



Title: Local Plan Update

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the position following the recent Planning Appeal in relation to Cottage Farm, Oadby.
- 1.2 It also sets out the current issues in relation to preparing a new Local Plan for the Borough.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Members note the position with regard to the recent Planning Appeal in relation to Cottage Farm, Oadby.
- Members note the importance of the following in enabling the Council to have control of delivering its spatial planning strategy for the Borough:
 - Objectively Assessed Need
 - Ensuring the consistent delivery of a sufficient number of new dwellings
 - Maintaining a 5 year supply of housing land
- Members note the situation with regard to the preparation of the Local Plan.
- The Council holds its intention to prepare its Local Plan in the context of the Strategic Growth Plan and an end date of 2036, but ensures the flexibility to switch to an end date of 2031 should the Strategic Growth Plan experience delay and/or fall out of line with the timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan.
- Members approve the Local Plan Key Challenges document for a period of 6 weeks public consultation, commencing on Monday 12th October 2015.

3. Information

- 3.1 The Council's development plan currently consists of the Saved Local Plan (1999), the Core Strategy (2010) and the Town Centres Area Action Plan (2013).
- 3.2 The Core Strategy was evidenced, prepared and adopted by the Borough Council prior to the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by the Government in 2012. Therefore, whilst aspects such as the spatial objectives and spatial strategy may still be relevant, some of the evidence upon which the policies are based, such as housing numbers, is open to challenge.
- 3.3 This was the case during the recent Planning Appeal in relation to Cottage Farm, Oadby when the developer's challenges were met with some sympathy by the Inspector, despite the Council's arguments to the contrary.

3.4 Whilst the Council does not agree with the Inspector's report and is in the process of challenging the Inspector's conclusions through the court of appeal, the situation demonstrates that in order to mitigate as far as possible the risk of a successful challenge to the development plan, two things are necessary:

1. The preparation of a new Local Plan

2. In the interim:

- the consistent delivery of a sufficient number of new dwellings to meet the 'Objectively Assessed Need'
- the identification of a sufficient amount of land to maintain a '5 year supply of housing land'.

Objectively Assessed Need

3.5 Although the Borough Council is of the view that the Core Strategy is up to date, Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) is an important concept because the National Planning Policy Framework states that where a development plan is found to be out of date, the Local Planning Authority should seek to meet the full OAN, rather than the housing requirement set out in its Plan.

3.6 'Objectively Assessed Need' represents an overall assessment of need without applying any limitations and policy considerations such as the supply of land for new development, local housing markets, infrastructure or environmental constraints. In other words it is 'policy off'. The housing requirement in the Plan is 'policy on'.

3.7 The OAN for the Borough was identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment which was published in 2014. OAN is derived based upon household projections, the need to support economic growth and the need to provide affordable housing. Due to the specific nature of the Borough, when assessed in this way, the level of need for affordable housing was found to be relatively high (163 dwellings per annum).

3.8 Taking this into account the OAN for Oadby and Wigston to the period to 2031 was identified to be 80-100 dwellings per annum (although shown as a range the OAN is considered to be the higher end of the range i.e. 100). This is an 'uplift' of 21 dwellings per annum compared to the household projections of 79 dwellings per annum. The uplift is considered to take account of the affordable housing need whilst deriving a realistic OAN in the context of the Borough. It is important to note that it is the Council's case that in establishing an OAN judgements have to be made, but these judgements are not based on Policy decisions and therefore the OAN is 'policy off'.

3.9 At the Planning Appeal in relation to Cottage Farm, Oadby the developer put forward an alternative case as to what the OAN for the Borough might be. Their main point being that the OAN should be higher due to the high level of need for affordable housing even though they had not themselves undertaken an affordable housing assessment. The Planning Inspector agreed with the developer and determined that 'for the purposes of this appeal [he would] adopt 147 per annum as the indicative figure [(i.e. the OAN)] for calculating whether the Council is able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land'

3.10 As a result, a summary of the current picture for the Borough is provided in the table below.

Source	Dwellings per Annum
Core Strategy Housing Requirement	90
Leicester and Leicestershire SHMA OAN	100
Cottage Farm Inspector's Report conclusion on OAN	147

Ensuring the consistent delivery of a sufficient number of new dwellings

- 3.11 It is very important to ensure the consistent delivery of a sufficient number of new dwellings in the Borough to meet the housing requirement. If this is found not to be the case, Government guidance requires that more new homes, in addition to the housing requirement, are provided.
- 3.12 The Core Strategy provides a breakdown of the amount of dwellings that are intended to be delivered in the Direction for Growth, within the Town Centres and in the remainder of the urban area. Therefore, it is important that we are on course to meet the targets in each of these areas.
- 3.13 In the immediate years after the adoption of a plan it is usual for delivery to be slower whilst the strategy comes into effect and proposals for development are drawn up. This has been the case in the Borough, but delivery is now beginning to increase.
- 3.14 The Core Strategy requires 452 dwellings to be provided at the Direction for Growth between 2009 and 2026. This equates to 27 dwellings per year. The planning approval for the Direction for Growth remains subject to the signing of the Section 106 Agreement. The Director of Services is in regular contact with the developer's solicitor to try to bring this matter to a resolution. Once development is underway there is a high level of confidence that these dwellings will be delivered at a consistent rate and within the plan period.
- 3.15 The Core Strategy requires 393 dwellings to be provided in the town centres between 2009 and 2026. This equates to 23 dwellings per year and over the 6 years to date (2009/10-2014/15) an average of 23 dwellings have been provided each year. Provided proposals set out within the Town Centres Area Action Plan come forward (eg Paddock Street, Wigston and East Street, Oadby) there is a reasonable level of confidence that dwellings will continue to be delivered at a consistent rate and to target in the town centres. This will be assisted by changes of use of offices to residential and interventions by the Council such as the Investor Prospectus and the Local Development Orders that are currently under preparation.
- 3.16 The Core Strategy requires 191 dwellings to be provided elsewhere in the urban area between 2009 and 2026. This equates to 11 dwellings per year and over the 6 years to date (2009/10-2014/15) an average of 43 dwellings have been provided each year. There is a high level of confidence that dwellings will continue to be delivered at a consistent rate and to target elsewhere in the urban area based upon previous performance.
- 3.17 Regarding affordable housing, the Core Strategy sets out targets for affordable housing provision in each of the settlements – 40 dwellings in Oadby, 90 dwellings (excluding the DfG) in Wigston, and 30 dwellings in South Wigston (160 in total) - during the plan period.
- 3.18 Across the Borough as a whole this equates to 8 affordable dwellings per year and over the 6 years to date (2009/10-2014/15) an average of 13 affordable dwellings have been provided each year. The specific targets for each settlement have also been exceeded. There is a high level of confidence that affordable dwellings will continue to be delivered at a consistent rate and to target subject to development coming forward as expected.
- 3.19 It should be noted that the figures and targets contained in this section are derived from the housing requirement set out in the Core Strategy of 90 dwellings per annum.

Maintaining a 5 year supply of housing land.

- 3.20 A five year supply of housing land is required by Government guidance to demonstrate that there is sufficient land available in the Borough that is suitable and available to achieve the delivery of the housing requirement over a 5 year period. Government guidance requires us

to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) each year which is used to determine whether or not a five year supply of housing land exists. The table below shows the sites that have been identified in the SHLAA that are considered will be deliverable and developable within the next 5 years.

Deliverable and Developable within 5 Years			
Settlement	Site	Area (hectares)	Number of Dwellings
Wigston	No. 39, Long Street	0.238	18
Wigston	No. 53 to 59, Queens Drive	0.096	15
Wigston	No. 8 to 10, Long Street	0.084	14
Wigston	No. 34, Bell Street	0.030	8
Oadby	Old Library, The Parade	0.265	40
Oadby	Oadby Pool Site, Leicester Road	0.260	10
South Wigston	Former Shoefayre, Kirkdale Road	1.102	56
South Wigston	Alpha House, Countesthorpe Road	0.149	14
South Wigston	No. 41 to 43, Canal Street	0.034	12
South Wigston	Land at Bennett Way	0.130	8
South Wigston	No. 29-31, Canal Street	0.021	5
South Wigston	No. 3, Canal Street	0.019	4
Total		3.210	204

3.21 As of the 1st April 2015, the Council had a 5 year land supply of 843 new residential dwellings, consisting of:

- 294 new dwellings with extant planning permission
- 204 dwellings on SHLAA sites (that are suitable and available to achieve within 5 years)
- 75 Local Plan allocation dwellings (Town Centre Area Action Plan sites – Paddock Street and East Street)
- 200 new dwellings at the Direction for Growth (Barratt Homes)
- 70 windfall sites (sites that will come forward that the Council is currently unaware of)

3.22 The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Planning Authorities to calculate the 5 year land requirement based upon:

- the Plan period housing requirement (90 dwellings per annum as set out in the Core Strategy) or where the plan is found to be out of date, the OAN
- plus, a 5% buffer (or 20% if there has been persistent under delivery of new housing)
- plus, any past delivery backlog. Since 2006 there has been an under delivery of housing in the Borough (67 dwellings), however it is not felt that this under delivery has been persistent, hence the authority adopt the 5 % buffer.

3.23 Taking account of the above, using the Plan period housing requirement of 90 dwellings per annum, the Council is required to provide at least **540** new dwellings over a 5 year period:

(90 dwellings x 5 years = 450 dwellings + 5% buffer = 473 dwellings + 67 dwellings backlog)

- 3.24 If the Objectively Assessed Need higher end figure of 100 dwellings per annum was used (as identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment) the Council would be required to provide at least **592** new dwellings over a 5 year period:

(100 dwellings x 5 years = 500 dwellings + 5% buffer = 525 dwellings + 67 dwellings backlog)

- 3.25 As mentioned earlier in this report, the Council is in the process of challenging the Inspector's decision regarding Cottage Farm through the court of appeal. However, if this decision was to stand, using 147 dwellings per annum as the Objectively Assessed Need and the 20% buffer, the 5 year requirement could be as high as **949** new dwellings over a 5 year period:

(147 dwellings x 5 years = 735 dwellings + 20% = 882 dwellings + 67 dwellings backlog)

- 3.26 More detailed information relating to 5 year supply and housing delivery can be found in the most up to date Housing Implementation Strategy (Appendix 1). It is imperative that the Council continue to unlock housing land within the Borough (for example the Town Centre Area Action Plan sites at Paddock Street and East Street) to ensure that a consistent rolling supply of housing land is maintained. Ensuring a consistent and healthy supply of housing land can negate any unforeseen circumstances, such as (for illustration purposes only) the Direction for Growth area stalling for 5 years, which would mean the 200 new homes projected to come forward within the next 5 years could not be used within the 5 year supply calculation.

Preparation of a new Local Plan

Timetable

- 3.27 Preparation of a new Local Plan is underway based upon the following timetable:

Key Challenges Consultation:	Autumn 2015
Preferred Options Consultation:	Autumn 2016
Submission of Plan:	Spring 2017
Adoption:	Autumn 2017

It is important that the Council keeps to this timetable. A Written Ministerial Statement by Brandon Lewis (Minister of State for Housing and Planning) on 21st July 2015 stated: "In cases where no Local Plan has been produced by early 2017 – five years after the publication of the NPPF – we will intervene to arrange for the Plan to be written, in consultation with local people, to accelerate production of a Local Plan". On the basis of this statement it is not yet clear whether the Borough Council is seen to have a Local Plan in place or not, given that we already have an adopted Core Strategy and Town Centres Area Action Plan. It has also been stated that the Government will publish league tables setting out local authorities' progress on their Local Plans.

Evidence

- 3.28 The main focus to date has been on preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the various evidence documents that are required to underpin the Plan. The majority of evidence can be prepared in house, however some evidence requires specialist knowledge and will need to be commissioned from external consultancies. Whichever way, collating evidence is a resource intensive and time consuming exercise and can only be undertaken as quickly as resources allow. This needs to be considered in the context of the Government's statement regarding councils having produced a Local Plan before early 2017.

- 3.29 The following evidence is prepared or underway:
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment*
 - Transport Study to 2031*
 - Green Wedge Review
 - Review of Locally Listed Buildings
 - Climate Change Study
- 3.30 Consideration will be given to preparing or updating the following evidence over the next 12 months:
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment update*
 - Employment Land Study*
 - Transport Study to 2036*
 - Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment*
 - Affordable Housing Viability Assessment
 - Retail Study
 - Local Infrastructure Plan
 - Places of Worship Needs Assessment
 - Conservation Areas Update
 - Landscape Character Assessment update
 - Phase 1 Habitat Survey

*denotes evidence that needs to be prepared at a Leicester and Leicestershire level, in partnership with other authorities.

Plan Period

- 3.31 The Council is currently working on preparing a plan to 2036 for the following reasons:
- there is an adopted plan in place to 2026
 - given the size of the Borough the rate of growth is relatively low and therefore it is much more effective and efficient to plan over a longer timescale (e.g. in terms of securing infrastructure etc)
 - given the current timetable for preparing the plan there will not be a full 15 year plan period at the date of adoption if the end date is 2031. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework states that 'Local Plans should be drawn up over an appropriate timescale, preferably a 15 year time horizon'
 - a plan period to 2036 fitted well with the timetable for the preparation of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan which was scheduled to be completed by Spring 2016 and intended to contain the strategy for the location of development up to 2036 and a strategic vision to 2050.
- 3.32 At a Leicester and Leicestershire level, there are differences in the proposed plan periods of different councils, with some preparing plans to 2031 (including Leicester City Council and Harborough District Council) and others preparing plans to 2036 (such as ourselves and Melton Borough Council).
- 3.33 In addition, the timescale for the preparation of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan has slipped significantly with indications that it will now not be available until Spring 2017.
- 3.34 These issues cause difficulties as far as meeting the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate is concerned and preparing the necessary evidence to support a plan to 2036 when other councils are focused principally on the period to 2031.
- 3.35 The Strategic Planning Group has sought advice on this matter from the Planning Advisory Service and The Planning Inspectorate (Appendix 2). Separately, we have sought our own

advice from Andrew Wright who provided our Planning Advisory Service Plan Review earlier this year (Appendix 3).

- 3.36 In consideration of this advice, it is proposed that the Borough Council continues with its plan preparation but, currently, with an open ended plan period. To facilitate this all evidence and related studies will need to be geared to provide outputs for horizons of 2031 and 2036.
- 3.37 This approach will enable the Council to hold its intention to prepare its Local Plan in the context of the Strategic Growth Plan and an end date of 2036. However, it also enables the flexibility to switch to an end date of 2031 should the Strategic Growth Plan experience delay and/or fall out of line with the timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 3.38 If we were to switch to an end date of 2031 and the Inspector express concern that the plan did not cover a full 15 years from its likely date of adoption, there would be the option to add extra years to the plan period by extrapolating the planned delivery rates for housing and employment land and projecting them forward over the extra years. This approach has been undertaken elsewhere in the County. There may also be a case for providing an indication as to where further development would take place after 2031 in order to assist coherent masterplanning or planning for infrastructure. This could be done by means of an indicative allocation and is considered to be an appropriate mechanism for dealing with development beyond the plan period (as against development within the plan period).
- 3.39 This approach would ensure that:
- The Council's Plan reflects the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan which will look ahead beyond 2031 (up to 2050)
 - If new or additional evidence becomes available before adoption of the Plan or if another council identifies that it has unmet housing need which requires consideration at a Leicester and Leicestershire level, there is scope to make amendments to our Plan to reflect such situations, during the course of its preparation.
 - There is the opportunity to undertake an early review of the Plan after its adoption should this prove necessary in the context of evidence and/or the planning policy position in the wider HMA

Local Plan Key Challenges Document

- 3.40 In order to progress with the preparation of the Local Plan a key challenges document has been prepared for a period of 6 weeks public consultation (see Appendix 4). This is intended to seek the views of local people about how the Local Plan should address the key challenges that exist within the Borough.
- 3.41 It is proposed that a number of public consultation events are held in order to seek the full input of local people in the process. The stage provides local people with an opportunity to have an input into the preparation of the Local Plan at an early stage and before the Plan starts to include policies and detailed wording which can be difficult to interpret.
- 3.42 The consultation will be carried out in line with the requirements of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the Duty to Co-operate.
- 3.43 The results of the public consultation will inform the selection of reasonable options for the Plan which will need to undergo sustainability appraisal. This process will inform the identification of preferred options which will also require sustainability appraisal as well as a further 6 week period of public consultation.

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Implications	
Legal	The Council is currently in the process of challenging the Inspector's decision in relation to the planning appeal regarding Cottage Farm, Oadby through the courts. The preparation of the Local Plan will need to comply with the requirements of the NPPF and NPPG.
Financial (CR)	Provision is made for the costs of preparing the Local Plan in the Council's budget. The budgetary position is reviewed on an annual basis
Equalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out of the key challenges document.
Risk (AT)	<p>CR1 Decreasing Financial Resources – It is a statutory requirement that the Council prepares a Local Plan, however, it is a costly taking into account the requirement for evidence, public consultation and Examination. There are financial implications in moving away from a plan period to 2036 to a open ended plan period with the potential to undertake an early review however this needs to be balance against the risk of the Plan being found unsound if the Council was to continue to progress on the basis of a 2036 plan period.</p> <p>CR2 and CR3 Partnership Failure/Political Dynamics – The Duty to Co-operate requires partnership working with other councils in Leicester and Leicestershire. There is a risk of difficulties in these relationships in considering strategic cross boundary planning issues or if one of the councils was to identify that it cannot meet its housing need, thus triggering the potential that it might have to be accommodated in another council area. The Strategic Planning Group and Member Advisory Groups are in place to mitigate this risk.</p> <p>CR4 Reputation Damage – The Government has stated that councils should have Local Plans in place before early 2017, otherwise there is the risk it they may intervene. It has also stated that league tables will be issued setting out progress in preparing Plans. The Council needs to ensure that adequate resources are in place to enable the plan preparation timetable is met and effective influence at a strategic level to ensure that strategic decisions do not delay plan preparation in the Borough.</p> <p>CR9 – Economy – Having a Local Plan in place is important in order to provide certainty to businesses wishing to locate in the Borough.</p>

Housing Implementation Strategy

April 2015

**Evidence base under pinning the Local Plan for the Borough of
Oadby and Wigston**



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1 Introduction

1.1 The Housing Implementation Strategy for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston sets out the Council's approach to managing the delivery of new housing up to 2026.

1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Authorities should *'for market and affordable housing, illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period and set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing describing how they will maintain delivery of a five year supply of housing land to meet their housing target'*.

1.3 From information contained within the Council's adopted Core Strategy, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and the Residential Land Availability report the following document will set out how the Council is to achieve the Core Strategy housing requirement. Over the Plan period, from 2006 to 2026 the Council are to provide a minimum of 1800 net additional homes within the Borough, or 90 dwellings per annum.

1.4 It is important to note that this document (Housing Implementation Strategy) should be read in conjunction with the Borough Council's Residential Land Availability report and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

2 Overall Plan Period Target

2.1 The Borough's annual housing target is set out in the Council's adopted Core Strategy. The figures have been found sound and robust through an Examination in Public and have subsequently been justified through the production of a Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

2.2 The Core Strategy sets a plan period target of 1800 additional homes for the period 2006 to 2026, which equates to 90 dwellings per annum.

Housing Requirement for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston: 2006-2026	1,800	
Housing Completions: 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2009	285	
Existing Housing Commitments as of 31st March 2009	479	
Remaining Housing to be provided: 2009-2026	1,036	
Housing opportunities identified in the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan areas and within the South Wigston Masterplan area	393	
Masterplan dwelling breakdown	Wigston	166
	Oadby	81
	S Wigston	146
Housing opportunities identified within the Leicester Principal Urban Area outside of the Wigston and Oadby Town Centre Masterplan areas and outside of the South Wigston Masterplan area	191 *	
Direction for Growth adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area to the south east of Wigston	452	

Figure 1: Extract from Core Strategy – Approach to Housing Delivery

2.3 The adopted Core Strategy illustrates the approach (shown in above table) of the Borough Council to housing delivery up to 2026. As of the 31st March 2009 there had been 285 additional residential completions, leaving a residual provision over the 17 year period of 1515 (or 89 dwellings per annum).

2.4 Since the 31st March 2009 there has been an additional 458 additional dwellings completed and added to the Borough's housing stock.

Table 2: Net housing completions in the context of the borough's core strategy											
Year	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	Required plan total to date	Borough total to date
No. of Completions	154	39	92	93	79	79	44	47	116	810	743

Figure 2: Extract from Residential Land Availability report 2014-15

2.5 As of the 31st March 2015 the residual additional dwellings to be provided in the Borough stood at (1800 minus 743) 1057 or 96 dwellings per annum. Taking into account all residential completions since the start of the Plan period in 2006 the Council is currently 67 additional dwellings below the Core Strategy requirement of 810.

3 Overall Plan Period Trajectory

3.1 To achieve the Core Strategy requirement of 1800 net additional homes over the Plan period; as of 31st March 2015, the Borough Council has a residual provision of 1057 additional dwellings.

3.2 To achieve the Plan period target the Council will allocate land through the new Local Plan process, identify land through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and take into account residential dwellings that already have granted planning permission.

3.3 The table below illustrates the number of dwellings likely to come forward through the processes outlined above.

Dwelling Source	Potential Number of Additional Dwellings
Current committed development	294
Identified deliverable SHLAA sites	204
Units identified in the Local Plan	217
Direction for Growth	450

Table 1: Illustrates potential number of additional dwellings over Plan period as of the 31st March 2015.

3.4 Summing the number of dwellings listed in the above table there are a potential 1165 additional dwellings up to 2026 (without including a windfall allowance). The Council has historically seen healthy supplies of windfall units. The following pages will illustrate potential supply with and without a windfall allowance.

3.5 The figure of 1165 is 108 dwellings (excluding windfall sites) above the 1057 residual requirement of the Core Strategy.

3.6 It must be noted that only 0 – 5 year SHLAA sites are illustrated within the trajectory below. 6 – 10 year sites and those of 10 years and above identified would be in addition to the SHLAA sites illustrated in the trajectory.

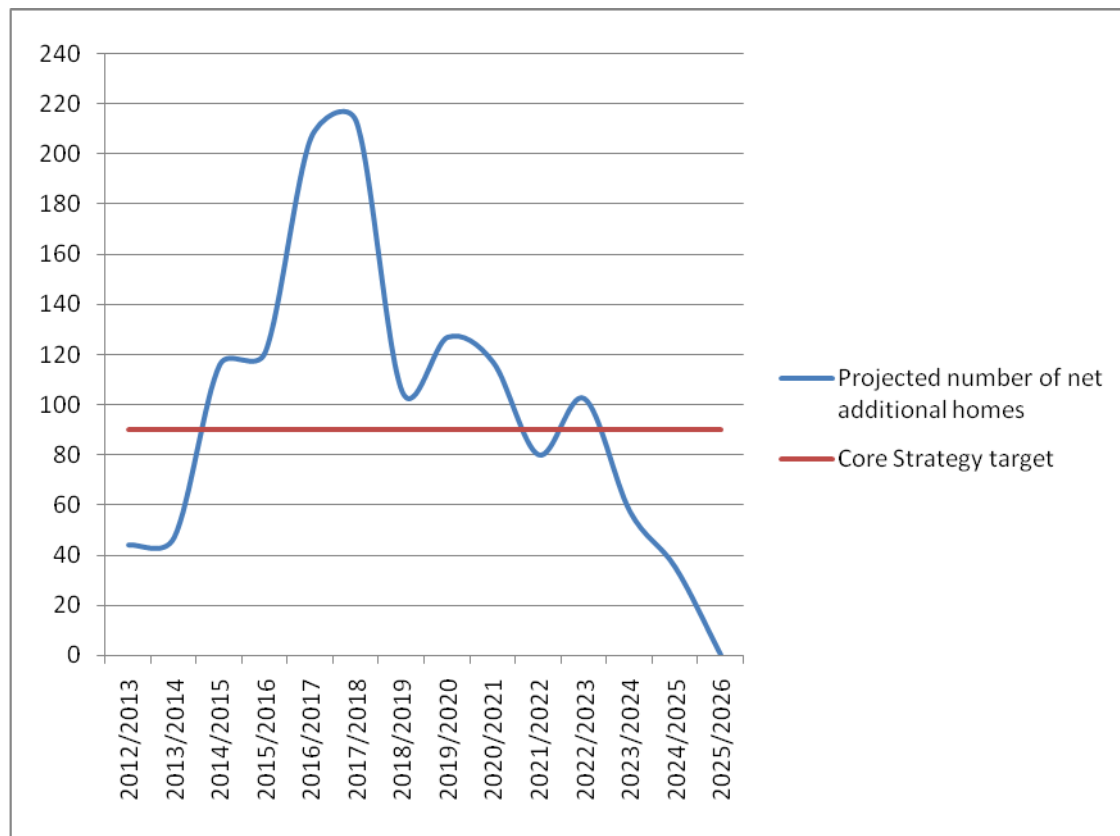


Figure 3: Projected delivery of additional homes over the Plan period

3.7 The chart above plots the projected number of annual additional dwellings over the Plan period against the Core Strategy requirement. The forecasting of completion figures over a shorter term period, for example, 5 years is relatively robust, however the longer the period the less accurate the forecast.

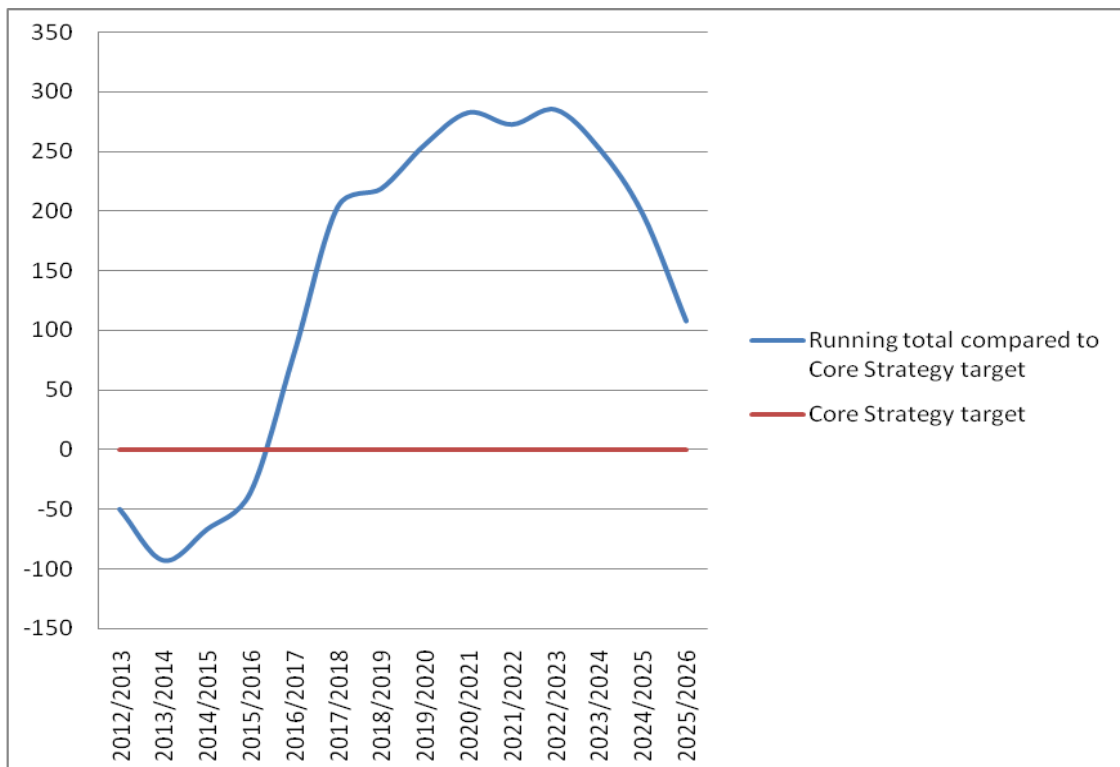


Figure 4: Cumulative dwelling total compared to Core Strategy target

3.8 Figure 5 overleaf, shows the detailed delivery of housing sites through a housing trajectory. The trajectory is based upon the trajectory contained within the Borough's Core Strategy, however has been updated to reflect the current situation in terms of actual housing delivery and potential housing delivery. It must be noted that the trajectory is an estimation of potential housing delivery for the remainder of the Plan period.

3.9 Figure 4 is based on Figure 5 overleaf and plots annualised cumulative dwelling completion data against the Core Strategy requirement. The graph shows that from 2016 the Borough's cumulative dwelling completions should be in excess of the cumulative Core Strategy target.

Windfalls

3.10 Government guidance states that Local Planning Authorities may make an allowance for windfall sites in the five year supply if they have compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply. It goes on to state that any allowance should be realistic having regard to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends, and should not include residential gardens.

3.11 From the 1st April 2008 until 31st March 2015, 383 (or 70 per cent) of the total 550 additional dwellings would be defined as windfalls. Of the 383 additional dwellings 292 have been provided on large sites of 11 units or more.

3.12 Over the 7 years mentioned above the average number of windfall units being delivered on both large and small sites is 55 dwellings per year which equates to over half of the Core Strategy annual target of 90. It would not be prudent of the Council to include 55 dwellings a year into its five year supply; however evidence does suggest that an allowance should be included.

3.13 To the ensure that the windfall allowance is realistic the Council has decided to use only a proportion of the annual average; some 25 per cent of the 55 dwelling average per year, equating to 14 units per year or 70 units over a 5 year period. Other than the anomaly in 2011 – 2012 where there were none of the units classed as windfalls, the number of windfall units has ranged between 30 and 89 in the other 6 years (4 of these 6 years have seen 70 units plus as windfalls).

Note – the Council has included a windfall allowance within the five year supply calculation due to current government guidance and compelling evidence suggesting it should.

Year	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Totals
Current committed development	44	47	116	121	118	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Identified SHLAA sites (0-5 year only)	-	-	-	0	81	90	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	204
Local Plan allocations	-	-	-	0	0	28	0	47	37	0	35	35	35	0	217
Direction for Growth	-	-	-	0	8	40	72	80	80	80	67	23	-	-	450
Annual dwelling total	44	47	116	121	207	213	105	127	117	80	102	58	35	0	
Cumulative dwelling total since 2006	580	627	743	864	1071	1283	1389	1516	1633	1713	1815	1873	1908	1908	
Core Strategy requirement since 2006	630	720	810	900	990	1080	1170	1260	1350	1440	1530	1620	1710	1800	
Running total compared to Core Strategy requirement	-50	-93	-67	-36	81	203	219	256	283	273	285	253	198	108	

Figure 5: Plan period net housing trajectory. Figures in blue refer to actual completions.

4 Five Year Land Supply

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land'*.

4.2 The current 5 year requirement for the Borough, using the adopted Core Strategy target of 90 dwellings per year is 450 dwellings plus the 5 per cent buffer, totalling 473. The Borough has seen a slight under provision of dwellings since 2006, therefore a backlog figure of 67 needs including within the requirement calculation. Using the Sedgfield methodology approach to five year supply, the figure totals 540 (450 + 5% + 67). As of the 31st March 2015 the Borough has a five year supply figure of 843 net additional homes, which is 303 dwelling units above the requirement of 540.

4.3 The above five year supply figure is based on:

- 294 committed dwelling units (those with extant planning permission)
- 204 SHLAA dwelling units (5 year sites only)
- 75 Local Plan allocation dwelling units
- 200 dwelling units on the Direction for Growth
- 70 windfall unit allowance (14 per year)

4.4 All the above figures have been extracted from the trajectory in Figure 5 above.

4.5 To ensure sustainable delivery of dwellings the Council will maintain a healthy 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites by:

- Updating data relating to identified sites and their progression
- Monitoring dwelling delivery through the Council's Residential land Availability report, and
- Considering potential contingency sites if the supply of sites ever was to drop below the five year supply requirement.

4.6 For more detailed information relating to SHLAA, completions and commitment figures please see the relevant monitoring documents (Residential Land Availability Assessment and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment).

5 Affordable Housing Target and Trajectory

5.1 Countywide evidence base has highlighted an affordable housing need within each Borough or District within Leicester and Leicestershire. Providing a healthy supply of affordable housing is a priority for most local authorities.

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework states that as well as having an overall housing trajectory, local planning authorities should produce an affordable housing trajectory that illustrates expected rates and quantity of delivery.

5.3 The Core Strategy under Policy 11 Affordable Housing, sets out affordable housing percentage site targets for each of the three settlements, that seek to meet identified local need. The affordable housing targets (as displayed below) are only relevant to 'large' residential sites that trigger the threshold of 10 dwellings or more. It must be noted that recent changes in government guidance mean that the threshold is now 11 dwellings or more.

5.4 The current targets are;

- Oadby 30 per cent
- Wigston 20 per cent
- South Wigston 10 per cent

5.5 Figures illustrated in Table 2 below have been taken from the Residential Land Availability report and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as well as calculated from site figures expressed in the Local Plan.

Dwelling Source	Potential Number of Additional Affordable Dwellings
Current Committed Development	41
Direction for Growth	90
Identified Deliverable SHLAA sites	110
Identified through the Local Plan	49

Table 2: Illustrates potential number of additional affordable dwellings over Plan period

5.6 For the purposes of the affordable housing trajectory in this document, the Core Strategy per cent target has been used to forecast affordable housing delivery on a site, unless otherwise known.

5.7 Summing the number of affordable dwellings listed in the above table there are a potential 290 additional affordable dwellings up to 2026 (not including windfall sites).

5.8 Since 2009 the Council has provided 77 affordable units, thus bringing the original 250 requirement down to 173. With the Council predicting delivery of some further 290 units over the Plan period, the Core Strategy target will be exceeded.

Year	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Totals
Committed development	0	0	24	12	21	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Identified SHLAA sites	-	-	-	0	32	63	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	110
Local Plan allocations	-	-	-	0	0	7	0	10	8	0	8	8	8	-	49
Direction for Growth	-	-	-	0	0	0	20	30	30	10	-	-	-	-	90
Dwelling total	0	0	24	12	53	78	35	40	38	10	8	8	8	0	

Figure 6: Plan period affordable housing trajectory. Figures in blue refer to actual completions.

6 Potential Risks to Housing Delivery

6.1 The following Chapter outlines the potential risks and constraints that could undermine the delivery of the Borough Council's housing requirement.

Economic Climate

6.2 Predicting the delivery of new homes is becoming ever difficult with the fluctuations in the economic climate (for example the market downturn in 2007/08). It can be particularly difficult when looking beyond a 5 year period. Delivery in the housing market is closely linked to the state of the economy and access to finance, for example, a period of decreased consumer demand due to unprecedented problems (like the UK has experienced since 2007) with potential home buyers not being able to secure finances will slow build rates and ultimately housing delivery. Recently however there has been a market recovery with build rates and completions on the increase.

6.3 Both the overall housing trajectory and the affordable housing trajectories have taken account of the current economic situation and the forecast continued increased delivery rates in the future.

Supply of Deliverable Land

6.5 The local authority could potentially have a situation where by there is insufficient deliverable housing land to deliver the Plan period requirement.

6.6 As the trajectories contained within this document illustrate, the Borough Council has a sufficient supply of deliverable sites to accommodate the Plan period requirement of 1800 additional homes. The deliverable land identified provides a healthy surplus to the requirement, even without factoring in other potential sources of additional residential units for example windfall sites. Also, should it be required the Council's Direction for Growth area can accommodate further growth to the 450 homes already planned.

Status in the Planning System

6.7 Sites that are identified and illustrated in the trajectory that do not have extant planning permission could be considered to have a higher degree of risk in terms of delivery than those with valid permission.

6.8 Although there could be a perceived greater risk to delivery for sites without an extant permission, most of the potential risk is expelled through the identifying of sites through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and the allocations process. Having the Council identify the sites gives developers a greater level of certainty that the sites are achievable in planning terms. Also, the majority of (if not all) sites within the 0-5 year period of the SHLAA have had land owner or developer discussions of some form.

APPENDIX 2

Aligning Local Plans across the Leicestershire HMA

1. The local planning authorities across the Leicestershire HMA are considering a number of options to better align local plans in order to deliver common growth aspirations, secure investment and comply with the 'duty to co-operate'. A number of options are being explored. Key issues relate to timescales and end-dates of plans, infrastructure constraints and the extent to which the City of Leicester can accommodate its objectively assessed housing need. Further detail is set out in the attached Briefing Paper (Appendix 1).
2. Members and senior officers of the relevant councils are keen to ensure that any collective approach agreed is deliverable and likely to be found sound by the Planning Inspectorate, and have sought advice from PAS on this basis. Andrew Pritchard (PAS Principal Consultant) and Keith Holland (PAS supplier and former Planning Inspector) were asked to offer comments on the Briefing Paper, and took part in a discussion with officer representatives from all the relevant councils, including the County Council and the recently appointed HMA Strategic Planning Manager, on the 14th August 2015.
3. Specifically, PAS were asked to provide advice on the following matters:
 - Review the four options identified in the briefing paper and provide a critical appraisal of each.
 - Advise on the respective levels of the risks associated with proceeding with each option.
 - Consider whether any other options should be pursued and, if so, identify what these are.
 - Advise whether the 'preferred' option 2 is a realistic option, or if not which option is considered more realistic.
 - Advise on what needs to be put in place to reduce the risks associated with the 'preferred' option.
 - Advise on any additional steps that could be taken to secure government 'buy in' to this approach.
4. PAS made it clear at the meeting that any advice provided was based on personal professional knowledge and experience only and could not be used to bind the decisions of the Planning Inspectorate.
5. On this basis, the following comments are offered:
 - a) The assessment of the options set out in the Briefing Paper contained in Appendix 1 provides an appropriate basis for considering a collective way forward.
 - b) Option 2 would appear to provide an appropriate balance between local flexibility and the inevitable degree of uncertainty. It is noted that the Government is strongly committed to delivery of adopted plans by 2017, and that is unlikely that a degree of uncertainty over the post 2031 period would be considered sufficient reason to delay plans that could otherwise proceed.
 - c) However, it is suggested that those LPAs planning to 2036 might include reference to a 'trigger point' for review, to take account of any new evidence that could alter the post

2031 situation which may emerge before a plan is adopted, such as new demographic projections or the publication of a longer term HMA wide Strategic Growth Plan (currently under discussion). The existing Memorandum of Understanding between all the LPAs could usefully be updated to reflect this.

- d) A critical factor in the success of Option 2 in the short term will be the extent to which current assumptions about the City of Leicester meeting its own objectively assessed housing need up to the period 2031 are found to be sound. To mitigate this risk, it is suggested that the City Council requests a PAS local plan evidence review focussed on the deliverability of the approach to meeting OAN.
- e) Moving forward, it is clear that the development of an HMA Strategic Growth Plan, the proposals for an HMA-wide Combined Authority and the infrastructure challenges of accommodating growth over the long term will result in the need for further and deeper co-operation. A common understanding the relevant technical issues and the establishment of effective governance arrangements for agreeing joint decisions will be required, particularly for elected members and senior officers. PAS is currently developing a new package of direct support to assist groups of councils to address such issues on a collective basis. It is suggested that HMA as a whole requests support from this offer.

Andrew Pritchard
Keith Holland

26th August 2015

APPENDIX 3



Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

Plan review support: local plan period

August 2015

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The first phase of support to the Council was to provide advice on the approach to be taken to the review of the core strategy. In particular that advice focused upon the how strategic planning would be taken forward for the wider Leicestershire area, and the implications for Oadby and Wigston.
- 1.2 The Council has now requested further advice in relation to the matter of the appropriate plan period for the local plan. It has provided a copy of a note which was produced by the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Authorities for the purposes of a discussion with Keith Holland of PINS on how the authorities can best align their approaches to plan making.
- 1.3 Whilst the remit is to advise the Council in terms of its own interests, the note reflects concerns amongst the wider group of authorities which may influence the positions they take in relation to strategic planning, and may therefore have an effect upon Oadby and Wigston. The advice here therefore addresses those concerns as well as considering the particular situation of Oadby and Wigston.

2 The plan period issue

- 2.1 It is clear from the note prepared for the meeting with Keith Holland that there are a number of concerns about the plan period among the LPAs, which they are seeking to resolve. These may be summarised as follows:
 - Those LPAs which are currently progressing plans on the basis of a plan period to 2031 (Harborough, Leicester and North West Leicestershire) wish to be able to continue without having to address the issues which will apply after 2031
 - Whilst there is shared commitment to the preparation of a Strategic Growth Plan for the whole of Leicestershire, it is only just starting, and will take some time to be prepared. To switch to planning in the context of the Strategic Growth Plan would mean that those currently working to 2031 would not only experience significant delay, but they would also need to re-cast a substantial amount of the work already done

- Further transport modelling is required for the period 2031 to 2036, for which there is no current programme, so this in particular is likely to affect the timetable for the Strategic Growth Plan
- There is concern about the Government's recent announcement of its intention to take over the preparation of local plans where LPAs have no plan in place by March 2017
- LPAs which are just beginning the review of their adopted core strategy, including Oadby and Wigston, would not have a 15 year plan period from the likely date of adoption if they accepted a 2031 plan end date
- In particular, Oadby and Wigston wish their local plan period to extend well beyond the end date of the adopted core strategy of 2026, on the basis that this would better enable them to address infrastructure needs, and a longer plan period would be more efficient

3 The LPAs working to 2031

- 3.1 In the case of the three LPAs which are working to the 2031 end date, they are effectively taking forward the principles underpinning a memorandum of understanding prepared at the time of the Charnwood local plan examination. This recorded that they had considered the scale of housing provision which would be required to meet their objectively assessed needs as indicated by a joint SHMA. Each had completed their own Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to an agreed common methodology.
- 3.2 The memorandum of understanding set out the key findings of the technical work. It said that based on the technical assessments and transport capacity work led by the County Council, all the authorities concluded that they could meet the upper level of projected objectively assessed needs for housing in the SHMA within their own area up to 2028 (the end date for the Charnwood core strategy).
- 3.3 It is understood that the LPAs will project needs and supply forward to 2031, and indications are that they can each meet their objectively assessed needs up to that date (though it is acknowledged that there is likely to need to be some shift of strategy after that date to reflect in particular the anticipated housing supply situation in Leicester after 2031).
- 3.4 Broadly speaking, provided that the LPAs can continue to confirm through their further plan making work that they can still meet their full objective needs up to 2031, then the matter of the duty to cooperate will not arise in relation to housing supply (though it may apply in relation to other cross-boundary issues with a more limited impact). In such a situation there should be no need for a wider strategic framework, and the individual LPAs can continue to work on their own to take their plans through to submission and examination.

- 3.5 However, in looking at this situation the previous advice to the Council indented as a key risk that at examination of the Leicester local plan, the Inspector might come to the view that the City could not in fact deliver all the housing to meet all its needs up to 2031. At worst this could lead the Inspector to conclude that Leicester had not met the duty to cooperate, and that the plan must therefore fall. That would then impact upon the planning of all the other Leicestershire Districts.
- 3.6 Since that advice was provided, the Government has provided new guidance to the Planning Inspectorate aimed at trying to prevent plans having to be found unsound at an advanced stage in the process. It encourages consideration being given to whether unresolved matters could be dealt with through an early commitment to a plan review. There would be a strong supporting argument for such an approach in the fact that Leicester and the other LPAs in the County would be committed to the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan, the SGP is the proper vehicle to address the wider strategic issues and it should be allowed to take its course.
- 3.7 Given that work on the Strategic Growth Plan will be under way by the time the local plans for the three authorities reach examination, it must be anticipated that the Inspectors will require good reasons why those plans should go ahead to adoption rather than await the Strategic Growth Plan. They may well accept the current plans only on the basis that the LPAs commit themselves to an early review which will address the strategy in the Strategic Growth Plan.

4 The way forward for Oadby and Wigston

- 4.1 The Council has set out coherent reasons why it wishes to work to a local plan end date of 2036, and it is considered that it can do so without causing problems for other LPAs in the County. Those which are working to 2031 can continue to do so, but of course in awareness of the risks. This would effectively mean acceptance of Option 3 in the note prepared for Keith Holland.
- 4.2 That note identifies two potential disadvantages in Option 3: that it could be more difficult to demonstrate compliance with the duty to cooperate, and that challenges on the basis of a coherent, up-to-date spatial approach would be more likely to succeed. The matter of the duty to cooperate for LPAs working to a 2031 end date has already been dealt with. Provided those LPAs can demonstrate convincingly that they can meet their full objectively assessed needs, the duty to cooperate does not arise.
- 4.3 The matter of challenges on the grounds that there is not an up-to-date spatial approach is largely covered by the fact that the duty to cooperate only applies where there are strategic issues which run across LPA boundaries. If the duty does not apply, there is no essential need for a cross-authority spatial strategy. The NPPF assists here. It says clearly in paragraph 14 that local plans should “positively seek opportunities to

meet the development needs of their area”; and in paragraph 179 that “Joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas”. Thus strategic planning is seen as being necessary to meet unmet needs, rather than being an end in itself.

- 4.4 Moreover, the LPAs will of course stress to the Inspector that they are parties to the preparation of a wider strategic framework in the form of the Strategic Growth Plan. However, the SGP is required primarily to address strategic issues post 2031, and it makes sense for the LPAs to put plans in place now which allocate land for development and support delivery of housing until such time as the Strategic Growth Plan is in place, and can be taken forward through local plan reviews.
- 4.5 In working to a plan period to 2036, the Council should be clear that it will prepare the plan in the context of the Strategic Growth Plan and will conform fully with it. This includes acceptance of the timetable for preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan.
- 4.6 The mechanism suggested in Option 2 in the note for Keith Holland, which speaks of the possibility that plans prepared to a plan horizon of 2036 should in some manner be “more flexible” is not considered workable. Essentially it would only offer a firm plan up to 2031, and would involve devices such as indicative allocations beyond 2031, over-allocation up to 2031, reserve or “future priority” sites, or a form of safeguarded land.
- 4.7 It is not considered that such devices would be acceptable to an Inspector at examination; since they would not provide the necessary certainty as to just *how* full development needs would be met. None of the post 2031 provisions would be firm development proposals, but of intentionally lesser status. There might however be value in some of these possibilities if the Council changed to a 2031 end date, which will be touched upon later.
- 4.8 Whilst the Council can hold to the intention to prepare its local plan in the context of the Strategic Growth Plan and an end date of 2036, it will wish to keep its options open to deal with the possibility that the Strategic Growth Plan may be seriously delayed for some reason. In particular, it is advised that all evidence and related studies should be geared to provide outputs for horizons of both 2031 and 2036.
- 4.9 Then should the Strategic Growth Plan encounter substantial delay, the Council will have the option to switch to a plan period to 2031. This would be coupled with an undertaking to prepare an early review against the strategic framework provided by the Strategic Growth Plan once it is in place.
- 4.10 Should the Council feel the need to take this course, it is possible that the Inspector at examination might be concerned that the plan did not cover

15 years from the likely date of adoption. This would appear less likely in the context of current Government encouragement for early reviews, but if it did arise the Council could respond to the Inspector by offering to add one or two years to the plan end date, extrapolating the planned delivery rates in the local plan for housing and employment land.

- 4.11 If the Council did switch to a 2031 plan period, there might be a case for providing an indication as to where further development would take place after 2031. This might be beneficial where, for instance, a strategic site was proposed whose development would logically run past 2031, to assist coherent master planning or planning for infrastructure. This could be done by means of an indicative allocation. Such a device would be appropriate because it would be dealing with development beyond the plan period, as against development within the plan period.
- 4.12 Finally, it is not considered that the Council should be concerned about the Government's stated intention to take over the preparation of local plans where they are not in place by March 217. It is clear from the Ministerial Statement by Brandon Lewis MP that the target is those LPAs which have no local plans at all, not authorities like Oadby and Wigston, which has an adopted core strategy which allocates the main strategic site. The regime may change over time, but it is not considered to pose any threat to the Council in the shorter term.

Andrew Wright

POS Enterprises on behalf of the Planning Advisory Service

APPENDIX 4

**OADBY AND WIGSTON LOCAL PLAN
KEY CHALLENGES (REGULATION 18) CONSULTATION**

October 2015



*Oadby and Wigston
Borough Council*

Equalities Statement

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council seeks to celebrate the diversity of our communities. It does, however, recognise that individuals and communities may experience unlawful discrimination in many ways despite equality laws and many examples of good practice in the Borough.

The Council considers equality as a basic human right and believes that all groups should be treated with respect and valued equally. We actively oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.

As a Council we believe that no one within our community should be disadvantaged, irrespective of where they live, their gender, age, disability, religious belief, race or sexual orientation.

We will ensure that every effort is made to provide key services to all. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council actively encourages public engagement and participation from all sections of the community in all aspects of plan making and decision taking and provides a variety of ways and means of doing so.

Alternative formats

If you require this consultation document in a different format such as large print or a different language, please contact the Planning Policy on 0116 257 2636 or email us at planningpolicy@oadby-wigston.gov.uk.

Tell us what you think...

We want to hear your views. We welcome comments on all of the key challenges or just those you have a particular interest in. Your views will help us to develop the best strategy, policies and mix of development in the right location.

This document contains a series of questions and we would invite you to answer whichever questions you wish. The quick questions are specifically designed for local residents whilst the detailed questions are aimed more specifically at those with a particular interest in the subject and planning professionals.

What happens next?

After this consultation, we will consider all the responses we receive. From your responses and using the information we have collected, we will finalise what the new Local Plan will need to cover. We will also consider the potential options for addressing these challenges. During this time we will also undertake additional research and options testing to ensure we have looked at dealing with an issue from every angle. Overall this will help to inform the most suitable and sustainable strategy for meeting the Borough's development needs. At this stage we will seek your views again.

The story so far...

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council adopted a Core Strategy in 2010 and a Town Centres Area Action Plan in 2013. Since then government guidance, legislation and local information has changed so we are now preparing a new Local Plan.

Through preparation of the Local Plan we will look to see what policies need updating or what new policies are required to achieve the growth and development needs within the whole Borough. The Plan will allocate land to meet these needs.

The key policy areas the Local Plan is likely to address are:

- how many new homes (including affordable homes) do we need to plan for and where these can be located;
- how much land is required to support employment and enterprise and where it is needed;
- how we can best protect our special green areas, heritage, landscapes and habitats;
- how we can continue to support the vitality and viability of the Borough's town, district and local shopping areas; and
- what local infrastructure do we need to plan for.

This document is the first formal stage of consultation in the preparation of the new Local Plan. We are inviting comments on a series of key challenges for the Borough and views on how they can be addressed. We also want to hear suggestions of anything that you feel may be missing.

This is an opportunity for you to have a say on how we plan for development and growth in the Borough. What you tell us during this consultation will help us develop the most sustainable strategy for managing growth, and meeting the Borough's development needs.

This is the first stage of consultation on the Local Plan. Our Local Development Scheme provides more information about future opportunities to comment as the preparation of the Local Plan progresses, including a timetable for the development of the new Local Plan document and also the further stages we will be seeking comments on.

How far ahead are we planning?

According to Government guidance, Local Plans should preferably cover a 15 year time horizon and take account of longer term requirements. Therefore, it is currently intended that the plan will cover the period to 2036. However, Leicester City Council and several other Leicestershire district councils are preparing Local Plans to 2031 and this will be reflected in the preparation of the Oadby and Wigston Local Plan with evidence prepared to cover the periods to 2031 and 2036.

The Local Plan will reflect the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan which is also currently in preparation and which will cover the period to 2036 and beyond.

PLANNING FOR THE HOUSING AND JOBS THAT THE BOROUGH NEEDS: THE LOCATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

What the Government say:

“Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area”¹

“Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth”²

“Local planning authorities should “boost significantly the supply of housing”³

“Local planning authorities should work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans. Joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own area”⁴

What the Borough’s Local Plan needs to do:

The Local Plan will need to reflect the outcomes of joint working with other councils and stakeholders in Leicester and Leicestershire to ensure that the Borough plays its part in meeting the need for new development across the whole area.

The Local Plan will need to include a growth strategy that identifies the main areas of growth in the Borough, for example town centre and previously used land first. The Plan will need to determine the most appropriate and sustainable locations for new homes, jobs and other development, taking account of all forms of existing and proposed infrastructure, such as roads, schools and health facilities.

The Local Plan will need to identify land in the Borough where new housing development can take place. A recent study has shown that 95 new homes will need to be provided each year in the Borough up to 2036 (or 100 new homes up to 2031)⁵. This figure may increase if other councils in Leicester and Leicestershire do not have sufficient land to meet their own need and if it is identified that there is the capacity to provide for it in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.

We also need to consider whether there is a need to provide land for new jobs such as shops, factories and business units. We intend to do some further work to understand if this is necessary and if so, how much.

We need to decide what land to ‘allocate’ for these various uses and in particular consider the balance between the amount of greenfield land and brownfield land (land which has had a previous use) that is identified.

We need to ensure that sufficient local public services are in place and that roads and

¹ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 14); March 2012

² National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 17); March 2012

³ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 47); March 2012

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 179); March 2012

⁵ Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Tables 84 and 85); June 2014

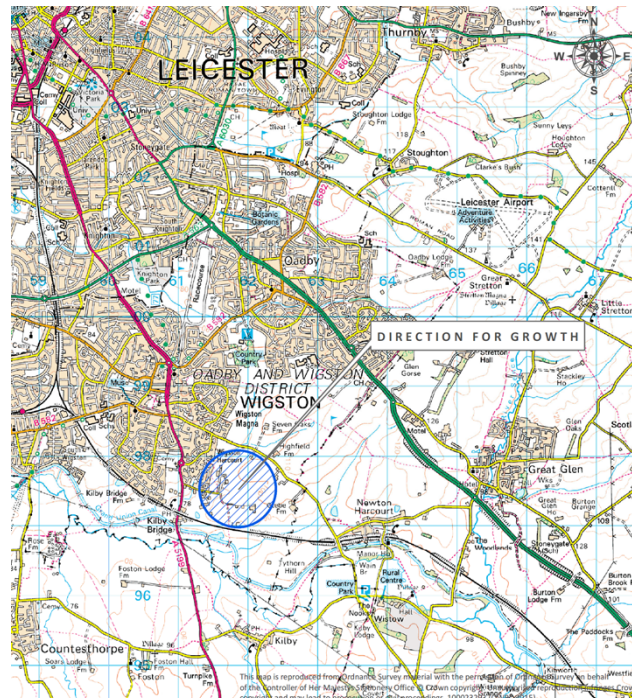
public transport have the capacity to meet the needs of more people living in the Borough.

The Current Situation:

Since 2006 we have had in place a strategy to build as much new development as possible on land that has been previously used. It also reflects a previously agreed strategy across Leicester and Leicestershire to focus new development in urban areas and on large greenfield sites adjoining urban areas. These are known as 'sustainable urban extensions', none of which need to be provided in the Borough. As a result of this strategy, currently 90 new homes are required to be built in the Borough each year between 2006 and 2026 (a total of 1,800 homes)⁶. In addition, new land has had to be made available to meet the need of business and enterprise.

In order to meet these needs we identified opportunities to re-use sites for new development across the Borough, but particularly in Wigston, Oadby⁷ and South Wigston⁸ town centres whilst at the same time aiming to improve the quality of the towns and the range of facilities that are available there.

However, because there is insufficient brownfield land available in the Borough to accommodate all of the current development needs we identified an area of greenfield land to the south east of Wigston where 450 homes and up to 3.5 hectares of land for businesses and industry can be built⁹. This is known as a 'Direction for Growth'. In 2013 Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes prepared a 'masterplan' to show how this could be achieved. outline planning permission was granted in April 2014¹⁰. The masterplan also showed the potential to build more than 450 homes and that if this was the case, the opportunity to build new community facilities, for example, a primary school.



⁶ Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Policy 1; September 2010

⁷ Oadby and Wigston Town Centres Area Action Plan; September 2013

⁸ South Wigston Regeneration Masterplan; May 2008

⁹ Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Policy 1; September 2010

¹⁰ Subject to Section 106 Agreement

We have currently identified that only appropriate development should take place at Kilby Bridge, such as small scale leisure, tourism and canal based development, given that this is the only rural settlement located in the Borough.

The Challenges for the Future:

Quick Questions:

1. Do you agree or disagree with the Council's assessment¹¹ that 95 new homes will need to be provided each year in the Borough up to 2036 (or 100 new homes each year up to 2031)?

2. Which parts of the Borough do you think should be identified for development in the future?

Detailed Questions:

The Council will need to continue to collaborate with other councils and stakeholders in Leicester and Leicestershire to agree where development needs are to be met, particularly if it is found that a local planning authority cannot meet its development needs within its own area.

3. What are the cross-boundary issues that you think we should be considering in Oadby and Wigston?

4. What public bodies should we be constructively engaging with?

The Local Plan will need to set out how many homes need to be built in the Borough and identify a range of sites on which they can be built in order to ensure flexibility. This will ensure that homes are built continuously and consistently each year. The sites are likely to include a range of greenfield land and brownfield land. A number of sites are already known to the Council¹² and these will be taken into account when considering the 'reasonable options'.

5. Are you aware of any particular sites that should be taken into consideration?

6. How do you think the Council should balance the amount of greenfield and brownfield land that is identified for development and how can this land be used most efficiently?

7. What do you think should be the minimum size of a housing site (in terms of the number of homes that it can accommodate) that is included in the Local Plan?

8. Do you think the Council should direct more development to the Direction for Growth in the future?

The Local Plan will need to set out how much land is required in order to reflect the number of jobs in the Borough, in particular jobs related to the business industry, commercial and warehousing sectors.

¹¹ Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Tables 84 and 85); June 2014

¹² Oadby and Wigston Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment; April 2015

9. Do you have any information that the Council should take into account in determining how much land should be provided for these uses?

The Borough is small in terms of the land area that it covers and the opportunities to identify land for new development are often limited. However, the Council is required to prepare a plan that meets the development needs of the Borough.

10. How do you think the Council should balance the small size of the Borough with meeting its development needs?

11. How do you think the Council should plan for Kilby Bridge, which is the only rural settlement in the Borough?

The location of the Borough, adjacent to Leicester, means that there is a strong relationship between the two areas in terms of where people, live, work and access sporting and leisure facilities.

12. How do you think the Council should plan for this?

13. Are there any particular relationships between the two areas that you think the Council should be particularly aware of?

PLANNING FOR HOMES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

What the Government say:

Local planning authorities should “deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities”¹³

Local planning authorities should “identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand”¹⁴

Local planning authorities should “where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need on site....such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time”¹⁵

The “Government’s aims in respect of travellers sites are: that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning; to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites....”¹⁶

What the Borough’s Local Plan needs to do:

The Local Plan will need to set out how many affordable homes should be built and ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the number of new market and affordable homes built in the Borough.

The Local Plan will need to ensure that a sufficient number of market homes for sale are built so as to widen opportunities for home ownership.

The Local Plan will need to meet the housing needs of the community by responding to any specific requirements as to the most appropriate size and types of homes (for example, for families, single people, young people, elderly people and people who need support and care).

The Council needs to make its own assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers working jointly with other councils in Leicester and Leicestershire and where necessary and appropriate, identify land for this purpose.

The Current Situation:

We have identified the level of affordable housing that can viably be provided to meet local needs within the Borough¹⁷. The current targets, which apply to all developments of 10 homes or more are:

- At least 30 per cent of new homes in Oadby should be affordable
- At least 20 per cent of new homes in Wigston should be affordable
- At least 10 per cent of new homes in South Wigston should be affordable¹⁸

¹³ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 50); March 2012

¹⁴ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 50); March 2012

¹⁵ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 50); March 2012

¹⁶ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (paragraph 4); March 2012

¹⁷ Affordable Housing Provision and Developer Contributions Report; September 2009

¹⁸ Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Policy 11; September 2010

We have identified sites of sufficient size that will enable the provision of affordable housing and we are working with developers and housing associations to bring forward developments that will consist wholly of affordable housing.

We have identified a range of sites where new homes can be built, including sites within town centres, sites within the existing settlements and a Direction for Growth which will enable the establishment of a new suburb to the south east of Wigston¹⁹. This range of sites will allow opportunities to develop apartments and houses of varying size. They also enable opportunities to provide specialist forms of housing, such as retirement living and extra care housing that provides supported accommodation for those who require it²⁰.

We have in place a criteria that would be applied in the determination of any planning applications for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites²¹. A recent study²² shows that there is no need arising for sites to be identified in the Borough to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

The Challenges for the Future:

Quick Questions:

14. What types of new housing are most needed in the Borough?

15. What approach should the Local Plan take towards providing affordable housing?

Detailed Questions:

The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is the third smallest local authority in the country in terms of land area (outside of the London Boroughs)²³. The effect of this, combined with the location of the Borough adjoining Leicester, is that, when assessed, the level of affordable housing need in the Borough is indicated to be high compared to the amount of new homes that it is actually feasible or viable to build each year²⁴.

In practice, also due to the specific nature of the Borough, this assessed level of affordable housing need tends to be met. This is because the Council's affordable housing stock is supplemented by the availability of housing benefit available to people who are renting privately owned accommodation.

16. How should the Local Plan meet affordable housing needs given the specific and unique nature of the Borough in this context?

17. How can the Local Plan assist in the Government's aspiration to increase home ownership?

¹⁹ Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Policy 1; September 2010

²⁰ Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Policy 12; September 2010

²¹ Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Policy 13; September 2010

²² The Leicester and Leicestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment; 2013

²³ Office for National Statistics, Standard Area Measurement for 2013 Local Authority Districts (UK)

²⁴ Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Tables 84 and 85); June 2014

The amount of affordable housing required to be provided on site by a developer is important to ensure that affordable housing continues to be built in the Borough. Due to the difference in the price of land across the Borough, the requirement for different percentages of affordable homes between each of the three main settlements has maximised the amount of affordable housing built in the borough.

18. How should the Local Plan seek to maximise the amount of new affordable homes built in the Borough in the future?

Everyone who lives in the Borough has their own specific housing need. This may be for a house of an appropriate size for their family. It may be a single person wishing to share or to have a home of their own. It may be someone wishing to downsize to a bungalow or apartment or someone wishing to move into retirement or supported housing. It may be someone wishing to buy a plot of land on which to build their own home.

19. Given the small size of the Borough, and its predominantly urban nature that directly adjoins the countryside surrounding the urban area of Leicester, how can the Local Plan meet all of these differing needs?

Government guidance states that where there is no identified need arising for sites for Gypsies or Travellers, the Local Plan should contain criteria which are “fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community as a basis for decisions should planning applications nevertheless come forward for Gypsy and Traveller sites”²⁵

20. What matters should such a criteria take into account?

²⁵ Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (paragraph 10); March 2012

PLANNING FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT LAND

What the Government say:

The planning system has “an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure”²⁶.

“Local planning authorities should set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth”; “support existing business sectors”; “identify and plan for new and emerging sectors likely to locate in their area”²⁷

What the Borough’s Local Plan needs to do:

The Local Plan will need to reflect the Council’s economic vision for the Borough and ensure that the necessary amount of land is available in the right locations to enable the vision to be delivered. In particular, it will need to take into account the road network to ensure that land put to economic use is viable when considered against transport and access costs.

The Local Plan will need to support existing businesses by seeking to maintain and improve the quality of the employment areas in the Borough whilst enabling businesses in existing poor quality premises to relocate to more suitable locations within the Borough.

The Local Plan will help to attract inward investors to deliver existing and new commercial opportunities. The food and drink sector is a growing sector in the Borough and the Local Plan will need to focus upon meeting the specific needs and requirements of this sector.

The Current Situation:

The Borough’s property portfolio is very diverse. It meets the needs of very small companies in multi-let properties as well as purpose built plants serving very large companies. Many companies have been present in the Borough for a long time and have an established presence. However, the employment areas in which they are located are unable to expand because they are surrounded by other uses. For example, many of the employment areas neighbour housing estates. In addition, buildings on the employment areas can fall into uses other than the business industry, commercial and distribution sectors and therefore limit the opportunities to provide jobs relating to these sectors in the Borough. This can have a detrimental effect on the overall economic competitiveness of the Borough.

Therefore, the new employment land currently earmarked to be provided in the Borough is intended to make up for the land within the existing employment areas that is lost to alternative uses²⁸.

²⁶ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 7); March 2012

²⁷ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 21); March 2012

²⁸ Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Policy 1; September 2010

The Council collaborates with other councils and stakeholders in Leicester and Leicestershire, including the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership to ensure that the various economic sectors are supported across the area. Sector Plans are currently being prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership and these will help to ensure that the Local Plan meets the needs of those sectors that have an existing or anticipated future interest in the Borough.

The Council has a clear economic vision and strategy for the growth and development of the Borough²⁹. The key economic focus is to support the growth of the local economy meeting the needs of both local home-grown businesses and larger multi national companies whilst providing opportunities, support and advice for inward investors and developers. The emphasis is on continuing to meet the growth needs of key sectors such as food, construction and distribution sectors which have developed based on the areas assets and strengths. The Council has identified a number of key projects to assist in the delivery of this strategy.³⁰

The Council launched its Investor Prospectus in March 2015. This seeks to promote a number of key sites in the Borough in order to attract new and existing businesses to establish themselves in the Borough.

The Challenges for the Future:

Quick Questions:

21. How and where should the Local Plan meet the existing and new employment needs of the Borough?

22. Are there any particular businesses or commercial activities in the Borough that we should develop specific policy support for?

Detailed Questions:

The job density for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston is 0.54³¹ which means that there is roughly one job in the Borough for every two residents of working age. This means that a large proportion of people who live in the Borough work elsewhere and is reflective of the location of the Borough adjacent to Leicester. We need to ensure that the appropriate amount and type of land is available to meet the needs of existing businesses wishing to expand and also new business sectors that want to develop a presence in the Borough.

23. How should we balance the competing needs of the employment areas in the Borough, between retaining land and buildings providing land for the business industry, commercial and distribution sectors and allowing new community orientated uses?

24. How can the Local Plan improve the quality of the existing employment areas?

25. Should the Local Plan respond to the fact that half of people who live in the Borough work elsewhere?

There is the potential to establish the Borough as a centre for specific sectors such as

²⁹ Oadby and Wigston Economic Development Strategy; 2009

³⁰ Oadby and Wigston Local Economic Plan; 2014

³¹ Nomis 2013

the food, construction and distribution sectors by expanding the clusters of such businesses that currently exist in the Borough. For example, 10% of the Borough's employment is in the food and drink sector.

26. How can the Local Plan attract inward investment, for example from sectors such as the food, construction and distribution sectors?

TOWN AND LOCAL CENTRES AND REGENERATION

What the Government say:

The Local Plan “should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period”

“Local planning authorities should recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their vitality and viability”

“Local planning authorities should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres”³²

“Local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. They should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres”³³

What the Borough’s Local Plan needs to do:

The Local Plan needs to define town, district and local centres and their boundaries and set out the required level of development for a variety of uses, including residential, retail, leisure and office.

The Local Plan will need to identify and protect the main shopping areas so that they continue to include mainly shopping and associated uses.

The Local Plan will need to reflect the individual characteristics of each town, district and local centre and identify the amount and type of new development required that will enhance those characteristics.

The Local Plan will need to consider the required level of car parking within each centre.

Regeneration of the centres should also include improvement of existing or creation of new public spaces. An attractive and inviting environment is important to the success of a centre. It is important that the improvements to the public spaces that have recently taken place within the Oadby and Wigston town centres is complemented in the future.

The current situation:

We have set out the amount of development that is required within each town and district centre up to 2026 and we have shown how this amount of development could be provided³⁴. The main aim has to be to regenerate the centres by improving their image and the services and facilities that they offer so that local people use them more often.

We have identified town centre boundaries and are able to ensure that the main shopping areas in the town and district centres remain mainly in a shopping use³⁵.

³² National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 23); March 2012

³³ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 40); March 2012

³⁴ Oadby and Wigston Town Centres Area Action Plan; September 2013

We have begun to implement town centre plans and during 2014 improvements to the public spaces on Bell Street, Wigston and The Parade, Oadby were completed. New homes have been built in the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston. We are continuing to identify and promote opportunities to increase the amount of development in the town and district centres³⁶. This will help to ensure that the centres remain successful in the future.

Our Town Centre Manager and local retailers have worked together to the benefit of each of the centres and it is encouraging that despite the recent shift in consumer spending habits on the high street the number of empty units remains low.

There are nine local centres in the Borough. These include a range of small shops and related facilities of a local nature serving a small catchment³⁷.

The Challenges for the Future:

Quick Questions:

27. What types of new development do you think should be provided in the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston?

28. What are the individual characteristics of each centre that should be protected and enhanced?

Detailed Questions:

The Local Plan needs to ensure that policies relating to town and district centres promote the appropriate level of development required to meet local needs; that reflects the individual characteristics of each centre; and, which is viable for developers to build.

29. Is there anything in relation to the town, district and local centres that the Local Plan should seek to change, particularly to respond to the changes in the way people buy products and services?

30. How can we ensure that local centres remain successful and continue to fulfil their purpose at a local level?

Being able to access the centres easily is important to ensure their continued success and the success of the businesses that are based there. Given the relatively small size of the Borough the centres are accessible by foot, bicycle, bus and car. Car parking serves a valuable role in support of the centres and the ability to easily access and park in the car parks are important considerations.

31. What improvements can be made to make access to the centres by foot, bicycle and bus easier?

32. What are your views with regard to car parking in the centres?

³⁵ Oadby and Wigston Town Centres Area Action Plan Policies 2 and 3; September 2013

³⁶ Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston Investor Prospectus; March 2015

³⁷ Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Policy 2; September 2010

Good quality building design and public spaces encourages people to spend more time in the centres and as a result can boost economic activity.

33. What views do you have on design of buildings and public spaces in the centres and the way in which these spaces are used?

INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

What the Government say:

Local planning authorities “should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities”³⁸

“For larger scale residential developments in particular, planning policies should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities including work..... key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties”³⁹

“Planning policies should plan positively for the provision of shared space, community facilities (such as shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services”⁴⁰

“The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available....Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement”⁴¹

“The Community Infrastructure Levy is a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of the area”⁴².

What the Borough’s Local Plan needs to do:

The Local Plan will need to ensure that development takes place so as to minimise the impact upon the highway network in the Borough and in surrounding areas.

The Local Plan will need to consider what, where and how infrastructure in the Borough can be improved to help facilitate sustainable development and growth.

The Local Plan will need to establish the demand that new development will place upon infrastructure and any funding gap that may prevent the delivery of additional infrastructure to support new development. The Local Plan will need to consider how to overcome any funding gap in order to enable the delivery of new development.

The Local Plan will need to ensure that sufficient provision is made for community facilities and places of worship in particular to meet the level of need of the faith communities residing in the Borough⁴³.

The Current Situation:

Geographically, the Borough has relatively strong road and rail connectivity to the rest of the East Midlands and further afield. However, its location to the south east of Leicester where the road network is constrained means that the east - west routes

³⁸ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 37); March 2012

³⁹ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 38); March 2012

⁴⁰ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 70); March 2012

⁴¹ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 72); March 2012

⁴² National Planning Policy Guidance (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 25-001-20140612) June 2014

⁴³ Faith Communities Profile and Places of Worship Needs Assessment; (2008)

towards the M69 and M1 motorways necessary to access the wider road network are frequently congested, particularly at peak times. Similarly the north – south routes between the Borough and Leicester city centre are frequently congested at peak times.

There are reasonable public transport links from Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston into Leicester but limited opportunities to use public transport links between South Wigston, Wigston and Oadby.

We have identified the amount and type of infrastructure that is required in the Borough to support new development⁴⁴ and we seek financial contributions from developers in order to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place to mitigate the impact of new development. This infrastructure can either be provided on site, such as sports grounds or community buildings, or off site, such as contributions to invest in providing school places or to provide additional children's playspace.

The Council considered introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy in the Borough but opted to continue solely with the negotiation of planning obligations via Section 106 Agreements because these were considered to be the most appropriate in the context of the Borough.

We seek to ensure that sufficient provision is made for community facilities and places of worship by setting out the considerations that need to be taken into account in identifying land for such uses and by protecting the uses of community buildings in order to meet these needs.

The Challenges for the Future:

Quick Questions:

34. How can the Local Plan increase walking, cycling and the use of public transport in the Borough?

35. Are there any particular items of infrastructure or community facilities that you consider will be required in order to support new development in the future?

Detailed Questions:

It is likely that any new development in the Borough, as well as in the surrounding areas of Leicester City, Harborough District and Blaby District, will have a impact upon the level of congestion and therefore place greater pressure on the Borough's infrastructure capability to handle the peak traffic flows.

The Local Plan will need to ensure that new development does not significantly increase the level of congestion on the road network within and adjoining the Borough. Where possible, the Local Plan will need to promote measures that minimise the amount of congestion on the roads.

36. How can the Local Plan ensure that the necessary amount of new development is provided in the Borough, whilst minimising the amount of congestion on the roads within and adjoining the Borough?

The Local Plan will need to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure (such as schools,

⁴⁴ Oadby and Wigston Local Infrastructure Plan; 2009

meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) is provided in the Borough to support new development. The Council will need to consider how best to seek financial contributions from developers towards the provision of infrastructure.

37. Do you have any view on how the Council should seek financial contributions from developers to pay for new infrastructure.

38. Should the Local Plan seek to make provision for burial facilities in the Borough?

DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY PLACES – DESIGN, LANDSCAPE, CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

What the Government say:

“Planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”⁴⁵

“The government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment”⁴⁶

“Local Plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected”⁴⁷

“The Planning System should.....protect and enhance valued landscapes”⁴⁸

“Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment”⁴⁹

What the Borough’s Local Plan needs to do:

The Local Plan needs to seek to conserve and enhance the built, natural and historic environment. The Local Plan will also need to promote high quality and sustainable design and use of materials.

The Local Plan will need to identify and seek the enhancement of the Conservation Areas and important buildings within the Borough.

The Borough has an array of different landscape and urban character areas, some of which are very unique. The Local Plan will need to ensure that new development reflects the particular character of the areas.

The current situation:

We have identified the boundaries of nine Conservation Areas (listed below) and set out why these areas are of special architectural and historic importance to the Borough.⁵⁰ Additionally, there is a Conservation Area that has been designated by Leicestershire County Council which relates to the Grand Union Canal.

Oadby	Wigston and South Wigston
London Road and Saint Peters Church Conservation Area	All Saints Conservation Area
North Memorial Homes and Framework Knitters Conservation Area	Midland Cottages Conservation Area
Oadby Court Conservation Area	South Wigston Conservation Area
Oadby Hill Top and Meadowcourt Conservation Area	Spa Lane Conservation Area
	The Lanes Conservation Area

⁴⁵ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 17); March 2012

⁴⁶ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 56); March 2012

⁴⁷ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 58); March 2012

⁴⁸ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 109); March 2012

⁴⁹ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 126); March 2012

⁵⁰ Conservation Area Appraisals; 2007

We seek to protect the statutory Listed Buildings in the Borough and have worked with the local civic societies to identify other buildings that, although not listed, are of significance to the Borough. These are listed in **Appendix 1**.

We have identified Landscape Character Areas and use these to ensure that a high quality of design is incorporated into new buildings that are built in the Borough. In particular we aim to ensure that new buildings fit well into their surroundings and reflect the existing scale and nature of the area. We have also identified green infrastructure corridors in order to ensure that wildlife can move freely through the Borough and to protect important habitats.

The Challenges for the Future:

Quick Questions:

39. How can the Local Plan encourage high quality design of new development?

40. What are the main characteristics of the Borough, or particular parts of the Borough, that the design, type, layout and location of new development should take into account?

Detailed Questions:

High quality and sustainable design is a key component of current national guidance. It will be important to ensure that buildings are designed to a high standard in the future as an attractive environment will encourage inward investment and the use of town centres and other facilities by local people.

41. How can the Council balance the need for high quality design and viability?

42. Are there any design issues or concepts that should receive particular consideration in the Local Plan?

The Local Plan will need to protect landscapes and buildings that add true value to the Borough whilst at the same time allowing for their enhancement and enabling development without causing harm to the special characteristics.

43. Do you think that the Council needs to consider designating new, or making amendments to existing Conservation Areas?

44. Do you think that the Council needs to consider designating new, or making amendments to the existing list of Significant Local Buildings?

The Local Plan will need to ensure that new development reflects the character of the Borough.

45. How can we best ensure that new development responds appropriately and effectively to the character and appearance of its surroundings?

PLANNING FOR THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, PLAY AND OPEN SPACE AND GREEN SPACES

What the Government say:

“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils”⁵¹

“Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value”⁵²

“Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged”⁵³

“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities. Planning policies should be based upon robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision”⁵⁴

“Take account of the different roles and character of different areas....recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it” and “recognise that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production)”⁵⁵

“Local communities should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them”⁵⁶

What the Borough's Local Plan needs to do:

The Local Plan will identify natural and local environment and green infrastructure assets and where appropriate, aim to protect and enhance these assets.

The Local Plan will set out the purpose and functions of the Green Wedge designation and identify the boundaries of these areas.

The Local Plan will identify the need for additional areas for play, open space and recreation when planning for new development and ensure that green spaces are identified and protected to support sustainable and healthy environments for residents to enjoy.

Where appropriate, the Local Plan will need to designate land as Local Green Space where local people have identified that it is of particular importance to them. This will afford particular protection against development to such areas, provided that the land is not extensive, is local in character and reasonably close to the community; and, is demonstrably special, for example because of its beauty, historic significance,

⁵¹ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 109), March 2012

⁵² National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 110), March 2012

⁵³ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 113), March 2012

⁵⁴ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 73), March 2012

⁵⁵ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 17), March 2012

⁵⁶ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 76); March 2012

recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.

The current situation:

We have assessed the natural and local environment assets that exist in the Borough, identified their location and considered how they may be protected and enhanced in the future⁵⁷. We have identified a number of Local Wildlife Sites that may warrant special consideration when considering proposals for new development.

Green Infrastructure is made up of a range of green resources which can form a network of open spaces including parks, open spaces, woodlands, gardens, river corridors, allotments, open countryside and landscaping around buildings. We have identified the connections between these resources and how these connections are of benefit to both local wildlife and people within the Borough.⁵⁸

We have a good understanding of the amount, location and quality of open space, sports and recreation facilities in the Borough⁵⁹ and we have set standards that ensure a sufficient amount of open space is provided in relation to new development.⁶⁰

We carefully manage development so as to maintain the integrity of the two Green Wedges within the Borough between Oadby and Wigston and Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton. We have also worked with partners to develop a strategy to ensure that the green wedges are effectively managed to ensure that they continue to serve their purpose.⁶¹

The Green Wedges within the Borough form part of the wider Green Wedge network around Leicester City. We have worked with other Councils in Leicester and Leicestershire to ensure a consistent approach to management and reviews of Green Wedge boundaries and to demonstrate the consistency of the Green Wedge designation with the National Planning Policy Framework.⁶²

We have defined land designated as countryside in the Borough and set out the types of development that may be acceptable taking account of opportunities to mitigate any impact of development on the countryside.

The Challenges for the Future:

Quick Question:

46. Which areas of the Borough should the Local Plan seek to protect – and why?

⁵⁷ Phase 1 Biodiversity Audit and Habitats Assessment; 2005

⁵⁸ Oadby and Wigston Green Infrastructure Plan; 2010

⁵⁹ Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Assessment; 2009

⁶⁰ Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Policy 17; September 2010

⁶¹ Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge Management Strategy and Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge Management Strategy; 2005

⁶² Statement on the consistency of the Green Wedge designation with the National Planning Policy Framework; 2012

Detailed Questions:

Given the nature of the Borough, with the pressures associated with being predominantly urban and located immediately adjacent to Leicester City, opportunities to protect and enhance the natural and local environment assets can be limited. Similarly, despite recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, development pressure can require the need to balance this with benefits created by the growth of the Borough.

47. In this context, how should the Local Plan seek to protect and enhance the natural and local environment assets in the Borough?

48. How should the Local Plan respond to the Green Infrastructure that exists in the Borough?

49. How should the Local Plan balance the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside with the benefits that can be created by new development?

There are opportunities to access open space, sports and recreation facilities in the Borough, however, there is not always an adequate amount of provision or its quality may not be of a sufficient standard. Additional development can put increased pressure on these resources.

50. How should the Local Plan maintain the quantity and quality of open space, sports and recreation facilities in the light of the continued growth of the Borough?

Green Wedges seek to retain the open and undeveloped character as well as retain and enhance public access to a particular area of land. Green Wedges also create green networks linking the countryside and open spaces within urban areas.

51. How can the Local Plan ensure that the purpose and objectives of green wedges marries with the continued growth of the Borough?

The Local Green Space designation allows local communities to seek to protect green areas that are of special importance to them.

52. Are there any particular green areas that are of particular importance to you or your community? Why do you consider that these areas should be given special protection?

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, WATER AND FLOOD RISK

What the Government say:

“Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk and water supply and demand considerations”⁶³

“To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources”⁶⁴

“Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape”⁶⁵

“Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere”⁶⁶

What the Borough' Local Plan needs to do:

The Local Plan needs to plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions; support energy efficient improvements to existing buildings; and, ensure that any local requirement for a building's sustainability is consistent with Government requirements.

The Local Plan needs to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources and include policies to maximise these forms of development subject to satisfactorily addressing any negative impacts.

The Local Plan must take account of climate change over the longer term, including flood risk, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape, and plan new development so as to avoid increased vulnerability to impacts arising from climate change.

The Local Plan needs to contribute towards meeting the Government target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Current Situation:

Since 2010, national policy and guidance on sustainable development and climate change has moved on. Whilst we currently set policies on climate change, sustainable construction, flood risk and carbon reduction changes to legislation and new evidence will require these to be updated.

We currently require all new development to demonstrate how it reflects nationally prescribed sustainable building standards for energy efficiency and that a Sustainability Statement is submitted alongside planning applications to demonstrate how potential

⁶³ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 94), March 2012

⁶⁴ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 97), March 2012

⁶⁵ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 99), March 2012

⁶⁶ National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 100), March 2012

carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced and by how much. We also requires that construction methods contribute towards the aims of sustainable development.

The Core Strategy seeks to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding or ensure that appropriate mitigation is put in place. It requires a detailed flood risk assessment for larger developments and that surface water run-off is proactively managed.

The Challenges for the Future:

Quick Question:

53. How should the Local Plan protect the Borough from the effects of climate change?

54 How should the Local Plan promote the use of energy efficiency and sustainable construction?

Detailed Questions:

We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced from the use of energy to provide the heating, cooling, lighting and other building services that keep occupiers comfortable and healthy.

55. How can the Local Plan encourage sufficiently high standards in new development to limit greenhouse gas emissions?

It is important to ensure that new development is designed and constructed to minimise the impact on climate change.

56. How can the Local Plan ensure that buildings are designed so as to have a longer useful life (eg to evolve with changing lifestyles and home occupation patterns)?

Climate change is expected to lead to warmer temperate and increased quantity and intensity of rainfall which is likely to increase the risk of flooding in the borough from rivers, sewers and surface water run-off.

57. Is there any scope to enhance and extend the Borough's network of green spaces in order to manage flood risk and address other climate challenges?

58. How can we encourage the use of adaptations like shading, natural and passive ventilation, and better drainage systems in new development?

59. Commercial and small scale wind, solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, ground source heat, hydro electric and biomass technologies enable more sustainable energy to be generated. How should the Local Plan make provision for such technologies in the Borough?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the new Local Plan?

The new Local Plan will set out the policies and proposals to guide future growth and development in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. Our new plan will set out the development needs of the Borough and where these will be located.

Why do we need a Local Plan?

National legislation (namely Section 13, 15 and 62 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)) requires councils to prepare a local development plan in order to shape future development and the use of land in their area. The Local Planning Regulations 2012 sets out the process by which councils must prepare, consult, submit for examination and adopt such plans. The local development plan must set out the general policies to deliver the development strategy for an area and any specific policies relating to particular land uses or areas in the Borough.

What happens if we don't have a Local Plan?

If we don't prepare a Local Plan we will not be able to manage and plan for change and growth in the Borough. Planning applications need to be determined in accordance with an up to date development plan. If the Borough Council were to reject development proposals without good reason and without reference to up to date planning policies we could be open to challenge through appeal. The National Planning Policy Framework says that if we don't have a local plan or our plan is out of date then we should grant planning permission for sustainable development. The definition of whether a development is sustainable is open to interpretation so without a Local Plan there is the risk of development taking place in locations we would not want to see built on, for example, valuable Greenfield land or open spaces.

What will the new Local Plan cover?

The new Local Plan will contain the strategic vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the Borough. It will also update the Borough's development needs in terms of housing and employment development as well as allocation of other land designations such as green wedges, countryside and local green space. The new Local Plan will also review and update the development control policies currently set out in the saved Local Plan 1999.

Why do the current local planning documents such as the Core Strategy need updating?

All plans and strategies require regular updating to take account of legislative changes, respond to change and ensure that the evidence that underpins them is still correct and relevant. The Borough Council continually monitors its adopted plans and policies to check they are working, are still 'fit for purpose', whether legislation updates require changes to be made and is the evidence base still robust and sound.

We are updating our local planning documents because there has been legislative changes since the Core Strategy and Town Centres Area Action Plan were adopted and also we have been updating our evidence base in relation to areas such as housing needs, climate change, green infrastructure and flood risk.

What is the Key Challenges consultation?

This Key Challenges consultation is the first stage in the review and revision of our currently adopted local planning document.

It is likely that this document does not identify all of the key challenges that are relevant

to the Borough and this is why we are consulting with residents, stakeholders, developers and anyone else with an interest in the Borough to find out what their views are. The representations that we receive from this stage of consultation will be used to help develop the next stage of the preparation of a new Local Plan. This will be consulted on at a later date in the process.

What is the duty to co-operate and how are cross-boundary issues dealt with?

The duty to co-operate was created in the Localism Act 2011, and amends the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. The duty to co-operate is not a duty to agree. But local planning authorities must make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination. At the examination, Local planning authorities are required to demonstrate how they have complied with the duty in preparing their Local Plan.

The duty to co-operate seeks to ensure that local planning authorities lead strategic planning effectively through their Local Plans, addressing social, environmental and economic issues that can only be addressed effectively by working with other local planning authorities beyond their own administrative boundaries. The aim is to encourage positive, continuous partnership working on issues that go beyond a single local planning authority's area. Areas that will require good cross-boundary discussion are for example, housing market and travel to work areas, river catchments and ecological networks, transport, infrastructure, flood risk management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council currently works closely with the other local planning authorities in Leicestershire to gather pertinent robust evidence on cross-boundary issues and develop ways of addressing such issues strategically. For example, the Borough Council, as part of the Leicestershire Housing Market Area, is currently engaged in agreeing the distribution of housing numbers between all Leicester and Leicestershire authorities.

At the time we submit our plan for Independent Examination by the Planning Inspectorate, we intend to prepare a duty to co-operate statement to demonstrate who we have cooperated with, the matters we have discussed and how the conclusions of these discussions have informed the development of the new Local Plan.

Has a Sustainability Appraisal been carried out of the Key Challenges document?

The Local Plan has to be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal which considers the environmental, economic and social impacts of the Plan.

The Key Challenges document is not accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal because at this stage, reasonable options for the Plan have not been set out. Reasonable options will be considered based on the response to this consideration. From this, preferred options will emerge and be consulted upon. A Sustainability Appraisal report will be consulted upon alongside the preferred options consultation. The Sustainability Appraisal report will record the process of considering the reasonable options and selecting the preferred options.

