

5. Preferred Options

- 5.1. This section of the report sets out the preferred options to be taken forward. This has been informed not only by the assessment as described previously, but also the outcomes of the six-week period of consultation and the involvement of local stakeholders.
- 5.2. The following paragraphs therefore outline firstly the preferred option for the overall vision and spatial strategy, followed by the preferred option(s) for the future of each character area.
- 5.3. The choice of Preferred Options has been based on the options assessment and the contribution to the objectives (and therefore vision), consultation and guided by national and regional policy and best practice as well as comments received. This section also sets out why certain options are not being progressed, for example due to the level of demolition required, unworkability of the project or cost implications. In many of the character areas nearly all the options are being taken forward, as they all relate well to and will help achieve the objectives, and therefore the vision for the future of the town.

Vision and Spatial Strategy

- 5.4. The vision and strategy for the future of the town, as set out below, have been developed following the agreement of the objectives through the issues and options consultation period. Additionally, they have been informed by baseline research, issues and options analysis, and comments that have been received during consultation. Considering all these factors together in the Vision as follows:
- 5.5. **An attractive, safe, successful and desirable town centre in which to spend shopping and leisure time. Oadby will be seen as a place in which to live and invest, providing shops, jobs and services to its local population and beyond.**
- 5.6. The town's strength will lie in its interesting mix of shops, cafés, restaurants etc, focused on the independent offer, but with a number of key national retailers as anchors to the town, as well as residential accommodation in the centre that will help activate the town throughout the day and into the evening. The town will be highly accessible by all modes, particularly on foot from its immediate surroundings in all directions, but also offering good public transport and car parking facilities. This is expressed visually in the strategy plan at figure 5.1.
- 5.7. This strategy will ensure that the town moves away from its current competitive position in relation to Wigston, and whilst an element of competition is inevitable due to their similar catchments, Oadby will have a different offer from Wigston, which will focus more on national retailers and civic functions.
- 5.8. The regenerative impact of the proposed development areas could be very significant in terms of any development that Oadby has seen in a number of years. To enable the various proposed developments, as well as any other development proposals as

'knock-on' or windfall developments from the Masterplan, to come forward and be negotiated and determined in an appropriate manner requires a strong planning policy framework with appropriate supplementary guidance.

- 5.9. In the section above, the Strategic Options of Growth, Consolidation and Contraction have been explained, and the possible futures for the town that they may deliver. The strategy for the future of town does seek a certain level of growth but also a re-focusing of the town into its future role.

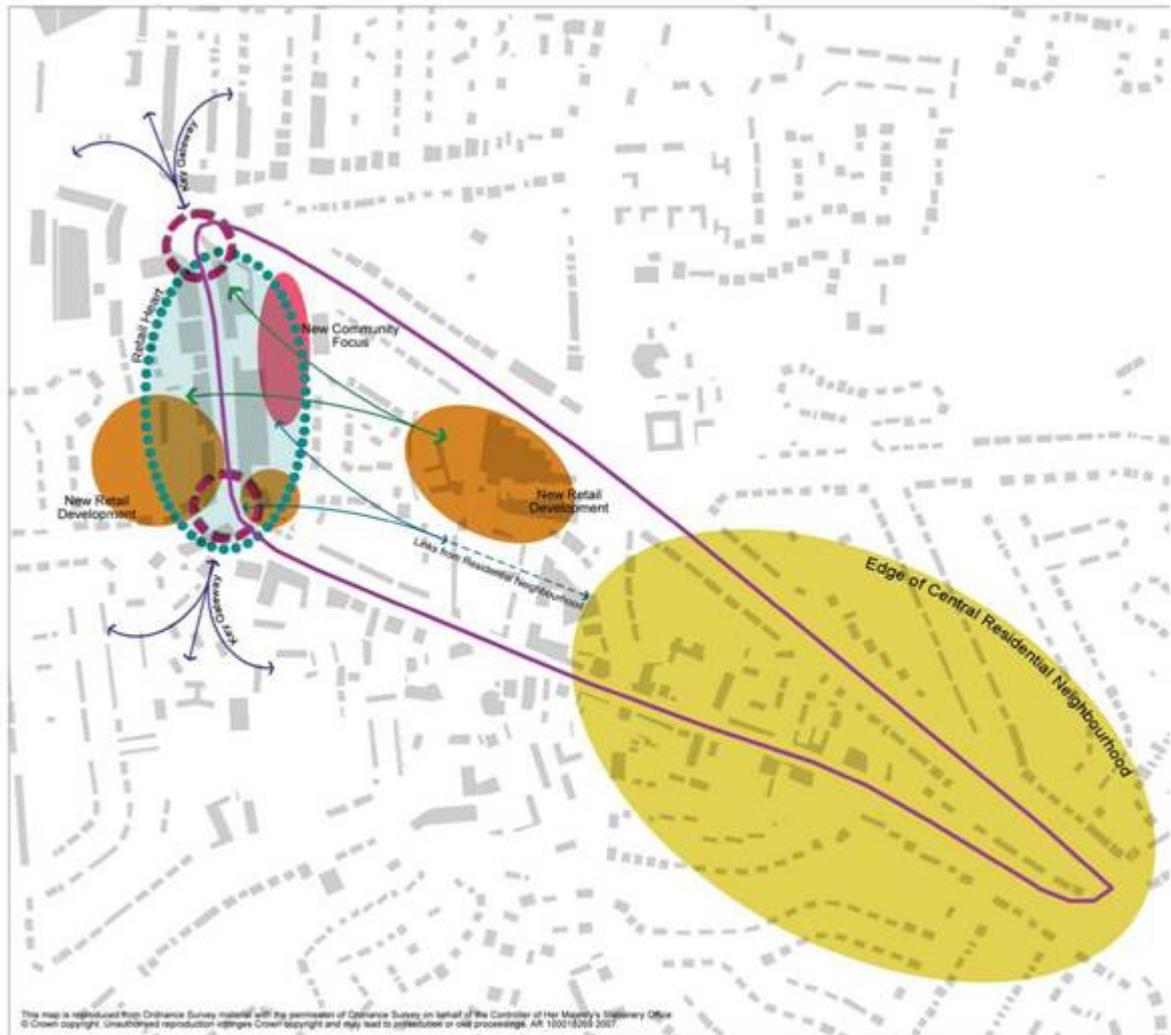


Figure 5.1 Oadby’s Strategy for the future (NTS)

- 5.10. This, and the assessment of the options as informed by the various consultations undertaken, does point towards a strategy of **consolidation** in a spatial manner but **growth** in terms of the retail offer. This will result in the re-focus of the town centre into a well defined core (consolidation) with new retail and leisure floorspace contained therein (growth).

Character Areas

- 5.11. The options generation process set out options for each of the character areas as established through baseline research, as shown in figure 2.3. Through their assessment as set out in the Issues and Options report and informed by consultation, the emerging preferred option is set out below, along with reasoning for not selecting other identified options. This should be considered alongside the overarching frameworks for transport and design.

Sandhurst Street

- 5.12. The development of the car park could represent an opportunity for major new retail and leisure development. This would incorporate the existing library site and the existing link to The Parade. The scheme would need to include appropriate levels of car parking.
- 5.13. It is also proposed to undertake the re-alignment of the junction to Leicester Road which will open upon The Parade and make it more visible – this is explained in more detail in the following sections. It also allows the development of a key gateway building to the town, as well as other gateway features such as new public realm, that will help improve the visibility and impression of the town.
- 5.14. General improvements to the public realm in the area will help accessibility throughout the area, although direct links to Ellis Park are not proposed owing to the density of development in this area making this difficult to achieve. Such improvements will assist in linking the town together and help to make accessible circuits, including the new town square area.
- 5.15. The possibility of purchase and demolition to enable the widening of the site is not pursued at this stage owing to the reality of the demand for retail floorspace in the town, and difficulty in delivery. In addition, it is considered unlikely that such a scheme would come forward within this plan period. Likewise, environmental improvements at BP Garage are not progressed, as although they can be encouraged through town centre management and improvements, this site is purely in private ownership and delivery could be problematic. Direct intervention for private home improvements is not being encouraged, although it is considered that homeowners will benefit indirectly from more general public realm improvements and, of course, the overall improvement of the town.

The Parade

- 5.16. As mentioned in the previous section, it is not felt appropriate to introduce a one way system and the same would apply to a fully pedestrianised street. The overall aim for The Parade would be to ensure that whilst maintaining two way traffic (with appropriate traffic calming measures), the levels of on-street parking including disabled parking are maximised, as are pavement widths. This allows a highly improved public realm to be achieved in conjunction with other development such as shop front improvements, and a drive to reduce vacancies. The latter could be assisted through a town centre manager working with local economic development

agencies, and will, of course, be assisted by the regenerative impacts referred to throughout this report. This improved part of the town would be highly visible from the re-aligned junction with Leicester Road.

- 5.17. The key physical projects in this area are the development of the northern part of the East Street car park for a community led scheme, which will also involve improvements to the remaining area of the car park, allowing for serving requirements to the improved rears of the shops. The other key development project is the redevelopment of The Precinct into an attractive mixed-use scheme overlooking a new town square. This will also be assisted by the re-modelling of the current retail units along Chestnut Avenue, which would have the potential of including the commercial units behind, although this is not being recommended at this stage owing to delivery and ownership issues. These developments, together with proposals adjoining this area, supercede the need for any 'arcading' of development to link buildings together.
- 5.18. The community based scheme could allow for a number of opportunities including an alternative location for the new library, health facilities, meeting space etc.
- 5.19. Improved public realm and associated pedestrian circuits as set out in each area, will help to achieve improved linkages to other town centre facilities including car parking.

Brooksby Drive

- 5.20. This will form an important pedestrian link to the possible development of the Invicta site on Harborough Road. As such, environmental improvements for example lighting, paving and pedestrian crossings points are the preferred options. Grant regimes are also proposed which may help improve properties in this area depending on the scheme involved.
- 5.21. It is therefore considered that all options are to be progressed.

Chapel Street

- 5.22. Sitting at the edge of the town centre, this area should retain its residential focus. Better links towards the town centre through environmental and building improvements are therefore encouraged.
- 5.23. It is therefore considered that all options are to be progressed.

Industrial Quarter

- 5.24. The development of the area for retail-led mixed-use development is recommended. This is the second key development area alongside the Sandhurst Street area. Any retail development proposals will however have to prove, through retail capacity and impact research, that the development of the site for the type of retail proposed will not have a detrimental impact on the current shopping provision of the town centre. Whilst the predominant use should be retail, other possible uses could include office or place of worship.

- 5.25. A community-led scheme is not felt appropriate on this site due to its overall size, and that it is likely to come forward in the near future, with both owner and possible developer seeking to progress the site for a retail led scheme.
- 5.26. Other smaller sites within this area would be appropriate for a range of uses including community or residential uses.
- 5.27. It is therefore considered that all options are to be progressed.

The Village

- 5.28. Currently comprising a real mix of uses, major development is not proposed in this area. The baseline report identified two possible sites for development – The British Legion / Walter Charles Centre and the current community buildings at the junction of London Road / Wigston Road. Whilst any change from current uses is not anticipated in the short term, should these sites become available, residential or alternative community use would be the most appropriate as opposed to retail. This will help to consolidate the retail core of the town and to help prevent it extending from beyond its proposed boundaries as set out elsewhere in this report.
- 5.29. It is therefore considered that all other options are to be progressed.

Honeywell Close

- 5.30. Again this area is dominated by residential development and that that focus should continue into the future.
- 5.31. Whilst all the options would be appropriate for implementation, it is not felt appropriate to progress this, as it is considered that investment needs to be focused more in the core of the town.

Harborough Road

- 5.32. Any works on the Harborough Road area would be linked to adjoining development, such as the Invicta site. Proposals should ensure safe and permeable pedestrian accessibility, particularly towards the centre of the town and to public transport facilities.
- 5.33. Any proposals for 'traffic calming' need to be considered very carefully, as the focus for this route is more likely to be the free flow of traffic as opposed to slowing or delaying flow, whilst being mindful of the importance of improvements to pedestrian crossings and accessibility.
- 5.34. New Street will assist in the traffic management proposals to help reduce the amount of Traffic on The Parade.
- 5.35. It is therefore considered that all options are to be progressed.

London Road East

- 5.36. Whilst providing a small amount of retail provision, this area really caters for a much wider market than the core of the town. It is therefore not felt appropriate to include this area within the town centre boundary, and policies would reflect that change. Development in this area (e.g. the public house) should be residential, not retail, again to help focus the retail provision of the town into its core. Other improvements such as architectural lighting would be achieved through non-physical projects, wider public realm improvements and town centre management regimes.
- 5.37. Again, to help focus investment and development in to the core of the town, it is not recommended to implement some options, i.e. central reservations.