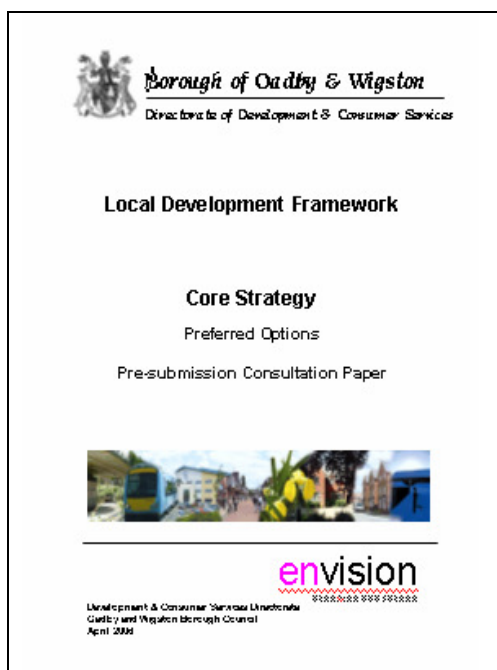


6 Preferred Options Paper (April/June 06)



6.1 Consultation Document: Core Strategy Preferred Options. Pre-submission Consultation Paper.

Consultation Dates: 24 April 2006 – 5 June 2006

6.2 Introduction

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 presented the Borough Council's preferred approach to future development in the Borough. Fourteen spatial objectives were provided. These set the context for the key spatial policy directions that the Core Strategy would deliver.

6.3 Who was consulted?

A list of consultees is included at Appendix B1.

6.4 How were people consulted?

Those on the Consultations Database were all consulted. The Borough Council also used a roadshow and a travelling display to reach the public. Press releases, adverts in the Paper and posters were all used to encourage the involvement of the public.

6.5 What were the main issues raised in the consultation responses?

Following on from the Issues and Options consultation, the Council identified a number of 'preferred options' to indicate how some of the issues facing the Borough could be approached. Appendix B7 summarises the comments made and sets out a brief officer response about how these comments will be addressed in preparing the draft Core Strategy.

Again many comments received were expressions of interest for individual housing and employment sites within the Borough. These sites will be assessed, along with other potential sites as part of the Allocations Development Plan Document.

In summary, the main issues raised at this consultation stage are as follows:

- The end date of the plan should be 2026 in line with the Regional Spatial Strategy as well as some of the policies need to more closely reflect regional policies;
- There is a need for the spatial portrait to be more comprehensive;
- The format of the document was considered poor in terms of clarity;
- There was general support for the spatial objectives;
- Some revision was suggested in terms of clarity and minor amendments not covered in the previous draft;
- The document should be more Borough specific;
- The key diagram needs to better reflect the Borough's relationship to Leicester City and the open countryside to the South;
- There should be a more explicit statement in relation to our brownfield strategy and in particular an appropriate brownfield target
- Many comments related to Expressions of Interest for particular sites. As the core strategy will not be allocating any strategic development sites these expressions of interest will be taken through to the Allocations Development Plan Document;
- Support was given to the spatial strategy of concentrating development in the centres of the three settlements;
- References to necessary infrastructure to support the spatial strategy need strengthening;
- General agreement was given for the breadth of the policy themes covered;
- Calls were made for the inclusion of strategic allocations in relation to housing and employment;
- There is a need to include our strategy in relation to Green Infrastructure;
- Emerging policies need to better reflect the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy; and
- There is a need for more up to date affordable housing evidence.

6.6 How did the Borough Council address these issues?

The Borough Council responded to the main issues raised as follows:

- The end date of the Core Strategy will be changed to 2026 in line with the Regional Plan. In addition, the draft Core Strategy policies will be revisited to ensure that they comply more completely with the Regional Plan.
- The spatial portrait will be revisited to ensure that is more closely related to Oadby and Wigston and how the Borough fits into the wider Principal Urban Area and in particular its relationship with its closest neighbours namely Leicester City, Blaby District and Harborough District Councils and the open countryside to the south of the Borough;
- Although there is no prescriptive format for the preferred options document it is agreed that the current format has not presented the preferred options coherently enough. The format for the submission draft core Strategy will not be the same as for the preferred options document.

- It is agreed that there needs to be a more explicit statement in relation to the Council's brownfield strategy. This and an appropriate brownfield target will form the basis of the development strategy for the Borough within the submission draft.
- Due to the level of support for concentrating development within the Borough's centres, this will continue through the submission draft of the Core Strategy
- It is agreed that there is insufficient guidance in relation to the necessary infrastructure to compliment new development. This will be addressed through development of the Core Strategy and future Local Development Documents.
- Due to the general agreement to the breath of policy themes covered it is not anticipated at this stage that further themes will be added unless the evidence base suggests otherwise
- The emerging Regional Plan does not anticipate that Oadby and Wigston borough will be required to allocate strategic housing or employment sites. The Council's evidence base further supports this. General housing and employment development sites will be allocated through the Allocations Development Plan Document.
- It is agreed that a Green Infrastructure policy has been unintentionally overlooked through this consultation. This will be rectified through the submission Core Strategy document.
- It is agreed that the Council's evidence in relation to Affordable Housing is not sufficiently robust. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment is in the process of being prepared jointly with other Leicestershire Authorities which should provide further more in depth guidance at Housing Market Area level.

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