

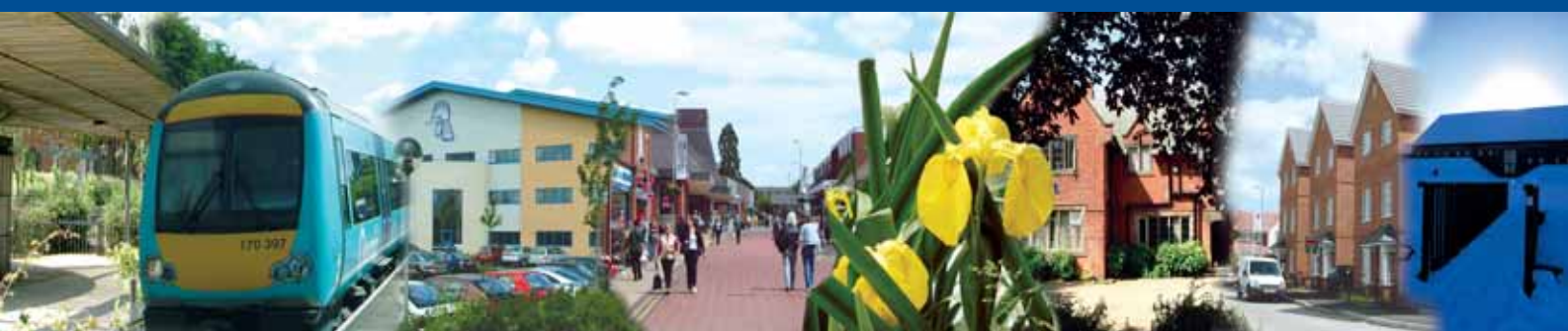
Borough of Oadby & Wigston



Oadby & Wigston Core Strategy

Publication Draft
Proposed Submission Document

October 2009





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Foreword

We feel privileged to live and work in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. The things we enjoy about the Borough of Oadby and Wigston result, of course, from the interaction of our local communities and the built and natural environment. Sometimes the existence of key features are incidental, sometimes they have evolved over a period of time, and sometimes they have been planned; whatever the case, we need to try and ensure that in the future, our communities have the same opportunities to enjoy all that is best about Oadby and Wigston.

It would be naive to say that things should or will remain the same; the Borough faces many pressures and challenges that can only be dealt with by tackling each issue with a thoughtful and evidenced approach. We must, for example, find sustainable solutions for meeting people's housing needs, supporting the provision of high quality employment, protecting the natural environment and addressing all the economic, environmental and social issues that face our communities today and also in the future.

The process for preparing new planning documents to guide the Borough in implementing the vision for our community is a long and complex procedure. We have to consider a range of issues, consult widely with our partners and representative organisations, commission specialist studies and consider existing evidence. This process has enabled us to produce the document now before you based on a solid set of principles from which to deliver a better future for our communities and local businesses.

This Core Strategy provides a clear vision for how new development can address the challenges we face and identifies where and when new development will take place in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston up to 2026. It outlines how much development will take place and how it will be achieved.

The spatial objectives and policies will set the context for other documents in the Local Development Framework and will therefore, help to shape the way our communities today and in the future will work and live their lives.

Councillor John Boyce
Leader of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council



Equalities Statement

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council seeks to celebrate our diversity. It does, however, recognise that individuals and communities may experience unlawful discrimination in many ways despite equality laws and many examples of good practice in the Borough.

The Council considers equality as a basic human right and believes that all groups should be treated with respect and valued equally. We actively oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.

As a Council we believe that no one within our community should be disadvantaged, irrespective of where they live, gender, age, disability, religious belief, race and sexual orientation.

We will ensure that every effort is made to provide key services to all. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council actively encourages public engagement and participation from all sections of the community in all aspects of decision making and provides a variety of ways and means of doing so.





Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1** The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is relatively small, largely urbanised and adjoins the south east corner of Leicester City. All of the Borough's urban areas fall within the Leicester Principal Urban Area. It has a population of some 55,795 and is 2,345 hectares in area, with an average density of 24 people per hectare. The majority of the population reside within the three main urban settlement centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston, which occupy just over 60 per cent of the Borough. There are also a small number of residential properties located within the vicinity of Kilby Bridge which is on the southern edge of the Borough.

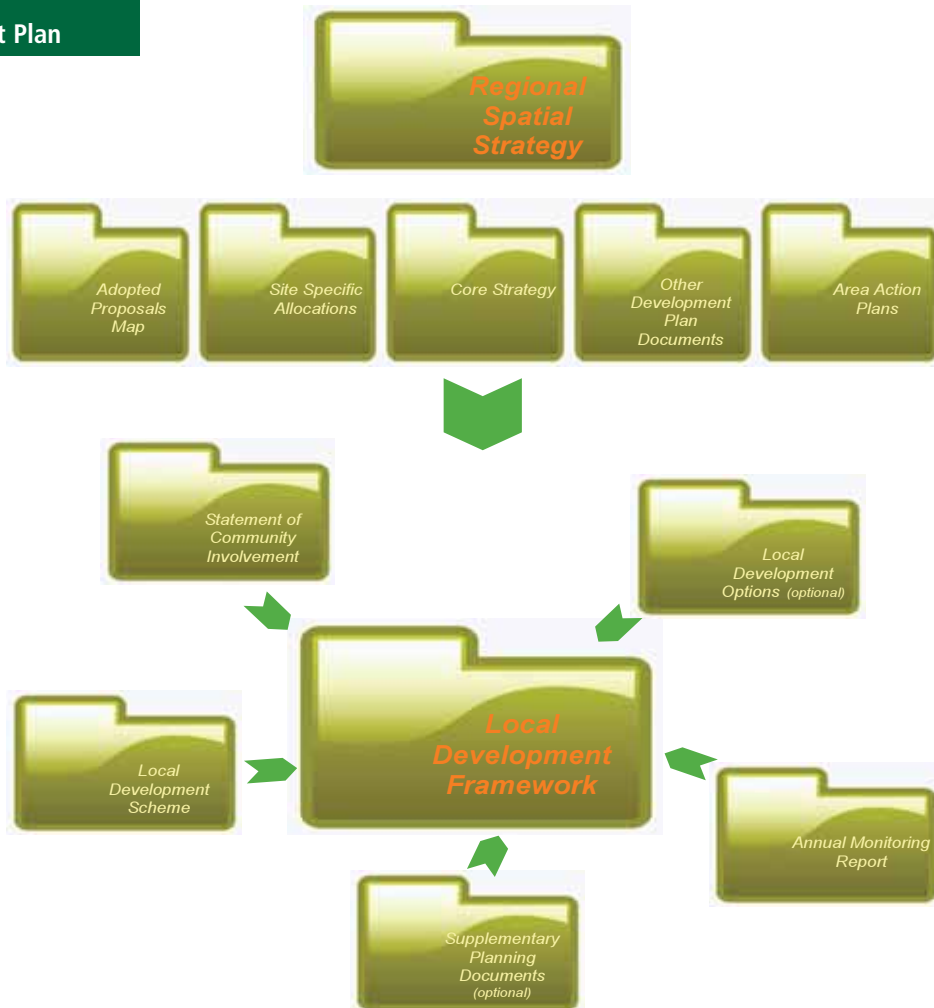
What is the Local Development Framework?

- 1.2** In 2004, the 'planning system' was amended under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. This resulted in Local Plans and Structure Plans being replaced by a 'two tiered' plan led system comprising of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. When combined, these determine how the planning system shapes local communities. The Oadby and Wigston Local Development Framework will replace adopted policies in the saved Oadby and Wigston Borough Local Plan as set out in Appendix 3.
- 1.3** A Local Development Framework is a 'folder' of documents prepared by district councils, unitary authorities and national park authorities, that outline how spatial planning will be implemented, managed and monitored within the local area.





**Figure 1:
The Development Plan**



What makes up the Oadby and Wigston Local Development Framework?

1.4 Listed below are the documents that make up the Borough Council's Local Development Framework. More detail on these can be found within the Borough Council's Local Development Scheme.

Local Development Documents

- Statement of Community Involvement

Development Plan Documents

- Core Strategy
- Allocations
- Development Control
- Proposals Map



Supplementary Planning Documents

- Residential Areas
- Conservation Areas
- Planning for Renewable Energy Technology and Energy Efficiency
- Developer Contributions
- Guidelines for New Development

What is the Core Strategy?

- 1.5** The Core Strategy is the foremost Development Plan Document (DPD) within the Local Development Framework. Over time, it will be complemented by other more detailed development plan documents setting out site allocations and general policies to determine planning applications which must all be in conformity with the Core Strategy. Once adopted, these various development plan documents will replace the existing Local Plan Policies.
- 1.6** The Core Strategy sets out the vision, spatial objectives and planning strategy for the Borough up to 2026. The Core Strategy provides the basic principles and policies that will steer built development and the use of land, establishes the overall general scale and location of development, and the approach to the key issues facing the Borough. In summary, the Core Strategy:
- Contains a clear vision from which spatial objectives, strategic policies, monitoring and implementation frameworks will flow;
 - Is linked to the sustainable communities agenda, helping determine the broad location of new housing and employment land necessary to meet the requirements of the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and the Three Cities Sub Regional Strategy; and
 - Is guided by sustainable development principles.
- 1.7** The Core Strategy is consistent with the East Midlands Regional Plan and national planning policy, as expressed within Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), Circulars and Ministerial statements. It also acts as a key implementation mechanism for the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy and more locally the Oadby and Wigston Sustainable Community Strategy, prepared by the respective Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).

So what is Spatial Planning?

- 1.8** The importance of spatial planning is recognised internationally and is derived from the need to integrate the complex array of policy documents, territorial strategies, legislative systems and differing cultural approaches across the European Union.





1.9 The principles of spatial planning are consistent across all levels whether it be concerned with local, regional or national strategies. In Britain, spatial planning can be defined as:

“Planning that goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function... This will include policies which can impact on land use by influencing the demands on, or needs for, development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting or refusal of planning permission and which may be implemented by other means.”

(Source: Planning Portal)



Preparing the Core Strategy – The Story so Far

Issues and Options Paper (July/August 2005)

The purpose of the Issues and Options paper was to set out and gather views on the key issues and options which could have been included in the Core Strategy. Each key issue had a number of options and sought views on which was the most suitable option. The responses received to this Issues and Options Paper had an important influence on the Core Strategy and aided the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper.

Initial Preferred Options Paper (April/June 2006)

This document was produced as a basis for consultation on the second stage of preparing the Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy, building upon the earlier Issues and Options consultation stage. It also included a number of draft policies.

The responses received to this Preferred Options Paper had an important influence in the development of the draft Core Strategy.

Supplemental Issues and Options Paper (June/August 2007)

The consultation was based specifically upon the Borough Council's strategy and options for locating sustainable development and the options for potential broad locations for growth outside the Leicester Principal Urban Area. The comments received provided a clearer understanding of the possible options.

Accepted Fast Track Proposal (June 2008)

During June 2008 the Government Office for the East Midlands accepted and supported Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's proposal for a fast tracked Core Strategy timetable.

Consultation on Draft Core Strategy (November/January 2008-09)

This document was produced as a basis for Regulation 25 Consultation on the draft Core Strategy, building upon earlier consultations.

This document and the comments received represented an important stage in developing the vision, spatial objectives and policies within the Core Strategy.

Publication of Submission Draft (October-November 2009)

This document published for a statutory six week public consultation period, prior to submission.

Submit for Examination (January 2010)

Once a summary of the main comments arising from the consultation and any final amendments have been made to the draft Core Strategy, it will be formally submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on its robustness and soundness. It is expected that the Hearing itself will take place in April 2010.





Development of Options

- 1.10** In the initial Core Strategy consultation document, ten key issues were set out, together with a number of Options for each issue. Since this initial document, and through stakeholder consultation, the various options have been narrowed down to one option for each key issue. This process of refining the various options to develop the Spatial Strategy for the Borough has been a key element in preparing the Core Strategy. The Vision, Spatial Objectives and policies, reflect the Borough Council's Preferred Option for each of the ten determined key issues.
- 1.11** For example, one of the key issues was the overall location of development in the Borough. The five options under consideration were:
- The use of existing brownfield sites and one urban fringe site
 - The use of existing brownfield sites and numerous small urban fringe sites
 - Use of brownfield sites only
 - Use of urban fringe sites only
 - A new settlement
- 1.12** Through the process of consultation and preparing the Core Strategy and its associated evidence base the various options were considered and refined. Previous versions of the Core Strategy document this process. The use of existing brownfield sites and one urban fringe site emerged as the preferred option and now forms a comprehensive part of the Core Strategy's Spatial Strategy, Vision and Spatial Objectives. A similar process has been used to refine 5 options for the location of the urban fringe site to one Direction for Growth and for the various options relating to the other key issues considered through the preparation process.



Chapter 2: The Policy Context

2.1 In producing the Core Strategy for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston, a number of documents were considered in order to provide evidence to underpin policies within the Core Strategy. This chapter provides an overview of the strategic documents referred to and their relevance to the Core Strategy.

National Strategies and Policy

2.2 Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), are prepared by national government to explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on current planning policy and the operation of the planning system. They also explain the relationship between planning policies and other national and european plans and strategies which have an important bearing on issues of development and land use.

2.3 The guidance set out in Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes has been taken into account in the preparation of the Core Strategy.

Regional and Sub Regional Strategies and Policy

2.4 All current Regional Strategies for the East Midlands area form important components of the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) Framework. The Integrated Regional Strategy Framework draws together the key issues and challenges for the East Midlands and provides an overarching picture of what is happening in the region. The Integrated Regional Strategy Framework has been developed by national government to enable all policies across the region to contribute as fully as possible to improving people's quality of life and wellbeing.

2.5 Integrated Regional Strategy Framework component documents include, the Regional Economic Strategy, the Regional Spatial Strategy (more commonly known as the Regional Plan), the Regional Environment Strategy and the Cultural Strategy. These documents have been developed within the context provided by the Integrated Regional Strategy Framework and together help the region move towards its vision, objectives and priorities, culminating in a more sustainable future.

2.6 With the East Midlands Regional Plan forming part of the Development Plan as well as being a component of the Integrated Regional Strategy Framework, it is a key strategic document in the moving forward of the region up to 2026. However, it does not go into site specific issues. The East Midlands Regional Plan provides a broad development strategy for Local Authorities in the East Midlands to follow and identifies the scale and distribution of provision for new housing and priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture energy, minerals and waste treatment and disposal'.

2.7 With the Regional Plan referring to the East Midlands as a whole, sub regional strategies have a more localised focus. The Borough of Oadby and Wigston falls within the Three Cities Sub Area. The Three Cities Sub-Area contains the Principal Urban Areas of Derby, Nottingham and Leicester. The East Midlands Regional Plan focuses regeneration and growth in the sub areas of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and adjoining settlements. The Three Cities Sub-Area defines a number of Housing Market Area groupings, including one covering the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area.





- 2.8** Local Authorities within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area work together on a number of different strategies, partnerships and processes such as the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment. These generally advocate a more 'joined up' partnership approach, allowing the local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire to tackle pressing issues together, for example, through the preparation of joint evidence base to support Core Strategies.

Spatial Relationship between the Borough of Oadby and Wigston, Leicestershire and Leicester City

- 2.9** Within Leicester and Leicestershire the overall strategy and priorities are set by Leicestershire Together (the Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership) and One Leicester (the Leicester City Local Strategic Partnership). Priorities are delivered and monitored through Sustainable Community Strategies (one for each Local Strategic Partnership), a Multi Area Agreement and a Local Area Agreement. For example, the Leicestershire Local Area Agreement seeks to deliver the ambitions outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy, making a measurable difference to inhabitants of Leicestershire.
- 2.10** Although located in Leicestershire, it is important that the Borough of Oadby and Wigston has regard to the spatial policy framework for Leicester City, given the Borough's location immediately adjacent to Leicester City and within the Leicester Principal Urban Area.
- 2.11** The Borough of Oadby and Wigston also has its own Local Strategic Partnership and Sustainable Community Strategy. The Local Strategic Partnership brings together, at a local level, the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors allowing different initiatives and services to support one another and to work together more effectively.
- 2.12** The Oadby and Wigston Sustainable Community Strategy is based upon the same top-level objectives from the Leicestershire Together Sustainable Community Strategy and derives nineteen priorities from the forty nine priorities contained within the Leicestershire Together Sustainable Communities Strategy. These were determined based upon research carried out by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council through the preparation of a 'State of the Borough' report in 2008 following full consultation with all residents, Councillors, staff and partners. These priorities will be the drivers for delivery to provide tangible outcomes in the Borough, for example, priorities and outcomes relating to issues of strategic housing.
- 2.13** The Local Development Framework, and in particular the Core Strategy, is the process through which priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy with a spatial or land use focus will be delivered, hence the strong relationship with the Local Development Framework and the Core Strategy.
- 2.14** A Local Infrastructure Partnership has been established as a sub group of the Local Strategic Partnership. This provides an example of how provision of new infrastructure will deliver some of the Local Strategic Partnership's priorities as well as supporting growth through the new development that the Local Development Framework aims to deliver.



Local Strategies and Policy

- 2.15** Local strategies and policies are the most detailed and locally specific of all the strategy and policy levels considered. Documents produced by the Borough Council use national, regional and sub regional strategies and policies as the base context to guide local and area specific documentation and agreements. For example, the Oadby and Wigston Economic Development Strategy is very locally specific and deals with particular issues within the Borough itself, but is based upon principles and strategies set out in the National Economic Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy.
- 2.16** However, locally specific documents to the Borough, as well as using varying levels of governance for guidance, also use locally specific evidence such as the Oadby and Wigston Corporate Plan and the 'State of the Borough' report, in order to reflect the Borough Council's local vision and priorities.





Chapter 3: A Spatial Portrait of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston

Introduction

- 3.1** The Spatial Portrait provides a broad picture of the economic, environmental and social issues facing the Borough and sets out the physical characteristics along with the social elements that require strategic guidance throughout the plan period up until 2026 and beyond.
- 3.2** Through consultation with local residents, businesses and key stakeholders with an interest in the Borough, there are several issues that the Council aspires to tackle through the delivery of the Core Strategy over the plan period:
- The location of new development
 - The management and use of green wedges
 - The delivery of affordable housing
 - The delivery and management of employment land
 - Managing the regeneration of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston
 - The delivery and management of sustainable transportation
 - The delivery of sustainable mixed use development
 - Management of sustainable leisure and recreation facilities
 - The delivery of appropriate development in the countryside
 - Management of Kilby Bridge to protect and enhance its character
- 3.3** The Borough Council and its partners face pressure to deliver the considerable growth allocated to the Borough through the East Midlands Regional Plan. There are also pressures to ensure that new development is delivered to a higher standard and that all developments in the Borough are easily integrated and managed in a sustainable fashion, limiting the impact that they will have upon the environment.
- 3.4** However, it is not just the urban environment that requires sustainable management. The Green Wedges and the countryside in the Borough are valuable and also require careful consideration.
- 3.5** A strong link with the Local Strategic Partnerships will ensure that the priorities deemed important in both the Leicestershire and Oadby and Wigston Sustainable Community Strategies that have a spatial flavour are, wherever possible, reflected and integrated into the Core Strategy. This will achieve an integrated and consistent approach to matters affecting the Borough as a whole. This chapter identifies some of those priorities and their relationship to the Local Development Framework.

Physical Characteristics

- 3.6** The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is unusual in comparison to many other Local Authorities because of its location and proximity to a major city, Leicester. In fact, Oadby and Wigston is the only district in Leicestershire whose entire urban area falls completely within the Leicester Principal Urban Area. Therefore, the spatial relationship that the Borough has with Leicester must be carefully managed.





- 3.7** Since the Second World War, the three principal settlements of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston have seen substantial growth, with initially development being located on greenfield land between each settlement and the City boundary.

The State of Oadby and Wigston Audit

- 3.8** In March 2008, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council commissioned the Local Futures Group to produce a 'State of Oadby and Wigston Audit'. The resulting report, 'The State of Oadby and Wigston' (October 2008) is designed to assist the Borough Council, the Local Strategic Partnership and other partners in identifying the key characteristics of and trends within the Borough.
- 3.9** Oadby and Wigston has a small economy by national standards, with an average knowledge sector and below average levels of productivity. However, the local economy is boosted by a strong enterprise culture and a high level of skill at both the adult and school levels.
- 3.10** A skilled workforce translates into relatively low unemployment levels within the Borough. Nevertheless, there is a mismatch between local skills and local employment opportunities which results in high levels of in and out-commuting for Oadby and Wigston. This may not be sustainable for local infrastructure in the long-term. It also means the local employment market is very competitive and might disadvantage local people. This trend is largely due to the fact that the City of Leicester attracts more employers due to its superior stature and accessibility. It is, therefore, difficult for the Borough to compete with Leicester with regards to the types and variation of employment opportunities.
- 3.11** The good social conditions prevailing in Oadby and Wigston are one of the Borough's greatest assets. Its high share of local knowledge workers translates into generally low levels of deprivation, crime and good health outcomes. A worrying trend, however, is that crime levels are rising in the Borough, despite the declining national and regional rates.
- 3.12** The Borough has a mixed environmental profile. On the one hand, its good levels of connectivity and amenities along with the affordability of its housing and proximity to Leicester City make it an attractive location to live. On the other hand, the Borough's weak natural environment score can be a disadvantage. Lack of business floor space and infrastructure is also a disadvantage that will need to be tackled in order to secure business growth and attract high value inward investment.
- 3.13** The State of Oadby and Wigston Audit provides a large amount of evidence to underpin the Borough's spatial portrait. The report directly influences the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy. These aim to improve areas where the audit found that the Borough was performing badly and to strengthen areas in which the audit identified the Borough to be performing well.



The Community - Population and Demographics

- 3.14** At the last Census (2001) the population of the Borough was 55,795 with 48.3 per cent male and 51.7 per cent being female. Also highlighted within the Census was that the Borough has a slightly ageing population compared to that of the national average, with only 19.8 per cent under the age of 16 years of age.
- 3.15** The average age in the Borough is slightly above that of the British population (38.7 years) with an average age of 39.3 years among residents.
- 3.16** Although Wigston is proving to be the strongest of the 3 centres in terms of its size, Oadby is the most affluent area in the Borough and is made up of larger dwellings, a number of which date back to the Arts and Crafts Movement of the 19th Century. In contrast, South Wigston was founded on its relationship with the railway and manufacturing and as a result the households in this part of the Borough are smaller and constructed to a higher density. Wigston is situated half way between the two, with more affluent residents living in the north and east, adjacent to Oadby, compared to the south and west where the settlement borders South Wigston and suburbs of Leicester.
- 3.17** The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is a relatively affluent, safe and prosperous place to live, work and visit. In recent years, the Oadby and Wigston Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) have worked closely with a number of key stakeholders including the Leicestershire Constabulary to reduce crime and disorder. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has developed a number of 3 year strategies, the latest being for 2008 to 2011, which recognises that there is no room for complacency and there is a continuous need to tackle crime and disorder and fear of crime.
- 3.18** The 2001 Census identified that there is an above-average in migration from within the UK, but very low from outside the country. More recent data suggests that recent in-migration has been very low, with the number of new National Insurance number registrations from overseas nationals as a share of the working age population (used as a proxy for relative levels of economic migration) well below national benchmarks.
- 3.19** Contrary to this, it is particularly interesting to note that although approximately 60 per cent of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston is within the Leicester Principal Urban Area, the population change in the City of Leicester records a particularly high number of new National Insurance number registrations from overseas nationals, reaching a level four times higher than the national average.
- 3.20** The Borough of Oadby and Wigston prides itself on its cultural diversity. The Borough's non-white population is large by national standards at 17.5 per cent, compared to 11.3 per cent in England as a whole. In particular, Oadby and Wigston records a higher share of those classified as Asian or British Asian than the national average. Given this diversity, it is important that the Local Development Framework takes account of the need to provide land and facilities to meet the needs of the different cultural groups.





3.21 The Faith Community Profile and Places of Worship Needs Assessment (2008) for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston establishes the various needs that the Local Development Framework should aim to meet as growth leads to a number of changes in the demographics of the local communities in Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston.

The Centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston

- 3.22** Both Wigston and Oadby are centres steeped in history with much evidence of this in older parts, such as The Lanes in Wigston. In contrast, South Wigston was not founded until the late nineteenth century, where it emerged during the development of Leicester's railway system and the related spread of manufacturing.
- 3.23** In developing the spatial portrait, it is important to recognise the different roles that the three centres play in the life of the Borough and to identify the challenges that they face. For the residents of the Borough, both Wigston and Oadby are considered to be integral centres that play important roles in the area. South Wigston is smaller but it is also considered to play a valuable role in the Borough.
- 3.24** In planning terms, Wigston is the larger centre because it provides significantly more retail floorspace than Oadby or South Wigston and in terms of Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres, it is classified as the principal centre within the local authority area. Oadby and South Wigston are, therefore, considered to be district centres based upon their retail offer and their role in the Borough at present.
- 3.25** By being in such close proximity to the City of Leicester, the role each of these settlements play is relatively local in terms of their retail offer. The types of retailers in these centres are generally smaller in comparison to the retailers that are present at Fosse Park in the District of Blaby and of course, within Leicester City centre. Nevertheless, the function of these centres in terms of their footfall and overall vitality and viability is good. Furthermore, the roles that the three centres play are very important and the local residents in Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston value their centres.
- 3.26** It is unusual for a resident of each settlement to venture into one of the other two centres in the Borough. If commuting is necessary, they are more likely to travel to Leicester, Blaby or south to Market Harborough which is situated in the District of Harborough. The main reason for this is a perception that if their needs are not met by their nearest centre it is unlikely that the other centres within the Borough will meet their requirements either. It may also be a result of poorer interlinked public transport services between Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston in comparison to the established links to the City of Leicester via bus or in the case of South Wigston, rail.

