

# OVERARCHING POLICY AREAS (STRATEGIC CHALLENGES)

The Plan period and cooperation  
Where should development go?



*Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire*

## The Plan period and cooperation

### What the Government says:

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), sets out that strategic policies set out within Local Plan's should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from the date of adoption. It is suggested that this is required so that Local Plans can anticipate and respond to long term requirements and opportunities.
- 4.2 In addition, to the above, planning over an extended period of time, provides certainty and clarity for the public and local communities, as well as landowners, developers and any other interested parties.
- 4.3 Further, the NPPF states that *'strategic policy-making authorities should collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters which they need to address in their plans...effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere...in order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.4 The Council is fully aware of the positives that planning over an extended period of time bring, however planning for such an extended period of time is extremely challenging and requires a vast amount of community input, cooperation and evidence base.
- 4.5 The current Local Plan period runs up to the year 2031. With a proposed adoption date of the year 2023 for the new Local Plan, the lifespan of the new Plan must run until at least 2038.
- 4.6 Producing a Local Plan is extremely challenging for Local Authorities due to the amount of evidence base required to underpin the Plan and the need to regularly consult. Bearing this challenge in mind, the Council is proposing the new Local Plan has a Plan period that runs up to the year 2041. This will ensure that, should Plan preparation slip for any reason, the Plan at adoption will still have at least a 15 year lifespan. It also ensures further certainty and clarity for an extended period.
- 4.7 Local Plans have to be underpinned by an up to date evidence base, therefore whatever the Plan period is, the evidence will need to cover that period also. Currently, strategic evidence being produced by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities, covers the time period of 2041.
- 4.8 As part of the new Local Plan process the Council will engage with all Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities (including Leicestershire County Council), in particular, its direct neighbours of Leicester City, Blaby District and Harborough District. Under the Duty to Cooperate, the Council will cooperate with all relevant stakeholders and will produce a number of Statements of Common Ground that will be signed off by all relevant partner organisations. Currently the Council has an agreed Statement of Common Ground with all Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities, including Leicestershire County Council that sets out how the collection of authorities will collaborate and deal with Leicester City's declared unmet need.



Potential options:

- The new Local Plan time period will run from date of adoption until the year 2041, to ensure that there is at least a 15 year life span on the Plan.
- The Council will produce and sign off Statements of Common Ground where relevant to do so. This will ensure that the Council both understands all the issues and challenges, and meets the Duty to Cooperate.

Questions:

- Is the suggested Local Plan time period of 'date of adoption to the year 2041' appropriate?
- Who should be the key stakeholders that the Council enters into Statements of Common Ground with?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also, if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Where should development go?

### What the Government says:

- 4.9 NPPF suggests that local authority areas should plan to meet their own local needs in full within the area. It goes on to say that *‘Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:*
- a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
  - b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
  - c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and*
  - d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.’*
- 4.10 Further, the NPPF suggests that *‘planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses...strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land’*. In addition, the NPPF says that planning policies should *‘give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land...promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings...and support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes’*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.11 The Council’s current Local Plan focusses development in the existing urban areas, and only in greenfield areas when necessary. The focus for development is very much within the town centre of Wigston, the district centre of Oadby, the district centre of South Wigston, and then the remaining urban areas that surround these centres.
- 4.12 The Borough is a relatively compact and highly urbanised area that lies directly adjacent to the City of Leicester, Harborough District and Blaby District. To put its size into context, it is the 11th smallest local authority area (out of 406) within the United Kingdom, however the 3rd smallest (behind the Isles of Scilly and Watford) when the smaller inner London Boroughs are removed from the list.
- 4.13 Due to the Borough’s urban nature, there must be a focus on urban regeneration, however, because the Borough area is so compact, there is a point where more greenfield development needs to take place as there just isn’t enough available land remaining within the urban areas. In addition, the Council considers that the Local Plans should identify a mix of sites for development, rather than ‘putting all its eggs in one basket’.
- 4.14 The Council invited submissions of land to be considered for new developments in the Borough for the period 2031 and beyond, as part of the most recent Call for Sites public consultation that ran for 8 weeks from Midday Friday, 25 September 2020 until Midday Friday, 20 November 2020.



- 4.15 The Council invited the submission of any land parcel(s) (no minimum site size threshold) from all interested parties, including local residents; businesses; landowners; developers; and, agents. A number of sites were submitted and all of the sites submitted will help the Council to identify potential sites for consideration for development, through the production of the new Local Plan.
- 4.16 The Borough of Oadby and Wigston's 'Call for Sites: Site Collation and Initial Assessment' document has now been published on the Council's website. To view this publication, please visit the Council's website to view the pdf document or click on the link below:
- [https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/call\\_for\\_sites](https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/call_for_sites)
- 4.17 Due to the unique nature of the Borough, the Council would welcome the submission of any further suitable land parcels (no minimum site size threshold) and invite any interested parties to identify potential sites for consideration for development which could comprise part of the Borough's housing and economic development land supply, post 2031.

Potential options:

- Concentrate new development within the existing urban areas, particularly the town and district centres, until such land has been fully utilised, only then will greenfield land be used for development.
- Focus new development towards the greenfield areas of the Borough only, for example many of which that have been put forward for consideration to the Council and are included in the 'Call for Sites: Site Collation and Initial Assessment'.
- Take a balanced approach to the location of new development with a mix of urban development and greenfield land development.

Questions:

- Which of the proposed options illustrated above should be used in determining the location of new development within the Borough area?
- Should all new development incorporate an element of housing, shops, leisure and employment, or should shops and employment remain in designated areas, for example town centres and identified employment areas?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

