

**Examination of
Oadby and Wigston Borough
Council Local Plan**

GUIDANCE NOTE

Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Guidance Note is to explain procedural and administrative matters relating to the examination of the Local Plan (LP).

1.2 Hearing sessions into the LP will commence on **Tuesday 24 April 2018**. An initial outline Programme will be prepared and published alongside a schedule identifying the Matters and Issues to be identified by the Inspector. A pre-hearing meeting is not being held. Participants are advised to make use of the Examination website https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/new_local_plan where further information including relevant documents can be found.

Inspector and Programme Officer

2.1 Claire Sherratt DipURP MRTPI has been appointed to consider the soundness of the LP. Her role is to consider whether or not the LP is sound and if the requirements of the relevant legislation and regulations have been met.

2.2 The Inspector will focus on the soundness criteria set out in paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), i.e. whether the LP has been positively prepared, is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Please note it is not the role of the Inspector to make improvements to the Plan that are not necessary to make it sound.

2.3 The Council will rely on the evidence it has collected in preparing the LP to demonstrate its soundness.

2.4 Those seeking changes to the Plan have to demonstrate why it is not sound and how the suggested changes would make it sound.

2.5 The Programme Officer for the examination is Kristen Perkins who can be contacted on 0116 257 2657 or by email – Kristen.perkins@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

2.6 She is independent of the Council and works under the direction of the Inspector. Her responsibilities include organising the programme for the examinations, maintaining the examination library and ensuring that all documents are recorded and distributed. Documents connected with the examination process should be forwarded to her. Any procedural questions, suggestions or difficulties should be raised with the Programme Officer and, if necessary, she will take them up with the Inspector. The normal method of communication will be by e-mail and all documentation will be available electronically, accessed via the examination website.

The Examination Process

3.1 The starting point for the examination is that the local authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. The examination will focus on the Matters and Issues identified by the Inspector who will have regard to individual representations insofar as they relate to matters of soundness.

3.2 Those who have made representations should have already decided whether their views can be dealt with in written form or if they need to present them orally at a hearing session. Both methods carry equal weight.

3.3 **Please note:** Normally, only those who made representations on the Pre-submission Consultation Document and that are seeking a change to the LP are entitled to participate in the hearing sessions.

3.4 The Inspector will seek to ensure that the Matters and Issues document is available on the Council's examination website no later than **Monday 26 February 2018.**

3.5 Could all respondents that are seeking a change to the Plan and wish to participate in the hearing session(s) where relevant to their representation please inform the Programme Officer which Matter, Issue and Question(s) discussion they wish to attend by **1pm on Friday 9 March 2018.**

3.6 A draft Programme and list of participants will be prepared and regularly updated as participants are confirmed. The Final Programme will include an 'Any other Matters' sessions.

3.7 It is open to the Council and any representor to submit further statements in advance of the hearings. However this is not a requirement and you may rely on your original representations if you wish. If further statements are submitted these should only focus on the Matters and Issues that the Inspector identifies in so far as they are relevant to the considerations already raised in your representation(s). Any such statements should be sent to the Programme Officer for receipt by **1pm on Friday 23 March 2018.**

3.8 The requirements for each statement are as follows:

- Statements should relate to the Matters and Issues identified by the Inspectors and be limited to not more than 3,000 words per matter. Generally there should be no need for appendices and no need to duplicate the content of documents already included as part of the Examination Library.
- Three hard copies of each statement at A4 size are required with paragraph and page numbers included. Any plans should be folded so as not to exceed that size. An electronic version of the statement is also required in PDF format with all documents being submitted to the Programme Officer. Statements should include, at the top of the front page, the appropriate Matter and Issue number and name of representor.

3.9 The need for succinct submissions is emphasised. Unnecessary detail and repetition should be avoided. It is the quality of the reasoning that carries weight, not the bulk of the documents. Nonetheless, it is vital that the fundamental elements of cases are set out clearly and succinctly – matters should not be raised at the hearings that have not already been raised.

3.10 Further discussion between the Council and representors is strongly encouraged – ideally leading to Statements of Common Ground. Please keep the Programme Officer informed about progress with preparation of such statements.

3.11 Representors who wish to proceed by written means do not need to take any further action; they can rely on what they have already submitted in writing. However, if any party wishes to submit further written evidence in support of their position, this should be focussed on the Matters and Issues and submitted within the above timescale.

3.12 Before the start of the hearing sessions the Inspector may raise questions directly with the Council on any points that are relevant to the examination. Any such exchanges of correspondence are placed on the examination website as examination documents.

3.13 As the purpose of the examination is to consider if the submitted plan is sound the focus of the examination is whether or not the process and methodology followed by the local planning authority in arriving at the spatial strategy and selecting the allocated sites is sound. Accordingly, in respect of specific sites, the examination will focus on both the process of site selection, including the underlying evidence base, and the soundness of individual sites. The Promoters of omission sites will be allowed to put arguments forward on the soundness of the allocated sites but not to promote the merits of their own site.

3.14 If it is concluded that additional sites are needed or if proposed sites are not sound then the LPA will be invited to put forward alternatives. Alternatively if the site selection process as a whole is unsound then the LPA should be invited to fix it and re-run the process.

3.14 The above advice on the approach to omission sites also applies to representations seeking to alter proposed Local Green Space and the like. In such instances the soundness of the LPAs proposals and the methodology underlying them should be examined first.

Hearing Arrangements and Procedure

4.1 The hearing sessions will commence at **10.00 am on Tuesday 24 April 2018 (week 1) and 10:00am on Tuesday 1 May 2018 (week 2)** in the Council Chambers at Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 2DR. Hearing sessions will be programmed for Tuesday – Friday each week. Please regularly check the Programme for updates on dates and approximate times of Hearing sessions together with any changes in venue details.

4.2 The hearings are open to the public and interested persons to attend, even if they are not taking part. Any changes to the arrangements will be advised to participants who should also keep in touch with the Programme Officer and regularly check the examination website.

4.3 The hearings will generally take the form of round table sessions, providing an informal setting for dealing with issues by way of a discussion led by the Inspector. There will be no formal presentation of evidence or cross examination. Please keep the Programme Officer informed about who will be speaking at the sessions.

4.4 The Inspector is required to run the examination hearings as efficiently as possible, minimising repetitious debate but allowing adequate time for discussions on key issues. The aim is for a series of focused hearings leading to the production of a short, focused report.

Site Visit Arrangements

5.1 The Inspector will make site inspections. Normally these site visits will be unaccompanied and unannounced unless the Inspector intends to enter private land or

buildings. Both a Council representative and the representor will be present on any necessary accompanied visits but these will not provide an opportunity to discuss the merits of individual sites or issues.

Close of the Examination and the Inspector's Report

6.1 After completion of the hearings the Inspector will submit a report to the Council as quickly as possible after the close of the hearing sessions.

6.2 The examination remains open until the report is submitted to the Council. However, once the hearing sessions are completed the Inspector can receive no further information from any party, unless it is a matter on which further comments have been requested by her. Any unsolicited items will be returned to the sender.

6.3 If Main Modifications to the plan are necessary to make it sound then it is hoped that many, if not all, will be based on proposals put forward by the Council in response to points raised and suggestions discussed during the examination. The Inspector will consider suggested changes from the Council in the same way as they will consider changes put forward by other parties.

Examination Library

7.1 Throughout the examination process, the Programme Officer will maintain an examination library of Core Documents. The List of Core Documents will be updated as required during the process and will be posted on the Examination website.

KEY DATES:

Mon 26 February 2018	Inspector's Matters and Issues to be published.
Fri 9 March 2018	Representors wishing to be heard / attend hearings to inform Programme Officer and clarify which Matter and Issue(s) is relevant to their representation(s).
Fri 23 March 2018 (1pm)	Additional Statements to be submitted to Programme Officer.
Mon 9 April 2018	Hearings Programme to be finalised & published.
Mon 16 April 2018	Agendas to be published.
Tue 24 April 2018	Hearings Commence for two consecutive weeks.

Claire Sherratt

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Local Plan