



TO COUNCILLOR:

N Alam
S S Athwal (Vice-Chair)
L A Bentley
G A Boulter
M L Darr

J K Ford
D A Gamble
C S Gore
S Z Haq
G G Hunt

P Joshi
J Kaufman
K J Loydall
I K Ridley (Chair)

I summon you to attend the following meeting for the transaction of the business in the agenda update below.

Meeting: Policy, Finance & Development Committee
Date & Time: Tuesday, 9 September 2025, 7.00 pm
Venue: Civic Suite 2, Brocks Hill Council Offices, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5JJ
Contact: Democratic Services
t: (0116) 257 2775
e: democratic.services@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

Council Offices
Oadby
01 September 2025

Anne E Court
Chief Executive



Meeting ID: 2912

<u>ITEM NO.</u>	<u>AGENDA UPDATE</u>	<u>PAGE NO'S</u>
9.	Budget Setting Approach for 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Plan Update (Urgent Item) Report of the Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer Under section 100B(4)(B) of the Local Government Act 1972, by reason of special circumstance, in that this additional item of business needs to be considered before the next meeting of the Policy, Finance & Development Committee.	3 - 6
13.	Cemetery and Burial Strategy (2026 - 2036) Report of the Legal Consultant	7 - 52
14.	Green Spaces Strategy (2025 - 2035)	53 - 73

15. Exclusion of the Press & Public

The press and public are likely to be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (Exempt Information) during consideration of the item below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exempt item outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

16. Asset Review Update (Exempt)

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Exempt report of the Legal Consultant

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**Policy, Finance and
Development
Committee**

**Tuesday, 09
September 2025**

**Matter for
Information and
Decision**

Report Title: **Budget Setting Approach for 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Plan Update (Urgent Item)**

Report Author(s): **Colleen Warren (Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer)**

Purpose of Report:	To consult Members on the approach for setting the 2026/27 budget and to update Members on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) position.
Report Summary:	This report seeks approval of the approach to set the annual budget for 2026/27 and provides an update on the MTFP budget gaps and progress on the Sustainability Programme.
Recommendation(s):	That the Committee: A. Agrees and recommends to Council the Budget Approach for 2026/27; and B. Note the updated MTFP budget gaps.
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Colleen Warren (Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer) (0116) 257 2759 colleen.warren@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Simon Ball (Finance Manager / Deputy S151 Officer) (0116) 257 2624 simon.ball@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1)
Vision and Values:	"Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision) Resourceful & Resilient (V4)
Report Implications: -	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	The implications are as set out in this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1) Political Dynamics (CR3) Reputation Damage (CR4) Regulatory Governance (CR6) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.

Statutory Officers' Comments: -	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Leadership Team.
Background Papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS 2024 -2029) to Full Council 22 September 2024 • 2025/26 Revenues Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and 2025/26 and 2029/30 Capital Programme to Full Council 20th February 2025
Appendices:	None.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution includes the Budget and Policy Framework Rules. This requires that each year the Council will agree a process for the development of the annual budget and policy framework and that the programme will be widely published.
- 1.2 The Local Government Act 1992 requires the councils that are billing authorities complete and approve their budgets and set a council tax before 11 March immediately prior to the start of the financial year on 1 April. The budget timetable (see section 3 of this report) will ensure these statutory deadlines are achieved.
- 1.3 The Council approved a new Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in February 2024, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy is a five-year assessment of the resources required to deliver the Council's services over that period. It sets out the projected budget gaps over the period and a Sustainability Plan for delivering savings to mitigate these gaps. The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2025/26 to 2029/30 provided an updated gap position and was reported to Council in February 2025. The annual budget approach for 2026/27 will update the indicative position with a detailed budget following the budget approach set out in section 2.
- 1.4 As was stated in the February 2025 budget report the Sustainability Programme savings included in the MTFP, did not meet the budget gap. The achievement of the Sustainability Programme savings included were still to be identified. Given the significant challenge in the financial position for 2025/26 and future years, it is key that SLT and members continue to focus efforts on delivering savings and this has been taken into account in the budget approach outlined below.

2. Approach and Key Principles

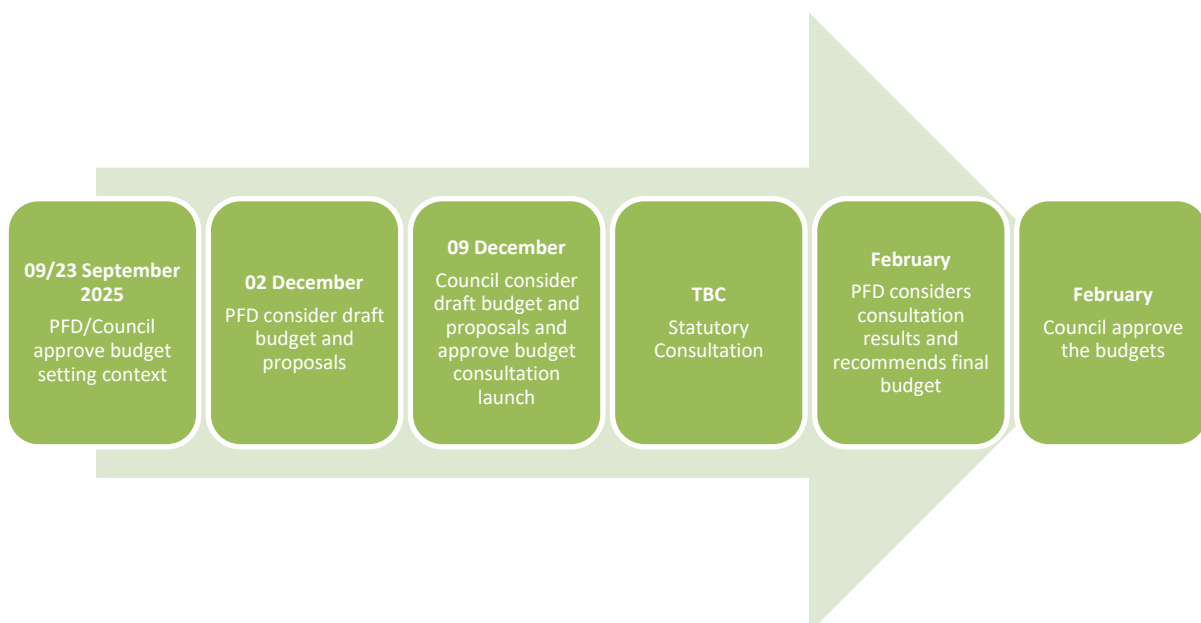
- 2.1 The 2025/26 revised budget will form the base budget for 2026/27.
- 2.2 Inflation assumptions will be made based on latest information, in respect of:
 - Salaries
 - Utilities
 - Fuel
 - Contracts (as per Contract terms)

- Interest rates (investment/borrowing)

- 2.3 **There will be no further revenue growth** – any pressures (cost inflation on supplies and services, in addition to those in 2.2), any growth (additional staff) or reduction in income due to reduced demand or fees should, insofar as is possible, be “self-funding”. This means services should try as far as is reasonably practical to off-set increases in financial resources by making savings in other areas.
- 2.4 **Review of budgets to identify savings** - historical budgets and actuals are to be reviewed to identify any consistent budget underspends with a view to removing these budgets to create savings. This will have to be considered in the context that the underspend may have been offsetting overspends, in which case budgets will need to be realigned.
- 2.5 **Capital Growth** - any additions to the capital programme must be funded by grant OR have a revenue payback OR be essential for the maintenance of service delivery. Ideally, if we are creating or enhancing an asset, it should be because it will better the council’s financial position through reducing spend or generating income, or it must be because we need to do this to maintain services.
- 2.6 **Sustainability Programme** - the projects identified under the Sustainability Programme will continue to progress to identify savings
- Financial Management
 - Service Reviews
 - Asset Management
 - Income Generation – including review of fees and charges in line with charging policy
 - Contracts

3. Timetable

- 3.1 The key dates for Members in relation to the budget approach are outlined in the proposed timetable below:



4. MTFP Update

- 4.1 The MTFS set out the approach for reviewing the MTFP and the Sustainability Programme. This will be reviewed before budget setting and as the budget is set.
- 4.2 Table 1 below shows the MTFP budget gaps approved at Full Council on 20th February 2025, this was the projected position after sustainability programme savings:

Table 1 – Budget Gap as of February 2025

Financial year	In-year gap	Cumulative gap
2025/26	(126,353)	(126,353)
2026/27	170,098	43,745
2027/28	290,069	333,814
2028/29	330,274	664,088
2029/30	366,977	1,031,065

- 4.3 As at Quarter 1 the current projected use of reserves is £361,891. Due the forecast MTFS budget gaps this will leave us in a very difficult position by the end of 2027/28. Further sustainability plans will be needed along with income generation to try and close the budget gaps and balance the budgets over the life of the MTFS.
- 4.4 The main challenges to the Council currently are the costs of Homelessness and Homelessness prevention. These costs are putting a substantial strain on the Councils balances. In mitigation work is continuously being carried out to try and identify ways to reduce the cost of homelessness.
- 4.5 The MTFP and budget gaps will continue to be reviewed and updated as the budget approach for 2026/27 progresses and assumptions in the MTFP are reviewed and updated.



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Wednesday, 10 September 2025	Matter for Information and Decision
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Report Title: Cemetery and Burial Strategy (2026 - 2036)

Report Author(s): David Gill (Legal Consultant)

Purpose of Report:	To seek approval for a public consultation on the proposed Cemetery and Burial Strategy.
Report Summary:	The report sets out the Council's approach to the provision of burial services over the next 10 years.
Recommendation(s):	A. That the content of the report appendices be noted; and B. That Committee approves the Cemetery and Burial Strategy (at Appendix 1) for a 8-week public consultation.
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Ben Wilson (Head of Neighbourhood Services) (0116) 257 2711 ben.wilson@oadby-wigston.gov.uk David Gill (Legal Consultant) (0116) 257 2626 david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Strategic Objectives:	Our Council (SO1) Our Communities (SO2) Our Partners (SO5)
Vision and Values:	Customer & Community Focused (V1)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Reputation Damage (CR4) Effective Utilisation of Assets / Buildings (CR5)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. Initial EA Screening (See Appendices)
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	Click to select comment.

Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	8-week public consultation proposed
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. Cemetery and Burial Strategy (2026 - 2036) 2. Cemetery Rules and Regulations (September 2025) 3. Memorial Safety Policy 4. Equalities Impact Assessment

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has not previously had a formalised Cemetery and Burial Strategy. The benefit of the strategy is that it not only outlines the aims and ambitions relating to the maintenance and improvement of burial grounds but, provides an opportunity to look at the broader long-term possibilities.
- 1.2 The ethos and aims of the strategy are based on an understanding of best practise.

2. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 2.1 Adoption of the strategy and the associated policies /procedures will address the fact that there is currently no Cemetery strategy in place and set out our ambitions for cemeteries and burials for the next ten years. We also want to ensure that policies relating to burials and memorials are clear, well communicated, and consistent. Providing a framework which enables the service to effectively manage our cemeteries and provide future focus.
- 2.2 A strategy that provides a clear direction of travel and guidelines for current management, helps to ensure that burial grounds are maintained and developed well. It also ensures consistency and provides an opportunity for strategic aims to be explored.
- 2.3 The aim is to provide cemeteries for Oadby and Wigston residents that are beautiful, peaceful and well used and to offer burial spaces that support a diverse range of cultural and individual needs. To ensure that our policies relating to burials and memorials are clear, well communicated, and consistent and to ensure that procedures for the purchase and use of burial sites and memorials are clear, efficient, and compassionate

3. Consultation

- 3.1 It is proposed that a public consultation will take place from 12 September 2025 until 31 October with a further report being submitted to this Committee on 2 December 2025.

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Cemetery and Burial Strategy

2026 to 2035

Introduction



Cemeteries are important spaces. In developing this strategy Oadby and Wigston Borough Council (the Council) are keen to ensure that we share the aims and ambitions for Cemeteries and Burials for the next ten years. We also want to ensure that policies relating to burials and memorials are clear, well communicated, and consistent.

Our vision is to ensure that all cemeteries in the Borough are maintained to a standard that reflects the respect due to those buried there. That the valuable green space created by burial grounds are pleasant quiet environments that can be used for remembrance, relaxation and reflection. It is also important that the Council's burial grounds reflect and support the diversity of the Borough, creating spaces for all faiths.

The Council manages 2 cemeteries and 3 closed church yards. In addition to ensuring the beauty of the sites, burials in Oadby and Wigston need to be sustainable. We need to ensure that we have sufficient capacity to accommodate the needs of residents.

Aims and Ambitions

The following are the key aims of the service. These are focused on ensuring clarity of process, quality of environment and inclusivity.

1. To provide cemeteries for Oadby and Wigston residents that are beautiful, peaceful and well used
2. To offer burial spaces that support a diverse range of cultural and individual needs
3. To ensure that our policies relating to burials and memorials are clear, well communicated, and consistent
4. To ensure that procedures for the purchase and use of burial sites and memorials are clear, efficient, and compassionate



Future ambitions for the Council are:

- To improve levels of accessibility for all cemeteries and the closed church yards managed by the Council
- To assess the use and condition of the chapels that are located within our burial sites and ensure that they are maintained appropriately.

Consultation

Engagement with and feedback from stakeholders including residents and communities is important in ensuring that the Cemeteries and burials grounds in Oadby and Wigston meet the needs of communities. To this end a public consultation will be undertaken commencing in Winter 2025 for 8 weeks before the Strategy is adopted.

In addition to engagement with residents, we will consult with Undertakers and memorial masons within the Borough. The close communication with those organisations helps to ensure that burials proceed as efficiently and smoothly as possible.

Legislative Framework

Whilst the views and requirements of communities and those using the burial grounds is very important. The policies and procedures that are in place relating to burials and memorials are required to be compliant with legislation.

There is currently no statutory duty for Local Authorities to provide burial spaces for residents, however, it is a requirement that existing burial grounds are well maintained.

The key legislation that applies to Burials and Burial grounds includes:

- The Local Government Act (1972)
- The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order (1977)
- The Public Health Act (1857)
- Ecclesiastical Laws
- The Burial Act (1857)
- National Planning Policy



Included in the legislation is a requirement that the Council provide Public Health Burials for those deceased who do not have relatives or where relatives have not been able to be traced.

The legislation also requires that headstones within burials grounds are assessed for safety through routine inspections. Those memorial stones found to be unsafe are required to be laid down to avoid risk of injury or damage.

Capacity

Wigston Cemetery has capacity to accept the current level of burials for approximately 10 years should demand remain stable.

Currently the Council does not make provision for other faith burials within its cemeteries.

The consequence of making provision for all faiths may result in a reduction in capacity going forward to between 6-8 years, however given that current trends show a reduction in interments as more people prefer cremation this will not have a significant impact on the viability of the cemetery.

In the longer term if the Council wishes to continue to provide burial provision within the Borough it will need to review how it operates the cemeteries and consider whether the re-use of graves would be a matter that it would consider (Subject to the Secretary Of State's approval) or identify additional land to either extend the cemeteries or create new cemeteries.



Policies

To ensure compliance with the legal framework as well as to ensure that Oadby and Wigston Cemeteries are maintained to a high standard and accessible for all, specific policies relating to Burials and Memorials have been developed. The table below provides a summary of those policies with the full documents included as appendices to this strategy.

The Burials and Memorials policies will be reviewed once the review of the current operation of the cemeteries has been concluded.

Policy Reviews

Potential Future Re-use of Graves/ Cemetery Extensions / New cemeteries	1	Review the current operation of the cemeteries and the impact arising from the provision of plots for all faiths.
Oadby and Wigston Cemetery Regulations	2	Overview of all aspects of Cemetery and Burial Management including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites • Opening hours • Plot and Section types • Maintenance regimes • Purchasing of burial plots • Installation of memorials
Memorial safety policies and procedures	3	Guidelines regarding safety testing and permitted memorials within different sections of cemeteries

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

Cemetery Rules and Regulations

September 2025

Committee Approval	PFD 9 Sept 2025
Policy Owner	Corporate Asset Manager
Review Date	April 2028



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1 Cemetery Rules and Regulations

All Local Authority managed cemeteries are subject to standards and conditions known as Cemetery Rules and Regulations. The Rules and Regulations are designed to inform all cemetery users of the aspects of the management of the cemeteries and the requirements applicable to them.

These Rules and Regulations should be read in conjunction with the statutory requirements contained within the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (as amended) together with any other relevant legislation that governs this service.

If you need help in interpreting the Rules and Regulations please contact the Cemeteries Office.

The Council reserves the right to alter, add to, or amend the Cemetery Rules and Regulations from time to time as necessary.

2 Burial Authority

The Burial Authority is Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, located at Brocks Hill Council Offices, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5JJ

Postal enquiries	Cemeteries Office Brocks Hill Council Offices Washbrook Lane Oadby Leicester LE2 5JJ
Telephone Enquiries	Telephone Leicester (0116) 288 8961
Email enquiries	cemetery@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Web site	www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Burial Law (Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977) states that none of the following can take place without the written permission of the Burial Authority (Council):

- Burials
- Interment of ashes;
- Scattering of ashes;
- Exhumations;
- Installation or fixing of a memorial, kerb edges, trees, plants, seats or benches;
- Adding an inscription to a memorial;
- Renovation of a memorial;
- Removal and /or replacement of a memorial;
- Building of walled graves or vaults.

3 Our Cemeteries

The cemeteries to which these Rules and Regulations apply are located at:

- Oadby Cemetery, Wigston Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5QB (including Oadby Cemetery Extension off Goddard's Slang)

- Wigston Cemetery, Welford Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 3TE

3.1 Opening hours

Our cemeteries are open to visitors every day including weekends and public holidays.

Burial times are from 9:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Monday to Thursday (last appointment 3.15 p.m.) and 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Friday (last appointment 2.00 p.m.), unless by prior agreement with the Council, in which case extra fees are payable as laid down in the Scale of Charges in respect of irregular hours. The time stated in the Notice of Interment is the time the cortege must be at the cemetery.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has the right to close the cemeteries at any time without prior notice.

3.2 Cemetery sections

Both cemeteries have sections available for

- Full burial (over 12 years of age);
- Children's sections (full burial up to and including 12 years of age);
- Interment of cremated remains (known as Garden of Remembrance or 'G of R');
- Scattering of ashes.

3.3 Sexton

The Council employs a Sexton who is responsible for maintenance of the cemetery grounds and all grave excavations and interments in both Wigston and Oadby Cemeteries. The Sexton has full authority to implement, enforce and advise on the Cemetery Rules and Regulations on behalf of the Council.

3.4 Conduct in cemeteries

All visitors should enter and exit the cemeteries using the main entrances and pedestrian gates only.

The Council reserves the right to refuse access to a cemetery if anyone is intoxicated or showing signs of drug abuse that could lead them to cause a public nuisance or disorder.

No person is to display any printed paper, notice or sign, or canvass, promote or sell their services to visitors in either cemetery without the written authorisation of the Council.

Under Article 18 of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977, it is an offence for anyone to:

- wilfully create any disturbance in a cemetery;
- commit any nuisance in a cemetery;
- interfere with any burial taking place in a cemetery;
- interfere with any grave or vault, any tombstone or other memorial, or any flowers or plants in any such manner;
- play any game or sport in a cemetery;
- enter or remain in a cemetery when it is closed to the public, unless authorised by the Council to do so.

Any person who contravenes the above shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine as laid out in Article 19 of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

In addition, it is an offence under the Criminal Damage Act 1971 to destroy or damage any property (including statues, monuments, memorials, railings or fences) belonging to another within the cemeteries.

3.5 Vehicles in the cemeteries

The Council shall not accept any liability for loss or damage to any vehicle parked in the cemetery or the cemetery car parks. All vehicles are parked at the owner's risk.

- **Wigston Cemetery:**

Parking is available along the cemetery entrance road or in the lay-by outside of the cemetery, directly off the A5199.

All vehicles should be neatly parked to allow access for funeral or other vehicles.

Visitors are not permitted to drive on the footpaths, grass or over any planted areas under any circumstances. Such action will be deemed a nuisance and will be dealt with under the powers of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order Articles 18 and 19 as cited above.

- **Oadby Cemetery:**

There is no provision for visitors to enter the cemetery by car.

Parking is provided on Goddard's Slang and limited provision is available off Chapel Street.

3.6 Dogs in the cemeteries

Dogs are permitted in the cemeteries but must be kept on a short lead. If a dog fouls, the owner must clean up any dog faeces and dispose of it in a litter or dog bin away from the site. Failure to clean up after your dog may result in a fine or prosecution.

3.7 Maintenance of grounds

Maintenance of the grounds (e.g. grass cutting, spraying, leaf and litter clearing, upkeep of trees, shrubs, flower beds and hedges) will be carried out by the Council at a frequency determined by the Council. The Council has the right to prune, cut down or remove any shrub, tree, plant or flowers that has become unsightly, overgrown or dangerous and to spray around graves in any area of the cemeteries.

The Council reserves the right to disconnect the water supply, without notice, if required.

The Council reserves the right to place soil or any other material onto a grave space in the cemetery (whether occupied or not) when carrying out maintenance works. Any soil or material placed will be removed and the area re-instated as soon as possible after the work has taken place.

3.8 Removal of floral arrangements and other items from graves

The Council has the right to remove items from graves which

- have perished;
- pose a hazard;
- encroach on an adjacent grave space;
- have not been authorised

and dispose of such items without prior reference to the Deed Holder. This includes flowers, wreaths, weeds, plants, rubbish, fencing, artificial grass, stone chippings, border edging, glass objects, other decorations and unauthorised items placed on a grave (for further information see section on Memorials).

The Council has the right to remove any trees or shrub on a grave that has exceeded 2' 6" (750 mm) in height.

Christmas wreaths are removed by Council staff after the Christmas period, normally in February/March.

4 Fees and Payment

All fees and charges applicable to the cemetery are set out in the Councils' published Scale of Charges which is reviewed annually.

All fees must be received by the Cemeteries Office before the work to which they relate is started. Fees for burials must be received, along with the Notice of Interment, a minimum of 48 hours (two working days) before the burial is due to take place and 24 hours (one working day) for interment of cremated remains.

Where payment is made by cheque, the cheque should be payable to 'Oadby & Wigston Borough Council'.

5 Purchasing a grave

Requests to purchase a grave should be made through the Cemeteries Office. This can be done at the time a funeral is arranged or, (at Wigston Cemetery only), by purchasing a grave in advance. Purchase in advance is limited to a maximum of two plots per applicant.

Purchase in advance is not available at Oadby Cemetery.

5.1 Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial

After a grave is purchased the Council will issue a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial (the Deed) to the purchaser.

The Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is a legal document. It does not give ownership of the actual land but allows the Deed Holder to:

- be interred into the grave if space is available (including cremated remains);
- authorise further interments into the grave where space is available;
- place an inscribed memorial onto the grave subject to the Councils' regulations on memorials;
- give permission for additional inscription(s) to be made onto an existing memorial subject to the Councils regulations on memorials.

The Deed should be produced to the Council when a request is made to re-open the grave. The Council reserves the right to refuse to allow an interment into a grave space where the Deed is not produced.

The Deed is granted for 100 years. When the Deed expires the ownership of the grave will revert back to the Council unless the family wishes to extend the Deed for a further

period. A fee is payable to the Council for extending a Deed by a further 50 years as laid down in the Councils' Scale of Charges.

The Deed Holder may transfer the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial during their lifetime to another individual on completion of an Assignment Form and payment of the required fee.

Where a Deed Holder is deceased and other family members wish to arrange a further interment into the grave space (or install a memorial or add an inscription onto an existing memorial) the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial will need to be transferred by completion of a Form of Assent before the grave can be further re-opened (or any memorial erected onto the grave or any existing memorial repaired, altered or removed). Further advice on how this may be possible can be obtained from the Cemeteries Office. Depending on individual circumstances, the transfer may require the consent of other family members. If the relevant consents are withheld the ownership cannot be transferred and no further interments will be allowed. Only the next of kin reaching an agreement between themselves can resolve this.

Possession of the Deed does not, in itself, signify ownership of the grave.

5.2 Public graves

A public grave is an unpurchased grave where no Exclusive Right of Burial exists. There is usually no family connection with those buried in this type of grave. No memorial rights exist for a public grave, therefore no headstone or memorial can be placed on it without the consent of the Council.

6 Arranging an interment

All arrangements for an interment or scattering of cremated remains must be made through the Cemeteries Office.

6.1 Notice of Interment

Interment requests must be made on the official 'Notice of Interment' form supplied by the Council. The forms are available by request or can be downloaded from the Councils' web site at www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk. The details provided on the form must be clear and complete. In the case of a second interment the Notice of Interment should be signed by the Deed Holder (except where the deceased is the Deed Holder) and the Deed produced.

The Notice of Interment and payment must be received by the Council not less than 48 hours (two working days) prior to the time the burial is due to take place or 24 hours (one working day) in the case of interment of cremated remains. Interments at shorter notice, will, if possible, be arranged in exceptional circumstances or for religious requirements. The Council reserves the right to charge additional fees for interments arranged at short notice as laid down in its Scale of Charges.

The Council reserves the right to delay or cancel any interment where, in its opinion, ownership of the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is disputed.

Coffin sizes should be detailed on the Notice of Interment. If these are not known at the time of giving notice they may be supplied later in writing to the Cemeteries Office. The Council shall not accept liability for any coffin sizes given other than in writing.

Interments can take place on any weekday (other than a public holiday) between

- 9:30 a.m. and 3.15 p.m. Monday to Thursday;
- 9:30 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. Friday.

Interments outside of the above hours may be available by special arrangement with the Council and will incur extra fees as laid down in the Scale of Charges in respect of irregular hours.

The time stated in the Notice of Interment is the time the funeral cortege must be at the cemetery.

6.2 Arrival at the cemetery

Punctuality at the cemetery should be observed to prevent inconvenience or one funeral running into another. Prior notice should be given to the Cemeteries Office for any extra ordinary funeral processions, for example, the use of a horse drawn hearse, a military funeral etc.

A funeral arriving before the time appointed may have to wait until the time arranged.

A funeral arriving after the appointed time must act under the direction of the Sexton as to when the burial may proceed. If a funeral arrives late the Council reserves the right to charge an additional fee as laid down in the Councils' Scale of Charges.

The funeral director or person arranging the funeral is responsible for providing sufficient bearers to transfer the coffin from the hearse to the graveside.

6.3 Disposal Certificate requirements

No interment or scattering of ashes can take place unless the Council has first received the appropriate certification. This is:

- A 'Certificate of Disposal' issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths, or
- An 'Order for Burial' issued by the Coroner, or
- A 'Certificate of Cremation' issued by the crematorium

This documentation must be supplied to the Cemeteries Office prior to the interment or may be handed to the Sexton at the cemetery before the interment or scattering can take place. Failure to provide the necessary documentation may result in the delay of the interment or scattering until the appropriate certification can be produced.

6.4 Religious ceremony

A burial can take place with or without a religious service or ceremony. It is the responsibility of the bereaved family or funeral director to arrange for a Minister, Clergy or other authorised person to officiate at the burial. Any authorised person may officiate at an interment providing the ceremony is conducted with decorum.

There is a chapel available at Wigston Cemetery which may be hired for a service or ceremony to take place. This can be booked through the Cemeteries Office at the time of making funeral arrangements. Hire charges are as laid down in the Councils' Scale of Charges.

6.5 Alterations to funeral arrangements

When a Notice of Interment has been accepted no alteration will be permitted except in regard of the time of burial. In this case written notice must be provided no later than one working day (24 hours) before the interment is due to take place.

The Council will not be responsible for any misunderstandings which may arise as a result of a telephone instruction only. Any requests or information (such as coffin sizes) given over the telephone must be immediately confirmed in writing.

Any additional expense incurred by the Council as a result of incorrect information having been supplied will be charged to the person making the application.

6.6 Scattering of ashes

There is an area in each cemetery designated for the scattering of ashes. Alternatively, ashes may be scattered under the soil of a full burial plot or cremated remains plot so long as permission is given by the Deed Holder. In either case, application should be made to the Council and the correct fees paid before any scattering takes place.

7 Graves

Interments will only be allowed in designated areas previously laid out for burial or interment of cremated remains. These areas are identified on the cemetery plans held by the Cemeteries Office.

The Council reserves the right to retain any grave spaces for its own purposes.

7.1 Allocation of graves

When purchasing a grave, whether at the time of death or purchasing in advance, a person will be allocated the next grave space 'following on' from the previous interment as shown on the cemetery plans. However, every effort will be made to accommodate family wishes where this is possible.

7.2 Excavations

All grave spaces are excavated by trained cemetery personnel and the method of excavation will take into account location, access and health and safety. No grave shall be dug or excavated by any other person unless appointed by the Council.

The Council has the right, without giving notice, to place soil or other material excavated from a newly dug grave temporarily onto the grave space(s) adjoining the grave being excavated whether or not the adjoining grave space(s) are purchased and/or occupied. Adjacent graves will be fully re-instated to their original appearance once the interment has taken place and the area will be left tidy.

When a grave is re-opened for the purposes of making a further burial no person shall disturb any human remains previously interred. Any ash caskets interred into a burial plot will be positioned in such a way and of sufficient depth to ensure they are not disturbed in any way should the grave be re-opened in future.

Where a temporary wooden cross is placed on a new grave, the Council has the right to remove the cross if it deteriorates to a poor condition or when a memorial is erected on the grave.

7.3 Size and depth of graves

Subject to the discretion of the Council all graves will be of such depth to accommodate:

- Burial sections - up to two coffins and up to six ash caskets
- Gardens of Remembrance – up to two ash caskets
- Children's Sections – one coffin

The Council reserves the right to alter this standard as required.

No body will be buried in a grave in such a way that any part of the coffin is less than 3 feet (900 mm) below the level of any ground adjoining unless the Council consider the soil to be of suitable character, in which case, a coffin made of perishable materials may be placed not less than 2 feet (600 mm) below the level of the ground adjoining the grave.

When more than one body is interred in any one grave a layer of earth not less than 6" (150 mm) thick shall be left undisturbed above the previously buried coffin except that this regulation may not apply in cases where two interments take place at the same time.

Graves will be of a sufficient size to admit coffins or caskets to the dimensions specified on the Notice of Interment form submitted by the Funeral Director or the person arranging the funeral. If the grave has to be enlarged, the Council may make an extra charge.

For any oversized grave, the Council has the right to charge for two grave spaces.

7.4 Re-instatement

Unless written instructions are received by the Council when the Notice of Interment is given, and any additional fee paid as laid down in the Scale of Charges, following the burial taking place, the grave will be filled in and, when the ground has settled, turfed over or seeded so that the level of the top of the grave corresponds with the level of the surface of the burial ground prior to the first interment.

Requests for personal involvement during the backfilling process will be considered upon request and should be notified to the Council prior to the burial taking place. Any personal involvement agreed to will be undertaken under the supervision of the Sexton.

After an interment has taken place the soil will continue to settle for approximately 9 - 12 months, or longer, depending on the soil conditions. The Deed Holder may plant up the grave area during this time. Where graves have not been planted or, where it is the opinion of the Council that the Deed Holder has not maintained the grave for over 12 months, the Council may turf over or seed the grave at the Sexton's discretion.

Graves can also settle unexpectedly during adverse weather and if this happens arrangements will be made to level the grave as soon as possible.

7.5 Walled graves or vaults

Where the Deed Holder wishes the interment to take place in a walled grave or vault an application must be made to the Council in writing and no work take place until written

authority has been given. The Council does not undertake the work to build the grave or vault and it is the responsibility of the Deed Holder to appoint a suitably qualified person to carry out the work to the satisfaction of the Council at the expense of the Deed Holder before the interment can take place.

A fee is payable to the Council for permission to undertake this work.

Details of the construction of walled graves and vaults are given in the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order. Further guidance and information should be sought from the Cemeteries Office.

8 Memorials

Once the grave has settled the Deed Holder may apply to the Council to install a memorial onto the grave in areas where this is permitted.

Memorials are only allowed on purchased graves.

8.1 Application to install a memorial

Only stonemasons that have been approved by the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) or British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) will be permitted to install or undertake fixing work on memorials within the Council's cemeteries. The stonemason will be required to supply to the Cemeteries Office a copy of their NAMM or BRAMM certification, together with evidence of their Public Liability Insurance for a minimum value of £5 million, before any permission will be issued by the Council.

All memorials or kerb edges of any kind, including inscriptions, are subject to the approval of the Council. An 'Application to Erect a Memorial' should be submitted in writing on the appropriate form to the Cemeteries Office together with

- a sketch and/or design of the proposed memorial;
- the exact dimensions;
- the wording of any inscription;
- the appropriate fee as per the Scale of Charges.

The application to erect a memorial must be signed by the Deed Holder of the grave onto which the memorial is to be placed.

Memorial Masons must not start to make a memorial or add an inscription to an existing memorial until all details (including sizes) have been submitted to the Council with the appropriate fee and approval has been granted in writing.

All memorials are to be made of natural stone, marble or granite. Memorials of concrete, wood, plastic, metal, pottery, glass or fibreglass are not permitted.

8.2 Memorial sizes

Below are the details of the maximum dimensions and types of memorials permitted to be placed onto graves for which the Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted:

Wigston Cemetery:

Section	Headstone	Kerbs	Planting
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Sections A – L	Height and width are at the discretion of the Council – contact the Cemeteries Office for further advice.	Permitted	Permitted. No planting to exceed 2' 6" (750 mm) in height.
Sections M – S*	Height (including plinth) 2' 6" (750 mm) Width 40" (1002 mm)	Permitted	Permitted. No planting to exceed 2' 6" (750 mm) in height.
Section T (Children's Section)	Height (including plinth) 2' 6" (750 mm) Width 24" (600 mm)	Permitted	Permitted. No planting to exceed 2' 6" (750 mm) in height.
Garden or Remembrance	Height (including plinth) 2' 6" Width 21" (530 mm)	Not permitted	Not permitted

*S Section – Between 2023 and 2025 a small number of memorials exceeding 2'6" were permitted in this section in error. These have been allowed to remain but no further permits will be issued for memorials exceeding 2'6" in this section of the cemetery.

Oadby Cemetery:

Section	Headstone	Kerbs	Planting
Sections A, B, C (Consecrated and Unconsecrated)	Height and width are at the discretion of the Council – contact the Cemeteries Office for further advice.	Permitted	Permitted. No planting to exceed 2' 6" (750 mm) in height.
Sections D and E, Chapel Street Annex (CSA) and Oadby Cemetery Extension (Consecrated and Unconsecrated areas in all sections)	Height (including plinth) 2' 6" (750 mm) Width 40" (1002 mm)	Permitted	Permitted. No planting to exceed 2' 6" (750 mm) in height.
Children's Sections (various locations)	Height (including plinth) 2' 6" (750 mm) Width 24" (600 mm)	Permitted	Permitted. No planting to exceed 2' 6" (750 mm) in height.
Garden or Remembrance	Height (including plinth) 2' 6" Width 21" (530 mm)	Not permitted	Not permitted

Vases not exceeding 12" (300 mm) in height may be placed on graves without charge or authority.

8.3 Inscriptions

Stonemasons should not start work on a memorial until approval has been granted in writing by the Council.

The Council reserves the right to refuse permission for a memorial where, in its opinion, the proposed inscription could cause offence or is deemed unsuitable.

8.4 Installing a memorial

The Sexton has the authority to refuse to allow any person to undertake work in the cemetery unless a notice is produced giving the written permission of the Council for such work to be carried out.

All memorials and materials must be carried into the cemetery in a way that does not cause damage to roads, walkways or grass areas.

Memorials must be installed back to back with those on the next adjoining row of grave spaces and must be ground anchored by an approved method suitable for the soil conditions. Fixings generally shall be in accordance with the current Code of Working Practice of the National Association of Memorial Masons.

All surplus materials, rubble and rubbish must be removed from the cemetery immediately following any work and, where the removal of a memorial has been required prior to an interment, the area should be cleared in time for the arrival of the funeral cortege.

No hewing or dressing of stone is permitted to take place in the cemetery.

Boards or other suitable material should be used to protect the adjacent area. Any damage to adjoining graves or memorial stones must be reported to the Council immediately and made good to the satisfaction of the Council.

8.5 Removing a memorial

No memorial shall be removed from the cemeteries without the permission of the Deed Holder or their representative and without the Council being informed of the whereabouts of the memorial.

When a memorial is to be removed to allow a second burial to take place it is the responsibility of the Deed Holder or their agent to remove the memorial at their own risk and expense prior to the burial taking place.

The Council reserves the right to:

- Remove, without notice, any unauthorised monument, memorial, stone, kerb edging, tree, shrub, plant or item erected or placed in the cemetery in contravention of these regulations or where, in its opinion, items reach a condition that could be a health and safety risk;
- Remove a memorial headstone from a grave to allow for adjacent graves to be excavated. As soon as the funeral has taken place the headstone will be fully re-instated by the Council.

8.6 Memorial safety

Memorials remain in the ownership of the Deed Holder or their family and must be kept in good repair.

The Council undertakes a programme of memorial inspections (see separate Memorial Safety Policy) and has the right to lay down or remove (without notice) memorials it believes to be unsafe. Every effort will be made to contact the owner if this happens to advise them of the action taken and request repairs be carried out. Notice will be sent to the Deed Holder at their last recorded address and a notice placed onto the memorial.

If a memorial is not repaired after notification has been sent to the Deed Holder the Council has the right to remove the memorial from the grave space.

8.7 Memorial trees and seats

Applications to purchase memorial seats or memorial trees for installation in the cemeteries should be made through the Cemeteries Office. Where applications are agreed to, the benches and trees will be obtained and installed by the Council and re-charged to the donor as per the Councils' Scale of Fees and Charges.

8.8 Items placed onto graves

The Council will not be liable for any loss, damage, theft or vandalism of any item (including memorial stones) placed onto a grave however caused.

Cemetery staff may remove articles from a grave that, in their opinion, are likely to cause risk, damage or offence or which may interfere with the Council's maintenance of the site.

The following items are not allowed to be placed onto graves and if found will be removed:

- Unauthorised memorials
- Unauthorised kerb edgings
- Artificial grass
- Log roll
- Glass or ceramic items or breakable containers
- Stone chippings or gravel (unless inside an authorised fully kerbed grave)

9 Exhumations

Once interred no human remains (including cremated remains) may be disturbed or removed from a grave unless a licence is first obtained from the Ministry of Justice or, if the grave is in a consecrated area, a Faculty from the Diocese. Any request to exhume human remains should, in the first instance, be made to the Cemeteries Office who will be able to give further advice.

10 Cemetery Records

As soon as is reasonably practicable after a grave has been purchased, or after an interment has taken place, details will be recorded in the burial registers held by the Council and, in the case of new graves, the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial will be sent to the purchaser.

The burial registers and cemetery plans may be viewed by the public by prior appointment with the Cemeteries Office. Searches of the registers and copies of entries may be made for a fee as laid down in the Councils' Scale of Charges and within the confines of the General Data Protection Regulations.

Memorial Safety Policy

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Oadby and Wigston Borough Council – Memorial Safety Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is responsible for the management of two cemeteries and three closed churchyards:
 - Wigston Cemetery
 - Oadby Cemetery
 - All Saints Churchyard, Wigston
 - St Wistan's Churchyard, Wigston
 - St Peter's Churchyard, Oadby
- 1.2 An important part of the Council's responsibility is to ensure that its cemeteries and closed churchyards are safe places in which to work and for the public to visit.
- 1.3 Historically, health and safety concerns in cemeteries have focused on the risks arising from grave digging. However, in recent years there has been increasing attention on the stability of memorials and the risks these present to cemetery staff and visitors.
- 1.4 There have been a number of deaths nationally in recent years and many serious injuries caused by unsafe memorials. Where accidents have occurred, local authorities have been investigated by the Health and Safety Executive and, in some cases, improvement notices issued. In the most serious cases the Health and Safety Executive has threatened prosecution.
- 1.5 Responsibility for health and safety lies with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council as the burial authority in control of the cemeteries. The Council is bound by the conditions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and Occupiers Liability Act 1957 to ensure that its burial grounds are safe places to work and visit. Managing memorial safety, therefore, is an essential part of controlling the risks to health and safety.
- 1.6 Whilst Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has overall responsibility for the safety of its cemeteries, including risks from unstable memorials, it does not own the memorials. The owner of the memorial is the deed holder (grave owner) or successor in title who is the person responsible for maintaining the memorial so as not to present a hazard. However, the current owner may not be identifiable as some records are extremely old and, in many cases, have not been updated by current relatives/family members.
- 1.7 This policy sets out Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's approach to the safe management of memorials in its cemeteries and closed churchyards and is based on guidance issued by the Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management 'Management of Memorials' 2019) and the Ministry of Justice ('Managing the Safety of Burial Ground Memorials; practical advice for dealing with unstable memorials' November 2014).
- 1.8 This policy also takes into consideration the Local Government Ombudsmen's 'Special Report; memorial safety in local authority cemeteries' (issued 2006) which provides guidance to burial authorities on the measures they should take to ensure the safety inspection process is well publicised in order to minimise any distress to relatives of the deceased and members of the public.

2. Installation of new memorials

- 2.1 The Council has introduced measures to ensure all new memorials and all memorials re-erected following interment are installed by an accredited memorial mason in accordance with the National Association of Memorial Masons Code of Working Practice. These measures require:
- All masons to work to the National Association of Memorial Masons code of working practice
 - All masons to provide a certificate of compliance
 - All masons to hold a British Association of Accredited Memorial Masons or National Association of Memorial Masons fixer licence or a licence issued under a similar qualification scheme.
- 2.2 As at present, an application to erect a memorial (or to add an additional inscription or carry out other works) must have been approved before any works on a memorial may be permitted.
- 2.3 All new memorials must conform to maximum size criteria relevant to particular burial grounds and individual sections. Details of specific restrictions are laid out in the Cemetery Rules and Regulations which is available on the Councils' web site or from the Cemeteries Office on request.

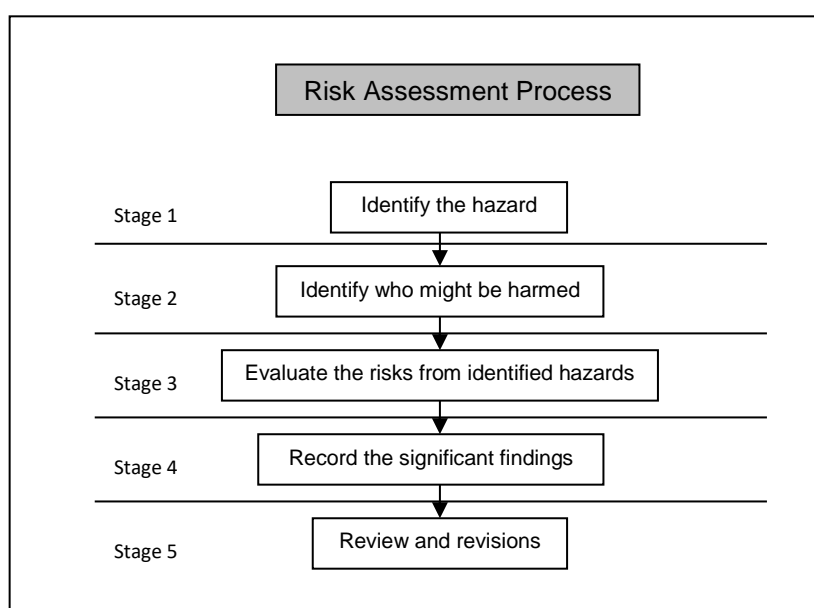
3. Publicity

- 3.1 Prior to carrying out any memorial safety inspections every effort will be made to explain to the public what is happening. A high level of publicity and good communication throughout the inspection programme should assist in minimising any distress to the bereaved and reduce cause for complaints.
- 3.2 At least 28 days prior to starting memorial safety inspections:
- notices will be displayed at all main entrances and in conspicuous positions throughout the cemeteries and closed churchyards
 - information will be sent to all local funeral directors and memorial masons
 - press releases will be issued to relevant local newspapers
 - Information will be included on the Council's web site.
 - Notifications will be sent to the Church of England and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission where required.
- The publicity will explain:
- what is being undertaken,
 - when it may be carried out
 - how people can obtain further information
 - how to raise a reasonable or valid objection.
 - how friends or relatives of the deceased can make arrangements to be present during inspections.
- 3.3 Grave owners or relatives of the deceased wishing to be present at the time of the memorial inspection should make their request to the Council as far in advance of any planned inspections as is reasonably practical.

- 3.4 Where information is already held on file to show that the grave owner or the family of the deceased wish to be informed of memorial inspections a letter notifying them of the Council's intentions shall be sent to the contact address at least 28 days prior to commencement of any inspection.

4. Risk assessments

- 4.1 Ministry of Justice guidance advises that generic risk assessments should be developed for different types of memorial, using hazard and likelihood ratings to establish levels of risk. Generic risk assessments for the most common types of memorial to be found in the Borough's cemeteries and closed churchyards can be found at appendix 1.
- 4.2 Both the Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management and the Ministry of Justice recommend taking a risk-based approach to managing memorial safety. Therefore the Health and Safety Executive's five stage risk assessment process will be used as a basis for undertaking the risk assessments. This is illustrated below:



HSE 5-stage risk assessment process

- 4.3 The calculation of risk is used to determine what controls may be required to minimise an injury occurring and the priority of action. Ministry of Justice define a hazard as "anything that may cause harm; the risk is the chance, high or low, that someone could be harmed by the hazard, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be." When completing the risk assessment the following ratings will be used:

Hazard rating	
HRR	Descriptor
1	Very minor or no injury
2	Minor injury (cut)
3	Serious injury (over 3 day/equipment damage)
4	Major injury or permanent disability
5	Single or multiple deaths

Likelihood rating	
LRR	Descriptor
1	Very unlikely
2	Unlikely
3	Possible
4	Probable
5	Definite
Action required after calculation (HRR x LRR)	
Score	Descriptor
1-5	No further controls required
6-8	Further control to be considered, low priority.
9-15	Further controls required – medium priority.
16-20	Further controls required – high priority.
21-25	Immediate action required – urgent priority.

Risk is determined by the calculation:

Risk = (Likelihood x severity) persons affected

- 4.4 As part of the risk assessment process it is necessary to carry out inspections of each individual memorial and take measures to control any risks that may be identified. To help with this process the generic risk assessments will be used to give an indication of the level of risk posed should individual memorials be found to be unsafe. An example inspection form can be found at appendix 2.
- 4.5 Inspections will be based on type of memorial, age, prevailing ground conditions, and areas of particular historical or social importance, as well as likely visitor frequency. In combination with the generic risk assessments for different memorial types, a rolling inspection programme will be developed over a five-year period. During this period each memorial will be tested at least once every five years with a visual and hand test to determine any instability or more regularly as required by the findings of the risk assessment process.

5. The inspection process

- 5.1 All memorial safety inspections will be carried out by a suitably qualified person in accordance with the guidance provided by the Council, other relevant bodies and national guidelines.

- 5.2 The Council will follow Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management guidance and will carry out safety inspections on all memorials in its cemeteries and closed churchyards on a minimum five-year cycle. The initial inspections will be undertaken within a 12 to 18 month period following the approval of this policy. Once the initial inspection has been completed cyclical inspections will take place based on the condition and risk assessment for each memorial.

This is proposed as:

- high risk memorials annually.
 - medium risk every three years.
 - low risk every five years.
- 5.3 For each individual memorial inspected a risk assessment (appendix 2) shall be completed. This assessment will in turn be used to calculate the risk associated with the memorial and whether or not further action to control that risk is required.
- 5.4 A record of all memorial inspections and the results of inspections will be kept by the Council and be available to view on request at the Council's cemeteries section, based at the Oadby Depot (one week's notice will be required for each request).
- 5.5 Immediately prior to carrying out the inspection of any memorial the inspector must ensure that the area around the memorial is clear of all potential hazards, for example members of the public, loose memorial components, glass jars, vases and so on. Particular care should also be taken if the ground conditions are poor or uneven.
- 5.6 If the memorial is overgrown with weeds or vegetation this should be removed prior to inspection. This should be done with care to avoid damage to the memorial and possible risks to safety.
- 5.7 For memorials up to 2.5 metres in height, inspections will include both a visual check and a hand test. The visual check must be completed first and the results recorded on the memorial risk assessment form. The hand test will then be used to determine stability of the memorial. The hand test will be used even where a visual check reveals no sign of defects.
- 5.8 The Council acknowledges that memorials fitted with a ground anchor may move when tested. Staff will be trained to identify when a ground anchor has been fitted and, therefore, will not fail the memorial for movement at the base to foundation joint, as the memorial will 'lock' on the ground anchor.
- 5.9 For memorials over 2.5 metres in height only a visual check will be completed. Where there is cause for concern or uncertainty a Council registered memorial mason will be instructed to carry out a more detailed assessment. Where assessment of the memorial falls outside the experience of this memorial mason or where there remains uncertainty of safety a specialised structural engineer or other suitably qualified professional may be instructed to inspect the memorial more thoroughly.
- 5.12 If visual checks identify a defect or issue with a memorial outside of the experience and knowledge of the person carrying out the check, a memorial mason from the Council's list of approved masons will be instructed to carry out an assessment of the problem. If the problem is viewed to be outside the experience of the memorial mason instructed a structural engineer or other suitably qualified professional shall be called in to advise.

- 5.13 Where kerbstones are found to be breaking apart and the grave space is in a generally poor state of repair the Council, under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order (1974) is permitted, where appropriate, to remove them from the grave and tidy the grave space. Where this is the intention, notices shall be displayed on the grave space for a period of three months and letters sent to the last known address of the grave owner or their heir(s).
- 5.14 The person carrying out the inspection must ensure that their actions do not pose a hazard to other employees or visitors. When carrying out the hand test it is the inspector's responsibility to ensure that they and all other persons stand out of the possible fall area of the memorial.
- 5.15 No memorials will be removed from the grave space as part of the testing.
- 5.16 For cyclical inspections the previous risk assessment for the memorial should be referred to by the tester prior to commencing works, taking into account local conditions and any potential risks not previously identified. The risk assessment should be amended to reflect any changes and controls put in place to manage these risks.
- 5.17 On consecrated ground the Council will notify the Church of England (Diocese of Leicester) of its intention to test memorials and where appropriate, obtain faculty permission for any works required.
- 5.18 Where appropriate the Council will notify the Commonwealth War Graves Commission of its intention to test memorials and obtain permission for any works required.

6. Dealing with unsafe memorials

- 6.1 The chart below indicates the methods available to temporarily make a memorial safe whilst trying to contact the grave owner. The options available will depend on the level of risk identified when the site-specific risk assessment is carried out:

Risk assessment score	Priority level	Options to temporarily make safe:
1-5	No further controls required	No further controls required
6-8	Low priority	Attach safety notice
9-15	Medium priority: further controls required	Attach safety notice and make safe support or lay down
16-20	High priority: further controls required	Attach safety notice and make safe support or cordon off or lay down
21-25	Urgent priority: immediate action required.	Attach safety notice and make safe support or cordon off or lay down

- 6.2 Where a memorial poses a low risk a safety notice shall be placed on the memorial and the grave owner or their heir(s) notified. Safety notices will inform people that the memorial has been found to be unsafe and will explain the action to be taken by the grave owner or their heir(s). The notice will be displayed on or near to the memorial.
- 6.3 Where a memorial poses a medium, high or urgent risk the Council may employ the use of a temporary make safe structural support whilst the grave owner or their heir(s) are contacted. This is in preference to cordoning off the memorial or laying it flat. The memorial will be temporarily stabilised by a stake positioned to the rear of the stone and secured with a binder or strap which, so far as is possible, avoids covering the inscription.
- 6.4 If due to the construction of the memorial a temporary make safe support cannot be fitted correctly then an alternative method of making the memorial safe should be used. Correct fitting of the structural support should not cause a trip hazard or create any other increased risk of injury.
- 6.5 The integrity of all temporary make safe works must be inspected regularly to ensure safety standards are maintained.
- 6.6 Cordoning off may be necessary in some circumstances, for example, for very large memorials or where a significant number of memorials are unsafe within a specific area. When cordoning off a memorial the cordon should extend around the fall area of the memorial not just the memorial as it stands.
- 6.7 Memorials will only be laid down if there is no other practical means of making them safe or where the grave owner or relative has requested it.
- 6.8 Before laying a memorial down the risk of creating a trip hazard should be considered and all necessary precautions taken to reduce this risk, for example resting the memorial on timber packing or positioning the memorial in line with other adjacent memorials.
- 6.9 Before attempting to move any memorial the likelihood of any component parts of the memorial falling during the operation must be assessed by a competent person. Any loose or detached parts must be removed independently.
- 6.10 Where possible when laying memorials down a slight angle will be maintained using a timber packing or by laying the memorial plate on its base to prevent the accumulation of water on the memorial face and the potential for long term damage to the inscription. The exception to this are crosses, which shall be laid flat to prevent them from breaking in two.
- 6.11 If laying a memorial down results in any dowels protruding from the memorial these shall be removed or cut off level with the stone.
- 6.12 When laying a memorial down a mechanical aid should be used to lift any memorial that is considered too heavy to lift by hand. No person should attempt to lift or carry any item that they consider too heavy. If lifting by hand, manual handling guidelines shall be applied.
- 6.13 Where the Council has been unable to contact the grave owner or where the grave owner has been traced but is unwilling or unable to have the memorial repaired it may be decided to partially bury the memorial in order to make it safe.
- 6.14 When partially burying an unsafe memorial at least 25 per cent or 15 inches (380mm) (whichever is the greater of the height) must be below ground. When in place the soil around the memorial should be thoroughly consolidated. When measuring how much of the memorial is to be below ground the measurement is taken from the last joint.

- 6.15 Where it is considered that Council staff cannot move a memorial safely the assistance of a specialist outside company or organisation shall be engaged.
- 6.16 All works to make safe a memorial that has been identified as of an immediate risk to health and safety will be carried out by a suitably qualified person trained in accordance with the guidance provided by the Council, other relevant bodies and national guidelines.
- 6.17 When taking action to make safe or repair memorials that are found to be unsafe priority shall be given to those memorials alongside or close to paths and main thoroughfares, memorials of historical or social importance, and memorials within highly visited sections. These memorials present the biggest risk in terms of potential injury to people visiting or working in the burial ground.
- 6.18 Where a memorial is thought to have a historical or social significance further specialist advice may be sought prior to any remedial works being carried out.
- 6.19 In some circumstances it may be necessary to employ a specialist company or organisation to make memorials safe through repair, laying flat or partial burial. Under these circumstances the guidance in this document and other relevant national guidelines will still apply.
- 6.20 The person(s) carrying out remedial work must review the risk assessment for the memorial prior to commencing works, taking into account local conditions and potential risks not previously identified. If required the risk assessment should be amended to reflect any changes and controls put in place to manage these risks.
- 6.21 The Council will not make a charge for applications from memorial masons to carry out repairs to an existing memorial.

7. Contacting owners of unsafe memorials

- 7.1 Where, after inspection, memorials are found to require maintenance, every effort will be made to contact the grave owner or their heirs in order to carry out any repairs required to the approved standard. The methods of contact will be:
- a notice attached to the unsafe memorial, and
 - a letter to the last known address of the grave owner or updated contact address, and
 - general local press releases, and
 - the Council's web site.
- 7.2 For all memorials found to be unsafe a letter will be sent to the grave owner at their last known address or updated contact address. If the Council receives no response a further letter will be sent after three-months of sending the first letter. These letters will inform the owner that their memorial has been found to be unsafe and details of the actions which need to be taken. If there is no response to these initial two letters a third and final letter will be sent at least six months after the date of the first letter.
- 7.3 Where after at least six months from being found to be unsafe the Council has been unable to contact the grave owner or their heir(s) the Council will take the necessary steps to permanently make the memorial safe. Under these circumstances the memorial could be:
- partially buried in the ground,
 - repaired (in which case, should relatives be traced in the future they may be asked to contribute to the cost of the repair) or

- permanently laid flat (this is a last resort and the Council prefers not to lay memorials down where an alternative option is available as this causes maintenance problems and trip hazards. Memorials may, however, be laid flat within the confines of an approved kerbset).
- 7.4 Where the grave owner or their heir(s) have been contacted but they are unwilling or unable to have the memorial repaired they will be given the choice to have the memorial partially buried or, if within the confines of an approved kerbset, permanently laid flat.
- 7.5 If no grave owner can be found but a memorial is thought to have heritage or social significance, the Council may consider repairing the memorial at its own expense. Under these circumstances any relative being found in the future would be requested to pay the cost of the repair.
- 7.6 Timescales for the Council to permanently make safe memorials are dependent on the level of risk from the memorial.
- high risk memorials will be permanently made safe after six months.
 - medium risk after one year,
 - low risk after two years.
- 7.7 Where possible the Council will keep an up to date database of all grave owner/ relative contact information. When purchasing grave rights new owners will be requested and encouraged to keep the Council informed of any changes in address.

8. General health and safety requirements for carrying out inspections and remedial work

- 8.1 The following section outlines general health and safety requirements relevant to the inspection and, where necessary, making safe of memorials.
- 8.2 Protective clothing must be worn when carrying out any operation in a burial ground; this includes steel toe capped boots, safety gloves and, when dealing with memorials over 1.5 metres in height, safety helmets
- 8.3 Tools and equipment provided must be suitable for the purpose and inspected prior to use. Any fault that should develop with tools or equipment must be reported immediately. The affected item must not be used until such time as a competent, authorised person has made full repairs.
- 8.4 Manufacturer's instructions should be followed when using equipment or installing memorial make safe structural supports. Users of any lifting equipment must also have undergone the necessary training in the safe use of any particular piece of equipment.
- 8.5 All staff inspecting memorials shall receive specific manual handling training.
- 8.6 No person should attempt to lift or carry any item they consider too heavy. Assistance should be called for if there is any doubt whatsoever.
- 8.7 It is the responsibility of every employee to report any hazard or potential hazard that he or she should notice. In the first instance the employee should, where it is safe to do so, remove the hazard or prevent any person from coming into contact with the hazard.
- 8.8 Should it not be possible to remove the hazard immediately, the employee should report the fact to cemetery staff who shall take the necessary action to remove the hazard.

- 8.9 All accidents and injuries, regardless of how slight, should be reported to cemetery staff and entered into the accident book. All accidents should be investigated by a supervisor or manager and, where findings indicate, a change to the working practice should be made to prevent any recurrence.
- 8.10 All accidents causing an employee to be absent for more than three days must be reported to the enforcing authority.
- 8.11 Accidents that result in a fatality must be reported immediately by telephone to the enforcing authority.
- 8.12 Dangerous occurrences (near misses) must be investigated and where necessary a change made to working practices to prevent a recurrence. Any change in working practice will be identified from the result of risk assessment. If it is considered that a near miss could have resulted in a reportable injury the enforcing authority must be notified immediately.
- 8.13 Employers and employees have a duty of care to protect the health and safety of other employees and members of the public who visit the burial grounds. Staff must be vigilant at all times and consider their actions in respect of the health and safety of visitors.

9. Review

- 9.1 The Council will review this policy on an annual basis to ensure it reflects current national guidance and best practice, or sooner if required, as a result of any changes in legislation or guidance.

Appendix 1:

Generic memorial risk assessment - summary for different memorial types should they fail the safety test

Type of memorial: Based on National Association of Memorial Mason's code types of memorials

Hazard rating, likelihood rating, calculation, priority: See section 4.

Immediate controls: See section 6.

Inspection frequency: Typical inspection frequencies for types of memorial

low risk – every five years

medium risk – every three years

high risk – every year

Date for removal of risk: See 7.6 - Higher risks will be removed quicker than lower risks

Risk assessment guidelines: generic memorial risk assessment; summary of different memorial types should they fail the safety test								
Memorial type	Hazard rating	Likelihood rating	Calculation	Priority	Immediate controls	Inspection frequency	Date for removal of risk	Comment
Lawn less than 60cm	2	2	4	Low	Consider warning sign if in prominent location	5 years	None	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels

Risk assessment guidelines: generic memorial risk assessment; summary of different memorial types should they fail the safety test								
Memorial type	Hazard rating	Likelihood rating	Calculation	Priority	Immediate controls	Inspection frequency	Date for removal of risk	Comment
Lawn 60-90cm	3	2	6	Low	Warning sign	5 years	2 years	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels
Lawn 90-120cm	4	2	8	Low	Warning sign	5 years	2 years	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels
Lawn 120-180cm	4	3	12	Medium	Warning sign Consider temporary support	3 years	1 year	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels
Lawn greater than 180cm	4	4	16	High	Warning sign Lay flat or cordon off	1 year	6 months	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels
Tablets / plaques less than 60cm	2	2	4	Low	Consider warning sign if in prominent location	5 years	None	
Vases less than 60cm	2	2	4	Low	Consider warning sign if in prominent location	5 years	None	Depends on stability of vase. i.e tall slender vases will be greater risk than shorter wider ones.
Vases greater than 60cm	3	3	9	Medium	Warning sign Consider laying flat / cordoning off if in prominent location	3 years	1 year	Depends on stability of vase. i.e tall slender vases will be greater risk than shorter wider ones
Open books less than 60cm	2	2	4	Low	Consider warning sign if in prominent location	5 years	None	If rest or book / rest joints have failed, increase likelihood rating
Open books 60-90cm	3	2	6	Low	Warning sign	5 years	2 years	If rest or book / rest joints have failed, increase likelihood rating

Risk assessment guidelines: generic memorial risk assessment; summary of different memorial types should they fail the safety test								
Memorial type	Hazard rating	Likelihood rating	Calculation	Priority	Immediate controls	Inspection frequency	Date for removal of risk	Comment
Open books 90-120cm	3	3	9	Medium	Warning sign Consider laying flat / cordoning off if in prominent location	3 years	1 year	If rest or book / rest joints have failed, increase likelihood rating
Open books greater than 120cm	4	4	16	High	Warning sign and lay flat or cordon off	1 year	6 months	If rest or book / rest joints have failed, increase likelihood rating
Crosses less than 60cm	2	3	6	Low	Warning sign Consider temporary support if in prominent location	5 years	2 years	If failed at top tier or joint between cross and top tier increase likelihood. Need to consider location and likely fall of cross if it fails
Crosses 60-90cm	3	3	9	Medium	Warning sign Consider temporary support if in prominent location	3 years	1 year	If failed at top tier or joint between cross and top tier increase likelihood. Need to consider location and likely fall of cross if it fails
Crosses 90-120cm	3	4	12	Medium	Warning sign Consider temporary support	3 years	1 year	If failed at top tier or joint between cross and top tier increase likelihood. Need to consider location and likely fall of cross if it fails
Crosses 120-160cm	4	4	16	High	Warning sign and fit support / lay flat / cordon off	1 year	6 months	If failed at top tier or joint between cross and top tier increase likelihood. Need to consider location and likely fall of cross if it fails
Crosses greater than 180cm	4	4	16	High	Warning sign and cordon off or lay flat	1 year	6 months	If failed at top tier or joint between cross and top tier increase likelihood. Need to consider location and likely fall of cross if it fails

Risk assessment guidelines: generic memorial risk assessment; summary of different memorial types should they fail the safety test								
Memorial type	Hazard rating	Likelihood rating	Calculation	Priority	Immediate controls	Inspection frequency	Date for removal of risk	Comment
Monoliths less than 60cm	2	2	4	Low	Consider warning sign if in prominent location	5 years	None	If ground conditions are poor likelihood should be increased
Monoliths 60-90cm	3	2	6	Low	Warning sign	5 years	2 years	If ground conditions are poor likelihood should be increased
Monoliths 90-120cm	4	2	8	Low	Warning sign	5 years	2 years	If ground conditions are poor likelihood should be increased
Monoliths 120-180cm	4	3	12	Medium	Warning sign Consider temporary support	3 years	1 year	If ground conditions are poor likelihood should be increased
Monoliths greater than 180cm	4	4	16	High	Warning sign and lay flat / cordon off	1 year	6 months	If ground conditions are poor likelihood should be increased
Full grave less than 60cm	2	2	4	Low	Consider warning sign if in prominent location	5 years	None	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels
Full grave 60-90cm	3	2	6	Low	Warning sign	5 years	2 years	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels
Full grave 90-120cm	4	2	8	Low	Warning sign	5 years	2 years	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels
Full grave 120-180cm	4	3	12	Medium	Warning sign Consider temporary support	3 years	1 year	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels

Risk assessment guidelines: generic memorial risk assessment; summary of different memorial types should they fail the safety test								
Memorial type	Hazard rating	Likelihood rating	Calculation	Priority	Immediate controls	Inspection frequency	Date for removal of risk	Comment
Full grave greater than 180cm	4	4	16	High	Warning sign Lay flat / cordon off	1 year	6 months	Increase likelihood rating if fail on dowels
Kerbs	2	2	4	Low	None	5 years	None	Assessment needs to be made if trip hazard dependent on location
Flat tablets / plaques	1	2	2	Low	None	5 years	None	
Monuments 120-180cm	4	3	12	Medium	Warning sign Consider temporary support / cordon off	3 years	1 year	Seek further assessment by structural engineer if required
Monuments greater than 180cm	5	4	20	High	Warning sign Cordon off / lie flat	1 year	6 months	Seek further assessment by structural engineer if required

Appendix 2:

Example individual assessment form

Cemetery:

Section:	Plot:	Name of deceased:		
Memorial type:	Generic hazard rating:	Generic likelihood rating:	Calculation:	Generic priority:
Height:				
Notes on condition (visual check for cracks, chips, lean, failed joints):				
Ground conditions:	Historical or social importance:	Frequently visited:	Adjacent to path:	
Good / Fair / Poor	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	
Hand test carried out:		Specialist advice required:	Movement detected:	
Yes / No		Yes / No	Yes / No	

Increased likelihood rating:	Generic hazard rating:	Revised calculation:	Revised priority:	
Action taken:				
Digital image number:		Inspection frequency based on revised risk:		
		Low every 5 years	Medium every 3 years	High every year
Inspected by:		Date:		

Appendix 3

Useful contacts	
British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM)	<p>Address: % SLCC 8, The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4EA</p> <p>Tel: 01788 544 963</p> <p>e-mail: bramm@namm.org.uk</p> <p>website: www.bramm-uk.org</p>
Commonwealth War Graves Commission	<p>Address: 2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7DX</p> <p>Tel: 01628 634 221</p> <p>website: www.cwgc.org</p>
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	<p>General Enquiries:</p> <p>Tel: 0845 345 0055</p> <p>e-mail: hse.infoline@santania.co.uk</p> <p>website: www.hse.gov.uk</p> <p>Report incident:</p> <p>Address: Incident Contact Centre, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly, CF83 3 GG.</p> <p>Tel: 0845 300 9923</p> <p>e-mail: riddor@santania.couk.</p> <p>website: www.hse.gov.uk</p>
Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management (ICCM)	<p>Address: ICCM National Office, City of London Cemetery, Aldersbrook Road, Manor Park, London E12 5DQ.</p> <p>Tel: 020 8989 4661</p> <p>e-mail: julie.callender@iccm-uk.com</p> <p>website: www.iccm-uk.com</p>
Local Government Ombudsman	<p>Address: PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH</p> <p>Tel: 0300 061 0614 or 0845 602 1983</p>

	e-mail: advice@lgo.org.uk website: www.lgo.org.uk
Ministry of Justice	Address: 102 Petty France, London SW1H 9AJ. Tel: 020 3334 3555 e-mail: general.queries@justice.gsi.gov.uk website: www.justice.gov.uk
National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM)	Address: 1 Castle Mews, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 2XL. Tel: 01788 542 264 e-mail: enquiries@namm.org.uk website: www.namm.org.uk
The Diocese of Leicester	Contact: Advisor for the Care & Development of Church Buildings. Address: Dioceses of Coventry & Leicester, 1 Hill Top, Coventry, Warwickshire CV1 5AB. website: www.leicester.anglican.org



EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

PART 1 - INITIAL SCREENING

Name of Policy/Function:		This is new
Burial Strategy		

Date of screening	2 nd September 2025
--------------------------	--------------------------------

1. Briefly describe its aims & objectives

The Burial Strategy draws together our ambitions for the management of Cemeteries and churchyards within Oadby and Wigston. The strategy has been developed to reflect the work of our officer team, partner organisations, community groups and local stone masons or funeral directors who each play a role in maintaining and managing the locations.

The strategy will be used as a framework to prioritise how we manage our Cemeteries and churchyards now and, in the future, to ensure they serve the needs of our communities.

(We are referring to the sites which Oadby & Wigston Borough Council owns and manages, which also have free public access. These sites include 2 cemeteries and 3 closed churchyards)

2. Are there external considerations?

e.g. Legislation/government directive etc

Given we do not have a Parish, the Council is duly responsible for these areas and to offer to all community groups.

3. Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?

Working in partnership is a key element of the strategy, the partners we will be working with include:-
 Secretary Of State
 Volunteers
 Stone Masons or Funeral directors
 All community groups

4. What outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom?

Aims and Ambitions

The following are the key aims of the service. These are focused on ensuring clarity of process, quality of environment and inclusivity.

1. To provide cemeteries for Oadby and Wigston residents that are beautiful, peaceful and well used
2. To offer burial spaces that support a diverse range of cultural and individual needs
3. To ensure that our policies relating to burials and memorials are clear, well communicated, and consistent
4. To ensure that procedures for the purchase and use of burial sites and memorials are clear, efficient, and compassionate



5. Has any consultation/research been carried out?

In terms of any major changes to the cemeteries and churchyards we will undertake a consultation with local residents and key stakeholders.

6. Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate the possibility of Inequalities/negative impacts?

Consider and identify any evidence you have -equality data relating to usage and satisfaction levels, complaints, comments, research, outcomes of review, issues raised at previous consultations, known inequalities) If so, please provide details.

None

7. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?

Positive – *It could benefit*

Negative – *It could disadvantage*

Neutral – *Neither positive nor negative impact or not sure.*

	Type of impact, reason & any evidence
Disability	Neutral
Race (including Gypsy & Traveller)	Neutral
Age	Neutral
Gender Reassignment	Neutral
Sex	Neutral

Sexual Orientation	Neutral
Religion/Belief	Neutral
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral

8. Could other socio-economic groups be affected?

e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes, homeless?

All groups would have fair option to purchase plots as set out in the Scale of charges

9. Are there any human rights implications?

No (If yes, please explain)

No

10. Is there an opportunity to promote equality and/or good community relations?

Yes (If yes, how will this be done?)

We have been working with local religious groups to develop our strategy. It is important we consider this wholly to ensure we offer a fair service to all religions.
All significant changes would undergo consultation to ensure fairness and transparency with decision making.

11. If you have indicated a negative impact for any group is that impact legal?

i.e. not discriminatory under anti-discrimination legislation

N/A

12. Is any part of this policy/service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

Where we are looking to improve accessibility and improve the areas listed, there may be a need to contract work out.

13. Is a Part 2 full Equality Assessment required?

No

14. Date by which a Part 2 full Equality Assessment is to be completed with actions.

N/A

Please note that you should proceed to a Part 2, the full Equality Impact Assessment if you have identified actual, or the potential to cause, adverse impact or discrimination against different groups in the community.

We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out and a full equality assessment **is not required*** (please delete as appropriate).

Completed by: Ben Wilson

Date: 2nd September 2025

Countersigned by:

Date: 2nd September 2025

Screened by:



Mark Smith

Date: 2nd September 2025

Please forward an electronic copy to our Equalities Lead mark.smith@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Equality Assessments shall be published on the Council website with the relevant and appropriate document upon which the equality assessment has been undertaken.



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 09 September 2025	Matter for Information and Decision
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Report Title: **Green Spaces Strategy (2025 - 2035)**

Report Author(s): **David Gill (Legal Consultant)**

Purpose of Report:	To seek Members approval to consult on the Green Spaces Strategy (2025 - 2035).
Report Summary:	The report introduces the Green Spaces Strategy (2025 - 2035) which in turn will inform the management of the Parks and Opens Spaces within the Borough.
Recommendation(s):	That the Green Space Strategy (at Appendix 1) is approved for a 6-week public consultation.
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Ben Wilson (Head of Neighbourhood Services) ben.wilson@oadby-wigston.gov.uk 0116) 257 2711 David Gill (Legal Consultant) david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk (0116) 257 2626
Strategic Objectives:	Our Communities (SO2) Our Council (SO1) Our Environment (SO4) Our Partners (SO5)
Vision and Values:	Customer & Community Focused (V1) Collaborative & Creative (V3) Proud of Everything We Do (V2) "Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Reputation Damage (CR4) Effective Utilisation of Assets / Buildings (CR5) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. Initial EA Screening (See Appendices)
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	

Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Green Spaces Strategy (2025 - 2035) 2. Equality Impact Assessment

1. Background

- 2.1 Parks and open spaces are fundamental to the health, well-being, and quality of life of any urban community. In Oadby and Wigston, these green spaces act as vital havens amid a rapidly urbanising landscape, offering residents and visitors opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and connection with nature.
- 2.2 From well-maintained local parks to tranquil nature reserves and green corridors, Oadby and Wigston is home to a diverse range of open spaces that support both environmental sustainability and the social fabric of the community.
- 2.3 Several services play a role in the functioning of Oadby and Wigston's parks or have a stake in how they are used, including corporate assets (grounds maintenance), planning policy, community engagement, health and wellbeing, community safety, climate change.

2. Why a change is needed

- 2.1 As Oadby and Wigston continues to develop, the demand for accessible, high-quality outdoor spaces becomes increasingly critical.
- 2.2 The Green Spaces Strategy for Oadby and Wigston is a comprehensive plan aimed at protecting, enhancing, and expanding these valuable green spaces to meet the evolving needs of a growing population.
- 2.3 This strategy:
 - Outline's the approach for managing, protecting and developing green spaces which gives consideration to the Council's resources, management and maintenance responsibilities and the contributions from community and interest groups.
 - Highlights a set of principles which will guide future maintenance, investment, community engagement decisions and actions regarding our green spaces.
 - Agree a set of priorities which focus effort, resources and decision making, ensuring that our green spaces remain high quality spaces for everyone to enjoy.
 - Help secure additional investment and external funding towards enhancing infrastructure, faculties and opportunities for the benefit of the community.
- 2.4 The successful delivery of the strategy's objectives will rely on several key factors:

- The active support and contribution of our partners and stakeholders in delivering high-quality work.
- Securing consistent and sufficient funding throughout the strategy's lifespan.
- Establishing a clear and effective monitoring framework, with defined milestones and achievements to assess progress.
- Ensuring the strategy is widely communicated and promoted in a variety of formats to foster ongoing stakeholder engagement.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 The strategy also supports the Council's Climate Action plan and climate change mitigation by focusing on enhancing green spaces, which play a vital role in reducing carbon emissions. Well-maintained parks and open spaces act as carbon sinks, absorbing CO2 and improving air quality.
- 3.2 Additionally, increasing the biodiversity and the number of trees and plants in these areas can help counterbalance the environmental impact of urbanisation.
- 3.3 The strategy also encourages sustainable practices such as using environmentally friendly materials in park designs, reducing waste, and promoting green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems.

Green Spaces Strategy

2025 - 2035



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Our strategic objectives

Our council

- To be the local voice of residents and businesses.
- To ensure that we provide high quality, value for money services that meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.
- To ensure high connectivity with residents and businesses.

Our communities

- To provide a clean and safe place for everyone.
- To support any activities or actions that enhance the health and wellbeing of our Borough.
- To provide good, affordable and efficient housing for everyone.

Our Economy

- To support economic growth that is focused on our town centres.
- To make our Borough an inviting place to visit.
- To help to provide good employment opportunities.

Our environment

- To ensure that we are a carbon conscious Borough.
- To be seen to be 'Green'.

Our partners

- To develop, maintain and enhance partnerships to help support delivery of our objectives.
- To ensure we are engaged and listening to all sections of the community.

'OUR BOROUGH - THE PLACE TO BE'

Our vision



Our purpose

Provide a sustainable council by listening, being engaged, and putting our customers first enabling us to focus on local needs and priorities.



... green spaces play
fundamental roles
in the provision of
increased community
cohesion, physical and
mental health, and
wellbeing.

Oadby and Wigston has a population of approximately 57,700 (census 2021) and covers an area of 9 square miles. The Borough is responsible for maintaining 26 areas of open spaces and parks which are treasured assets, central to the lives of their communities and enjoyed by visitors for many reasons. We are extremely proud of our green spaces and the value they bring to communities, including biodiversity, economic, education, heritage, health and wellbeing. In developing this strategy, we recognise these benefits and present clear priorities which will protect and enhance them in the future.

When we talk about our green spaces, we are referring to the sites which Oadby and Wigston Borough Council owns and manages, which also have free public access. These sites include formal parks, recreation grounds, playing fields, general open spaces, play areas, closed churchyards and cemeteries.



These green spaces play fundamental roles in the provision of increased community cohesion, physical and mental health, and wellbeing. We aim to ensure that these spaces will serve the communities of the future, as well as those of today. In doing so, we will provide opportunities that are sustainable, help improve biodiversity, contribute to climate change mitigation, encourage tourism, help grow the local economy, conserve the heritage and cultural offer in Oadby and Wigston and contribute to education.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council also owns a site which is managed by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (the Lucas Marsh Nature Area) which sits adjacent to the magnificent Brocks Hill Country Park, the new home of the Borough Council which comprises 67 acres of woodland and meadows.

Additionally, we recognise that a large amount of green space which is available to residents and visitors within the district is owned and managed by others – including The Leicestershire University Botanical Gardens at Oadby and the privately owned informal country park at Oadby Grange.

The Borough also benefits from the Grand Union Canal that passes through the Borough providing attractive vistas along the tow path particularly at Kilby Bridge and has good relationships with Leicestershire County Council, the Canals and Rivers Trust, community/ charity organisations and private land owners – and recognises that having a positive, open, and helpful collaboration with these organisations is the best way to achieve the aims set out within this strategy.



The background image shows a lush green park. In the foreground, there is a grassy field. In the middle ground, a playground is visible with a swing set and a spring rider shaped like a yellow boat. In the background, there are several tall evergreen trees and some residential houses under a blue sky with light clouds.

Vision

Our green spaces will be vibrant, attractive, robust and actively maintained spaces for the whole community to enjoy.

They will be futureproofed to provide climate resilience and enhanced biodiversity while supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Key Strategic Priorities

1. Invest in green spaces as a priority, protecting our heritage.
2. Use resources effectively and sustainably, whilst maintaining and improving our amenities.
3. Contribute to climate change and biodiversity targets and aims, through planting trees and managing sites for wildlife whilst improving flora and fauna.
4. Increase the use and accessibility of green spaces for all, improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.
5. Work co-operatively with our communities and effectively with partners through positive community engagement.



Our green spaces have a major part to play in community and family life.



Why have a Green Spaces Strategy?

Our green spaces have a major part to play in community and family life. They are places for us to socialise, enjoy being active, connect with nature and wildlife, relax and reflect. Some green spaces contain heritage features which tell a story about the past.

They can also play an important part in providing a more sustainable future, contributing towards climate change aspirations and providing educational opportunities.

It is also important to see our green spaces in the context of their ability to support and enhance our fauna and flora. The wide mix of sites offers a diverse range.

This Strategy will:

- Outline the approach for managing, protecting and developing green spaces which gives consideration to the Council's resources, management and maintenance responsibilities and the contributions from community and interest groups.
- Highlight a set of principles which will guide future maintenance, investment, community engagement decisions and actions regarding our green spaces.
- Agree a set of priorities which focus effort, resources and decision making, ensuring that our green spaces remain high quality spaces for everyone to enjoy.
- Help secure additional investment and external funding towards enhancing infrastructure, facilities and opportunities for the benefit of the community.





Management Plan

Brocks Hill Country Park has a management plan which identifies local improvements which can be made and recognises the ongoing contribution of community groups and partners in delivering some of these actions with us.

Our remaining green spaces are extremely valuable assets, and each contributes to the broad benefits already highlighted. They play a significant part in community life and are extremely important to the people that use them.

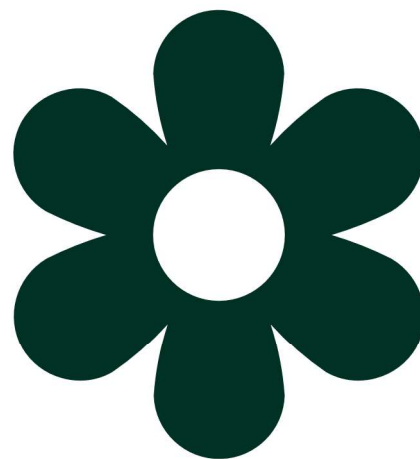
Each of our green spaces will be managed and developed using the guiding principles within this strategy and the maintenance regimes that are specific to each site.

Our green spaces often contain natural features, have unique heritage value and, in some cases, play facilities for children. Whilst they may not always require detailed management plans, it is important to state that these are cherished assets for local communities and we are committed to improving these to ensure that they remain that way.

We want to ensure that all of our green spaces will stand up to future challenges. We therefore have a strong desire to improve biodiversity within these areas, manage the sites for the benefit of wildlife, provide more protection and shelter from the climate and reduce the impact of climate change.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles will be used when considering any changes that affect the current or future management and maintenance of our green spaces. These principles have been developed to ensure that any changes that are made to these spaces are appropriate, affordable, sustainable and deliver clearly against the aspirations of this strategy.



These guiding principles are:

- Use key strategies and recognised evidence of good practice as a base to inform decision making so that any changes, improvements or projects are the right thing, in the right place and for the right reason.
- Ensure that any projects to protect or enhance our green spaces are in keeping and in proportion with the overall purpose and heritage of our sites and deliver against one of the priorities listed in this strategy.
- Any projects or improvements are developed with accessibility in mind, ensuring that wherever practical, our sites are accessible to all.
- Any new projects which have an impact on the ongoing maintenance of our sites are both affordable and financially sustainable.
- Any projects or improvements are developed with serious consideration as to how our green spaces will be used by our future generations, whilst looking to increase biodiversity and climate resilience.

Objectives

We will:

1. review maintenance regimes to ensure that our green spaces are maintained to a high standard, in an affordable and sustainable way, and make improvements to increase enhance biodiversity. (Addresses priorities 1,2,3,4 & 5)

2. ensure that infrastructure and heritage features are protected and well maintained, in accordance within the resources available to the Council. (Addresses priorities 1 & 2)

3. encourage and enable positive physical and mental wellbeing by developing strong partnerships with community groups, sports clubs and other stakeholder groups. Ensuring that our green spaces fulfil their potential for enabling healthy lifestyles for all ages, encouraging all residents to move more. (Addresses priorities 1,2,4, &5)

4. plant more trees within our green spaces to help combat climate change (carbon storage) and increase canopy cover, providing future new habitats for wildlife and additional shade for our communities in periods of extreme heat. (Addresses priorities 1,2,3,4 and 5)

5. ensure our green spaces are safe, welcoming and accessible places for all of our communities and that the highest possible standards of health and safety are maintained by our service providers, event organisers and when engaging the community in projects. (Addresses priorities 2,4 and 5)

6. actively encourage community engagement and involvement in the protection, maintenance, development and positive environmental impacts of our green spaces. (Addresses priorities 1,2,3,4 and 5)

7. effectively manage internal budgets and attract external funding wherever possible towards the ongoing maintenance and the future development of our green spaces. (Addresses priorities 1,2,3,4 and 5)

8. review the Brocks Hill management plan annually to ensure objectives are being delivered effectively. (Addresses priorities 1,2,3,4 and 5)



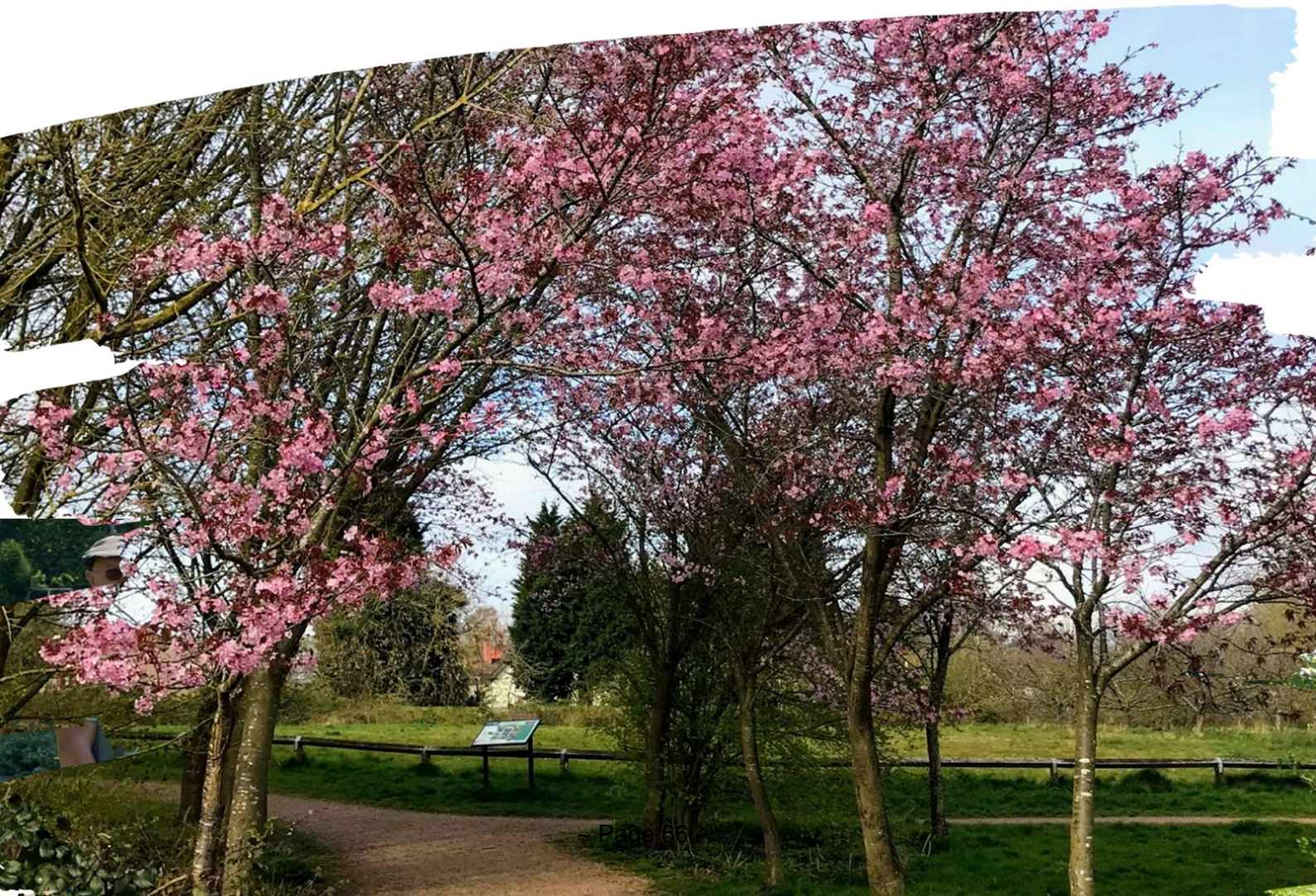
Strategic Context

For this strategy to focus on the future effectively, it is important that it is set within the framework of the key influencing documents and evidence base which frame the provision, protection and development of our green spaces.

It is equally important to understand the current context in which our green spaces are managed and maintained as this will play a part in decision making and the delivery of future projects. (Full details of the documents can be found in Appendix 1).

Key Strategies and Documents

- Corporate Plan (2023- 2027)
- Oadby & Wigston Borough Local Plan (2011-2031)
- Climate Change Strategy (2024)
- Oadby & Wigston Tree Strategy (2019)
- Volunteering Policy 2022
- Sport England: Uniting the Movement (2021 – 2031)



Community Involvement

We are committed to working with local organisations who may wish to manage and maintain some of the smaller land assets within their locality, which are owned and currently maintained by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council. With community support, financial backing and agreed plans in place, these local green spaces may be better suited to local management. We want to encourage dialogue between a range of local organisations such as community groups and charitable foundations that will lead to the management model that best serves the local community.



We also see the important role our parks and open spaces can have on our communities across Oadby and Wigston. We will therefore ensure that our communities are able to help decide how their local spaces are managed and have the opportunity to contribute to their upkeep and future development.



*Wherever
practical, our
sites are
accessible to all*



Management Responsibilities

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is responsible for the overall management of the sites listed in Appendix 2 as well as many more incidental parcels of land. In addition to having the overall management responsibility, we work proactively with service providers, partners, the community and interest groups to develop and deliver projects that protect, maintain, or improve our green spaces.

The Corporate Assets team is responsible for maintaining each of the Council's green spaces across the district. Maintenance Schedules or action plans detail an agreed schedule of maintenance standards undertaken in each area.

The Corporate Assets team supports community groups such as Pride of the Borough to deliver agreed projects that help protect and enhance green spaces for the benefit of the community.

Community groups, including Friends of Peace Memorial Park are a vital and valued support network who play an important role in assisting the Council in undertaking specific maintenance tasks and development projects. These groups are also viewed by the Council as a way for the community to bring forward ideas, energy and act as a mechanism to attract additional funding to protect, maintain and enhance the green spaces.





Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

*We aim to
encourage
and enable
positive
physical and
mental
wellbeing.*



Appendix 2



EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

PART 1 - INITIAL SCREENING

Name of Policy/Function:		This is new
Green Spaces Strategy 2025-35		

Date of screening	2 nd September 2025
--------------------------	--------------------------------

1. Briefly describe its aims & objectives

The Green Spaces Strategy draws together our ambitions for the management of parks and open spaces within Oadby and Wigston. The strategy has been developed to reflect the work of our officer team, partner organisations, community groups and councillors who each play a role in maintaining and improving the borough.

The strategy will be used as a framework to prioritise how we manage our parks and green spaces now and, in the future, to ensure they serve the needs of our communities.

(We are referring to the sites which Oadby & Wigston Borough Council owns and manages, which also have free public access. These sites include formal parks, recreation grounds, playing fields, general open spaces, play areas, closed churchyards and cemeteries.)

2. Are there external considerations?

e.g. Legislation/government directive etc

Contribute to climate change and biodiversity targets and aims, through planting trees and managing sites for wildlife whilst improving flora and fauna.

3. Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?

Working in partnership is a key element of the strategy, the partners we will be working with include:-
Pride of the Borough
Friends of Peace Memorial Park
Ministry of Justice
Volunteers

4. What outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom?

Our parks and green spaces are open to all. They play a fundamental role in the provision of increased community cohesion, physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Key Strategic Priorities:-

- Invest in green spaces as a priority, protecting our heritage.
- Use resources effectively and sustainably, whilst maintaining and improving our amenities.
- Contribute to climate change and biodiversity targets and aims, through planting trees and managing sites for wildlife whilst improving flora and fauna.
- Increase the use and accessibility of green spaces for all, improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- Work co-operatively with our communities and effectively with partners through positive community engagement.

5. Has any consultation/research been carried out?

In terms of any major changes to our parks, recreation grounds, playing fields, of cemeteries we will undertake a consultation with local residents and key stakeholders.

6. Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate the possibility of Inequalities/negative impacts?

Consider and identify any evidence you have -equality data relating to usage and satisfaction levels, complaints, comments, research, outcomes of review, issues raised at previous consultations, known inequalities) If so, please provide details.

None

7. Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?

Positive – *It could benefit*

Negative – *It could disadvantage*

Neutral – *Neither positive nor negative impact or not sure.*

	Type of impact, reason & any evidence
Disability	Positive
Race (including Gypsy & Traveller)	Neutral
Age	Neutral
Gender Reassignment	Neutral

Sex	Neutral
Sexual Orientation	Neutral
Religion/Belief	Neutral
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral

8. Could other socio-economic groups be affected?

e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes, homeless?

Yes, they could but only in a positive way, we would encourage all our residents to use our parks and green open spaces and let all groups know of any events that are happening.

9. Are there any human rights implications?

No (If yes, please explain)

10. Is there an opportunity to promote equality and/or good community relations?

Yes (If yes, how will this be done?)

We have been working with a disabled parent's group to review the play equipment that we have our parks. Where a piece of equipment needs replacing or we have funding to put in new equipment then we will consult with them on the needs of disabled children so we can maximise access for all to the play equipment.

11. If you have indicated a negative impact for any group is that impact legal?

i.e. not discriminatory under anti-discrimination legislation

N/A

12. Is any part of this policy/service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

Where we are replacing or installing new equipment on our parks then we will use contractors, we will ensure that the service they provide is inclusive of all.

13. Is a Part 2 full Equality Assessment required?

No

14. Date by which a Part 2 full Equality Assessment is to be completed with actions.

N/A

Please note that you should proceed to a Part 2, the full Equality Impact Assessment if you have identified actual, or the potential to cause, adverse impact or discrimination against different groups in the community.

We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out and a full equality assessment **is not required*** (please delete as appropriate).

Completed by: Teresa Neal

Date: 2nd September 2025

Countersigned by:

Date: 2nd September 2025

Screened by:



Mark Smith

Date: 2nd September 2025

Please forward an electronic copy to our Equalities Lead mark.smith@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Equality Assessments shall be published on the Council website with the relevant and appropriate document upon which the equality assessment has been undertaken.

Agenda Item 16

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

(Document is Restricted)

(Document is Restricted)