Dear Mr. Thorpe,

**Oadby Town Centre Masterplan Area Action Plan**

My apologies for the belated submission of comments, having found the 21st December, 2007 schedule wholly impractical in collating within the group.

However it is my understanding that the schedule had been extended, hence this submission as attached for your consideration.

We have been looking forward to the report, mindful in consideration of the Town.

Yours sincerely,

H.J. Hier
Chairman
Oadby Town Centre Area Action Plan —

Comments on Report
(Numbers/Subject refers to those in Report)

Access/Movement

2.19 Signage in the context of this report should not be referred. That is up to the Borough/Highways Agency.

2.20 There is no limited pedestrian circuit in the Town Centre. Would agree there is poor pedestrian linkage to the car parking areas. e.g. 3 narrow alleys.

Public Involvement

4.23 If Oadby Town Centre is not to be developed as a strong centre in terms of National Retailer representation why include for.

4.24 Agreed it has to be attractive to nearby towns/villages such as Kibworth Harcourt/ Beauchamp and Fleckney which means transportation. Current bus transport is rather limited.

4.4 Agreed that a one-way traffic system would not be appropriate strategy.

4.5 The proposed re-alignment of the A.6 junction from the Parade is not warranted on the basis of:-

a) The current junction and resulting 'S' road orientation leading to the Parade curtails traffic speed from the A.6 and provides a wide and visual impact to the Town, coupled to the fact the existing adjacent area is both aesthetically and congenial. This would of course be eradicated by the proposal.

b) The proposal from the A.6 emphasises a cul-de-sac approach with no restriction on to the Parade except what is referred to a "Traffic Management" under item 4.5.

c) The proposal also includes for the inclusion of a commercial building, this "closes up" rather than "opens up" the view from the A.6 by its longitudinal dimension which emphasises the shortcomings of the proposed re-alignment. See 5.13 “key gateway buildings” which reduces rather than improves visibility of the Parade. What of the car parking facilities necessary with such a building.

Character Areas

Sandhurst Street

5.12 Roof top parking on 'one level' only, above the proposed new retail development appears not to give the same space of car parking as exists on the Library site. Ramped access will be required which takes up more space. Open land at ground level is necessary for serving the retail units. i.e. no parking at ground level.
5.14/5.15 Under these items we note the cautiousness of the approach to the plan (10-15 years), giving a distinct impression that the purchase and demolition is dependent on retail entrepreneurs taking up the retail floor space. This curtails the ambitions of developing the Town Centre within the planned period. Reference to item 4.23 which does not give much confidence in the retail development of Oadby.

The Parade

5.16 The group considered the timed pedestrianised system for the Parade, by allowing service vehicles outside peak travel times as is believed was very successful in a number of towns. Consensus of opinion would suggest that partial pedestrianisation would not be viable.

Brooksby Drive

5.20 Retail development on the existing “Invicta” site is too far away from the core of Oadby centre to effect a viable link, and any pedestrianised routes would be via residential area which is far from satisfactory. The development of a Leisure/Community/Place of Worship would be more appropriate at this site where specific parking could be included.

The Village

5.28 Agreed - Residential use in future.

Harborough Road

5.33 Free flow of traffic must be maintained.

5.34 Agreed New Street should be considered to assist reduction of traffic on the Parade. In practice New Street traffic would be biased towards Wigston.

London Road East

5.36 Agreed this area is not included within the Town Centre boundary, albeit it caters for a wider market than the existing proposed retail core of the Town, nevertheless it is obvious that the proposed Town Centre will affect the area. In effect the east of Oadby will inevitably become predominately residential on the development of the Town Centre.

There will obviously be some resistance to this by the historically established retail outlets in the area. Old Oadby is very much a centre of activity and general opinion would suggest every effect should be made to retain this character. Of course aged dwellings in the area are very much in demand, especially first time buyers.
Transport Framework

Overall Strategy

5.39 The proposal to create a positive pedestrian environment along the Parade is welcomed.

5.41 It is considered that current parking in Oadby operates at a “very high” rather than “fairly high” capacity (viz a viz leading up to Xmas).

The strategy does not appear to confirm or show the level of car parking is to be maintained or indeed increased to cater for the proposed improved retail core in the Town.

5.42 Proposals to improve pedestrian links from car parks to the Parade are welcomed.

Vehicular Movement

5.43 We would disagree that the Town Centre suffers from severance caused by the A.6, would agree on the dominance of vehicular traffic over pedestrians on the Parade. A signage strategy serves no purpose except to assist visitors to the Town, which is not the issue. Residents do not require signage assistance.

5.48 Fig.5.3 showing proposed entry to the Parade is not of assistance when the traffic flow is orientated East/West and the A.6

5.49 The proposed “Public Realm” improvements are welcomed and would give a sense of “space” to the Town Centre.

East Street Car Park

Design Objectives

7.4/7.5 The proposed Leisure/Community/Place of Worship development to the north of East Street Car Park substantially reduces car parking facility for Oadby.

The proposal for such a development was considered at length by the group. It concluded to reject the scheme on the basis that it will result in a substantial reduction in parking facilities in the overall space available in the Town after development.

Reference to 5.51 it is agreed it is important that there is no overall loss of car parking space in the Town. The proposals do not show how this can be achieved indeed they appear to show a large reduction.
7.15 **Sandhurst Street/The Precinct and Chestnut Avenue**

The proposed retail/leisure development is questionable in its format, with access to the oval geometrical area via what can only be termed a passageway from the Parade.

Such development in a number of towns to our knowledge(e.g. Stratford) are simply cul-de-sacs with boarded up shops, which does not give much confidence in the proposed development.

It is suggested that albeit such developments are laudable, it could be very much enhanced by including an increase frontage of the development on to the Parade. The proposal is very sparsely divided between the Parade/Chestnut Ave. Upper deck car parking above the proposed retail units would be insufficient to provide same level of parking as existing Sandhurst Street Car Park.

Also upper deck parking could be most intrusive to the existing low level bungalows both in Chestnut Avenue and Primrose Hill.

**General**

Having perused a great deal of correspondence from authoritative bodies which could affect our proposals for the future of Oadby, we would refer to the recent correspondence such as the deliberation of the Competition Commission to the effect that supermarkets posed no threat to independent retailers. This is at odds with Associations such as:-

3. Association of Convenience Stores.

Other authoritative organisations have also embraced a similar stance.

e.g. Womens Institutes
     National Consumer Council.

The point to be made is in effect that the report from the Competition Commission is widely expected to encourage the building of supermarkets. Therefore it is imperative that the Borough Council should only allow developments of mini-supermarkets or major supermarkets to go-ahead only if they do not harm Oadby Town Centre or Wigston.

I therefore conclude on pessimistic note for 2008 to the effect that if retail development is to succeed in Oadby there are a number of issues to be addressed, e.g. Planning and Tax Environment which is not conducive to attracting entrepreneurs.

Weekly shop is done at supermarkets.
Inflation and rent increases coupled with business hikes.

Too many charity shops (5 in Oadby) which enjoy 80% rebate on their business rates and therefore can pay greater levels of rent and price out competition.
Oadby Civic Society

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LE2 5WT
Our Ref. 070/STAT
7th December 2011

Dear Mr Thorpe.

Oadby Town Draft Centre Area Action Plan,

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Oadby Area Action Plan.

Comments in our letter of 5th January 2008, where they refer to the current Action Plan of October 2011 are still relevant. However we would emphasise the following;

1. The Oadby Centre

Ref. 5.43. A new 2/3 storey Retail and Residential Development will again result in a need for increased parking facilities.

2. Phasing

Ref. 5.45. Public realm improvements to the Parade are welcomed, and considered as being urgent.

AAP18 Brooksby Square.

Ref. 5.5. East Street car park would still have to provide service access to Retail/Commercial Units. Hence no change.

Ref. 5.30. Proposed Community/Public space on the North side of car park, substantially reduces car parking in this area, which is heavily used, more so, rather than Sandhurst St., and if not available would deter visitors/shoppers. A public square located in this area, remote from the Centre/Parade seems unnecessary.

Ref. 5.57/58. Harborough Rd. frontage to Car Park could be enhanced by landscaping. The proposal for a 3/4 storey residential development with a leisure development will reduce car parking facilities at this end of the Town, and the specific space here is remote from the main Centre area where it would be more appropriate.

The residential development will do nothing to improve the image of Oadby, if that is the intention.
If a building is required on the A6, suggest a high quality office block strip parallel to the A6 carriageway with parking under, A miniature Business Park

Ref. 5.60 Economic. This will increase the need for more car parking.

Ref. 5.61/63. Result in loss of car park.

Ref. 5.64 Simple redesign of whole car park is all that is required to improve the overall appearance.

AAPP19 Baxter’s Place

Ref. 5.41 A decked car park albeit half-sunk, will have a detrimental effect on adjacent residential properties. Suggest a single storey plus a two storey to Retail site, with privacy walls to the dwellings. The increase in Retail/Commercial and Community use, will inevitable lead to an increase in parking provision. The proposal does not seem to take account of services to some of the Parade Shops via the “central square”. The existing pedestrian link to the Parade is only a narrow passage.

Refs. 5.54/5.69 The comment to Ref. 5.41 apply to this para.

Ref 5.74 Would query if car parking is significantly improved. Our records show present overall facility is at 413 spaces (38 reserved), with the new plan showing overall as 358 spaces.

Ref. 5.75 Agreed front servicing could be possible. It should be noted that the existing access to Sandurst Street car parking facility needs to be widened.

AAPP 20. The Parade

Refs 5.77/78/79/80. The proposals here are welcomed. However, is there a conflict as to the improved Parade and the through traffic?

Summary of the important points.
a) The proposed peripheral development of Oadby e.g. Brooksby Square, Baxter’s Place, coupled with the development of the Building Block strip on the A6, will distract from the core of Oadby, which is the Parade. It is suggested that Public Realm monies would be better channeled to the Parade.
b) Car Parking is the lifeline of Oadby Retailers, and such provision must be retained/improved.

Yours sincerely.

Jack Hier (Chair).