



**Policy, Finance and
Development
Committee**

**Tuesday 27th
October 2015**

Matter for Decision

Title: **Harborough Local Plan Options Consultation**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Harborough District Council has published an Options Consultation Paper in relation to the preparation of a new Local Plan for Harborough district.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Members approve the comments set out in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.10 of this report as Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's formal response to the Options Consultation Paper.

3. Information

3.1 Harborough District Council is preparing a new Local Plan. This responds to the fact that it considers its Core Strategy, adopted in 2011, to be out of date because it does not deliver enough housing to meet the districts future housing needs. The Harborough Core Strategy planned for 350 new dwellings per annum; the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment which was undertaken across Leicester and Leicestershire identified an objectively assessed need to 475 new dwellings per annum. Harborough District Council is preparing a plan covering the period to 2031 because it consider this will enable it to get its plan in place quicker.

3.2 It is worth noting that in the case of Oadby and Wigston, the objectively assessed need to 2031 identified in the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment is 100 dwellings per annum and that it is the Borough Council's intention to prepare a Local Plan covering the period to 2036.

3.3 Paragraph 36 of the Options Consultation Paper states that 'each authority [in Leicester and Leicestershire] has indicated that it has enough suitable housing land to meet its objectively assessed need'. This confirmation was provided in the Memorandum of Understanding covering the period to 2028 that was agreed in support of the public examination of the Charnwood Core Strategy. Whilst this position has not changed in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston as far as the objectively assessed need identified in the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment is concerned, it should be noted that since publication of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment:

- the objectively assessed need for the Borough has been challenged; and
- another Council in Leicester and Leicestershire is preparing a Local Plan in which its proposed housing requirement differs from its objectively assessed need as identified in the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

- 3.4 Therefore, it will be necessary for Harborough District Council to continue to consider whether or not each authority has enough suitable housing land to meet its objectively assessed need as its Local Plan preparation process continues and it may be prudent to undertake further work in this respect.
- 3.5 The Options Consultation Paper identifies 9 options for the location of new housing and employment sites. These include:
- 4 alternative options for Strategic Development Areas of at least 1000 dwellings, employment land and associated infrastructure. Two options are located at the Kibworths, one at Scraftoft/Thurnby and one at Lutterworth.
 - Focusing on rural areas (mainly Fleckney, Great Glen, the Kibworths, Stoughton, Thurnby, Bushby)
 - Focusing on urban areas
 - Continuing the current Core Strategy approach (focusing on urban settlements – particularly Market Harborough)
- 3.6 A number of these different options would have an impact on the Borough of Oadby and Wigston either due to the proximity of new housing and employment sites to the Borough and/or the amount of extra traffic that the development options would place upon the A6.
- 3.7 Development options in the proximity of the Borough or which would place extra traffic on the A6 require very careful consideration in the following context:
- The relationship with growth already planned to take place in the Borough to 2026 as identified in the Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy and the relationship with development options for the location of new development in the Borough beyond 2026
 - Additional congestion on the A6 in the Borough and in Leicester City
 - Additional congestion on routes immediately beyond and surrounding the A6 within the Borough and Leicester City. In particular, east-west routes, including to the Fosse Park/Junction 21/M1/M69 area
- 3.8 It is of note that the recent Leicester and Leicestershire Transport Study to 2031 concluded that it is tenable to continue with the current housing market area wide spatial distribution strategy to 2031. For Harborough district this would appear to provide appropriate evidence to support Option 2 – Core Strategy Distribution. It would not support the other options that are being consulted upon because these differ from the current housing market area wide spatial distribution strategy.
- 3.9 The part of the Leicester Principal Urban Area where the Borough of Oadby and Wigston and the District of Harborough adjoin is particularly important in a strategic planning context due to the pressures for growth in this area combined with the pressures on existing infrastructure to the south and south east of the Leicester Principal Urban Area. In particular, this is a result of the limitations on the ability to improve and increase capacity on the existing road network which already experiences congestion. This is a particular issue about which Oadby and Wigston Borough Council would wish to work closely with Harborough District Council, as well as Blaby District Council, Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council under the Duty to Co-operate both in terms of preparing its own Local Plan and the Local Plans of neighbouring Councils.

- 3.10 The Options Consultation Paper includes a commitment to maintaining Green Wedge designations and protecting them from inappropriate uses. This commitment is very much welcomed and shared by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, given that the Thurnby/Leicester/Oadby Green Wedge includes land that falls within both council areas. Where necessary and appropriate, the Borough Council would support the removal of small areas of built development from Green Wedges, such as dwellings and their curtilage, in order to ensure that they remain defensible and robust.

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Implications	
Legal	None
Financial	None
Equalities	None
Risk (AT)	None