consider the infrastructure requirements up to the year 2050, including those to meet educational need.





4.47 The Borough Council will seek to proactively engage with the Education Authority at every stage of production on the new Local Plan. Indeed, early engagement with the Education Authority suggests that developer contributions from all qualifying sites of 10 or more units (major developments) will be required to contribute towards the costs of additional educational infrastructure to meet that additional demand that will be placed upon school infrastructure over the next Plan period.

Potential options:

- Prioritise infrastructure based on viability and identified need, and include all items in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and relevant Policies, as appropriate.
- Ensure that the Developer Contributions mechanisms are fully up to date and take into account the Education Authority's desired approach to delivering Education Infrastructure over the Plan period.
- Require only large scale development to contribute towards education provision.
- Continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders, throughout both the Local Plan process and planning application process
- Only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Questions:

- Should the Council require all development proposals, regardless of size, to contribute towards delivery of educational infrastructure?
- Should the Council consider any of the other options set out above appropriate?
- Should the Council only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance?
- Do you consider that there are current issues with education provision within the Borough area?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Walking and cycling infrastructure

### What the government says:

- 4.48 In relation to the Government's recognition of the importance of the health agenda, the NPPF recognises that *'planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: ... c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling'*.
- 4.49 Further, the NPPF states that *'transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that: ... opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued...'*.
- 4.50 The NPPF also states that *'planning policies should: ... provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans)'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.51 It is inevitable that the Borough's population will need to travel for employment, leisure, recreation, education, and other reasons people choose to move and travel. With regard to the Borough's geographical location in relation to the City of Leicester and south-east Leicestershire, it is possible that many people could choose sustainable transport options for many of these journeys, provided safe and attractive infrastructure options are in place to encourage it.
- 4.52 The Council's current Local Plan Policy on Sustainable Transport and Initiatives (Policy 26) requires all new developments to be *'located and designed to; reduce the need to travel by the private motor vehicle; enhance the safety of pedestrians and other road users; encourage the use of cycling as a sustainable mode of transport; and, improve accessibility for residents, particularly in locations where there is poor transport choice and availability'*.
- 4.53 The Council is committed to doing all it can to positively impact the local communities health and well-being, and will seek the provision of high quality walking and cycling routes where appropriate and possible to do so. The Council will continue to work closely with the County Council and neighbouring authorities to ensure that there is both a local and strategic approach to walking and cycling infrastructure.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing or similar Policy approach, as set out within the current Local Plan
- Consider setting a requirement for sites (of a certain size) to provide on-site walking and cycling infrastructure solutions, and / or, off-site contributions towards walking and cycling infrastructure and sustainable transport solutions in the local area.

### Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan (relevant parts of) Policy 26 – Sustainable Transport and Initiatives, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?



- Should the Council draft a new Policy to address Walking and Cycling Infrastructure needs in the Borough, taking account of up to date national planning policy and guidance, as well as local evidence?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Public transport

### What the government says:

- 4.54 The NPPF recognises the crucial role that public transport and sustainable methods of transport will play in creating more sustainable places in the future. With regards to promoting sustainable transport, the document sets out that *‘the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth ... Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making’.*
- 4.55 The NPPF also states that *‘planning policies should: ... be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned’.*
- 4.56 The National Planning Practice Guidance states that *‘it is important for local planning authorities to undertake an assessment of the transport implications in developing or reviewing their Local Plan so that a robust transport evidence base may be developed to support the preparation and/or review of that Plan. A robust transport evidence base can facilitate approval of the Local Plan and reduce costs and delays to the delivery of new development, thus reducing the burden on the public purse and private sector. The transport evidence base should identify the opportunities for encouraging a shift to more sustainable transport usage, where reasonable to do so; and highlight the infrastructure requirements for inclusion in infrastructure spending plans linked to the Community Infrastructure Levy, section 106 provisions and other funding sources’.*
- 4.57 The Department for Transport (DfT) states that economic growth is one of the biggest challenges for transport. Transport’s role in this is hugely important – getting people to work and to services such as education and healthcare providers, as well to leisure activities and shops, is crucial to quality of life and wellbeing.
- 4.58 The DfT’s Circular 02/2013 *‘strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development’* is also a document that local planning authorities are required to refer to. It explains how the Highways Agency (Highways England) will engage with the planning system. It also gives details on how Highways Agency will fulfil its remit to be a delivery partner for sustainable economic growth whilst maintaining, managing and operating a safe and efficient strategic road network.

### What the Council says:

- 4.59 The Council is committed to encouraging sustainable travel patterns through all development proposals. A key principle in achieving sustainable travel patterns and transport methods is the implementation of travel plans for developments that will have a significant traffic impact.
- 4.60 Accordingly, travel plans have been expected in support of all major development proposals in recent years, having been required in Policy 26 – Sustainable Travel and Initiatives in the current Local Plan.
- 4.61 The Council will continue to work closely with Leicestershire County Council as the local highways authority and positively impact the provision of public transport in all new developments.



Potential options:

- Continue with the existing or similar Policy approach, as set out within the current Local Plan.
- Consider setting a requirement for sites (of a certain size) to provide on-site public transport infrastructure solutions, and / or, off-site contributions towards sustainable public transport solutions in the local area.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan (relevant parts of) Policy 26 – Sustainable Transport and Initiatives, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Should the Council draft a new Policy to address public transport infrastructure needs in the Borough, taking account of up to date national planning policy and guidance, as well as local evidence?
- Do you consider that the current public transport provision within the Borough area is adequate or does it need to be improved?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



# HOUSING (LOCAL CHALLENGES)

First home  
Technical housing standards  
Self and custom build  
Sustainable homes  
Housing choices  
Urban infill



***Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire***



## **First homes**

### What the government says:

- 4.1 First Homes are the Governments preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25 per cent of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.
- 4.2 The Government sets out that First Homes meet the ‘affordable housing’ definition set out in the NPPF and its delivery is a key way of providing affordable homes to local communities. The Government sets out that First Homes must be discounted by at least 30 per cent of the market value and must not be sold for a price higher than £250,000.
- 4.3 Further, Government states that First Homes must be provided on-site in line with the relevant Paragraphs of the NPPF.

### What the Council says:

- 4.4 Currently, the NPPF has not been amended to require the provision of First Homes within development proposals. All Government requirements are set out within NPPG guidance. However, the Council will seek to provide provision of First Homes through the new Local Plan.
- 4.5 It is expected that First Homes will be sought as part of the affordable housing contributions associated to all major development sites (10 or more dwellings). For example, Policy 13 – Affordable Housing of the Council’s current Local Plan, requires the provision of affordable homes at 30 per cent of the total number of new homes on all sites of 10 or more new homes within the settlement of Oadby. Therefore, if a site of 30 new homes required the provision of 9 affordable homes, 25 per cent of the 9 affordable home provision would need to be in First Home tenure; with the remaining a mix of social and / or affordable rent.
- 4.6 Current Government guidance allows local authority areas to increase the level of First Home discount from 30 per cent up to 50 per cent, however with the caveat that they must be able to robustly demonstrate why the higher level of discount is needed. It is not currently expected that the Council will increase the level of discount from the 30 per cent required by Government.

### Potential options:

- Include the requirement for First Homes within planning policy set out within the New Local Plan.
- Increase the level of discount from 30 per cent to either 40 or 50 per cent.

### Questions:

- Is there robust evidence to suggest that the level of discount should be increased within the Borough area?
- Do you consider that ‘First Homes’ will be of genuine benefit to the local communities within the Borough area?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

## Technical housing standards

### What the government says:

- 4.7 NPPF currently suggests that nationally described space standards should be applied through local planning policy where the requirement for utilising the internal space standard can be justified. NPPG states that *'where a local planning authority (or qualifying body) wishes to require an internal space standard, they should only do so by reference in their Local Plan to the nationally described space standard'*.
- 4.8 The above paragraph should now be put in the context of more up-to-date Government requirements in relation to internal space standards on new homes. Permitted development legislation has been amended in relation to new homes provided through the permitted development route. In short, all new homes provided through permitted development rights must comply with the nationally described space standards.

### What the Council says:

- 4.9 As illustrated above, there has been a recent Government shift when it comes to new homes provided through permitted development rights. Whereas previously, there was emphasis on local authorities producing evidence to justify the use of internal space standards on new homes, its use is now a Government requirement on all new homes provided through permitted development rights.
- 4.10 The Council's current Local Plan requires all new homes provided through conversions, sub-divisions, and / or changes of use, to comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards.
- 4.11 It is expected that the Council, at least role forward the requirement to comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards on all new homes provided through conversions, sub-divisions and / or changes of use. It is also expected that the Council takes on board the recent shift in Government thinking and requires all new homes provided within the Borough to comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards.

### Potential options:

- 'role forward' the requirement to comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards on all new homes provided through conversions, sub-divisions and / or changes of use.
- require that all new homes provided within the Borough comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards.

### Questions:

- should the Council continue with its current planning policy approach set out within Local Plan Policy 11 Housing Choices, that requires compliance with the Governments Technical Housing Standards on new homes provided through conversions, sub-divisions and / or changes of use?
- should the Council require that all new homes provided within the Borough comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Self and custom build

### What the government says:

- 4.12 The Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 places a duty on local planning authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced plots of land to provide self-build and custom house building projects. The Act also places a duty local planning authorities to have regard to these registers when carrying out planning and other functions.
- 4.13 NPPG suggests that *'relevant authorities must give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area. The level of demand is established by reference to the number of entries added to an authority's register during a base period'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.14 The Council's current Local Plan has a specific planning policy relating to the delivery of self-build and custom build plots (Policy 14 – Self Build and Custom Build). The policy approach is to support the provision of self-build and custom build plots.
- 4.15 It is expected that the Council 'roles forward' the existing policy approach of the current Local Plan into the new Local Plan, ensuring that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the Local Plan that seeks to support plot provision.
- Strengthen the policy approach to require self-build and custom build plots on all major development sites.

### Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 14 – Self Build and Custom Build, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Are there any other options available to the Council that would be appropriate?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

## Sustainable homes

### What the government says:

- 4.16 According to the Government, both existing and new homes, account for 20 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions in the United Kingdom. It goes onto suggest that the new homes being built now will exist in the year 2050, therefore it is a must that standards set now for homes put us on the right path in meeting the 2050 net zero emitter target for the United Kingdom.
- 4.17 In January 2021, Government published its response in relation to the Future Homes Standard consultation that took place during 2019 and 2020. The main thrust of the Governments published response was a move to a fabric first approach to all new development, in particular new homes. Not only will Government expect higher standards of thermal insulation, but also better use of renewable energy generation and more modern methods of heating, for example heat pumps and heat networks.
- 4.18 NPPF states that the *'planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate...it should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure'*.
- 4.19 NPPF suggests that new development should be planned in a way that can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Further, new development should take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing, and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

### What the Council says:

- 4.20 The Council is committed in seeking the highest levels of design and sustainability in all new development. A number of the Government requirements in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, will come through the Building Control process, however planning can play an important role also.
- 4.21 The Council considers that being proactive when it comes to sustainability and climate change, is the only way forward into the future. With this in mind, the Council would expect all new development proposals to have elements of (or at least the enabling infrastructure for) the following built into its design and build:
- Solar photovoltaic energy producing technology
  - Electric vehicle charging points
  - Ground and / or air source heat pumps
  - Wind energy producing technology
  - Water energy producing technology
  - Grey water recycling
- 4.22 In addition to the above, the Council would expect all new development to make use of the existing environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage by taking account of location, orientation, landform, layout, massing and landscaping.
- 4.23 The Council will also expect new homes to be built using the most up to date and energy efficient technologies, for example modular technologies.



Potential options:

- Require all new homes to have at least one of the elements listed above (in bullets) built into its design and build.
- Require all new homes to have all of the elements listed above (in bullets) built into its design and build.
- Require all new homes to have the enabling infrastructure for all of the elements listed above (in bullets) built into its design and build.
- Not require any further elements of sustainability to that expected through the building control process.

Questions:

- Which of the above potential options do you consider to be the most appropriate?
- Are there any elements of sustainable home design that have been missed from the bullet list above, that you consider would be effective in helping battle climate change and reducing energy usage?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Housing choices

### What the government says:

- 4.24 With regards to the Government's objective of delivering a sufficient supply of homes, the NPPF states that in order to significantly boost the supply of homes, *'it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay'*.
- 4.25 The NPPF goes on to say, *'the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes)'*.
- 4.26 The NPPF suggests that local planning authorities should deliver a wide choice of high quality homes; they should widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

### What the Council says:

- 4.27 The Council wants to provide the most appropriate housing solutions for all of its existing population, as well as those future populations aspiring to live within the Borough.
- 4.28 Specific note will be taken of the need for bungalows and retirement accommodation within the Borough. Historically the Borough has seen very little new provision of retirement accommodation or bungalows, and would therefore, in principle, actively support the development of bungalows in appropriate locations.
- 4.29 The Council's current Local Plan approach in Policy 11 – Housing Choices, is already committed to providing new homes that are 'fit for purpose' and promote healthy living conditions, and, that they are appropriate for modern living and requirements. The Policy also supports the delivery of all new homes, regardless of type or tenure, to be of a size that allows sufficient space for all of its proposed inhabitants to live comfortably and sustainably.
- 4.30 This Policy approach has been successful in providing a wide range and choice of new homes and therefore, the Council will look to continue this approach, although amendments may well be appropriate to ensure that it is up to date with National and Local policy and guidance. For example, one additional consideration that must be taken into account is the need for new residential units to take into account the desire of people to work from home and to therefore have sufficient space to do so, without having to make their living spaces into 'make-shift' home office spaces.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the current Local Plan, with wording amendments to allow for National and local Policy and Guidance updates to be reflected.
- Strengthen the policy approach to require more bungalows, residential care facilities and homes fit for purpose to accommodate the full spectrum of health inequalities for people of all ages





Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 11 – Housing Choices, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Are any of the other options set out above appropriate?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Urban infill

### What the government says:

- 4.31 NPPF states that *'planning policies should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land'*.
- 4.32 NPPF goes on to suggest that planning policies should recognise that some undeveloped land can perform important functions, and that substantial weight should be given to the development of suitable brownfield land. Further, national policy sets out that local authorities should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, if such development helps meet identified needs.
- 4.33 Government also sets out that local planning authorities should be proactive in their approach to helping bring forward suitable development land, whether the land is held in public ownership or not.

### What the Council says:

- 4.34 As set above, one of the key principles of the NPPF is the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land). The definition of previously developed land excludes residential garden land or any other open amenity space around buildings.
- 4.35 With the Borough being relatively compact and urban in nature, appropriate infill development has consistently come forward year on year and it makes a valuable contribution towards the Council's provision of, both, residential and other uses. It however must be appropriately managed as the majority of previously developed land within the Borough is situated within the built up urban areas. It is this land that can be subject to urban infill development proposals.
- 4.36 Current Local Plan policy manages inappropriate infill development that has a detrimental impact on the locale in which it is proposed. The Council also manages development that seeks to split existing residential plots. Detrimental infill development or splitting of existing plots can have a significant detrimental impact on the character of a location and can also contribute towards the loss of heritage and amenity space.
- 4.37 Current Local Plan Policy 15 – Urban Infill Development seeks to manage inappropriate infill development and splitting of existing plots. The policy also makes use of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment evidence base.
- 4.38 It is expected that the Council 'roles forward' the existing policy approach of the Local Plan into the new Local Plan. However, may amend the wording to be 'stronger' in managing development in areas that are of more significance, for example conservation areas, or high value landscape areas.



Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the current Local Plan that seeks the appropriate management of infill development and proposals that seek to split existing plots, taking account of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment.
- Strengthen the policy approach to be 'stronger' in managing detrimental development in areas that are of more significance, for example conservation areas, or high value landscape areas.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 15 – Urban Infill, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Are there any areas within the Borough where the policy relating to Infill development and the splitting of plots should be stronger or should not apply? For example, remove the 'in principle' support for infill development or splitting of plots.
- Should 'in principle' support for infill development or splitting of plots be applied across the entire Borough area, regardless of what the proposal site is, or where it is located?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



# DESIGN AND CHARACTER (LOCAL CHALLENGES)

High quality design  
High quality construction and use of materials  
Landscape and character  
Local green spaces  
Design codes  
Renewable and low carbon energy production  
Public realm  
Shop fronts (including shutters)



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*

## **High quality design**

### What the government says:

- 4.1 The NPPF makes it clear that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning system should achieve. NPPF states that *'the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'*.
- 4.2 Government sets out that all development should; function well and add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping; be sympathetic to local character and history; establish or maintain a strong sense of place; and, create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible that promote health and well-being, with high standards of amenity.
- 4.3 National policy also sets out that planning permission *'should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents'*.
- 4.4 In order to ensure that design follows certain key principles, the Government produced the National Design Guide. According to Government, the guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. The guide sets out 10 key principles that should help shape places and support the inclusion of high quality design in all new development. In addition, the guide sets out an overarching framework from which more locally specific design guides can be formulated, to meet the priorities of local communities.

### What the Council says:

- 4.5 High quality design, and the use of high quality materials is paramount in ensuring that new development creates attractive, buildings and spaces that are sustainable, well connected, and are in character within the locale they are set. It is imperative that new development provides buildings and spaces that people enjoy now and in the future.
- 4.6 Design in planning is about making places welcoming, easy and efficient for people to use in terms of functionality, durability, and accessibility. High quality and inclusive design should reflect local character and distinctiveness and be the basis for shaping balanced, safe, healthy and integrated communities. It is important to recognise that design is not just about the visual and functional aspects of a development but also its influence on social and environmental wellbeing.
- 4.7 Any development proposal should deliver the highest possible quality of design and use of materials. The Council will seek to ensure that all new buildings and spaces are 'fit for purpose' and are appropriate for healthy living.
- 4.8 The Council will also seek to ensure that any development proposal will have a significant positive effect on the community in which it is situated.



4.9 Current planning policy relating to design, set out in the current Local Plan, is somewhat criteria based and seeks the inclusion of good design through a number of key (generic) criteria. It is expected that the Council will continue to seek high quality design through a criteria based policy (in the new Local Plan, however will also seek the production of more locally specific design guides and / or codes that supplement adopted policy.

Potential options:

- Produce a criteria based design policy within the new Local Plan that is generic in nature, however is focussed on a number of key design principles.
- Produce locally specific design principles through the production of local design guides and / or codes.

Questions:

- What is good design to you?
- Should the Council be producing a criteria based policy, and if so, what criteria / design principles should be included?
- Should the Council be producing locally specific design guides or rely on the National Design Guide?
- How can the Council ensure that high quality design reflects the character of an area and the needs of the local community?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.





## High quality construction and use of materials

### What the government says:

- 4.10 NPPF states the *'creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve'*.
- 4.11 Further, new development should; be *'sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change'*...and also should *'establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit'*.
- 4.12 In addition, NPPF suggests that local planning authorities should always seek to ensure that the quality of any development approved is not materially diminished between permission through to completion.

### What the Council says:

- 4.13 The Council is committed in ensuring that the standards of construction and materials are of the highest quality and last the test of time. Also, the Council is committed in ensuring that all new development uses materials and construction methods that conserve and enhance the environment, landscape and character area in which the development is located.
- 4.14 Through the use of policy set out in the new Local Plan, it is expected that the Council will require all new development to be of the highest quality both in terms of construction and use of materials. To ensure that the quality of development is maintained through the planning process and construction process, it is expected that the Council will monitor and use enforcement powers where necessary to do so.
- 4.15 The Council wants the Borough area to be a shining example of how high quality design, high quality construction, and use of high quality materials can make an important positive impact on local communities, both in place making but also health and wellbeing.

### Potential options:

- Require all new development to make use of the highest quality methods of construction and use the highest quality materials, and seek to refuse development proposals that do not provide this.
- Do not have a requirement for all new development to make use of the highest quality methods of construction and use the highest quality materials.

### Questions:

- Which one of the above potential options do you consider to be the most appropriate?
- If you consider that the new Local Plan should require the highest levels of construction and material use, how do you consider that the Council could best require, monitor and enforce this?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Landscape character

### What the government says:

- 4.16 NPPF suggests that planning policies should set out how the Council will seek to protect and enhance areas, such as, the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.
- 4.17 Further, the NPPF states that *'planning policies should ensure that developments...are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)'*.
- 4.18 NPPF also suggests that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, as well as recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

### What the Council says:

- 4.19 It is vitally important that the Council recognises and protects the Borough's most distinctive and attractive landscapes through careful and consistent planning policies. The Borough contains ten Conservation Areas, as well as a number of nationally and locally listed buildings and important urban and rural character areas.
- 4.20 Together with the Council's Conservation Area Appraisals, the Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment assists the Council in ensuring that development proposals in the most distinctive urban and rural character areas in the Borough are not only informed by and sympathetic to townscape and landscape character, but also, they contribute towards the regeneration, restoration, maintenance and conservation of the areas impacted.
- 4.21 The Council is committed to ensuring that the Borough areas rich, diverse and historic landscape and character are protected and enhanced so that they continue to play vital roles in both the local community and the local biodiversity. The Council's current planning policy relating to Landscape and Character, set out within the Local Plan, has been successful in managing growth within protected environments, as well as enhancing protected environments where possible to do so.
- 4.22 It is expected that the Council 'roles forward' the existing policy approach of the current Local Plan Policy 44 – Landscape and Character, into the new Local Plan, ensuring that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the current Local Plan as it has been successful in managing growth and enhancing protected or sensitive environments.



Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 44 – Landscape and Character, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Are there any other options available to the Council that would be appropriate?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Local Green Spaces

### What the government says:

- 4.23 The Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. The NPPF states that *'the designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.'*
- 4.24 Further, the NPPF sets out tests that should be applied when land is being considered for Local Green Space designation.
- 4.25 Government is clear that Local Green Space designations should not be used in a way that undermines the aim of plan making and sustainable growth and should only be used to protect areas of green open land that are special to local communities.

### What the Council says:

- 4.26 The Council is committed in protecting and enhancing areas of green open space that are important and / or special to the local communities that live within the Borough area.
- 4.27 Through the previous Local Plan process the Council undertook a call for sites process in relation to Local Green Space designation. A number of sites were put forward for assessment, with the majority of the sites submitted being designated and illustrated on the Adopted Policies Map.
- 4.28 It is expected that all of the sites currently designated as areas of Local Green Space will continue their designation, however a review assessment will take place to ensure that each of the sites continue to function as Local Green Spaces and meet the criteria set out in national planning policy.
- 4.29 In addition, it is expected that the Council 'roles forward' the existing policy approach of the Local Plan Policy 45 – Local Green Space, into the new Local Plan. The current policy approach has proven successful in managing the Local Green Space designations.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the current Local Plan as it has been successful in managing the Local Green Space Designations.
- Remove certain areas designated as Local Green Spaces should evidence dictate a need to do so.
- Designate new areas of Local Green Spaces should evidence dictate a need to do so.

### Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 44 – Landscape and Character, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Do any of the currently designated sites need removing from the Local Green Space designation?



- Are there any new areas that should be considered for Local Green Space designation?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Design codes

### What the government says:

- 4.30 NPPF suggests that all new development should follow the design principles set out in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Government suggests that a *'design code is a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that are visual and numerical wherever possible to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area'*. It goes on to suggest that the National Model Design Code is *'a toolkit to guide local planning authorities on the design parameters and issues that need to be considered and tailored to their own context when producing design codes and guides, as well as methods to capture and reflect the views of the local community from the outset, and at each stage in the process'*.
- 4.31 NPPF also suggests that local planning authorities should be producing area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans, to ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.
- 4.32 Further, NPPF states that *'to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.33 The Council is committed to ensuring that high quality design is the 'norm' rather than the exception.
- 4.34 Historically, it has been challenging for local planning authorities to refuse poor design, as at a national level, there hasn't necessarily been the policy backing. However, with the Government's recent publications and strengthened policy position in relation to high quality design and the use of design coding, it is expected that poor design will be phased out of development proposals going forward.
- 4.35 In line with Government planning policy and guidance, the Council will produce local design codes for the Borough area. Currently there are no details in terms of how many design codes there will be, what parts of the Borough area the design codes will relate to, or what level of detail the design codes will hold; however, the Council will ensure that any design codes produced will be in conformity with the National Model Design Code and will be useful, relevant and innovative.
- 4.36 It is expected that the new Local Plan will contain a policy relating to local design codes, however will leave the detail to the local design codes themselves.

### Potential options:

- Produce a smaller number of more generic local design codes that cover larger areas of the Borough area.
- Produce a larger number of local design codes that are less generic and cover smaller more bespoke areas of the Borough, so that individual character areas are taken account of.
- Keep any local design codes produced, quite high level, illustrative and less prescriptive, rather than having local design codes that are more detailed and prescriptive.





Questions:

- Which of the above potential options relating to local design codes do you consider to be the most appropriate for the Borough area?
- Which areas / parts of the Borough do you consider would benefit from the production of local design codes?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Renewable and low carbon energy production

### What the government says:

- 4.37 The NPPF states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future, which will help combat climate change. It goes on to suggest that the planning system should support the provision of renewable and low carbon energy technologies.
- 4.38 The NPPF defines renewable and low carbon energy as *‘energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels)’*.
- 4.39 The NPPF also states that in order *‘to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should: a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts); b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and c) identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers’*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.40 The Council, together with all public and private sector agencies, has a responsibility to plan for and implement a positive strategic approach that will:
- Ensure new developments adapt to, and mitigate for, the potential impact of climate change upon the natural and built environment;
  - Increase the energy efficiency of all new developments and major refurbishment, by respecting nationally prescribed sustainable standards, thus reducing carbon emissions; and,
  - Proactively seek to utilise more renewable and low carbon energy solutions within the Borough.
- 4.41 When it comes to tackling climate change and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure, the Council wants to be proactive. With this in mind, the Council would expect all new development proposals to factor renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure into its design and build. For example, decentralised renewable or low carbon energy supply systems, or individual plot / site energy production utilising wind, sun and water energy.

### Potential options:

- Require all new buildings to have at least one renewable and low carbon energy producer built into its design and build.
- Require all new developments to have decentralised renewable or low carbon energy supply systems built into its design and build.
- Not require any further elements of sustainability to that expected through the building control process.



Questions:

- Which of the above potential options do you consider to be the most appropriate?
- Are there any elements of renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure that have not been mentioned, however should be a fundamental part of new development design and build?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Public realm

### What the government says:

- 4.42 The NPPF makes it clear that creating high quality places is fundamental to what the planning system should achieve. NPPF states that *‘the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities’*.
- 4.43 Government sets out that all development should; function well and add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping; be sympathetic to local character and history; establish or maintain a strong sense of place; and, create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible that promote health and well-being, with high standards of amenity.
- 4.44 NPPF suggests that all new development should follow the design principles set out in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Both the guide and the code, focus on public spaces and public realm and suggest that public spaces should be generous, well designed and contribute positively to the local context.

### What the Council says:

- 4.45 Public realm is the public spaces between buildings and structures that are of the built and / or natural environment, that are open and freely accessed by the public. Public realm also provides the context and setting for existing and new development. It includes hard and soft surfacing materials, street furniture (including lighting, benches, litter bins), traffic and pedestrian signage, way finding and control, trees, and landscaping.
- 4.46 Any public realm scheme proposed within the Borough area must ensure that it is designed and developed to the highest standards. All schemes must improve the attractiveness of the streets and make the areas more desirable places to visit, to shop, work and live.
- 4.47 The use of high quality materials presents an attractive and welcoming environment, and they also ensure longevity against deterioration. The Council is committed in ensuring that all development proposals that have an impact on public realm, display the highest levels of design and material use, and not only maintain a sense of place and character, but improve it.
- 4.48 The Council is also committed in ensuring that the pedestrian is prioritised over any other form of movement or transport within a public realm setting. In March 2021, the Council published its latest supplementary planning document relating to all things public realm within the Borough. The document sets out the Council’s proactive attitude towards improving public realm and public spaces in the Borough area.
- 4.49 The document suggests that with the Borough being diverse in so many ways, a single Borough-wide approach to Public Realm would be inappropriate and too generic. Standard public realm design principles and use of materials for the entire Borough would stifle the rich diversity and heritage, restrict unique identity and curb innovative design. The document therefore focuses on a number of topic areas and has best practice design principles for each, for example, parks and recreation grounds, conservation areas, town and district centres, canal tow paths, new development etc.



4.50 Well-designed public realm will make best use of the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area, the way that it functions and will seek to meet the demands of the wider community.

4.51 The Council's current policy approach set out in the Local Plan is fairly generic in its approach, however does make reference to the principles set out in the Public Realm Supplementary Planning Document. Due to the detail contained within the recently published Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document, it is expected that a similar approach is taken with the policy contained within the new Local Plan, ensuring that it is up-to-date with national planning policy and guidance.

Potential options:

- Continue with the more generic policy approach, however have more detailed public realm principles set out within the Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document.
- Have detailed policy principles set out in the new Local Plan.
- Do not have a specific public realm policy and deal with provision of and design of public realm within the more generic design policies and design codes.

Questions:

- Which of the above potential options do you consider is the most appropriate?
- What do you consider to be the most important aspects of public realm?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Shop fronts (including shutters)

### What the government says:

- 4.52 The NPPF states that *'planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places'* and with regards to town centres, National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) suggests that *'local authorities will also need to consider and address any wider impacts in relation to crime, noise and security'*.
- 4.53 The NPPG highlights a number of indicators that are seen as useful when assessing the health of town centres and planning for their future:
- *'diversity of uses*
  - *proportion of vacant street level property*
  - *commercial yields on non-domestic property*
  - *customers' experience and behaviour*
  - *retailer representation and intentions to change representation*
  - *commercial rents*
  - *pedestrian flows*
  - *accessibility – this includes transport accessibility and accessibility for people with different impairments or health conditions, as well as older people with mobility requirements.*
  - *perception of safety and occurrence of crime*
  - *state of town centre environmental quality*
  - *balance between independent and multiple stores*
  - *extent to which there is evidence of barriers to new businesses opening and existing businesses expanding*
  - *opening hours/availability/extent to which there is an evening and night time economy offer'.*
- 4.54 The Government has made recent changes to the Use Classes Order (2015) with the latest updates coming into force in July 2021. In relation to retail and town centres, the Government is keen to allow greater flexibility of uses and provide a greater mix of uses on the high street and increase footfall, and bring community uses closer to communities.
- 4.55 The National Design Guide (2021) sets out that *'National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. This National Design Guide, and the National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools'.*
- 4.56 The National Design Guide also states that *'well-designed public and shared amenity spaces feel safe for people who occupy the buildings around them, and also for visitors and passers-by. They help to overcome crime and the fear of crime. Careful planning and design create the right conditions for people to feel safe and secure, without the need for additional security measures'.*





### What the Council says:

- 4.57 Corporate branding and signage will not always be appropriate and in sensitive locations (for example within and adjoining Conservation Areas) and applicants will be encouraged to use alternative designs and approaches that are in keeping with the local area. The colours used for shop fronts should be consistent with the local area in which it is located and should not be stark in contrast.
- 4.58 In order to ensure a high standard of shop front design, the Council's current Local Plan includes Policy 32 – Shop Fronts, that requires all proposals to provide detailed elevation drawings of the proposed shop fronts (to include shutter detail if required in accordance with the policy) in relation to the building within which it is to be located, as well as showing adjacent shop fronts and buildings for contextual purposes.
- 4.59 Whilst the attractiveness of a building should not be compromised, in accordance with guidance set out in the National Design Guide (2021), consideration should be given to natural surveillance and safety and security when designing new shop fronts. This also applies to the size and height of any canopies which should not compromise pedestrian or vehicular safety or visibility.
- 4.60 It is expected that the Council 'roles forward' the existing policy approach of the Local Plan Policy 32 – Shop Fronts, into the new Local Plan. The current policy approach has proven successful in managing the Shop Fronts in the Borough, although wording amendments will be made to take account of the National Design Guide, the National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the Local Plan as it has been successful in managing the Shop Fronts in the Borough.
- Remove the policy approach and only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

### Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 32 – Shop Fronts, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Should the Council remove the policy approach and only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



# ECONOMY, RETAIL AND LEISURE (LOCAL CHALLENGES)

Cafes, restaurants etc (night time economy and dwell time)

Delivering retail

Local impact threshold

Primary and secondary frontages

Tourism



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*

It should be noted that, on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021, the government introduced a new ‘permitted development right’ (PDR) which allowed for the conversion of a wide range of buildings and units in buildings currently in commercial, business and service use to residential use without requiring planning permission granted by Local Authorities. This expands the existing right to convert offices, shops and financial and professional services premises into residential use by increasing the size limit of what can be converted and adding to the range of premises potentially eligible for conversion, which will now include restaurants, cafes, light industrial units, clinics, nurseries, day centres, gyms and recreation centres.

The wide-ranging PDR expansion will have implications for local planning policies contained within Local Plans, however the Council will continue to produce, publish and adopt related local planning policy as national planning policy and guidance can change quickly without notice.

### **Cafés, restaurants etc (night time economy and dwell time)**

#### What the government says:

- 4.1 The NPPF identifies building a strong and competitive economy as a key objective for the planning system. To help achieve this, it suggests that Local Plans are required to ensure that a sufficient level of land is available for an appropriate range of economic uses to support growth and innovation and further, that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.
- 4.2 It goes on to state that *‘planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation’*.
- 4.3 NPPG suggests that *‘a wide range of complementary uses can, if suitably located, help to support the vitality of town centres, including residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure/entertainment, healthcare and educational development’*.
- 4.4 Cafés, restaurants and the night time economy – including bars, pubs and hot food takeaways, play an important role in a vibrant and healthy town centre that caters to all ages and demographics. It is however important that a balance is achieved between a healthy night time economy and potential wider impacts associated to crime, noise and security.

#### What the Council says:

- 4.5 Hot food takeaways, restaurants and cafes can contribute positively to both the daytime and night time economies of town centres, district centres and local centres, but can also have a detrimental impact on each centre if not managed appropriately. Detrimental impact can come in the form of highway congestion and parking problems, litter, odours and anti-social behaviour. Hot food takeaways, restaurants and cafes can also contribute to adverse health outcomes.
- 4.6 Local Plan Policy 36 ‘Hot Food Takeaways’ seeks to avoid the potential adverse impact of hot food takeaways by assessing each proposal on its own merits according to the impact that it has on the vitality and viability of the frontage or block of units of which it forms a part of.



- 4.7 Policy 36 also looks at the cumulative effect of the potential undesirable outcomes, mentioned above, where takeaways are already present within the vicinity. The amenity of the area is also considered in regards to the proposed opening hours, the impact of noise, public health, disturbance, design (including ventilation), smell and litter, traffic generation, parking problems and highway safety.
- 4.8 It is expected that a similar policy approach to that of the current Local Plan is followed in the new Local Plan, however broadening its scope to include cafes and restaurants. The Council is aware that changing shopping habits of local communities, for example buying more products 'on-line', will impact the need for the current retail dominance within the Borough's main centres. The Council will have to be flexible in its policy approach going forward, which may well mean more provision of cafes, bars and restaurants.

Potential options:

- Retain Local Plan Policy 36 as it is, which focuses on hot food takeaway only, and seek to retain a balance between the daytime and night time economy in our town, district and local centres with very little change to the tests and requirements, as they stand.
- Broaden the policy approach to take account of hot food takeaways, restaurants and cafes and other relevant uses.
- Remove the local policy position in relation to the provision of hot food takeaways.

Questions:

- Empty A1 Retail use units are often the subject of Change of Use planning applications to A5 Hot Food Takeaways. Should the Local Authority continue to protect empty A1 retail units until they can be filled?
- Should the current Policy position set out within Local Plan Policy 36, be broadened to appropriately manage the provision of hot food takeaways, and encourage greater provision restaurants, cafes and other relevant uses?
- How big of a role do you think the Council should play in relation to the provision of hot food takeaways and the potential negative impacts on local communities health and well-being?



## Delivering retail

### What the government says:

- 4.9 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality. Local planning authorities are expected to objectively identify sites for retail land. Ensuring town centres are recognised and protected. Identifying sufficient land to meet the retail needs of the Borough area should be approached positively.
- 4.10 The NPPF, updated in July 2021, states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. They should promote competitive centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer that reflects the individuality of each distinct centre.

### What the Council says:

- 4.11 The prime function of Wigston town centre and Oadby and South Wigston district centres are designated shopping locations. The premise in all three of these centres has been the retention of a high proportion of retail units, which was seen as essential to maintaining their success and effectiveness to the local communities, however should this premise remain going forward if local communities shopping habits have changed?
- 4.12 It is also vital to ensure that each centre functions for longer hours during the day. Centres with units that are closed during the day do not give the appearance of being vibrant and thriving retail centres which encourage greater footfall and new attractive independent and innovative retail businesses. Focusing opportunities within the town and district centres and ensuring a balance of development types, including retail, commercial, leisure, and residential will result in town and district centres where people want to live and visit.
- 4.13 In 2016 the Council commissioned Nathaniel Litchfield & Partners (NLP) to undertake a Retail Capacity Study for the Borough, to serve as local evidence to support local planning policy. This evidence base underpins the Council's current Local Plan, in particular Policy 22 – Delivering Retail. One of the key areas of the Retail Capacity Study was the setting out of current convenience and comparison retail capacity in Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston and the potential capacity for additional convenience and comparison retail floor space over the period up to 2031.
- 4.14 Current Local Plan Policy 22 – Delivering Retail sets out the capacities / need that was identified for each of the Borough areas main centres in relation to retail provision up to the year 2031.
- 4.15 It is expected that the Council follows a similar policy approach in the new Local Plan in relation to retail provision, as it does in the current Local Plan. For example, an evidence base study will be undertaken to ascertain the level of retail capacities / need for each of the centres; then a policy will identify and allocate land to meet the capacities / need identified.
- 4.16 However, there are a number of factors / challenges that need bearing in mind, for example;
- changes in consumer purchasing patterns with the growth of online retail.
  - since the current Local Plan was adopted in 2019, the Covid-19 pandemic has arrived and has affected the way we live and shop. It has been reported that there has been a dramatic impact on the National economy with businesses failing and shops on our high streets closing.



- in August 2021 the Government extended Permitted Development Rights further to allow for the conversion of units that fall under the recently created E use class (which combines the previously used A1, A2, A3, B1a, B1b, B1c, D1 and D2 uses). This means that a wide range of town centre uses can now be converted to other uses through the prior approval process.

4.17 The above mentioned challenges, will significantly affect the ability of the Council to proactively and strategically manage its town and district centres, in accordance with the aim of section 7 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres' as set out in the recently updated NPPF.

Potential options:

- maintain the (or utilise a similar) current policy approach set out within Local Plan Policy 22 Delivering Retail.
- commission a new retail capacity study that takes account of more recent challenges.
- Not commission a new retail capacity study and continue to use the outcomes of the previous study.

Questions:

- Should the Council be commissioning an up-to-date retail capacity study for each of its main centres?
- Although Permitted Development Rights have been extended, the NPPF retains the statement that planning policies should support town centres and take a positive role in their growth, management and adaptation. With that in mind, should the Council continue to protect the Borough areas retail offering in the new Local Plan?
- Is there any flexibility that could be woven into planning policy to reflect the potential economic uncertainty ahead?
- Should the Council be applying greater flexibility in relation to the proportion of retail units...should the Council ne allowing greater proportions of cafes, bars and restaurants within its main centres?





## Local impact thresholds

### What the government says:

- 4.18 The NPPF states that *'when assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floor space threshold.'*
- 4.19 It goes on to suggest that the assessment should also include an impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal. In addition, it suggests that the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme) should be taken account of also.
- 4.20 In the 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres' section of the NPPG it states that *'in setting a locally appropriate threshold, it is important to consider:*
- *the scale of proposals relative to the town centres;*
  - *the existing viability and vitality of town centres;*
  - *cumulative effects of recent developments;*
  - *whether town centres are vulnerable;*
  - *likely effects of development on any town centre strategy; and*
  - *the impact on any other planned investment'*.
- 4.21 Government policy and guidance goes onto say that where an application is likely to have significant adverse impact it should not be permitted.
- 4.22 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to apply a sequential test to planning applications for main centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. It is appropriate to identify locally set thresholds for the scale of edge-of-centre and out of centre retail, office and leisure development which should be subject to the assessment of the impact criteria set out by the NPPF.

### What the Council says:

- 4.23 The Council is aware that NPPF suggests that a default threshold of 2,500 sq m. gross floor space should be used in relation to local impact thresholds, but due to the compact nature of the centres within the Borough, the NPPF threshold of 2,500 sq m. gross is considered to be inappropriate. If the NPPF threshold were to be used, the scale of a single development proposal that would be not subject to an impact test, could be larger than the entire development plan capacity projections and could have a significant detrimental effect towards the vitality of the centre.
- 4.24 The retail capacity study undertaken for the Borough illustrates locally set Impact Thresholds for each of the centres. Current Local Plan Policy 24 Local Impact Threshold states the threshold over which an impact assessment will be required for each of the town and district centres and is as follows:
- Wigston Town Centre – 1,500 square metres gross floorspace
  - Oadby District Centre – 1,500 square metres gross floorspace
  - South Wigston District Centre – 500 square metres gross floorspace



4.25 It is expected that the Council will 'roll forward' the current policy requirements set out within current Local Plan Policy 24 Local Impact Threshold, into the new Local Plan.

Potential options:

- Commission a new retail capacity study that seeks to review the current local impact thresholds.
- Maintain the current local impact thresholds, without commissioning a review.
- Remove the Local Impact Threshold policy position, and utilise the policy and guidance approach set out at a national level.

Questions:

- Should the Council be maintaining a locally set Local Impact Threshold for each of its main centres?
- Is an update of the retail capacity study required to ensure the impact thresholds are still appropriate?
- Has development outside the Borough increased the vulnerability of towns and local centres within the Borough, for instance the Fosse Park expansion in Blaby District?



## Primary and secondary frontages

### What the government says:

- 4.26 The NPPF suggests that Local authorities should recognise town and district centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies that support their vitality and viability. They should also (amongst other things), promote competitive centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer that reflect the individuality of each centre.
- 4.27 The NPPF goes onto suggests that planning authorities should define the extent of the primary shopping areas within their designated centres based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages.
- 4.28 The NPPF suggests that planning policies should define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre;
- 4.29 Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.

### What the Council says:

- 4.30 The Council seeks to have an approach to town and district centres that is positive, promotes competitive environments and has appropriate management and growth over the entire plan period.
- 4.31 In addition, the Council considers that to maintain a vibrant and successful core to its centres, it is important to maintain a high proportion of retail units. Too many non-retail uses within the town and district centres, especially in the primary shopping areas will compromise the retail function of the town by diluting the overall supply of retail floor space.
- 4.32 The Council's current Local Plan at Policy 27 Primary Frontages, sets out 'key' areas within the Primary Shopping Areas of each centre that are known as Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages. These areas have the highest concentration of main town centre uses, in particular retail.
- 4.33 With regard to the location for new retail, leisure and other town centre uses (as defined in the NPPF), the Council has adopted the 'sequential approach', as set out in the NPPF. For retail, leisure and other town centre use development the first preference is town, district or local centre sites, (where suitable sites are available), followed by edge-of-centre sites, and only then out-of-centre sites will be considered.
- 4.34 The current Local Plan sets out that at ground floor level, the primary shopping frontages in the Borough's town and district centres are identified on the Council's Adopted Policies Map. Further, Policy 27 stipulates that

*'to ensure that retail remains the primary use within the primary shopping frontages, development will only be permitted for non-A1 uses in the following circumstances:*



- *Where at least 70 per cent of all units within the primary frontages in Wigston town centre are in A1 use;*
- *Where at least 90 per cent of all units within the primary frontage in Bell Street (Wigston) are in A1 use;*
- *Where at least 65 per cent of all units within the primary frontages in Oadby district centre are in A1 use; and*
- *Where no more than three consecutive units are in non A1 use within any primary frontage’.*

4.35 It is expected that a similar policy approach is retained within the Council’s new Local Plan, however the Council is fully aware that changes in shopping habits, the Covid pandemic, and recent government announcements in relation to retail uses, could dictate the content of a new policy, and how closely it relates to the existing policy set out at Local Plan Policy 27 Primary Shopping Frontages.

Potential options:

- ‘Roll forward’ Local Plan Policies 27 and 28 unchanged, in spite of the expansions to Permitted Development Rights. Changes to National Policy and the GPDO have recently been unexpected and frequent. Further changes still may occur before the end of this process.
- Re-write Local Plan Policies 27 and 28 to allow flexibility as the economy recovers from recent challenges. Perhaps look at reassessing the percentages of desired primary frontage protection for each town and district centre.
- Remove Local Plan Policies 27 and 28.

Questions:

- Are Policies 27 ‘Primary Shopping Frontages’ and Policy 28 ‘Secondary Shopping Frontages’ still fit for purpose and do they conform to national planning policy and guidance?
- Would a less strict approach to controlling the use types on our shopping frontages act as a potential buffer to the threat that the expansion of permitted development rights from E Class units to C3 dwellings poses?
- Although changes to permitted development rights affect town and district centres considerably, should the Council maintain a local policy approach, as during the lifetime of the new Local Plan, there may be further unexpected changes to the Planning System that will affect the national policies under consideration now?
- Should the Council be removing the policy approaches relating to the high levels of provision of retail uses within town centres?



## Tourism

### What the government says:

4.36 The NPPF is relatively silent on the subject of tourism. It identifies the need to support a prosperous rural economy through enabling sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments, but in respect of urban areas, the only other reference is with regards to the definition of 'main town centre uses' that recognises that 'culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)' are uses that would be deemed as acceptable main town centre uses.

### What the Council says:

4.37 Tourism in the Borough plays a small yet important role in the local economy in relation to the centres of Wigston, Oadby, South Wigston and the settlement of Kilby Bridge, as well as large areas of green space including Brocks Hill Visitors Centre and Country Park, Leicester Racecourse, Glen Gorse Golf Course and Oadby Grange Country Park.

4.38 The Council's Economic Regeneration team has worked hard to establish partnerships with key organisations in the Borough including the University of Leicester and Leicester Racecourse. The Borough is well renowned for its green infrastructure assets and proximity to the open countryside, and therefore, it is something that the new Local Plan could look to build upon and enhance moving forward, particularly in light of the associated health and wellbeing benefits of spending time immersed with nature.

4.39 In addition to the green economy potential, the Borough's settlements present opportunities to enhance the visitor economy that in turn will help to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's town, district and local centres.

### Potential options:

- Consider the benefits of developing a specific Tourism and the Visitor Economy related Policy.

### Questions:

- Should the Council draft a new Policy to address Tourism and the Visitor Economy in the Borough, taking account of up-to-date national planning policy and guidance, as well as local evidence?
- Should the Council only apply the Policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING (LOCAL CHALLENGES)

Open space, sport and recreation facilities

Built leisure facilities

Built health facilities

Health impact assessments



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*



## **Open space, sport and recreation facilities**

### What the government says:

- 4.1 Open space, sports and recreation underpin peoples' quality of life, with well designed and implemented planning policy, being fundamental in delivering the broader Government objectives of, supporting urban regeneration and rural renewal; promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion; health and well-being; and, promoting more sustainable local communities.
- 4.2 In August 2020, the Government's 'Planning for the Future' consultation White Paper set out that *'planning should be a powerful tool for creating visions of how places can be, engaging communities in that process and fostering high quality development: not just beautiful buildings, but the gardens, parks and other green spaces in between, as well as the facilities which are essential for building a real sense of community. It should generate net gains for the quality of our built and natural environments'*.
- 4.3 The NPPF sets out that *'planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: ... c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling'*.
- 4.4 The NPPF also states that *'access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision'*.
- 4.5 In light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the heightened value that people have placed upon publicly accessible open spaces and places, the NPPF also recognises the role that public rights of way, heritage assets and Local Green Spaces can play in enhancing the network of facilities in the area. The NPPF defines open space as *'all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.6 Locally based open space requirements have been developed by the Council and have been very successful in maintaining (and increasing) the levels of open space within the Borough. With this success it is felt that it would not be appropriate to deviate from the current requirements, however through close discussion with Sport England, the requirement and provision of the Outdoor Sport Space typology will continue to be achieved through the Council's latest Playing Pitch Strategy rather than through the use of the Council's quantity requirement approach.
- 4.7 Proposals for new residential development should contribute to the provision and / or enhancement of open space in areas where there is a deficiency in provision, or poor quality of open spaces. This provision could be either on or off-site depending on the scale and nature of development and the level and quality of existing facilities in the local area. On-site provision of open space should provide at least the requirements as set out below, whereas off-site contributions towards open space provision should be consistent with the Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document.



- 4.8 It is expected that the Council 'roles forward', with amendments as necessary, the existing policy approach of the current Local Plan Policy 9 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities, into the new Local Plan. The current policy approach has proven successful in managing the Open Space, Sport and Recreation in the Borough.
- 4.9 The Council will also look to review and update its evidence base to ensure that a fair and robust approach is taken to deliver all necessary infrastructure to support the planned levels of growth up to 2041.

Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach and update the evidence base supporting the Policy position.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in current Local Plan Policy 9 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Do you consider that there are more appropriate options relating to the delivery of open space, sport and recreation facilities in relation to new development?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## **Built leisure facilities**

### **What the government says:**

- 4.10 The NPPF states that *'strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for: a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development'*.
- 4.11 With regards to ensuring the vitality of the town centres, the NPPF states that *'planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should: a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters'*.
- 4.12 In light of Covid-19, changing habits of the population for shopping online and for home deliveries, as well as some creative alterations to the Use Classes Order and the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO) by the Government in recent years, it is clear that the high street and town centres in general will need to be adaptable and responsive to trends and changing demands. The leisure industry is one example of how the role of the high street could change in the future, as the NPPF recognises. It states that *'planning policies should: a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters; ... Meeting anticipated needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses over this period should not be compromised by limited site availability, so town centre boundaries should be kept under review where necessary'*.

### **What the Council says:**

- 4.13 In collaboration with Sport England, the Council is keen to ensure that the current level of provision of the built leisure facilities in the Borough, namely sports halls, swimming pools and small halls or community venues, are sufficient for the projected growth within the Borough over the Plan period up to 2041 (should that be the end of the Plan period). The Council continually monitors and assesses the local community's needs to ensure that provision of built and community facilities within the Borough is appropriate.
- 4.14 The Council will also seek no net loss of the current levels of built leisure facility provision in the Borough.
- 4.15 In producing the Council's current Local Plan evidenced produced in partnership with Sport England concluded that the levels of built facilities in the Borough were sufficient to meet growth demands up to 2031. Therefore, in collaboration with Sport England, the Council must assess the increased demand up to the end of the new Plan period and determine whether the current supply of built leisure facilities is able to meet the additional growth in population.



Potential options:

- In collaboration with Sport England, assess whether there will be an increased demand up to the end of the new Local Plan period and determine whether the current supply of built leisure facilities is able to meet the additional demand to accommodate the forecasted growth in population.
- Apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Questions:

- Should the Council draft a new Policy to address Built Leisure Facilities needs in the Borough, taking account of up to date national planning policy and guidance, as well as local evidence?
- Should the Council only apply the Policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance?
- Do you consider that the Borough area is deficient in a certain type of built leisure facility?
- Do you consider that the Borough area has a surplus in a certain type of built leisure facility?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## **Built health facilities**

### What the government says:

4.16 The NPPF states that in order *'to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments'*.

### What the Council says:

4.17 The Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing the health and wellbeing of its residents. Due to this commitment, the Council has set up its own Health and Wellbeing Board that brings key decision makers together from a range of local health providers to review local health data, share information on service provision and lobby for change. The Council will continue to work collaboratively to ensure that all of its residents are happy and live long and healthy lives, with less inequality.

4.18 The Council has also established regular lines of communication with the local Clinical Commissioning Group and the National Health Service (NHS), as well as local GP surgeries and other health partners. This communication enables regular meetings and dialogue to keep the 'finger on the pulse' when seeking opportunities to:

- support the NHS (including local GP Surgeries) in delivering a health and wellbeing service which meets the needs of Borough's residents;
- encourage healthier communities through the targeting of unhealthy lifestyle choices;
- seek contributions towards new or enhanced health facilities from developers where new housing development will result in a shortfall of provision; and,
- ensure increased access to the Borough's open spaces as well as offering increased opportunities for physical activity.

4.19 The Council is determined to continue to maintain this communication and to increase the effectiveness of this collaboration as part of the new Local Plan.

### Potential options:

- In collaboration with the local Clinical Commissioning Group and the National Health Service (NHS), as well as local GP surgeries and other health partners, assess the increased demand up to the end of the new Plan period and determine whether the current supply of built health facilities are able to meet the additional demand to accommodate the forecasted growth in population.
- Continue with the existing approach and update the evidence base supporting the Council's Policy position.
- Apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.



Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 46 – Infrastructure and Developer Contributions, ensuring that it and supporting evidence is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Should the Council draft a new Policy to address Built Health Facility needs in the Borough, taking account of up to date national planning policy and guidance, as well as local evidence?
- Should the Council only apply the Policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance?
- Do you consider that the Borough area is deficient in built health facilities?
- Do you consider that the Borough area has about the right amount of built health facilities?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.





## Health Impact Assessments

### What the government says:

- 4.20 The NPPF states that *'planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: ... c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling'*.
- 4.21 National government requires local planning authorities to ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision taking. Public health organisations, health service organisations, commissioners and providers, and local communities are expected to work effectively with local planning authorities in order to promote healthy communities and support appropriate health infrastructure.
- 4.22 National planning practice guidance recognises that early engagement between all key stakeholders around the health agenda through the production of new Local Plans is essential. This collaborative approach, it states, would allow for them *'to work together on any necessary mitigation measures. A health impact assessment is a useful tool to use where there are expected to be significant impacts'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.23 The Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing the health and wellbeing of its residents. Due to this commitment, the Council has established a Health and Wellbeing Board that aims to bring key decision makers together from a range of local health providers to review local health data, share information on service provision and lobby for change. The Council will continue to strive to ensure that all of its residents are content and live long and healthy lives, with less inequality.
- 4.24 By having a positive approach to local health and wellbeing, the Council, in partnership with relevant bodies, continues to seek opportunities to create and support vibrant, sustainable and healthy communities by promoting and facilitating healthy living and lifestyle choices as well as creating an environment that offers plentiful opportunities for improving health and wellbeing.
- 4.25 In the Borough's current Local Plan, the Plan makes reference and has Policy-led objectives that seek to ensure that all new development contributes towards providing an array of opportunities for healthy living and wellbeing of the Borough's residents. For example, where applicable, all new development proposals should, through design and provision, encourage walking and cycling, as well as encourage the use of other sustainable modes of transport. Where there is potential to do so, development should also contribute towards the provision of and / or the refurbishment of footpaths, cycle ways, canal towpaths, outdoor adult gyms, outdoor sports provision, children's play equipment and recreational open spaces.
- 4.26 The current Local Plan contains Policy 5 – Improving Health and Wellbeing, that requires *'all residential development proposals of 11 units or more and non-residential development proposals of a combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 square metres will be required to submit a Health Impact Assessment screening statement. The statement will measure the potential impact and demands of the development proposal upon the existing services and facilities'*.



- 4.27 The Council will work in partnership with the Leicestershire Public Health team and the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group in due course to support the production of the new Local Plan to ensure its evidence base and Policy approach is as robust and up to date as possible.
- 4.28 As part of this work, the Council will seek input into the development of the new Local Plan's Health Impact Assessment and with the key objective being to manage the impact of planned growth on local communities and health services and to create healthier places to live and work for the existing and new communities in the Borough.

Potential options:

- Continue with existing approach to Health Impact Assessments, as set out in the Council's current Local Plan Policy 5 – Improving Health and Wellbeing, with amendments to the Policy wording to account for relevant National Policy updates and local evidence base.
- Continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders, throughout both the Local Plan process and planning application processes.
- Remove the policy approach and only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Local Plan policy relating to Health Impact Assessments (Policy 5) with wording amendments where necessary?
- Should the Council remove the policy approach and only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



# LOCAL SERVICES (LOCAL CHALLENGES)

Car parking and electric vehicle car parking  
Community facilities  
Cemetery and burial space



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*

## Car parking / electric vehicle car parking

### What the government says:

- 4.1 NPPF states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making, so that patterns of movement, streets and parking contributes towards the provision of high quality spaces and places.
- 4.2 Further, NPPF states that *'in town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists'*.
- 4.3 NPPF suggests that in setting local parking standards, note should be taken of; accessibility; the type and mix of development proposed; availability of public transport; local car ownership; and the need for ultra-low emission vehicles.
- 4.4 Government is currently promoting the use of more electric vehicles and is planning to end the sale of higher emission producing vehicles by the year 2040.

### What the Council says:

- 4.5 The Council is committed in ensuring that all new development is provided with the appropriate levels of vehicular parking spaces.
- 4.6 The Council currently utilises the local highway authority's highway standards, in relation to development and parking proposals. The Leicestershire Highway Design Guide is produced by Leicestershire County Council and is updated regularly to ensure that the guide remains up-to-date.
- 4.7 Current local planning policy set out in the Council's Local Plan requires all new development proposals to conform to the standards set out in the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide, unless robust evidence specifies a need to vary from these standards.
- 4.8 It is expected that the Council 'roles forward' the existing policy approach of the current Local Plan Policy 34 – Car Parking, into the new Local Plan.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the current Local Plan as it has been successful in ensuring the appropriate parking levels are provided on all new developments.
- Require all new development to provide Electric Vehicle Charge points.
- Remove the policy approach and only apply the policy principles and guidance set at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

### Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in current Local Plan Policy 34 – Car Parking, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?

- Should the Council be requiring all new development to provide Electric Vehicle Charge points, so that occupiers have the ability to utilise modern technologies?
- Should the Council be requiring provision of Electric Vehicle Charge points in all new homes that are delivered?
- Should the Council be requiring provision of enabling infrastructure for Electric Vehicle Charge points in all new homes that are delivered?
- Are any of the other options set out above appropriate?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Community facilities

### What the government says:

- 4.9 NPPF suggests that the provision of community facilities should be set at a local level and local authorities should *'plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments'*. Further it suggests that an integrated approach to the location of housing, employment and community facilities should be ensured, as it plays a key role in sustainable development.

### What the Council says:

- 4.10 Community facilities are defined as buildings or spaces where community led activities for community benefit are the primary use and the facility is managed, occupied or used primarily by the voluntary and community sector. Community facilities can include purpose-built structures such as community halls and village halls, places of worship, health centres, schools and cultural facilities such as museums, libraries, theatres, post offices and public houses.
- 4.11 The Council will seek to ensure that local communities have access to community facilities. In recent years the Borough has seen significant investment within its community facilities, both from the private sector as well as the Council itself, for example the new community pavilion at Horsewell Lane park.
- 4.12 The Council will continually monitor and assess the local community's needs to ensure that provision of community facilities within the Borough is appropriate for local community needs.
- 4.13 The loss of community facilities can have a substantial impact on people's quality of life, wellbeing and overall viability of the local area. The Council will expect new development to at least retain, and where required, improve existing local community facilities. It is important that these are integrated into the design of new development.
- 4.14 Current local planning policy set out in the Council's Local Plan has been successful in ensuring the provision of community's facilities over the past few years. Due to this, it is expected that the Council 'roles forward' the existing policy approach of current Local Plan Policy 7 – Community facilities, into the new Local Plan.
- 4.15 In addition, the Council will continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders, throughout both the Local Plan process and planning application process.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the current Local Plan as it has been successful in ensuring the delivery of community facilities.
- Require all development, irrespective of size or type, to contribute towards community facility provision.
- Require only large scale development to contribute towards community facility provision.
- continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders, throughout both the Local Plan process and planning application process





Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 7 – Community Facilities, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Should the Council require all development proposals, regardless of size, to contribute towards delivery of community facilities?
- Are any of the other options set out above appropriate?
- Which community facility is needed in your area to mitigate the impact of growth?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Cemetery and burial space

### What the government says:

4.16 In the context of ‘proposals affecting the Green Belt’, the NPPF suggests that certain land uses and forms of development, such as cemeteries and burial ground, would be deemed as acceptable, *‘provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it’*. Although the Borough does not have any Green Belt land, the surrounding countryside and green wedges play a similar role and therefore this Policy approach is relevant in this context.

### What the Council says:

4.17 The Council’s current Local Plan states that *‘there is no quantity requirement for these types of open space [cemeteries and burial grounds]; however the Council has identified land south of Gartree Road in Oadby (as illustrated on the Adopted Policies Map) as appropriate for the provision of cemetery and burial grounds. This land will ensure the Council has sufficient land available to provide for the Borough’s cemetery and burial needs up to 2031’*.

4.18 In addition, Policy 18 - Stoughton Grange Direction for Growth Allocation and Oadby Cemetery Allocation, in the current Local Plan, allocates land to the north of Oadby for cemetery and burial uses. The Policy sets out that *‘any cemetery or burial proposal for the allocation site would need to be sufficiently evidenced and justified in terms of ground conditions and its size, scale, need, impact and use. The impact on the direct highway network would also need to be assessed against any proposal put forward’*.

4.19 With the Borough being relatively compact and urban in nature, it is recognised that Cemetery and Burial Space is scarce and therefore, of importance to the local community.

### Potential options:

- Continue with existing approach to retain the Oadby Cemetery Allocation, as set out in the Council’s current Local Plan and its evidence base.
- Consider whether or not to retain the Oadby Cemetery Allocation and to undertake a review of the evidence base in order to establish whether or not to retain or amend the boundaries of the existing allocation in order to take account of the new Local Plan proposed levels of growth and any other factual updates.

### Questions:

- Should the Council ‘roll forward’ the current Local Plan policy relating to the Oadby Cemetery Allocation with wording amendments to ensure that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Should the Council remove the current Local Plan policy relating to the Oadby Cemetery Allocation?
- Do you consider that the Council should be allocating land for cemetery and / or burial space in the new Local Plan?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



# HERITAGE (LOCAL CHALLENGES)

Conservation areas  
Listed buildings and locally listed buildings



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*

## Conservation Areas

### What the government says:

- 4.1 NPPF states that planning policies should ensure the *'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure'*. Further it states that *'plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats'*.
- 4.2 Heritage assets such as Conservation Areas, should be conserved and enhanced wherever possible as they are irreplaceable assets of real significance. They should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change and requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets.
- 4.3 The NPPF is prescriptive in its approach to conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, and sets out a clear framework for both plan making and decision taking.
- 4.4 The designation of conservation areas and the role that local authorities play in the conservation and enhancement of conservation areas is set out in legislation (Part 2 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Further, NPPG sets out national guidance relating to the 'Historic Environment'.

### What the Council says:

- 4.5 Conservation Areas exist to assist the conservation and enhancement of areas of particular architectural or historic interest and they play an important role in local community's everyday way of life. They are a reminder of history gone by and examples of high quality historic architecture and methods of construction that you don't necessarily see today.
- 4.6 The character and heritage associated to conservation areas must be conserved for now and future generations. For example, according to heritage experts, the majority of the buildings nationally listed now, will continue to be the majority in the future, due to the low number of buildings currently being built that would be eligible for national listing.
- 4.7 Demolition or changes to buildings within a conservation area can have a long lasting damaging impact; by removing or changing structures that contribute to their character and heritage. Hence, as with listed buildings, it is appropriate to employ a presumption in favour of retention. The Council will not permit development if it adversely impacts buildings, open spaces or uses which contribute towards the character of a conservation area. The character of Conservation Areas is often the product of various elements such as the mixture and style of buildings, the extent and form of open spaces and other natural elements such as trees and hedges.
- 4.8 Legislation requires that special attention is paid to the conservation and enhancement of conservation areas, and, therefore, the Council has prepared Conservation Area Appraisals and a Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document for all of its designated Conservation Areas. Within the Borough area there are ten designated conservation areas, nine of which identified by the Council and one of which designated by Leicestershire County Council. The conservation areas are listed below:



- All Saints Conservation Area, Wigston
- London Road and Saint Peters Church Conservation Area, Oadby
- Midland Cottages Conservation Area, South Wigston
- North Memorial Homes and Framework Knitters Conservation Area, Oadby
- Oadby Court Conservation Area, Oadby
- Oadby Hill Top and Meadowcourt Conservation Area, Oadby
- South Wigston Conservation Area, South Wigston
- Spa Lane Conservation Area, Wigston
- The Lanes Conservation Area, Wigston
- The Grand Union Canal Conservation Area, (Leicestershire County Council designation)

4.9 Each of the Council designated conservation areas are set out within the Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document and the Adopted Policies Map. Further, the Council currently protects conservation areas and other heritage assets in Local Plan policies 40 (Culture and Historic Environment Assets) and 41 (Development in the Conservation Area).

Potential options:

- Continue to protect conservation areas from unacceptable development, by maintaining local planning policy in the new Local Plan.
- Reassess all of the designated conservation areas to ensure that they continue to meet the designation criteria.
- Seek to increase or decrease the number of conservation areas subject to evidence base.

Questions:

- Should the Council continue to protect conservation areas from unacceptable development, by maintaining local planning policy in the new Local Plan?
- Are there any areas of the Borough that are not currently designated as conservation areas, however you believe they should be?
- Are there any areas of the currently designated conservations areas that should be removed from the designation?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

## Listed and locally listed buildings

### What the government says:

- 4.10 One of the key areas of the NPPF is the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and heritage assets.
- 4.11 The NPPF defines heritage assets as *'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'*
- 4.12 In addition, the NPPF suggests that *'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'*.
- 4.13 The NPPF also states that *'the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.14 Listed buildings are of national importance, representing the best of our historic and architectural built heritage. The Borough area contains 37 listed buildings or structures and it is vital that any works affecting them or other buildings of local importance is guided by appreciation for their importance. In addition to nationally listed buildings, the Borough also has a number of non-designated heritage assets in the Borough, for example, locally listed buildings.
- 4.15 Although not nationally designated, locally listed buildings are important to the local historic landscape and heritage of the Borough. The Borough Council recognises their importance locally and seeks to conserve and enhance these heritage assets wherever possible. All of the locally listed buildings within the Borough were collated and set out in the Borough's Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings (2017) which was published as evidence to support the current Local Plan.
- 4.16 Policy 40 – Culture and Historic Environment Assets, in the current Local Plan recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing the Borough's unique cultural identity, as well as identifying and protecting designated and non-designated heritage assets. The Policy states that *'where development is likely to have a significant adverse impact on designated heritage assets and their settings and / or non-designated heritage assets and their settings, and / or other historic / heritage character areas and cannot be avoided or they cannot be preserved in situ, the development will not be permitted, unless there are substantial public benefits, which outweigh that harm or loss'*.
- 4.17 It is expected that the Council will 'roll forward' the existing planning policy approach set out within the current Local Plan into the new Local Plan ensuring that it is up-to-date with national planning policy and guidance.





Potential options:

- Continue with Policy 40 and its approach, as set out in the Council's current Local Plan and its supporting evidence base.
- Consider whether or not to retain all of the buildings and structures on the Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings and to undertake a review of the Schedule to establish whether to retain, amend or delete buildings or structures on the Schedule.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Local Plan policy relating to Culture and Historic Environment Assets with wording amendments as and where necessary and a local evidence base update?
- Should the Council undertake a review of the Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings to establish whether or not to retain or amend the Schedule?
- Are there any buildings or structures within the Borough area that are of heritage significance that should be placed on the Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



# MASTERPLANNING (LOCAL CHALLENGES)

Large scale change and place making



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*

## **Large scale change and place making**

### What the government says:

- 4.1 NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. It also sets out the three overarching objectives – economic objective, social objective and environmental objective. Further, NPPF suggests that the three objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans, and through the planning decision making process.

### What the Council says:

- 4.2 The Council will always seek to ensure that each and every development that occurs within the Borough area contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and place making.
- 4.3 Creating a sense of place is vital in ensuring that development fits well within the landscape that it is proposed, but is also vital to local communities and the way they carry out their everyday way of life. Place making means creating real ‘places’ and focuses on transforming public spaces and environments to strengthen the connections between people and places. Place making is very much a process centred on people and their needs, wants, aspirations, desires, and visions. It is about creating environments in which communities want to live, work and explore.
- 4.4 To ensure that larger scale development proposals are transparent and contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development and create a real sense of ‘place’, the Council will require the production of masterplans, development briefs or other appropriate strategies, that set out how the proposal seeks to deliver the three overarching NPPF objective, as well as how the proposal intends to create real ‘places’ and not just new developments.
- 4.5 The Council currently requires the production of either masterplans, development briefs and / or other appropriate strategies through Local Plan Policy 3 – Regeneration Schemes and Large Scale Change.
- 4.6 Further, the policy illustrates a set of criteria that the produced masterplans, development briefs and / or other appropriate strategies should take account of.
- 4.7 It is expected that the current Local Plan Policy 3 – Regeneration Schemes and Large Scale will be carried forward with amendments to ensure that it is up-to-date with national planning policy and guidance and also reflects the importance of place making. Also, it is expected that the definition of ‘large scale change’ will be consistent with the definition of major development as set out within the Annex 2 of the NPPF.

### Potential options:

- Maintain the current policy approach set out at Local Plan Policy 3 – Regeneration Schemes and Large Scale Change, within the new Local Plan. Ensuring that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance.
- Maintain a similar policy approach set out at Local Plan Policy 3 – Regeneration Schemes and Large Scale Change, within the new Local Plan, however with the addition of a definition for ‘large scale’.
- Ensure that further reference is made to the importance of place making and set out within planning policy what the place making expectations are.



- Remove the policy approach, and do not have a requirement for the production of masterplans, development briefs and / or other appropriate strategies should larger scale development be proposed.

Questions:

- Which of the approaches set out within the above potential options above do you consider to be the most appropriate in ensuring larger scale development contributes towards providing sustainable development?
- What do you consider to be the key principles of place making?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

