

Oadby and Wigston Local Plan Examination

Further Statement submitted on behalf of Leicester Racecourse Holdings Ltd

Matter 7: Town Centre Growth/Retail Provision

Issue: Whether the Local Plan will address the retail needs of the area?

March 2018

Introduction

1. This Statement has been prepared by Turley and Landmark Planning on behalf of our client, Leicester Racecourse Holdings Ltd. It follows previous representations submitted on behalf of Leicester Racecourse in relation to the Oadby and Wigston Local Plan Pre-submission consultation.
2. This Statement relates to Matter 7 (Town Centre Growth/Retail Provision). It addresses Issue 1, namely *“whether the Local Plan will address the retail needs of the area”*. For ease of reference, our response is based on the specific questions set out by the Inspector.

Question 1: Will Policy 22 be effective in meeting the convenience and comparison retail floorspace needs of the area over the plan period?

3. As set out in our previous representations, Policy 22 will not be effective in meeting the convenience retail floorspace needs of the area over the plan period. This is due to a failure to identify any additional convenience retail floorspace in Oadby over the plan period.
4. The Council’s own evidence base acknowledges that there is an unmet qualitative need for additional convenience floorspace over the plan period, specifically in the form of a new deep discounter foodstore(s) to serve Oadby. This point is addressed in our previous representations and is not repeated in this Statement. Our previous representations also refer to national data sources that demonstrate the continued growth in the market share of, and the demand for, deep discounter provision. The information drawn from the national data sources is consistent with comments made in the Council’s Retail Study regarding the deep discounter sector.
5. Despite the above, Policy 22 makes no provision for further convenience floorspace to serve Oadby over the plan period. To ensure Policy 22 is effective, and ultimately be considered

‘sound’, it should be amended to address the requirement for additional convenience floorspace in Oadby to accommodate a deep discounter.

6. Sufficient flexibility should be provided in Policy 22 to allow for a suitable site(s) to come forward, or to be allocated within the wider plan, to meet this need. As set out in our previous representations, there are no available sites capable of meeting this need either within Oadby District Centre itself, or in an edge of centre location. Land within the ownership of our client adjacent to Palmerston Way, is considered suitable to accommodate such a retail use.
7. Policy 22 is copied below in full with the amendments suggested by our client clearly shown. This includes some minor amendments to the policy and deleting the sixth paragraph (as currently set out), which is considered to be too prescriptive. Any new text is identified in italics and underlined, whilst any text to be deleted has been strikedthrough.

Policy 22

Retail development will be encouraged and permitted in the defined policy areas of the town centre and district centres, as well as the Borough’s local centres.

The town and district centres of the Borough will be the focus for new additional retail floorspace, maintaining the Borough’s current hierarchy and market share between centres.

The following identified additional overall retail capacities in net floorspace up to 2031 will be sought within each of the centres.

- Wigston – 1,169 sq m
- Oadby – 1,351 sq m
- South Wigston – 373 sq m
- Local Centres – 81 sq m

Retail development will be encouraged of a scale appropriate to the needs of the local area served by these centres. Development will be subject to local planning, traffic and environmental considerations and the needs of people who live in or near the proposal areas. Proposals seeking higher retail provision than those set out above would need to be evidenced and justified and would need to set out that there would not be any detrimental impacts to the centre in which it is situated.

Irrespective of the assessed quantitative need, particular encouragement will be given to proposals for a new discount foodstore to serve Oadby in the light of a qualitative deficiency of such provision, as evidenced in the retail evidence base.

In considering proposals for new retail development, the Borough Council will apply the sequential and impact test as specified in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance. It will be essential that any new development does not have ~~an~~ *adverse effect a significant impact* on existing centres within the Borough. *All proposals exceeding the floorspace thresholds set out in Policy 24 will be required to submit an Retail Impact Assessment.* New development should be integrated within existing infrastructure.

~~Where a proposal fails to satisfy the 'town and district centre first' approach and/or the sequential test or is likely to have significant adverse impact on the centre, it will not be permitted.~~

Proposals for retail development within the town centres would need to follow the principles as set out within the Area Action Plan Guidance document.

Question 2: Policy 24 requires an impact assessment to be submitted in certain scenarios. However, is it clear to a decision maker what the impact assessment must demonstrate to find an application for a proposal outside of a defined centre, not otherwise in accordance with the plan, acceptable? Is Policy 24 effective?

8. Where the relevant threshold is triggered and an impact assessment required, it should be carried out in accordance with national policy (as set out in the NPPF and NPPG). We would recommend a minor alteration to Policy 24 to ensure that this is clear. The amendment is shown below using italics and underlining.

Policy 24

Applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of a defined centre, which is not in accordance with this Plan, will require an impact assessment *in line with NPPF requirements (or its successor)* if the development is over the following floorspace thresholds: ...