

## 7. Conclusions and Next Steps

- 7.1. This report has detailed a thorough analysis of pertinent documents, the town itself, its location and relationships with surrounding places, as well as spatial analysis and analysis of the property market with particular focus on retailing.

### Context

- 7.2. The document review shows that the regeneration of town centres is a key issue of **national planning policy**. However, other reports also suggest that it is important to bear in mind the dangers of perpetuating 'Ghost Towns', as more and more local shops and services close and local communities therefore no longer live within easy walking distance. This, as well as the 'Clone Town Britain' report, stresses the importance of local distinctiveness and local retail.
- 7.3. **Regionally**, Oadby falls within the Three Cities sub area but is not identified as a town that is proposed to accommodate significant growth; this falls to the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Strategic Regional Centres. The successful growth points bids has actually resulted in the annual housing requirement to reduce in the Borough from the current structure plan.
- 7.4. 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.
- 7.5. 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.

### Property analysis

- 7.6. 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 comes more from nearby Wigston and Fosse Park.
- 7.7. 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 it is this absence that is preventing investment.
- 7.8. The town centre is clearly an important provider of local services – with banks, solicitors, and especially estate agents in plentiful numbers. The Parade is clearly an attraction for these uses, especially at its western end, although such uses do not necessarily contribute to the vibrancy of the shopping experience.
- 7.9. There is limited investment transaction evidence, and there is only one retail property currently on the market. Details of past transactions are evidence of moderate sale

prices. This 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.

- 7.10. 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, however, have a strong nighttime economy anchored around a number of major restaurants and pub/restaurants.
- 7.11. 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 large recent developments in the south of 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

- 7.12. 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 stretched along London Road towards the more recent developments of on the Parade.
- 7.13. The linear characteristics of the Conservation area reflects 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.
- 7.14. Towards the north of the Town Centre the quality of the architecture deteriorates and the history is lost.
- 7.15. 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

- 7.16. 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 that are 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.

- 7.17. 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
- 7.18. There is a wide ranging parking offer in the town, with time and cost restrictions designed to minimise use as 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. often via narrow alleyways. There are minimal cycling facilities.

### Emerging objectives

- 7.19. Taking into consideration all that is set out in this report, the emerging strategic objectives are as follows:
- 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

### Next Steps

- 7.20. The findings of this report were presented to the Steering Group in March 2007.
- 7.21. The agenda for this meeting also introduced a list of sites and opportunities as shown at figure 7.1 that have emerged through the baseline analysis. This will form the basis of an options workshop that will be undertaken in June 2007 which will inform the development of the Options Report.
- 7.22. The Options Report will then be taken through a six week period of public consultation including an exhibition. Comments received during this period will be taken into consideration, reported to the Council then taken into consideration in the development of the Preferred Options report, which will also undergo a six week period of public consultation. Comments received at this stage will then be taken into account in the development of the Submission Document.

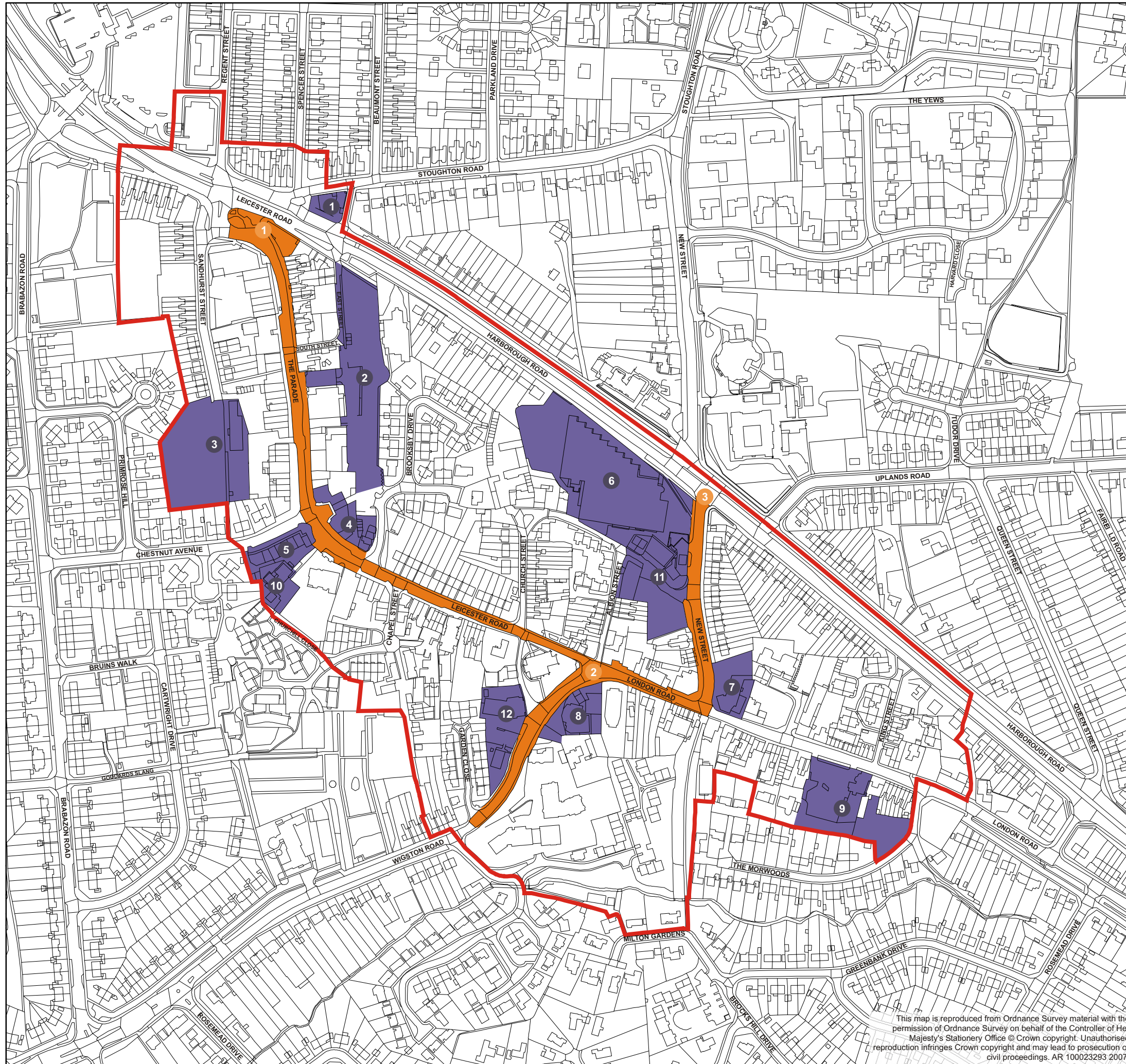


Figure 7.1

- Oadby Study Area Boundary
- Public Realm
- 1 Gateway Island
- 2 Gateway Island
- 3 Gateway Island
- Potential Development Sites
- 1 Garage 1
- 2 Office and Car Park
- 3 Sandhurst Street Car Park / Library
- 4 Precinct
- 5 Shopping Parade
- 6 Invicta / Vantis
- 7 New Street / London Road
- 8 Community Building
- 9 Public House and Car Park
- 10 Commercial Premises Adjacent to Public House
- 11 New Street including Garage
- 12 British Legion and Walter Charles Centre



Oadby & Wigston

Potential Development Sites

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