

# Draft Organisational Strategy (2024 – 2027)

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

# 1. Introduction

## Purpose of the Strategy

This Organisational Strategy for Oadby and Wigston Borough Council sets out a vision for the type of organisation the Council needs to become to deliver the Corporate Strategy and continue to thrive, given the financial limitations and the external environmental constraints which the Council faces.

The strategy provides an overarching framework for the future development of the Council as an organisation based upon a set of principles that are both relevant and necessary. We are at a time of major challenge and change within the authority due to local, regional, and national factors.

The strategy and its principles are intended as a guide to ensure that the Council can marshal efforts and resources to provide a persistent focus on continued improvement in outcomes, value for money and therefore increasing public value, which will also make the Council more sustainable in future years.

## Organisational Vision:

The vision for the future shape of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is to be one of:

***A more focussed council with an efficient support function, concentrating resources on council service delivery in innovative ways to a set of activities agreed by Members and Officers.***

This proactively supports the Council's vision: **"Our Borough – The place to be"**.

And more specifically the Council's agreed purpose which is to:

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

The organisational vision is designed to describe an organisation that is capable of meeting the agreed purpose of the Council which is to "provide a sustainable council by listening, being engaged, and putting our customers first enabling us to focus on local needs and priorities".

This is namely an organisation that better meets the needs of its residents and customers, providing value for money in an environment of significant public finance constraints and limited financial resources.

## 2. Scope of the Strategy:

The organisational strategy does not sit in isolation but is both an overarching strategy underpinned by a further set of corporate business strategies and a strategy which underpins the Corporate Strategy and the Council's Constitution.

**Table 1 – Council Values and Council Business Strategies**

Council Business Strategies	Council Values and Behaviours
Medium Term Financial Strategy	Corporate Vision
People Strategy	Corporate Strategy (WIP)
Customer Experience Strategy	Constitution – Members' Code of Conduct
Human Resources Strategies & Policies	Constitution – Officer and Member Relations
Procurement Policy	
Risk Management Strategy	
ICT Strategies and Policies	
Sustainability Programme inc. Asset Review	
Economic Regeneration Strategy	

The strategies listed on the left-hand side of Table 1 are translated into priorities and activities through the Council's annual business planning process, driving the development of service plans to reflect the implementation of the corporate plan.

**Diagram 1 – The Positioning of the Organisational Strategy**



### **3. Organisational Principles:**

The key principles required of Oadby and Wigston to achieve the vision are listed below:

#### **Sustained in our focus on outcomes -**

The Council exists to improve the lives of our residents and customers, and we are driven by a sustained organisational focus on the outcomes delivered to those customers.

This means working (sometimes with others) to modify the shape of services to better achieve continuous and measurable improvement based on well-founded customer intelligence.

Services will be flexible enough to share resources depending on shifts in customer demand and will work collectively to serve residents rather than focus on working in silo-environments.

#### **Strong in providing leadership –**

Effective public value and community leadership needs to be supported by strong organisational leadership. The organisational strategy requires the development of leadership skills and capacity at all levels in the organisation including councillors.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***For officers,***

Initiatives such as the People Strategy and its constituent parts will help to deliver this aspiration, seeking to engender leadership capacity as part of a core competency framework for OWBC's staff.

Increasing knowledge around our "generic competencies" will support leadership by valuing innovation, financial management, risk taking and public value. It will develop more entrepreneurial managers capable of working in new and challenging ways set within a strong and appropriate risk management framework.

#### ***For members,***

Detailed training workshops are provided as part of the Councillor Induction Programme which provide a solid foundation for a broad understanding of Council business.

Regular briefing and training sessions are also undertaken to assist with policy formation.

The Council's adopted "Buddying System" provides each Councillor with direct access to a dedicated senior officer.

Committee Chairs are provided with the opportunity to have detailed briefings on agenda items and topics which are pertinent to the running of the specific committee. In some cases, regular briefing and training sessions will be held subject matters.

Specific training is provided for those members who need it and hold a role attracting a special responsibility allowance.

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<sup>1</sup> The recently developed Member and Officer Commitment will be pivotal to the success of this.

The Leader of the Council undertakes political responsibility for proposing and directing the overall strategy, budget, policy arrangements and service reviews; Members contribute to the formation of the Council's policies, budget setting and service delivery.

Strategy development, budget setting, policy arrangements and service delivery all require significant amounts of senior and professional officer contribution.

Leading the authority is very much a partnership between politicians and officers. It is a well-established convention that effective policies and strategies cannot be developed and implemented without co-production and ownership from both parties.

### **Confident with (the right sort of) partnership working -**

The Council already has a good track record in working in partnership with positive examples seen with the Police, Leicestershire County Council, neighbouring Borough and District Councils and the Third Sector.

In delivering better outcomes and value for money to our customers, it is recognised that we cannot operate in isolation. Rather, such outcomes can only be achieved in partnership with public, private, and voluntary organisations, whereby sometimes the most effective role of the council is to facilitate and support other organisations who are better placed to deliver particular services to the community and, where there is a clear benefit, sometimes taking the lead role on behalf of others. Similarly, we may decide to cease certain partnership arrangements if there are no clear benefits to the Council or the borough.

Following a challenging appraisal of selecting the right partners for the right service, we recognise the importance of partnership working and by not duplicating service delivery we provide improved services and to create efficiencies and cost savings.

### **Confident with change and improvement -**

Change and improvement no longer sit apart from the everyday activity of the Council. Our Customer Experience Strategy and our success with the Customer Service Excellence awards recognises the importance of self-challenge and change on an ongoing basis, pro-actively setting out to improve ways of working and raise attainment across all priority areas of council activity.

This will be further embodied through our service review programme. We will continue to drive out waste and non-value activities throughout the Council and provide opportunities for multi-skilling our workforce which will enhance our customer-focused service delivery and also increase the public value that is delivered.

Of significant importance is the need for all officers to be able to work much more flexibly to meet new organisational and external challenges. This is well recognised by elected members and could require officers to learn new skills, take on temporary internal secondments to specific projects and working more regularly in a portfolio<sup>2</sup> management arrangement.

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<sup>2</sup> From a Project Management perspective (<https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/what-is-project-management/what-is-portfolio-management/>)

### Confident with information -

The organisational vision seeks an organisation that is capable of absorbing, assimilating, and sharing information as a key means of directing strategies and achieving outcomes across functions and services. With a confidence with information comes an organisational ability to better understand and meet the needs of our customers, as well as provide better value for money to those customers by redirecting resources to areas of high need and demand.

Our reliance on information and information management grows on a regular basis and we will utilise national and regional surveys and benchmarks as well as our own 'customer insight' information sources to improve our customer knowledge.

### Being accountable -

In achieving better service outcomes for its customers, we recognise accountability as a strength. Only through clear and accountable ways of working can the organisational vision be owned and shared by all. Accountability is not seen as an add-on but a fundamental way by which we operate. Officers will continue to provide regular reports on performance to and be held accountable by elected members. Examples of these reports are detailed below:

### Diagram 2 – Performance Accountability Examples



## 4. Implications for Services:

In delivering on the stated vision and associated principles, there also exist underlying service characteristics common to all services within the authority. All services must be:

### **Customer shaped, delivering value for money:**

Customer service information must provide a central basis to enable services to better understand and meet the needs of their customers. Through our mechanisms, such as DASH, services must be able to differentiate between and target customers within a corporate framework of consistently high standard customer care, whilst delivering value for money and therefore increasing public value.

The Service Review Project may require the redefining of the differing roles between the corporate support and frontline service delivery in relation to customer contact between customer service and service delivery professionals across all Council functions.

The use of Demand Capture, Service Reviews, ICT, Project Management and Workforce Planning may necessitate a total redesign in service delivery to meet these requirements.

### **Being professionally guided:**

While recognising the need to be customer shaped, there remains a key role for service areas to maintain the position of professional brokers of information. This is relevant across all areas of the Council and is not restricted to traditional professions. Workforce planning will ensure that we manage skill gaps effectively and are proactive in the training provided.

### **Able to work across authority functions and organisations:**

As stated in the overarching principles, one of the most fundamental on-going organisational changes is the need to work beyond current operational boundaries. These may be internally, within our existing team structures or even across external organisational boundaries. It is increasingly clear that a failure to work in this way is a failure to provide maximum value for money and outcomes for our residents and customers.

### **Creative, seeking excellence in innovation and the application of organisational learning:**

Leadership at all levels and in all roles within the Council, innovation, creativity, and the sharing of knowledge must be celebrated as key values in service delivery. The entrepreneurial application of organisational (and partner-wide) resource represents a key tool in leveraging added value and therefore better meeting the needs of our customers in times of cost pressures and an ever-changing environment.

## 5. Supporting Outcomes:

There are five key organisational drivers underpinning the delivery of the organisational vision within the context of reinvigorated service requirements. For Oadby and Wigston, these are:

### Our Workforce:

- Share the Council's values.
- Being appraised (including flexible working issues) and trained.
- Support new professions (such as Customer service, Project Management, Digital).
- Are dynamic and where appropriate, maybe shared with partners.
- Have communications and liaison skills.
- Ability to transfer skills (personally and to others).
- Are technically and technologically fluent.
- Agile and flexible.

### Our Elected Members:

- Share the Council's values.
- Significantly and positively contribute to Policy development.
- Support and challenge service delivery in a constructive manner.
- See the bigger picture, do not get bogged down in operational detail.
- Have communications and liaison skills.
- Are technologically fluent.<sup>3</sup>

### Our systems, processes, and technology:

- Provide information to shape service delivery.
- Are an enabler of change.
- Provide the basis for effective project management.
- Provide the cohesion in a complex and flexible organisational environment.
- Are standardised, reliable technology platforms with ability to tailor.

### Our assets:

- Where appropriate are leveraged to maximise value.
- Could be more flexible assets.
- May sometimes not be our first choice if it is more advantageous to make better use of partner arrangements.

### Our customer access arrangements:

- Are simplified across the Council.
- Keep pace with digital opportunities.
- Drive value-for-money services.
- Provide intelligence gathering and customer insight.
- Drive service development and improvements.
- Recognise and accommodate the differing needs of different customer groups.

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<sup>3</sup> Members are required to be technologically fluent to the extent that they are able to engage with residents and undertake their duties as a Councillor.



## **6. Conclusions and Timescales:**

The strategy will run until June 2027 and all underpinning strategies that are due for a refresh or need to be written will incorporate the principles of the Organisational Strategy. Strategies and policies will be revised.

There will be a need to ensure that as the requirements from and demands of Local Government continue to change that the principles considered in this strategy and the underpinning business strategies continue to remain relevant and appropriate.

This strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure the content and approach is still appropriate and fit for purpose.

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