



Figure 7: Strategic Green Infrastructure



Chapter 6: The Natural Environment

Core Strategy Policy 6

Green Wedges

The objectives of Green Wedges are to:

- retain the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedges;
- retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban area; and
- retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedges, especially for recreation.

The following land uses will be acceptable in Green Wedges, provided that they are consistent with these objectives:

- agriculture, horticulture and allotments not accompanied by retail development;
- outdoor leisure, recreation and sporting facilities;
- forestry;
- footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways; and
- burial grounds

Road proposals or dedicated public transport routes will only be acceptable where there is no alternative route available outside the Green Wedge and provided appropriate mitigation measures are implemented to minimise any adverse impacts on the amenity of the specific Green Wedge.

The detailed boundaries of the Green Wedges within the Borough will be identified in the Allocations Development Plan Document. Any review of the boundaries should be undertaken through the Local Development Framework process and in partnership with relevant neighbouring Councils.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 13: Green Wedges and the Countryside

- 6.1 The purpose of Green Wedges is to protect important areas of open land which influence the form and direction of urban development; to ensure that open land extends outwards between the existing and planned development limits of the urban areas; preserve strategic landscape and wildlife links between the countryside and urban open spaces; prevent the coalescence and maintain the physical identity of settlements adjoining the main urban areas and allow recreation and access to the countryside. To support these aims, the Borough Council prepared the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge Management Strategy in 2004. A Management Strategy for the Oadby, Thurnby, Stoughton Green Wedge was prepared in partnership with the Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project in 2005.





- 6.2** As a small and predominately urban Borough, our landscape plays a major role in shaping the character of the environment, both stimulating leisure and tourism and supporting the overall 'quality of life'. The Oadby and Wigston Landscape Character Assessment (2005) identifies a number of landscape character areas across the Borough and it is important that both the quality and distinctive characteristics of these areas are conserved and enhanced when new development occurs. Therefore, in order to ensure that any new development respects this character and enhances it, new development affecting the Green Wedges should relate well to the existing landscape and be sympathetic to its surroundings.
- 6.3** In relation to the Green Wedges specifically, their existing area should be maintained, in particular because of the valuable role they play in preserving the identity of the urban areas. Green Wedge boundaries will be safeguarded unless an identified need for new development, which cannot be accommodated within the existing urban area, justifies the need to review them.
- 6.4** Green Wedges provide an excellent gateway to link the urban area to the countryside. In the instance of the Green Wedge separating Wigston and Oadby, not only does it separate the two urban settlements, it also provides the Green Infrastructure necessary to access the countryside to the south of the Borough. Management of Green Infrastructure in the Borough is dealt with in Policy 5: Green Infrastructure.
- 6.5** With regard to the Direction for Growth, consideration will be given to the need to allocate land for a new Green Wedge through the Allocations Development Plan Document.



Core Strategy Policy 7

The Countryside

Land outside the Leicester Principal Urban Area, defined limits to development and Green Wedges will be defined as Countryside. The openness and intrinsic qualities of the Countryside will be protected. The Borough Council will promote good management of the Countryside whilst allowing it to adapt to the identified needs of the community.

Some forms of development may be required in the Countryside. Development justified as necessary in the Countryside must be appropriate in terms of layout, scale, height, materials, form, impact and siting. Development should not adversely affect landscape, wildlife, the ecological, geological, environmental, archaeological or historic resources of the specific site and the surrounding areas.

Development causing adverse impacts in the Countryside will only be permitted where there is a justifiable need which outweighs these impacts and where a Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken to ensure that all detrimental impacts that a development may cause have been assessed and can be mitigated.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 13: Green Wedges and the Countryside

- 6.6** In line with the Spatial Strategy for the Borough, where possible, development shall be focussed in the Leicester Principal Urban Area to minimise development in the countryside.
- 6.7** This policy provides protection against inappropriate development in the countryside and establishes the criteria for the types of development that may be appropriate. New development in the countryside will only be permitted where a justifiable need can be demonstrated consistent with the principles set out in Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, for example, development that will enhance the rural economy and when viable, support the delivery of affordable dwellings for identified local need. Where development does take place in the countryside it must be sympathetically designed and located so as to provide as little disturbance as possible to the open nature of the countryside and to protect the various Green Infrastructure asset that it supports.
- 6.8** Although the Borough of Oadby and Wigston is predominantly urban, land to the south and east within the local authority boundary plays an important role in providing the residents of the Borough and the wider Leicester Principal Urban Area access to open countryside. The majority of the Borough's population live within the built up areas around the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston. However, it is also imperative that where appropriate, necessary forms of development to meet the needs of residents in rural areas are supported.
- 6.9** As a small and predominately urban Borough, our landscapes plays a major role in shaping the character of our environment, both stimulating leisure and tourism and supporting the overall 'quality of life'. The Oadby and Wigston Landscape Character Assessment (2005) identifies a number of landscape character areas across the Borough and it is important that both the quality and distinctive characteristics of these areas are conserved and enhanced when new development occurs. Therefore, in order to ensure that any new development respects this character and enhances it, new development affecting the Green Wedges should relate well to the existing landscape and be sympathetic to its surroundings.





- 6.10 The exact limits to development in the countryside, for example, in relation to the Direction for Growth and Kilby Bridge will be defined in the Allocations Development Plan Document.

Core Strategy Policy 8

Climate Change and Renewable Energy

All new development, including large scale refurbishment, will be required to demonstrate how:

- It makes effective use of resources and materials, reduces predicted CO2 emissions and minimises water use;
- It will incorporate decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy generation; and
- It is sited and designed so as to minimise, mitigate and adapt to the likely effects of climate change

Residential Development

New residential development will be required to meet the following standards of the energy efficiency component of the Code For Sustainable Homes (or any subsequent national sustainable building standards) beyond the current building regulations unless this would render the development commercially unviable:

- Minimum Code Level 3 by 2010
- Minimum Code Level 4 by 2013
- Minimum Code Level 5 by 2016
- Code Level 6 post 2016

Non-residential Development

All non-residential development will be encouraged to attain high energy efficiency and minimum impact on the environment to at least BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method) 'very good' standard.

Renewable Energy

In order to achieve indicative renewable energy generation targets for the Borough of:

- Up to 2 Mega Watts of wind energy;
- Up to 4 Mega Watts of electric building integrated renewables; and
- Up to 6 Mega Watts of thermal integrated renewables

the Council will permit new development of sources of renewable energy generation where:

- Proposals seek to minimise any adverse effects on designated environmental assets, important landscape features and significant local biodiversity;
- They seek to minimise any detriment to the amenity of
- neighbouring residents and land uses; and
- They meet high standards of sustainable design and construction

The Council will further encourage all new development or major refurbishment to incorporate energy from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources. All large scale development will be required to incorporate on-site renewable energy generation, unless it is not feasible or viable or alternative decentralised and



renewable, low carbon sources can be identified.

Proposals should be accompanied by an energy statement demonstrating how (potential) carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced and by how much.

Further information will be contained in the subsequent Guidelines for New Development Supplementary Planning Document.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 8: Sustainable Design and Infrastructure, Spatial Objective 12: Enhancing Green Infrastructure and Spatial Objective 13: Green Wedges and the Countryside.

- 6.11** Climate change is a global problem requiring local action. The Core Strategy sets out the strategic approach for addressing climate change. It is imperative that we ensure that the approach taken is relevant to the Borough's circumstances so that the policies within the Core Strategy and wider Local Development Framework contribute in a meaningful way. This means ensuring that the development and use of land contributes to the Government's targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increases electricity production from renewable sources.
- 6.12** The basis of Core Strategy Policy 8 is threefold:
1. taking steps to ensure new developments adapt to, and mitigate for, the potential impact of climate change upon the natural and built environment;
 2. increasing the energy efficiency of all new developments and major refurbishment, thus reducing carbon emissions so that our contribution to global warming is retarded; and
 3. increasing renewable and low carbon energy generation within the Borough
- 6.13** The East Midlands Regional Plan gives direction to the district level by stating that "local authorities should develop policies and proposals to secure a reduction in the need for energy through the location of development, site layout and building design". This policy is in line with the East Midlands Regional Plan 'energy hierarchy' which encourages local authorities to reduce the need for energy, to use energy more efficiently and to use renewable energy.
- 6.14** The Council will encourage development that proposes to deliver a higher percentage of energy savings through the use of decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources. The Energy White Paper 2002 seeks reductions in carbon dioxide emissions of 10% by 2010, 15% by 2015 and 20% by 2020. The Core Strategy has a timescale of up to 2026. During this period renewable energy generation and carbon dioxide emission reduction targets will increase. The Council intends to implement policies that exceed these targets through a Guidelines for New Development Supplementary Planning Statement

Residential Development

- 6.15** In 2006, central Government announced a 10 year timetable towards zero carbon standards for all new homes from 2016. This would be achieved through a step by step tightening of Part L of the Building Regulation. This equated to energy efficiency improvements for all new dwellings of 25% by 2010, 44% by 2013, 60% by 2016 and zero carbon post 2016. The percentage energy efficiency improvements stipulated by the Government are equivalent to Code Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 respectively of the Code for Sustainable Homes.





6.16 The Code for Sustainable Homes measures the sustainability of a new home against categories of sustainable design, rating the 'whole home' as a complete package. The Code uses a 1 to 6 star rating system to communicate the overall sustainability performance of a new home. The Code sets minimum standards for energy and water use at each level and, within England, replaces the EcoHomes scheme, developed by the Building Research Establishment (BRE).

Code Level	Minimum percentage reduction in dwelling emission rate
Level 1 ()	10
Level 2 ()	18
Level 3 ()	25
Level 4 ()	44
Level 5 ()	100
Level 6 ()	'Zero Carbon Home'

Figure 8: Code Levels for Mandatory Minimum Standards in Carbon Dioxide Emissions Source: The Code for Sustainable Homes Technical Guide (October 2008), the Department for Communities and Local Government

6.17 In February 2008 the Government confirmed that a mandatory rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes will be implemented for all new homes from 1 May 2008.

Non-domestic Development

6.18 Non-residential developments contribute to approximately 40% of the United Kingdom's carbon emissions. The planning system can assist in helping to reduce these emissions by seeking better standards from new development.

6.19 Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) is an established and widely used environmental assessment method for buildings. It provides a formal classification for both old and new non-domestic buildings. BREEAM evaluates buildings according to set criteria and then provides an overall assessment score.

6.20 All factors that could have an impact on the environment at all levels of its construction and lifecycle are featured in the criteria, from a buildings carbon emissions and energy efficiency to its recycling facilities and location. The issues assessed in the criteria include:

- Management
- Health and Well-being
- Energy
- Transport
- Water
- Land Use and Site Ecology
- Materials
- Waste and Pollution



6.21 The standards that can be achieved by a building are:

- Pass
- Good
- Very Good
- Excellent

6.22 Through encouraging the implementation of BREEAM standards in new development, the Borough will strive towards maximising energy efficiency and minimising pollution, as well as reducing the production of waste and promoting the sustainable management of such. Over the plan period, these standards will contribute towards the creation of quality environments that will add to the overall goal of a more sustainable Borough. In support of the England Waste Strategy (2007), the Borough Council shall encourage all businesses within the area to recycle waste.

Renewable Energy

6.23 Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy states, “local planning authorities may include policies in local development documents that require a percentage of the energy to be used in new residential, commercial or industrial development to come from on-site renewable energy developments”. Following on from this, the Planning and Energy Act 2008 provides Councils with legal powers to require renewable energy systems in new buildings.

6.24 The Council’s Planning for Climate Change Study (2008) was undertaken to examine the potential for renewable and low carbon energy generation within the Borough, the scope for energy efficiency improvements above the Building Regulations, and adaptation to climate change for new development.

6.25 The study looked at the potential for:

- Wind energy
- Hydro power
- Bio-mass (e.g. wet bio-mass, energy crops and waste wood)
- Building integrated electric renewables (e.g., micro-wind turbines, photovoltaic cells)
- Building integrated thermal renewables (e.g. solar water heating, heat pumps)

6.26 The study concluded that due to the Borough’s urban nature, topography and geographic size, there was limited potential for a variety of renewable energy generation facilities. Only one location at Tythorn Hill was identified with potential for large scale wind energy of between 2-4 Mega Watts. The study further concluded there was more potential to exploit building integrated renewable or low carbon energy facilities.





- 6.27** The Borough Council will encourage developers to propose innovative developments that incorporate a range of building integrated renewable or low carbon energy facilities. In addition there is scope for new developments to exploit the potential for consequential energy savings through design approaches such as, passive solar gain in relation to building orientation, passive solar heating of south facing rooms and permeable street layouts that can reduce vehicle movements.
- 6.28** Reference should also be made to Policy 5 Green Infrastructure, Policy 9 Flood Risk and the Water Environment and Policy 14 Design and Sustainable Construction where they relate to climate change.

Core Strategy Policy 9

Flood Risk and the Water Environment

Development proposals should take into account the potential impact of climate change on the water environment. Development should not increase the risk of flooding, or together with existing and committed development, increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Development proposed in areas that would be at risk from flooding should be avoided unless it can be demonstrated that:

- Appropriate land at lower risk is not available;
- There are exceptional reasons for the development in that location; and
- The risk can be fully mitigated through careful design and engineering methods.

A detailed Flood Risk Assessment will be required for all developments greater than 1 hectare in size. This should identify the necessary mitigation and adaptation measures which should:

- Aim to avoid or reduce the risk of flooding and harm from it;
- Where appropriate include suitable habitat creation and not cause detriment to existing habitats or species; and
- Demonstrate how such measures form an intrinsic part of the overall development.

Development should proactively manage surface water run-off through the promotion of sustainable drainage techniques and positive land management, including the use of permeable surfacing.

Development of Brownfield sites should be accompanied by a desktop study to identify any potential contamination. If there is potential for contamination to be present on site, further more detailed investigation will be required to ensure that contaminants are not mobilised and enter groundwater supplies or watercourses.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 8: Sustainable Design and Infrastructure and Spatial Objective 12: Enhancing Green Infrastructure.



- 6.29** The proactive management of flood risk is one of the most important ways of adapting to the predicted more intensive rainfall and other extreme weather events as a result of climate change. Some potential impacts of climate change that would have an effect of the Borough's water environment include:
- Increased flood risk due to wetter winters and more frequent as well as destructive storms;
 - Strain on water availability due to drier, longer summers and resultant droughts;
 - Expectation that rain storms will be heavier and more prolonged. Where heavy rain cannot be absorbed fast enough by land this leads to localised flooding and potential flash floods.
- 6.30** Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) Development and Flood Risk (December 2006) sets out national policy regarding managing flood risk. PPS25 requires local planning authorities to identify any land at risk of flooding, from what source and the degree of that risk. In addition, there is the requirement to prepare a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). This is an assessment of flood risk on a catchment-wide basis in relation to development proposed in an area i.e. Oadby and Wigston Borough. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should be carried out in liaison with the Environment Agency. The Sequential Test is a key part of PPS25. It is used to steer new development to areas at the lowest risk of flooding. In addition, the Exception Test allows limited scope for departures from the sequential approach where development is deemed essential to meet the wider aims of sustainable development. Ensuring flood risk can be managed effectively is an important consideration when identifying suitable sites for development, particularly housing.
- 6.31** The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (November 2007) was prepared in liaison with the Environment Agency. The aim of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is to provide 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, coastal 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. Within the Borough there are 2 main occurrences of Flood Zone 2 and 3: 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 the other runs along the Wash Brook corridor which flows west to east between north Wigston and Oadby. There is one further occurrence along the Evington Brook corridor north of Oadby and Stoughton Farm Park, although this is within a relatively small outcrop of the Borough. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has helped inform the spatial development strategy for the Borough (see Core Policy 1 Spatial Strategy for Development) and is the basis on which the Sequential and Exception Tests will be applied.
- 6.32** All applications for development in areas at risk of flooding or with critical drainage problems, and any development on land exceeding 1 hectare outside flood risk areas, will require a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment in line with PPS25.
- 6.33** Appropriate management of the natural environment and major watercourses in the Borough such as the Grand Union Canal and River Sence corridor is essential to help reduce flood risk. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment offers guidance on how to manage the floodplains in the Borough.





Sustainable Drainage

- 6.34** Traditional drainage is designed to move surface water run-off as rapidly as possible to a discharge point, either a watercourse or soak away. This approach has a number of harmful effects because run-off from impermeable surfaces can increase the risk of flooding downstream, as well as causing sudden rises in water levels and flow rates in watercourses. In addition, by diverting rainfall to piped systems, water does not soak into the ground, depleting ground water and reducing flows in watercourses in dry weather.
- 6.35** Surface water run-off can contain contaminants such as oil, organic matter and toxic metals. Although often at low levels, cumulatively they can result in poor water quality in rivers and groundwater, affecting biodiversity, amenity value and potential water abstraction. After heavy rain, the initial run-off is often highly polluting.
- 6.36** Sustainable drainage systems provide a more sustainable method of discharging surface water and in turn reduce the risk of flooding and contamination. They should be utilized where practicable. Their form or technique used will be determined by the nature of the development and the location proposed. Some methods have the potential for environmental and landscape enhancement improving biodiversity and local amenity. Where sustainable drainage methods cannot discharge total surface water alone, they can be used beneficially in conjunction with conventional piped systems.
- 6.37** Developers will normally be expected to fund sustainable drainage systems and their future management. This will be secured through a planning condition or Section 106 agreement. Further guidance in relation to flood risk mitigation, adaptation and sustainable drainage systems will be contained in the subsequent Guidelines for New Development Supplementary Planning Document.

Previously Developed Land

- 6.38** In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control (2004), a desktop study for potential contamination will be required to support proposals on any Brownfield site. The Borough Council is preparing an Employment Sites and Brownfield Land Study to inform development of the Allocations Development Plan Document which should highlight potential development sites that may be contaminated. Further guidance on potential contaminated land can also be sought from the Council's Environmental Health department.

Water Cycle Study

- 6.39** Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has prepared a Water Cycle Study Scoping Report which covers the initial and scoping stages of preparing a Water Cycle Study at a strategic level. A Detailed Water Cycle Study is likely to be required to be prepared by the developer in relation to the Direction for Growth in order to inform masterplanning work, relevant local development documents and any subsequent planning application.



Chapter 7: Infrastructure and the Built Environment

Core Strategy Policy 10

Community Infrastructure

Working within the overall context of the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area, the Borough Council will work with Local Strategic Partnerships and the key infrastructure providers to establish a Local Infrastructure Partnership that will prepare, keep under review and implement a Local Infrastructure Plan.

Developer Contributions will be used to ensure that new development meets the appropriate and necessary on and off site infrastructure requirements which are required to support the development and mitigate or compensate for the impact of the development on existing community interests and the local environment.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objectives 8: Sustainable Design and Infrastructure, Spatial Objective 9: An Accessible Borough and Spatial Objective 10: Promoting Healthy Lifestyles.

- 7.1 New development creates additional pressures on a locality by increasing the need for or pressure on facilities such as healthcare provision, schools, highways, public transport and the environment – the community infrastructure. This policy aims to ensure that infrastructure or facilities delivered as a result of Developer Contributions are to time and to the appropriate quality and, overall, reflect the impact of the development on the local community and environment.
- 7.2 The Borough Council has worked in partnership with Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and other Leicestershire district councils to prepare a Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area Authorities Growth Infrastructure Plan. This was commissioned from Roger Tym and Partners and the Plan was produced in 2009. The Plan identifies the infrastructure implications of housing and jobs growth in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area to 2026. It shows, at a high level, the cumulative infrastructure requirements that arise from growth; how much the infrastructure costs; and how the infrastructure might be funded. It also looks at how the infrastructure requirements of growth might be delivered. Preparation of the Plan involved a wide range of consultation and involvement from both primary and secondary infrastructure providers.
- 7.3 The Leicester and Leicestershire Housing, Planning and Infrastructure Group are responsible taking forward the Plan, particularly with respect to prioritising infrastructure delivery in the context of available funding streams. However, their emphasis is likely to be directed towards Leicester City and Sustainable Urban Extensions where the vast majority of growth in the Housing Market Area to 2026 is expected to be delivered.
- 7.4 In the Borough of Oadby and Wigston a Local Infrastructure Partnership has been established as a sub group of the Local Strategic Partnership. This is a relatively fluid grouping, seeking to involve those partners and infrastructure providers who are appropriate for each discrete development.





- 7.5** The Local Infrastructure Partnership has prepared a Local Infrastructure Plan. This provides a more detailed and locally focused perspective of the cumulative infrastructure requirements that arise from growth in the Borough. The plan is in conformity with and complements the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area Authorities Growth Infrastructure Plan. It builds on the Spatial Objectives and the Core Strategy policies to establish what needs to be done and by when, who needs to do it and what the priorities for action are. Where possible, it identifies capital and, if appropriate, revenue costs together with sources of funding.
- 7.6** The Borough Council has prepared a Green Infrastructure Plan which has a similar role and function to the Local Infrastructure Plan, but deals specifically with Green Infrastructure. This will provide a local context to the 6Cs Growth Point Green Infrastructure Strategy that is being prepared at a regional level. This aims to protect, enhance and extend networks of green spaces and natural elements in and around the three cities of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, connecting with their surrounding towns and villages.
- 7.7** The Local Infrastructure Plan and the Green Infrastructure Plan have identified those aspects of infrastructure that are essential in order to support development and mitigate or compensate the impact of the new development on existing community interests. These are identified in Appendix 2.
- 7.8** The plans have also identified those aspects of infrastructure that are desirable or optional. These will be identified in a Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions.
- 7.9** Developer contributions is a generic term which can be used to refer to planning gain, planning contributions, Section 106 agreements, planning obligations or planning conditions. Developer contributions can be provided either as planning agreements or unilateral undertakings made by developers. In most cases the local planning authority and developers finalise developer contributions through a Section 106 planning agreement, within the context of granting planning permission. On occasions a unilateral undertaking may be submitted by a developer to support a proposal. The Planning Obligations Circular (05/05) requires that planning obligations are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, relevant and reasonable. Developer Contributions may be provided by way of land, buildings and/or financial contributions. They can take the form of a maintenance payment to allow for the longer term upkeep and maintenance of the facilities and infrastructure.



- 7.10** Examples of infrastructure which may be sought through developer contributions include;
- affordable or specialist housing needs;
 - open space and play facilities;
 - sporting and leisure centre facilities;
 - local education investment provision;
 - highways and public transport improvements;
 - healthcare provision and social services;
 - local waste management and recycling;
 - environmental works including benefits to local biodiversity, the cultural and historic environment and other Green Infrastructure;
 - new provision of/repairs and/or improvements to community buildings
 - public art in the community;
 - crime prevention and community safety provision; and
 - flood protection.
- 7.11** The Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions will incorporate a review all existing policy and guidance relating to developer contributions in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. The involvement of Local Strategic Partnerships and the local community will be sought to ensure that the requirements of all partners, infrastructure providers and communities are taken into account. Where relevant, the Supplementary Planning Document will identify thresholds of development that may require the provision of, and developer contributions towards, infrastructure.
- 7.12** The Government is considering the implementation of a new method for addressing developer contributions. This is called the Community Infrastructure Levy and is intended to simplify the developer contribution process by providing a charging schedule against which new development will be assessed for its financial contribution towards infrastructure provision. The Borough Council will review its approach to developer contributions once the Community Infrastructure Levy is enacted. If enacted before the publication of the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document then the Community Infrastructure Levy will be addressed in this. If enactment postdates the Supplementary Planning Document then this will be reviewed as necessary.





Core Strategy Policy 11

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing will be sought to meet identified local needs on all developments of 10 dwellings or more.

The capability of a site to deliver a financially viable level of affordable housing will be informed by a Borough-wide Affordable Housing Viability Assessment. There is no upper limit to the level of affordable housing that can be delivered on a site; however, in line with the current Affordable Housing Viability Assessment the following minimum thresholds will apply:

- Oadby - 30%
- Wigston – 20%
- South Wigston – 10%

unless individual site viability analysis advocates a higher percentage is appropriate. In particular, an individual site viability analysis will be required in relation to the Direction for Growth at Wigston.

In order to meet local needs 80% of affordable housing should be for social rent and 20% for intermediate housing.

Off-site contributions for affordable housing in lieu of on-site provision will only be supported where there is clear evidence that the site is not suitable or viable. Where 100% provision of affordable housing is proposed by a Registered Social Landlord the Council will consider negotiation on other planning obligations.

Where possible, affordable housing provided through this policy should be retained within the affordable housing stock for the longer term, regardless of tenure. Where the affordable housing is not maintained by a registered social landlord, appropriate planning conditions will be imposed or a planning obligation will be negotiated.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 1: Regeneration of Town and District Centres, Spatial Objective 4: South Wigston District Centre, Spatial Objective 6: Growth of the Principal Urban Area and Spatial Objective 7: A Balanced Housing Market

- 7.13** Although Oadby and Wigston is a relatively wealthy Borough there is still a significant need for affordable housing which is likely to rise over the plan period. It appears many households needing to access affordable housing are masked by this perception of affluence. This has been evidenced through the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment prepared in 2008.
- 7.14** The study identifies trends across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (as defined in the East Midlands Regional Plan) and the sub-markets that function within it. The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (December 2008) indicated that there was an annual shortfall of 214 dwelling units up to 2016. The adopted East Midlands Regional Plan states new housing in the Borough should be provided at a level of 90 dwellings per annum. This would require the Council to set a threshold for affordable housing provision of 238%.



- 7.15** The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment acknowledge that 238% is not a target percentage that is realistic or achievable. It further states that percentage targets over 40% would be impracticable in terms of viability, the wider market and mixed communities. The study recommends that local planning authorities set appropriate local percentage targets, taking into account the factors above. This is in line with Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing.
- 7.16** The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment further indicates that an appropriate tenure split should be 80% of affordable housing for social rent and 20% for intermediate needs (definitions of each tenure are contained in the Glossary).
- 7.17** A Borough-wide Affordable Housing Viability Assessment was prepared in August 2009. The aim of the study was to provide further evidence in relation to:
- appropriate local targets;
 - funding sources (eg public subsidy, developer contributions);
 - priority infrastructure needs
 - land viability; and
 - the level of commuted sums
- 7.18** The Affordable Housing Viability Assessment identified five sub market areas based on post code vectors. These are: Prime Oadby; Oadby; Wigston; South Wigston (north of the railway line) and South Wigston (south of the railway line). Between these sub areas current market values vary significantly which has a marked effect on residual values. The findings of the Affordable Housing Viability Assessment recommended that due to the considerable variation in residual values between the sub markets in the Borough, the Council could adopt a split percentage threshold across the Borough's three settlements. The study proposed percentage targets for affordable housing based on identified local needs for each settlement of: Oadby - 30%; Wigston – 20% and South Wigston – 10%. These targets should be taken as a minimum.
- 7.19** With regard to the Direction for Growth at Wigston, an individual site viability analysis will be required in order to inform masterplanning work, relevant local development documents and any subsequent planning application. This is because the Affordable Housing Viability Assessment and the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities Growth Infrastructure Plan indicate that a minimum threshold higher than the 20% identified for Wigston is achievable on a site of this nature. However, due to the fact that market conditions and viability will change during the life of the Core Strategy and that the Direction for Growth is not scheduled to begin until 2017 at the earliest it is more appropriate to undertake such an analysis closer to the time that development is likely to start.
- 7.20** Planning Policy Statement 3 advocates that local planning authorities should set a plan-wide target in local development documents for the amount of affordable housing to be provided. Because the Council are proposing a split target across the Borough this will be difficult to substantiate within the Core Strategy. Market conditions will change during the life of the Core Strategy so it is desirable that policies put in place for affordable housing delivery are designed and applied with considerable flexibility otherwise future housing development may be stunted. There are likely to be developments in some areas which can support a higher percentage of affordable housing contribution (subject to individual site viability analysis). Proposals for a higher provision of affordable housing will be supported.





- 7.21** The Allocations Development Plan Document will contain site specific policies, in relation to housing development. It is felt that this is a more appropriate local development document to set out a plan-wide target for affordable housing as there will be clarity about how the overall Borough housing figure of 1800 dwellings up to 2026 will be disaggregated between the three settlements. In addition, it is likely that some allocated sites will have specific targets for affordable housing based on individual site viability analysis and identified local needs.
- 7.22** In terms of an appropriate site size threshold, the Council has established a dwelling size threshold of 10 or more dwellings in line with the findings of the Affordable Housing Viability Assessment. This reflects the predominately urban nature of the Borough and the fact that many of the sites developed for housing are often small in size.
- 7.23** Although Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing states that the national indicative minimum site size threshold is 15 dwellings. Local Planning Authorities are able to set lower minimum thresholds, where viable and practicable.
- 7.24** In relation to proposals for off-site contribution in lieu of on site provision of affordable housing, this will only be acceptable if the developer can demonstrate clear evidence that on-site provision is not suitable or viable. In addition the Council will encourage residential site layouts that have all dwelling units developed to the same architectural standards, with no noticeable change in elevations of property or landscaping, irrespective of tenure. Adopting a ‘tenure blindness’ approach on all sites will help towards the objective of creating balanced and inclusive communities in line with paragraph 16 of Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development.
- 7.25** Further guidance will also be contained in the following subsequent local development documents: Allocations Development Plan Document, Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plans, Guidelines for New Development Supplementary Planning Document (in relation to allocated sites) and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (in relation to off-site provision).
- 7.26** Where 100% provision of affordable housing is proposed by a Registered Social Landlord the Council will consider negotiation on other planning obligations. Further guidance in relation to the appropriate amount of contribution will be contained in the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 7.27** With regard to specific proposals where provision of affordable housing might prejudice other objectives of the Core Strategy the Council may consider adopting a flexible approach towards the provision of affordable housing.

Retention of Affordable Housing Stock

- 7.28** It is desirable to ensure that affordable housing delivered through this policy remains available to meet local housing needs beyond the first occupier. To ensure the delivery and long term occupation of affordable housing, it will be preferable for a specialist organisation, such as a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) or Trust, to be involved in the ownership and management of the resultant dwellings. Management of affordable housing by a Registered Social Landlord or Trust will be formalised through the use of a legal agreement. However, the right of occupants of shared ownership housing to staircase to full ownership means that shared ownership housing cannot remain affordable in perpetuity. In addition, Right to Acquire schemes allows eligible Registered Social Landlord and Trust tenants to buy their property at a reduced cost. Both systems effectively convert former affordable housing into market housing. The Council will support agreements that seek to enable the affordable housing provider to buy back the unit for affordable housing should the owner move on.



Core Strategy Policy 12

Housing Needs of the Community

Development will be permitted which contributes to meeting the identified housing needs of different groups in the community through the provision on suitable sites of one or more of the following:

- a range of housing types, unit sizes and tenures to help create mixed and inclusive communities, provide a choice of housing and meet identified local housing needs;
- dwellings designed with the capability of being adapted to meet the needs of all occupiers in line with national best practice

Where proposals are made for development to meet specific local housing needs, the following criteria should be applied:

- proposals should be located within or adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area where there is access to a range of essential local services and facilities;
- proposals should be located close to public transport routes and accessible by a range of transport modes; and
- proposals should be integrated into the existing wider community to help create mixed and inclusive communities

Proposals that seek to meet the needs of specific groups identified in the latest Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment or other appropriate evidence will be supported.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 1: Regeneration of Town and District Centres, Spatial Objective 2: South Wigston District Centre, Spatial Objective 6: Growth of the Principal Urban Area, Spatial Objective 7: A Balanced Housing Market, Spatial Objective 8: Sustainable Design and Infrastructure

7.29 Local Development Documents should contain policies which seek to address the needs of different households and groups, for both affordable and market housing. This accords with the Government's key housing policy goal of ensuring that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live. This is in line with the Council's objective of creating balanced, mixed and inclusive communities and the Local Strategic Partnership's priority of meeting the housing needs of local people.

7.30 All new residential development should seek to address the need for differing household sizes and for diverse groups within the Borough. The Borough's household needs are varied and include single people, couples with and without children, black and minority ethnic groups, older people and the frail elderly. Some households will also have special needs such as people with physical disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health problems and sensory disabilities. Sometimes these specific needs occur in the same households i.e. a couple where one partner has a disability. Homes required to help address these differing needs can also be diverse, ranging from dwellings with more or less bedrooms and/or different styles of accommodation: flats, houses, bungalows, communal living units etc. All proposals for new housing, including those that affect existing housing stock, will need to be of a high quality and design. The delivery of new housing should not only meet existing needs but also the aspirations of people as their needs change over time.





7.31 The appropriate mix of different household types, sizes and tenures will be identified through sub-regional and local housing market assessments and other relevant studies. The shortfalls in particular housing types will vary across the Borough and over the plan period. The current Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2008) identified demographic trends and the types of housing likely to be needed by 2016. As the urban area of the Borough lies within the Leicester Principal Urban Area, many of the trends and wider housing needs relevant to Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston are contained in the section relating to Leicester City.

7.32 The main demographic trends identified by the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment were an overall increase in smaller household formation and an ageing population. In relation to older people, it is anticipated that by 2025 the over 65 population will increase by 43% and the over 80 population by 53%. As a result of this forecast of future population increases in the older age groups, an Older People’s Housing Needs Study is currently being prepared based on the Leicester Housing Market Area.

7.33 The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment estimated the types of household that would need to be accommodated in the Borough by 2016. The following table sets this out:

Married couple	Cohabiting couple	Lone parent	Other multiperson household	One person household
47%	10%	6%	4%	32%

Figure 9: Projected household type by 2016

7.34 Although there is an understanding of the type of households requiring housing, assumptions need to be made regarding the unit size and type of housing that would need to be provided to meet this need. The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment gave an estimate of the likely profile of household types that will require market housing to 2016. The estimate is based on an assumption of the type of accommodation that may be suitable and acceptable to each group. It cannot be guaranteed that groups will find the assumed accommodation suitable or acceptable. Further analysis, taking account of the current housing market provides a refined estimate of the type of provision that may be needed by 2016:

Medium large family units*	Multiperson units	Small – medium units**	Sheltered and/or – Supported***
63%	4%	32%	1%

Figure 12: Percentage of household stock required by 2016

*two and three bed houses and larger = medium to larger family units

**one and 2 bed flats, 2 bed houses and 2 bed bungalows = smaller and medium

*** covers frail elderly, people with special needs etc



- 7.35** From this information it can be extrapolated that there is a shortfall of medium to large family units within the Borough although the need for small to medium units is still high.

Extra Care Housing

- 7.36** Extra care housing describes a type of specialised housing that provides independence and choice to adults with varying care needs and enables them to be accommodated in their own homes. Services are provided in a purpose built housing environment with care and support delivered to meet individual resident's needs. An extra care housing scheme is usually a group of apartments or bungalows built on the same site, providing specialised accommodation and support services on hand 24 hours a day. The accommodation can be rented or bought, either by an individual or couples. This type of housing typically includes communal facilities such as meals, domestic help, leisure and recreational facilities within a protected environment. Where communal facilities are included as part of a development these should be accessible to neighbouring communities, where possible, to foster balanced inclusive communities.

Life time Homes Standard

- 7.37** The Council will encourage new housing to be built to meet the Lifetime Homes Standards. These are a set of home design principles which seek to ensure that homes meet the varied and often changing needs of occupiers over time. First developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1991 the current standard comprises of 16 design features which should be incorporated into new dwellings to make housing more functional for everyone including families, disabled people and older people. They also include future-proofing features that enable cheaper, simpler adaptations to be made when needed, for example, making the getting into and around the home easier for everyone, whether due to limited mobility, being elderly or families with small children. Good accessibility is relevant to everyone. The Standards go beyond those currently required by the Building Regulations, . However, the Government is currently proposing that the Standards through the Code for Sustainable Homes with the overall aim of all housing being built to meet the Standards from 2013.
- 7.38** Details regarding the 16 design features which make up the Standards can be found in Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, a National Strategy for Housing an Ageing Society (CLG 2008).





Core Strategy Policy 13

Provision of Gypsy and Traveller Sites

The Council will allocate land through the Allocations Development Plan Document for 1 residential pitch for Gypsies and Travellers in line with the East Midlands Regional Plan.

The following criteria should be applied in the determination of proposals for new or existing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites:

- within or adjacent to the Leicester Principal Urban Area;
- be reasonably accessible, by a range of transport modes, to essential local services and facilities including shops, schools and Doctors Surgeries;
- there is safe and appropriate access to the highway network, with adequate provision for parking and servicing of vehicles;
- is, or can be, served by adequate water and sewerage connections;
- is not located within Flood Zones 2 or 3, is not on contaminated land or within an area of poor ambient air quality;
- is capable of sensitive visual integration into existing surroundings;
- would not adversely impact environmentally sensitive areas or areas of heritage and landscape character importance; and
- would not have an unacceptable impact on adjoining neighbours and land uses.

All proposals for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople site development should be in accordance with current National design guidance.

This policy will assist in the delivery of Spatial Objective 7: A Balanced Housing Market, Spatial Objective 9: An Accessible Borough, Spatial Objective 10: Promoting Healthy Lifestyles and Spatial Objective 11: Empowering a Safe Community

- 7.39** It is important to provide for the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople within the wider context of meeting identified local housing needs. Definitions for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople can be found in the glossary.
- 7.40** In order to assess these needs, a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland was carried out. This provided the evidence necessary to inform the development of policy in the East Midlands Regional Plan which sets out the minimum net additional pitch requirements (residential and transit) that Local Development Frameworks should make provision for up to 2012. Beyond 2012 it suggests that an ongoing increase of 3% compound growth per year should be assumed.
- 7.41** For Oadby & Wigston the requirement for Gypsies and Travellers is 1 residential pitch. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment defines a pitch as an 'area of land on a Gypsy and Traveller caravan site developed for a single family'. The location of a site to meet this need will be identified through the Allocations Development Plan Document.



- 7.42** In relation to Travelling Showpeople there is no net additional requirement in the Borough identified at this time.
- 7.43** The Core Strategy must also contain a criteria based policy for the provision of Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites. This should be used to guide the allocation of sites to meet identified accommodation needs and unexpected demand (such as the assumption that there is an ongoing increase of 3% compound growth per year as stated in the East Midlands Regional Plan). The policy should seek to ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are accommodated in sustainable locations with access to a range of essential services such as education, healthcare, welfare, shops, water and sewerage connection. The location of the site should not result in unacceptable living conditions for its occupants such as contaminated land, poor ambient air quality or being within an area liable to flooding.
- 7.44** Where permission is granted, appropriate conditions or planning obligations are likely to be used to ensure occupation of the site is restricted to those persons genuinely falling within the appropriate definition of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. In addition, proposals should be in accordance with guidelines contained in Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites, Good Practice Guide (CLG May 2008).
- 7.45** The Council will give preference to locations firstly within, and then adjacent to the Leicester Principal Urban Area in line with Core Strategy Policy 1: Spatial Strategy for Development in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.

