

- 2.5. **Regionally**, Oadby falls within the Three Cities sub-area, but is not identified as a town proposed to accommodate significant growth. Although Oadby is within the Principal Urban Area, this falls to the city of Leicester and the Strategic Regional Centres. The review of the regional plan is proposing a decrease in the Borough's annual housing requirement from the current structure plan, although this is under consideration at the Examination.
- 2.6. The Local Plan identifies the town centre boundary, as well as primary and secondary shopping areas and frontage lengths, seeking to focus retail uses in the centre of the town, with adjacent complementary services.
- 2.7. The **socio-economic analysis** shows a higher than average proportion of residents of the town's catchment falling within social grades AB, as well as higher educational attainment, and generally a degree of affluence above the Borough and national averages. It is also acknowledged that there is a high student population on the edge of the town. These features are important considerations in informing the town's future role.

Property analysis

- 2.8. Oadby has a niche role as a district centre serving its local population, with a high proportion of independent retailers. Although it sits in close proximity to Leicester, it offers a complementary rather than competing role, competition coming more from nearby Wigston and Fosse Park.
- 2.9. Research suggests that the town is relatively static in retail terms, with little investment other than the Marks and Spencer Simply Food store. The town centre also suffers from a lack of modern units that are capable of satisfying retailer requirements, and research has suggested that this is one the barriers to investment.
- 2.10. The town centre is clearly an important provider of local services – with banks, solicitors, and especially estate agents in plentiful numbers. The Parade is evidently an attraction for these uses, especially at its western end, although such uses do not necessarily contribute to the vibrancy of the shopping experience.
- 2.11. There is limited investment transaction evidence and details of past transactions are indicative of moderate sale prices. This is likely to reflect Oadby's role as a district centre, with most significant retail interest drawn to Leicester city centre and considerable competition for the remaining investment from Wigston and Fosse Park.
- 2.12. The town centre offers a reasonable range of offices relative to its size, however demand is seen as being limited by the close proximity of Leicester city centre and by the office parks around junction 21A, M1. There are limited commercial leisure opportunities, also due to the proximity of Leicester. Oadby does benefit from a number of eating and drinking establishments.

- 2.13. Public and community facilities are limited. The most significant facility is Oadby library, which is the subject of proposals to be relocated to alternative premises in the town centre. The town centre includes significant areas of residential property. The market is seen as buoyant with high demand evidenced by several recent developments in the south of the town centre. However, discussions with agents suggest that buyers are less attracted by the town centre offer (although that is valued) than by the proximity of Oadby as a whole to Leicester. This emphasises Oadby's role as a commuter town.

Townscape and Landscape

- 2.14. Oadby still retains some of its village characteristics with a mixture of uses, preserving the appearance of its organic growth. This is centered on the oldest remaining part of Oadby around St. Peter's Church and stretches along London Road towards the more recent developments on the Parade.
- 2.15. The linear characteristics of the Conservation Area reflect the development of the original settlement along the road between Leicester and London to the southeast of St. Peter's Church. Much of the building fabric outside of the Conservation Area is relatively poor and detracts from the town centre as a whole.
- 2.16. Towards the north of the town centre the quality of the architecture deteriorates and the history is lost.
- 2.17. The village green has long since disappeared with the redevelopment of the village as its size and nature has become much more urban. The only key green space within the town centre is Lawyers Lane. As this is a public footpath it doesn't allow for much social interaction to take place.

Access and Movement

- 2.18. In strategic terms Leicester is well placed with good links to core national and regional networks. Oadby is the far south-eastern suburb and as such is less well placed in relation to the major road networks concentrated to the west and north of the city. However the A6 links Oadby directly to Leicester (also a quality bus route) and Kettering, the A14 and Bedford providing strong links to the south-east and east via the A6, A14 and M11.
- 2.19. The A6 has a severance affect on the town, and there is little or no signage off the A6 to indicate to passing traffic that Oadby town centre is located in close proximity. It does however offer easy public transport access.
- 2.20. There is a wide ranging parking offer in the town, with time and cost restrictions designed to discourage use for park and ride purposes into Leicester. There are limited pedestrian circuits in the town centre, partly due to the existing layout of the shopping area. There are also often poor pedestrian linkages to the car parking areas, frequently via narrow alleyways. There are minimal cycling facilities.

Character areas and opportunity sites

2.21. The various analyses as set out above have led to the division of the town into various character areas, within which are identified potential opportunity sites for future development. These are shown at figure 2.3.

Emerging Objectives

2.22. Taking into consideration the baseline research and contents of the Issues and Options report, the following strategic objectives have been agreed:

- To establish a distinct and sustainable role for Oadby
- To encourage the growth of economic and social benefits for local people
- To create a safe, distinctive and pedestrian friendly environment
- To achieve an attractive and accessible place to shop, live and work
- To ensure that Oadby reflects high quality and inspirational design
- To link the town, physically and economically, to its catchment

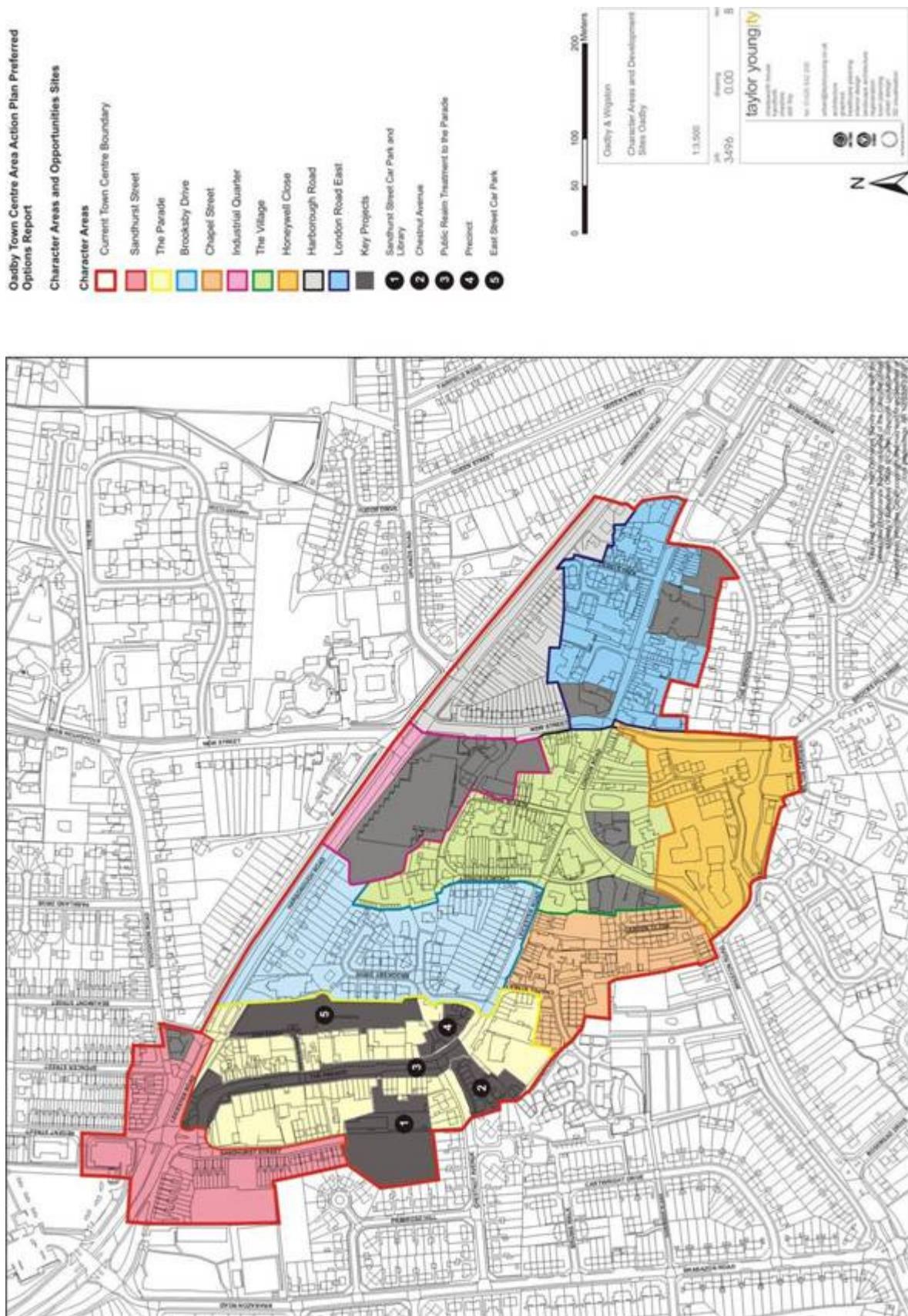


Figure 2.3 Character Areas and Development Sites (NTS)