

Green Spaces Strategy

2025 - 2035



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Our strategic objectives

Our council

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

Our communities

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

Our Economy

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

Our environment

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

Our partners

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

'OUR BOROUGH - THE PLACE TO BE'

Our vision



Our purpose

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



The background image shows a lush green park. In the foreground, there is a grassy field. In the middle ground, a playground is visible with a swing set and a colorful, abstract sculpture. In the background, there are several houses and tall evergreen trees under a blue sky with some clouds.

Vision

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

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

Key Strategic Priorities

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



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



Why have a Green Spaces Strategy?

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

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

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

This Strategy will:

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





Management Plan

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

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

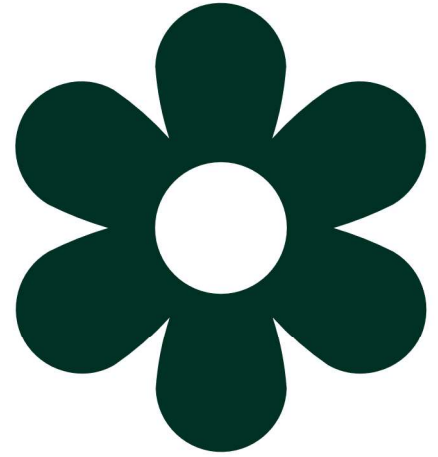
Our remaining green spaces are extremely valuable assets, and each contributes to the broad benefits already highlighted. They play a significant part in community life and are extremely important to the people that use them.

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

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

Guiding Principles

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



These guiding principles are:

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

Objectives

We will:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



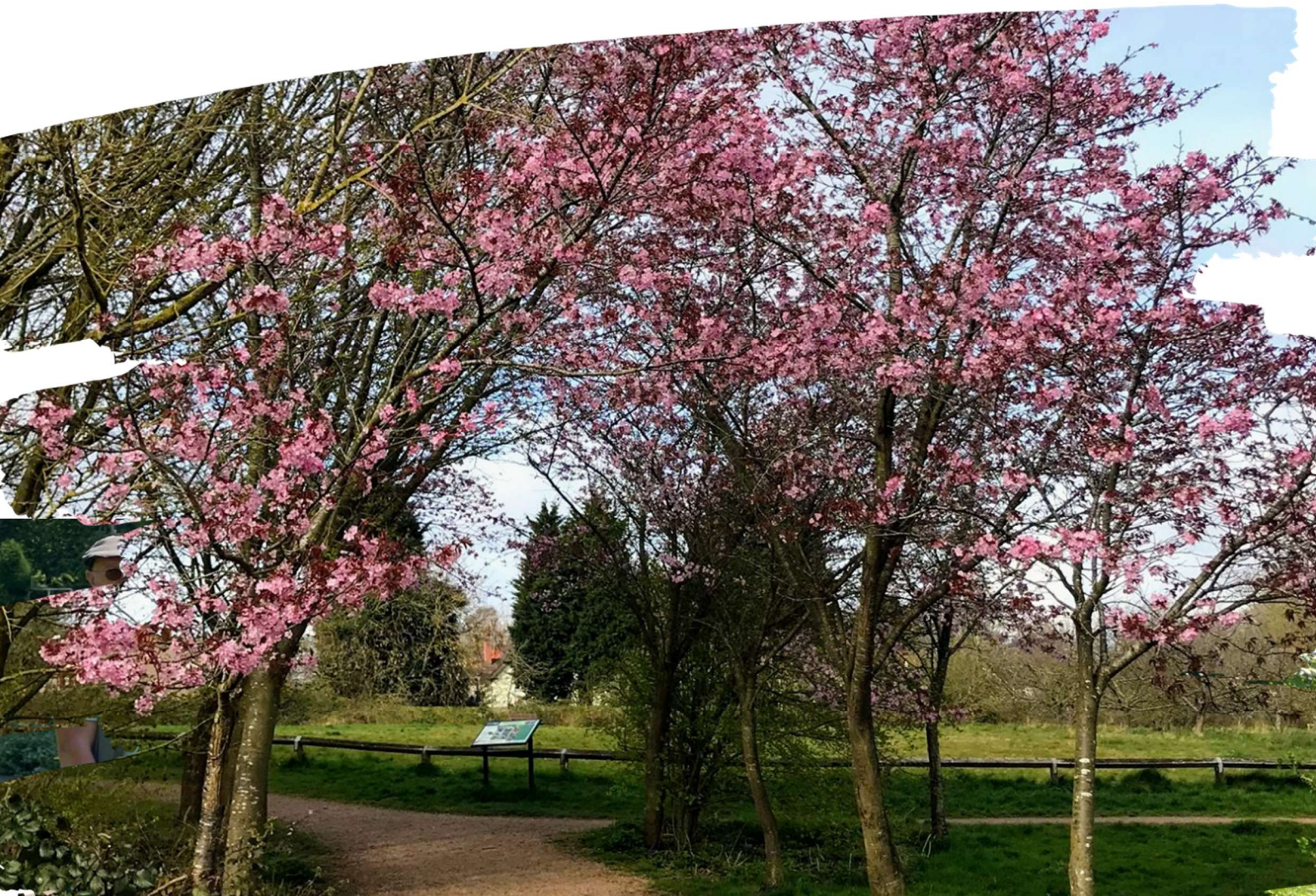
Strategic Context

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

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

Key Strategies and Documents

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



Community Involvement

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



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



*Wherever
practical, our
sites are
accessible to all*



Management Responsibilities

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

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

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

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





Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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



Oadby & Wigston | Our borough -
the place to be