

# Green Wedge Review

Evidence underpinning the Borough of Oadby and  
Wigston's Local Plan (2020-2041)

Winter 2024/2025

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Oadby and Wigston Borough Council (henceforth called 'the Council') adopted its most recent Local Plan in April 2019 which set the spatial and development strategy for the Borough for the period 2011-2031. As part of the planning process, the Council is preparing a Local Plan to cover the period 2020-2041.
- 1.2 The aim of the Green Wedge Review is to assist the Council in determining the boundaries of the Green Wedge designations within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. The Green Wedge Review (2017)<sup>1</sup> precedes this Review and was used to inform the formulation of the current adopted Local Plan (2019) and its Green Wedge designations, as illustrated on the associated Adopted Policies Map (2019). This Review provides an up to dated picture of the current state of the Borough's green wedges and outlines appropriate modifications that could be required for the Council to achieve its housing need, whilst retaining the integrity of the green wedges in line with the principles that have enabled their recurring designation across Leicester and Leicestershire.
- 1.3 Policy 1 in the draft Local Plan 2020-2041 is the Spatial Strategy for Development within the Borough. This strategic policy sets out the scale of development required in the Borough to meet the local housing need and the level of infrastructure to support it. There are many development pressures which have been highlighted through the Call for Sites<sup>2</sup> process. This Review proposes possible changes to the green wedges in order to meet the local housing need and ensure the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.4 Each of the existing green wedges will be assessed against the functions set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology (2011)<sup>3</sup> to see whether the current and proposed new boundaries fulfil the functions of a Green Wedge.
- 1.5 The Borough of Oadby and Wigston has two Green Wedge designations that were originally designated through the Leicester and Leicestershire Structure Plan and have been retained through policies set out in the Core Strategy (2010), the revoked East Midlands Regional Plan and more recently the 2019 Local Plan. Note, a Green Wedge designation is not the same as Green Belt and is not specifically recognised in National Policy.
- 1.6 The two green wedges in the Borough are known as; the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge which crosses boundaries with Harborough District and Leicester City; and, the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge which crosses boundaries with Leicester City. With neither of the designated green wedges entirely sitting within the Borough's boundary, crossing boundaries with Leicester City and Harborough District, it is important that any reviews of the green wedges consider the Duty to Cooperate. This review has been done in consultation with the neighbouring local authorities of Harborough District and Leicester City, who have either published a Green Wedge Report or are in the process of a Green Wedge Review.
- 1.7 It must be noted that this review is a technical report and does not constitute planning policy or site allocations. Allocations are made via the process of preparation and adoption of a Local Plan. This paper only considers land designated as Green Wedge. The Green Wedge Review therefore

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/files/documents/green\\_wedge\\_review\\_2017/LP9.01%20Green%20Wedge%20Review%202017.pdf](https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/files/documents/green_wedge_review_2017/LP9.01%20Green%20Wedge%20Review%202017.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/call\\_for\\_sites](https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/call_for_sites)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/wh1fwkl0/green-wedge-review-joint-methodology-july-2011.pdf>

forms part of the Evidence Base for the 2020-2041 draft Local Plan and its associated Adopted Policies Map.

- 1.8 This document has been broken down into differing chapters that follow the methodology set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology (2011).
- 1.9 The 2020 – 2041 Local Plan could allocate up to 8 sites for housing. 4 of these either extend into or are fully within an existing 2019 green wedge designation boundary.
- 1.10 In total, the 2019 Local Plan designated 263.6 of land in the Borough as green wedge. This review documents sets out that 194.1 of land could be retained as green wedge designation. This means circa 25% of existing green wedge land could be de-designated.

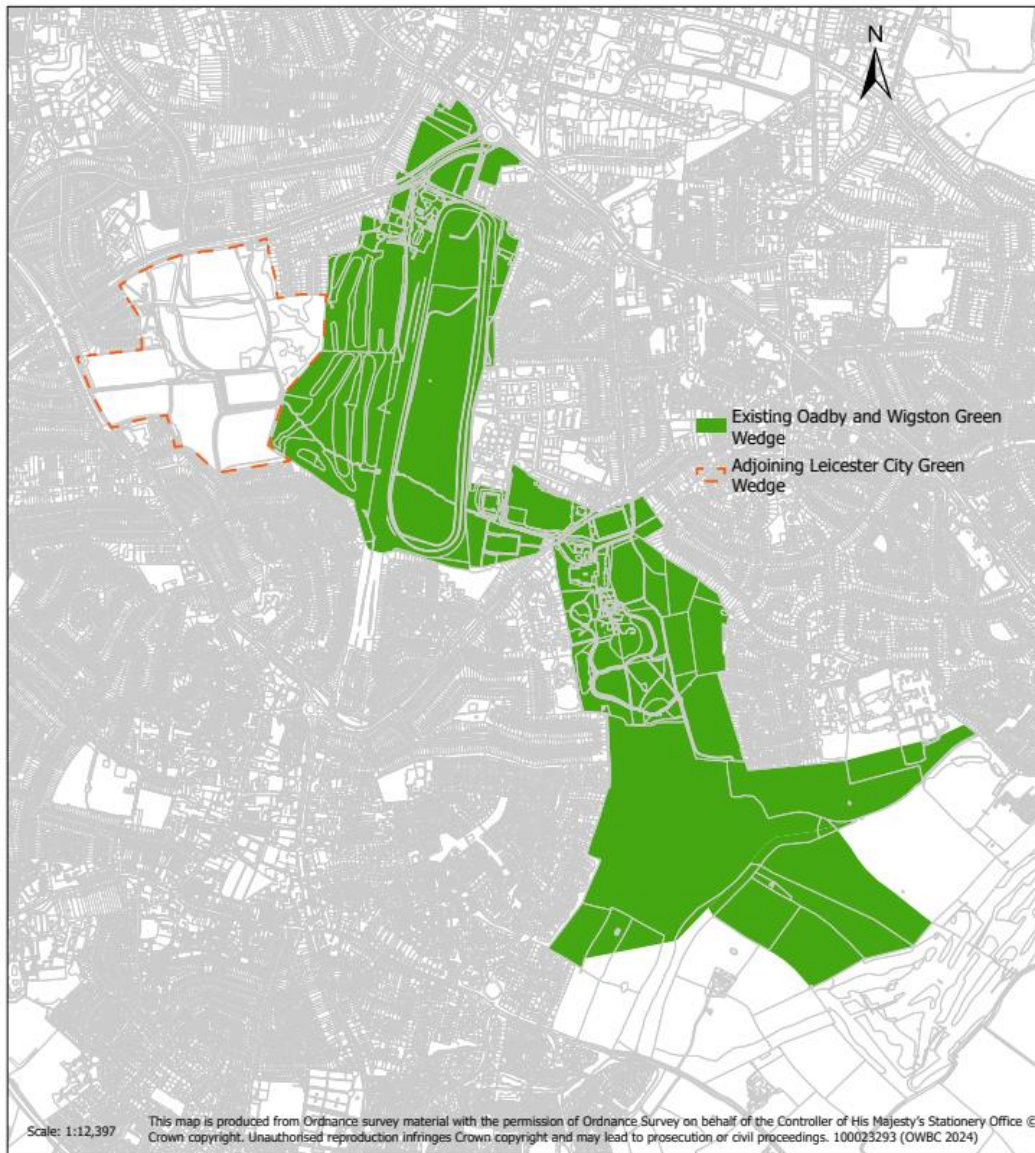
## 2. Current Green Wedge Designation overview

- 2.1 The 2019 Green Wedge designations within the Borough form part of the wider Green Wedge network within Leicester and Leicestershire. Each local authority in Leicestershire bordering Leicester City shares a Green Wedge designation with one of their neighbouring local authorities - therefore crossing administrative boundaries.

### Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge

- 2.2 The Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge spans the administrative boundary with Leicester City to the north west. The Green Wedge in its entirety is around 234 hectares, with the Borough's designation being approximately 193.3 hectares in size and separating the urban areas of Oadby and Wigston entirely. The Green Wedge runs north west to south east from Leicester City out towards the open countryside to the south of Oadby and east of Wigston. As well as farm land and open countryside, the Green Wedge comprises of many appropriate leisure activity uses including sports grounds and training facilities, a racecourse, a golf course and a country park.

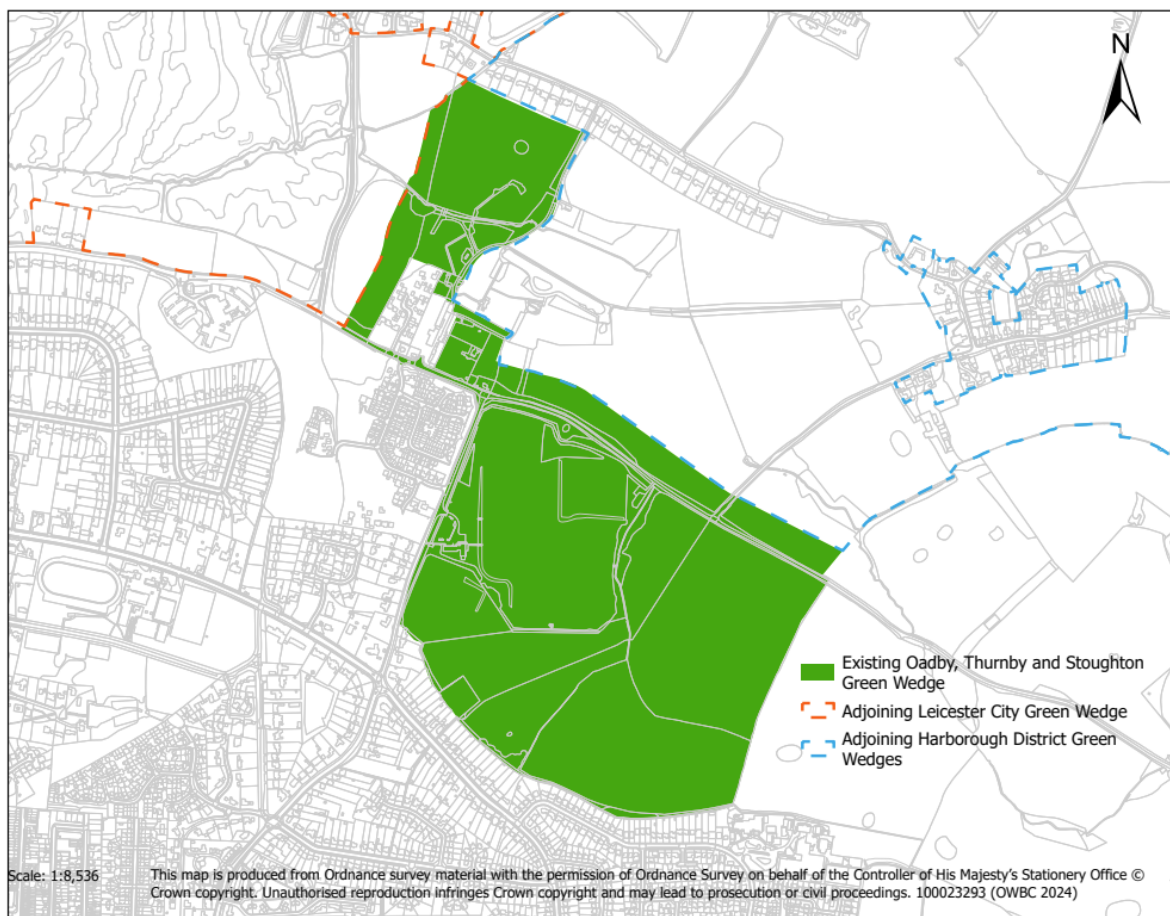
Figure 1. The current extent of the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge



### Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge

- 2.3 The Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge is situated to the north east of Oadby and crosses administrative boundaries with Leicester City and Harborough District. The overall area of the Green Wedge is in the region of 452 hectares. The Borough's designation makes up approximately 70.3 hectares of the total designation size. The area of Green Wedge that lies within the Borough runs from a north west to south easterly direction and begins at the Borough boundary close to the B582 Gartree Road and extends out towards the countryside to the north of Manor High School in Oadby. Land uses currently situated within this Green Wedge area include sports pitches and agricultural land.

Figure 2. The current extent of the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge



### 3. Policy Context

#### Formulation of the Green Wedge within Leicester and Leicestershire

- 3.1 Green Wedge policies were initially introduced in the County of Leicestershire, in the Leicestershire Structure Plan adopted in 1987. The policy stated that *'the character of the green wedge areas...will be protected and wherever possible improved'* and it set out general locations of green wedges. Detailed boundaries of the green wedge designations were then defined and illustrated within each relevant local authority Local Plan.
- 3.2 The Leicestershire Structure Plan (1994) then maintained green wedges through specific policies, for example environmental policies 3 and 4. Paragraph 3.21 of the policies Explanatory Memorandum usefully stated the four specific aims of Policy 3:
- a) *'To protect structurally important areas of open land that influences the form and direction of urban development, prevent coalescence and maintain the physical identity of adjacent settlements;*
  - b) *To ensure that open areas of land extend outwards from urban centres to preserve links with open countryside;*
  - c) *To provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents;*
  - d) *To promote the positive management of such (green) wedges to ensure that they remain or are enhanced as attractive environmental features with good public access'.*
- 3.3 The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan (2005), Strategy Policy 6, again reinforced the importance of green wedges within Leicester and Leicestershire as well as listing the purpose of green wedges. There were subtle differences to the aims given in the 1994 Structure Plan, particularly regarding *'strategic landscape and wildlife links'*, however by and large the strategy towards green wedges remained much the same. The policy stated that detailed green wedge boundaries would be reviewed as part of the Local Plan reviews. The Structure Plan was replaced by the East Midlands Regional Plan, which was introduced due to changes to the national planning system in 2004.
- 3.4 The East Midlands Regional Plan (2009) (revoked) set out the strategic planning context for the East Midlands area. The Plan did not have a specific green wedge policy but did emphasise that a review of existing green wedges or the creation of new ones in association with development will be carried out through each planning authorities Local Plan process. Paragraph 4.2.18 of the supporting text stated that: *'Green wedges serve useful strategic planning functions in preventing the merging of settlements, guiding development form and providing a 'green lung' into urban areas, and acts as a recreational resource. Although not supported by government policy in the same way as Green Belts, they can serve to identify smaller areas of separation between settlements. Provision will be made in green wedges for the retention or creation of green infrastructure or green links between urban open spaces and the countryside, and for the retention and enhancement of public access facilities, particularly for recreation.'*
- 3.5 The Regional Plan set out the key planning functions for green wedges, which were; preventing the merging of settlements; guiding development form; providing a 'green lung' into urban areas; and acting as a recreational resource.
- 3.6 In July 2010 the Government announced that it was to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. The East Midlands Regional Plan was formally abolished through the Localism Bill on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

## National context

- 3.7 Green Wedges are a vital local planning tool used within Leicester and Leicestershire, which is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, as agreed by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and other Councils within Leicestershire, including Leicester City.
- 3.8 During 2011 Leicestershire County Council<sup>4</sup> undertook a public consultation exercise to understand the public value of green spaces within Leicestershire. Green wedge areas, including the two green wedge designations within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston were valued highly by the public and were said to be greatly important to local communities.
- 3.9 Although the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (NPPF) does not contain a specific reference to green wedges, however paragraph 1 of the document makes it clear that the Framework *'sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied<sup>1</sup>. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans can provide for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner'*. The NPPF also sets out that the purpose of planning system is to achieve sustainable development which has three overarching principles. Green wedges have a role to play in achieving sustainable development by making environments which are vibrant and healthy whilst enhancing the natural and built environment through the efficient use of land and improvements to biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- 3.10 Paragraph 15 is clear in that Plans should provide a framework for meeting the local housing need. It states that *'the planning system should be genuinely plan led. Succinct and up to date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings'*. This echoes paragraph 11a regarding the need for councils to promote a sustainable pattern of development that meets housing and infrastructure needs, improves the environment and mitigates and adapts to the effects of climate change.
- 3.11 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF further states that *'the development plan must include strategic policies to address each local planning authority's priorities for the development and use of land in its area'*. Paragraph 20 continues to highlight that *'strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places (to ensure outcomes support beauty and placemaking), and make sufficient provision for:*
- a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
  - b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
  - c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and*
  - d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation'*.
- 3.12 Paragraph 35 of the NPPF details what makes a Local Plan *'sound'*. One of the tests of soundness is to be *'consistent with national policy'*. Criteria d) of paragraph 35 expands on this and states that to be consistent with national policy a Plan should enable *'the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant'*. The joint *'Statement of consistency of the Green wedge designation in Leicester*

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<sup>4</sup> [Leicestershire County Council \(2011\) Green Spaces Consultation Report \(lsc-online.org\)](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/consultations/2011-green-spaces-consultation-report)



and Leicestershire with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023)<sup>5</sup> sets out how the green wedge designation meets this test.

- 3.13 Paragraph 180a) makes clear that *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)'*.
- 3.14 Paragraph 181 of the NPPF states *'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries'*. Green wedges are locally designated areas which help guide development, provide a green lung and act as a recreational resource which directly relates to this paragraph.
- 3.15 Paragraph 191 of the NPPF sets out that *'Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development'*. One of the functions of the green wedge is to provide a green lung into urban areas; this relates to environmental value such as green infrastructure, wildlife sites, air quality and flood alleviation measures.

### Local context

- 3.16 Green wedges within Leicester and Leicestershire have been consistently included within local plan making since their introduction in the Structure Plan. They were identified within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston Local Plan (1999) which was subsequently replaced in part by the Core Strategy in 2010. The Core Strategy set out a specific policy for Green Wedges and outlined their objectives as well as suitable objectives. The Core Strategy went through an Examination in Public and the Inspector<sup>6</sup> concluded in their report that they were *'satisfied that Oadby and Wigston's approach to green wedges is in harmony with that of neighbouring authorities. The purposes and functions of green wedges are clear, and I see no need to extend the range of permitted uses. I recognise the benefits to place-shaping, to biodiversity and providing local people with formal and informal open space which green wedges bring to Oadby and Wigston...I conclude that Policy 6 is justified and deliverable'*.
- 3.17 The two green wedges within the Borough were reviewed through a Green Wedge Review in 2017 which was used as an evidence base for the current Local Plan (2011-2031) which was adopted in 2019. Paragraph 143 of the Local Plan Inspector's Report (2018)<sup>7</sup> concludes that *'the retention and designation of Green wedges in the [Local Plan] is supported by a robust evidence base'*. This supports the use of this type of Review to underpin the Local Plan process as well as endorsing the methodology used.
- 3.18 The Pre-Submission draft Local Plan 2020-2041 will seek to roll forward the 2019 Local Plan policy on Green Wedges with minimal change.
- 3.19 Policy 33 of the Pre-Submission draft Local Plan 2020-2041 will set out Council's objectives to retain and where possible enhance the Green Wedges. Whilst the Council understands that changes to

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<sup>5</sup> [Statement of consistency of the Green wedge designation in Leicester and Leicestershire with the National Planning Policy Framework \(2023\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> The Planning Inspectorate (2010) Report on the Examination of the Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy

<sup>7</sup> The Planning Inspectorate (2018) Report on the Examination of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston Local Plan

the Green Wedge in the Local Plan period 2020-2041 will reduce the quantity of land designated as Green Wedge, development could increase its overall quality. This will be achieved through developer contributions to enhance the local environment, where the first approach should be on-site delivery of contributions. Certain contributions, such as Biodiversity Net Gain, may be delivered off-site through a developer's purchase of credits.

3.20 The proposed Policy states:

**Policy 33: Green Wedges (Strategic)**

Green Wedges are valuable areas of green land within the Borough and the Council will retain these areas as open and undeveloped.

The objectives of all Green Wedge areas situated within the Borough are to:

- a) Prevent the merging of settlements or urban areas;
- b) Guide development form;
- c) Provide a 'green lung' between the urban area and the countryside; and
- d) Act as an open and undeveloped recreational resource.

Due to the open and undeveloped nature of the Green Wedges, the Council will allow uses that are consistent with the following:

- a) Agriculture, horticulture and allotments and associated development necessary to facilitate and support these uses;
- b) Outdoor leisure, outdoor recreation and outdoor sports and associated development necessary to facilitate and support these uses, as long as the use does not negatively impact the undeveloped character;
- c) Forestry and bodies of water and associated development necessary to facilitate and support these uses;
- d) Footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways; and,
- e) Burial grounds and associated development necessary to facilitate and support these uses.

The Council will support proposals that retain and enhance public access into the Borough's Green Wedges, as well as proposals that retain and enhance the role that the Green Wedges play in the Borough's Green Infrastructure Network, Nature Recovery Network, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and its contribution to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and habitats.

Road proposals or dedicated public transport routes proposed to be situated within a Green Wedge that are evidenced as being a necessity will only be acceptable where it has been proven that there are no alternative routes outside of the Green wedge.

Any proposal that has an adverse impact on the Green Wedge will only be permitted where there is a robust and justified need which outweighs these impacts and where a Landscape Character Assessment

has been undertaken to ensure that all detrimental impacts that a development may cause have been addressed and can be mitigated.

- 3.21 The definitive boundaries of the Green Wedge designations are always defined on the Borough Council's Adopted Policies Map.

## 4. Methodology

### Background

- 4.1 The Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology (July 2011) is being used as the basis to carry out this review. It is the standard methodology agreed by the six Local Authorities of: Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Leicester, North West Leicestershire, and, Oadby & Wigston, which form part of the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area. A Joint Methodology was prepared as many green wedges cross administrative boundaries. The Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge spans the administrative boundary with Leicester City to the north west and the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge is situated to the north east of Oadby and crosses administrative boundaries with Leicester City and Harborough District. Using this methodology ensures a consistent approach is taken by the authorities.
- 4.2 The most recent Statement on the consistency of the green wedge designations in Leicester and Leicestershire was published in May 2024 and agreed the green wedge designation within Leicester and Leicestershire and the methodology's conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and other statements of national policy. For the reasons outlined in the joint statement it was agreed that the green wedge designations are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and that it is the intention of Leicester and Leicestershire authorities to continue to support the green wedge designations as a strategic planning tool which will be reviewed through the process of preparing new Local Plans.
- 4.3 The agreed review methodology allows for green wedges to be reviewed at either a larger 'macro' scale that looks at the green wedge as a whole or a more focussed 'micro' scale that reviews certain sections of the green wedge only. At a macro scale the green wedge should achieve all the functions as set out within the agreed methodology, however at a 'micro' scale, assessment areas do not necessarily need to meet all four functions if they contribute to the overall designation. The functions that a green wedge should fulfil are as follows:
- preventing the merging of settlements;
  - guiding development form;
  - providing a green lung into urban areas; and
  - acting as a recreational resource.

### Data collection and desk top survey

- 4.4 Data has been collected on the green wedges in respect of:
- Public rights of way and permissive routes (footpaths/bridleways/cycleways).
  - Historical landscapes and archaeological remains
  - Findings of the Minerals and Waste Plan
  - Land use within the Green wedge
  - Ecology
  - Development Management decisions within the green wedge
  - Air Quality Management areas (AQMA's)
  - Water management (areas of flood risk)

- Connection to green infrastructure in the wider area
- Evidence of development pressures
- Transport routes and infrastructure.

### **On Site Surveys**

- 4.5 A visual appraisal of the Green Wedges has been carried out considering the following:
- Topography
  - Identification of key physical features within and out of the Green wedge
  - Significant hedgerows/hedgerow trees/woodlands
  - The extent of built development within Green wedges
  - Perception of separation from several points within and on the boundaries of settlements (intervisibility and intervisibility)
  - Visible informal uses through the Green wedge
  - Consideration of whether the green wedge could fulfil other functions not yet identified.
- 4.6 For assessment purposes the Green Wedges have been split into areas for the purpose of the survey so that the assessment captures the different roles and character of the green wedges.

The Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge Review

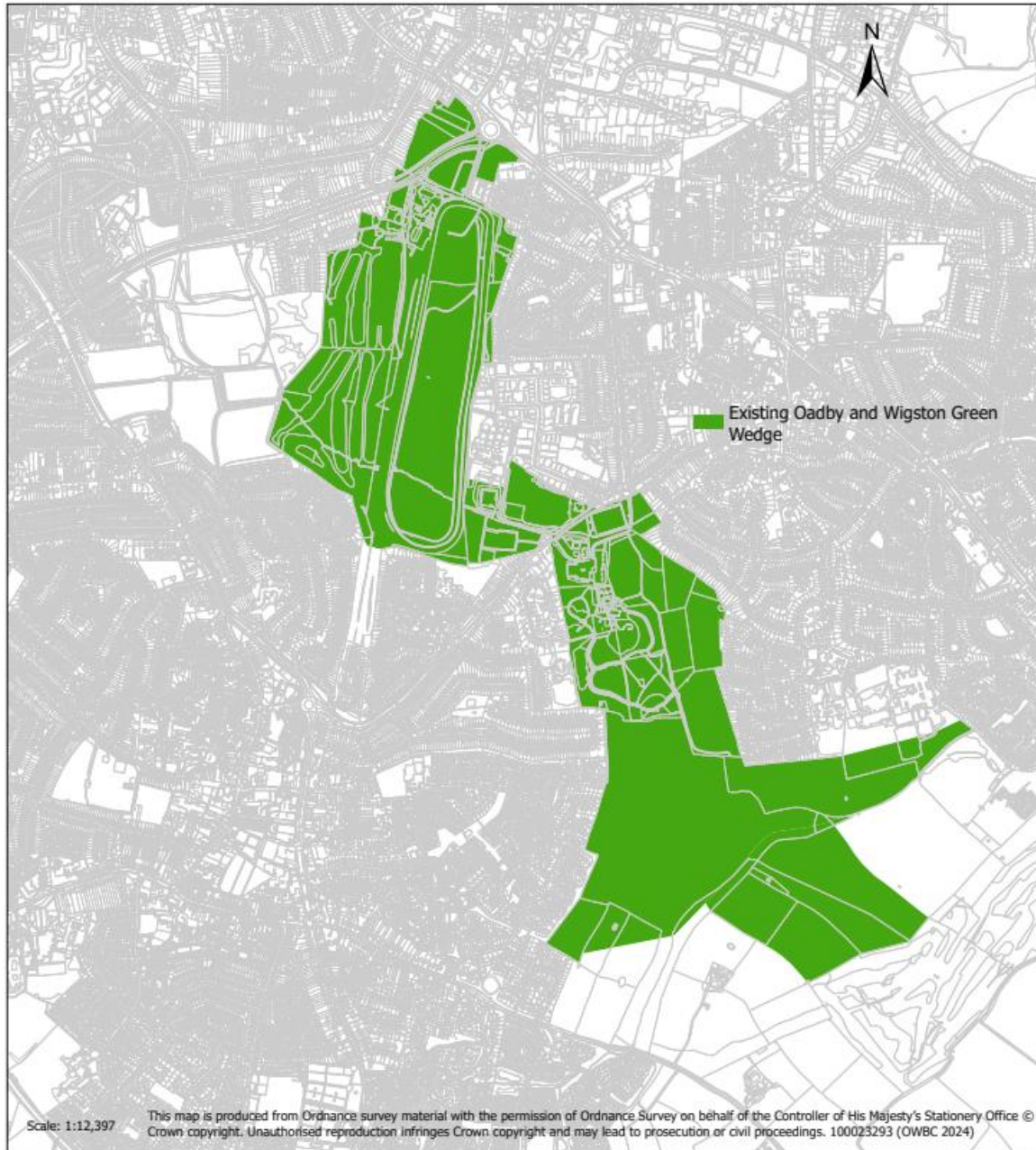


## 5. Desktop Survey

### Introduction

- 5.1 A desktop survey has been undertaken to review the green wedge's functions at a macro level.

Figure 3. The Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge



### Historical landscapes and archaeological remains

- 5.2 Historic landscape characterisation (HLC) is a method of identification and interpretation of the varying historic character within an area. It reveals the patterns and connections within a landscape, spatially and through time, for example in relation to buildings and patterns (of fields, streets and routeways). The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape

Characterisation Project included an assessment of the green wedge area. The south-western section of green wedge is characterised by fields and enclosed land, in particular:

- Re-organised Piecemeal Enclosure - This HLC Type will be characterised by small irregular or rectilinear fields that have lost 10% or more of their field boundaries since the 1st edition 6" OS map, or areas of large irregular or rectilinear fields. In both cases at least two field boundaries will have an 's-curve' or 'dog-leg' morphology. These enclosure patterns have developed through a process of amalgamation of fields created through piecemeal enclosure.
- Very Large Post-War Fields - This HLC Type is characterised by very large fields, over 8.1 ha and often significantly larger which have been created since the publication of the 1st edition 6" OS map. In most cases this will be the result of Post-War agricultural improvements intended to meet the requirements of intensive arable cultivation.
- Other small rectilinear fields - These areas comprise small rectilinear fields which do not fall into one of the other character types. Included in this group will be small meadows and closes not occurring next to settlement boundaries.



5.3 Other land classifications within the area, reflect the urban nature of the green wedge including:

- Other Parkland (Brocks Hill) - The Other Parkland category includes those forms of parkland, recreational or ornamental landscapes which don't fall into any of the other categories in this Broad Type.
- Public Open Space (Coombe Park & Brocks Hill) - This category comprises areas of land accessible to the public, most commonly in an urban context, and which are likely to be the product of "soft" landscaping.
- Sports Field (Oval Park Training Ground & Oadby Town Football Club / Greene King Park) - This category comprises areas identified as sports fields and stadia from the current OS map layer.
- Pre-War Allotments - This category comprises areas identified as sports fields and stadia from the current OS map layer.
- Racecourse - This category comprises areas marked as horse racing tracks on current OS mapping.
- Golf Course - This category comprises areas identified from the modern OS map base as golf courses.



- Small irregular fields - Areas of Small Irregular Fields not assigned to one of the other historic landscape character types. These will include small meadows and closes not occurring next to settlement boundaries.

5.4 Within the Green Wedge there are number of known archaeological sites and historic buildings, these include:

- Post-medieval windmill north end of Leicester Racecourse, Oadby
- Possible Bronze Age burial site, Brocks Hill, Oadby
- Prehistoric pottery from west of Seven Oaks Farm, Wigston
- Medieval pendant from The Race Course, Oadby
- Medieval spindle whorl from Brocks Hill, Oadby
- Medieval finds from west of Seven Oaks Farm, Wigston
- Medieval papal bull from north of Seven Oaks Farm, Wigston
- Roman coin from Brocks Hill, Oadby
- Roman finds from north-east of Seven Oaks Farm, Wigston
- Possible Roman site, Black Spring, Wigston
- Undated ring from Brocks Hill, Oadby
- Roman pottery from Brocks Hill Millennium Park, Oadby
- Prehistoric flint from Brocks Hill Millennium Park, Oadby
- Medieval and post-medieval finds from Brocks Hill Millennium Park, Oadby
- Roman pottery found west of Seven Oaks Farm, Wigston
- Leicester Racecourse, Leicester Road, Oadby
- Sewage Treatment Works, Wigston Road, Oadby
- Site of Brocks Hill Farm, Badger's Holt, Oadby
- Site of Oadby Grange Farm, Brocks Hill Country Park, Oadby
- WW2 searchlight battery, Wigston Road, Oadby
- Dormitory, Mess Block and Stables, Leicester Racecourse, Leicester Road, Oadby
- Members Stand, Leicester Racecourse, Leicester Road, Oadby

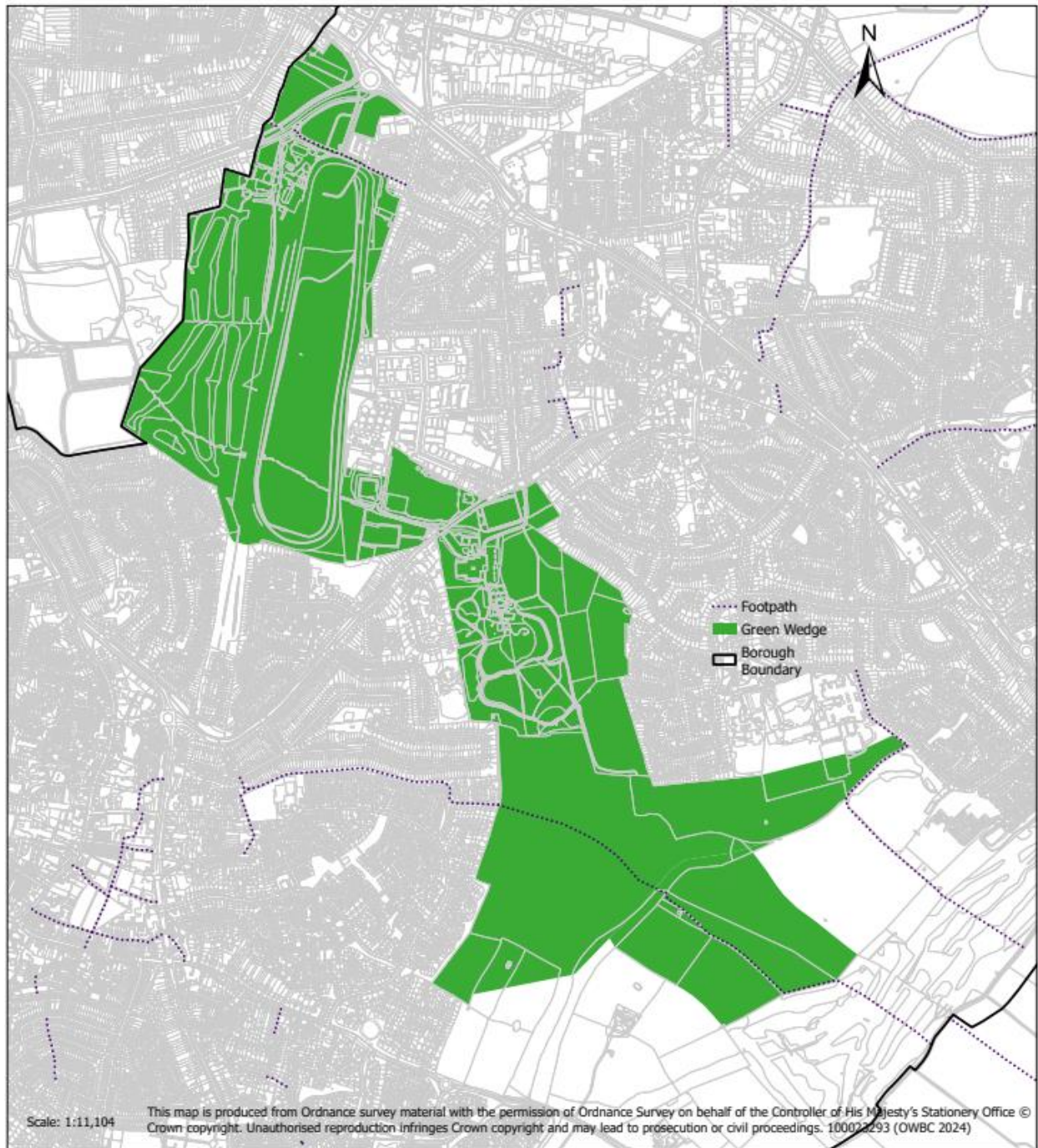
5.5 The Members Stand, Dormitory, Mess Block and Stables at Leicester Racecourse are locally listed buildings. Although not nationally designated, locally listed buildings are important to the local historic landscape and heritage of the Borough. The listing comprises of The Dormitory and Mess Block with Stables and The Members stand. The buildings are sited at the north end of the racecourse and were built for the Leicester Club and County Race Course Company Ltd circa 1884. The Members stand was designed by Chas. J. Bentley of London and the Public Stand by W. Millican of Leicester (who also designed the Leicester Fish Market). The buildings have notable architectural features. There is a group value to the buildings in the racecourse and thus considered as a group in the local listing.



### Access

- 5.6 There are several public rights of way which run through the green wedge area. There are two rights of way which connect the urban areas to the countryside which are located off Tendring Drive, Wigston and Coombe Rise, Oadby and one public right of way which links Granville Avenue with Palmerston Way which skirts around the edge of the racecourse. These are shown in Figure 4.
- 5.7 Public access is also provided as part of the network of footpaths within Brocks Hill Country Park which provide connections into the wider green wedge and countryside.

Figure 4. Map of footpaths in and around the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge.





### Land use within the Green Wedge

5.8 There are various land uses within the green wedge these include:

- Leicester Golf Centre
- Leicester Racecourse
- Oadby Recycling and Household Waste Site
- Oval Park Training Ground
- Allotments
- Oadby Town Football Club / Greene King Park
- Lucas Marsh
- Parklands Leisure Centre
- Brocks Hill Visitor Centre and Country Park
- Agricultural Land

5.9 Adjacent/nearby land uses include:

- Glen Gorse Golf Course
- Riding stables
- Agricultural land
- Existing residential development
- Residential developments under construction
- Knighton Park
- Industrial Estate

### Ecology

5.10 The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2024) assessed several sites which fall within the Green Wedge or are within close proximity. The Survey identified that there were habitats within the Green Wedge which have the potential to support terrestrial and aquatic Great Crested Newts, reptiles, roosting, commuting and foraging bats and diverse bird species.

- 5.11 The Leicestershire Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026<sup>8</sup> identifies Priority Habitats and Species and there is evidence within the Green Wedge of habitats and species on this list. The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey found that within the Green Wedge there was evidence of significant habitats, species and other features which are priority habitats or species, or which may act to support or function as habitats, wildlife corridors or stepping stones within the wider landscape and which may support priority species. Examples of priority habitat or species within the green wedge include (but are not limited to) bats, water voles, swifts, mature trees and wet woodland. The extended survey highlighted that mature and veteran trees are a priority habitat within the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan and act as an important habitat resource for hole-nesting birds, roosting bats, fungi, lichens and saproxylic insects and that concentrations of mature trees are particularly valuable.
- 5.12 Local Wildlife Sites are spread across the Green Wedge, these sites are a mix of potential, candidate and notified local wildlife sites<sup>9</sup> and are listed below:
- Race Course Meadow
  - Lucas Marsh LNR
  - Brocks Hill Country Park and LNR, Oadby
  - Opposite Invicta Park
  - Spinney Pond, Brocks Hill Country Park
  - Brocks Hill Mature Tree
- 5.13 From the desktop review in relation to ecology the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge provides an important role in protecting and enhancing biodiversity and provides habitat connectivity which helps facilitate animal migration and movement. This is particularly important due to the urban nature of the surrounding area and the green wedge provides the links from the urban area into the countryside, whilst protecting the network of natural habitats and nature conservation areas.



### Water management

- 5.14 The Wash Brook flows through the Green Wedge, moving westwards from its source east of Oadby to its confluence with the River Soar in Leicester. It flows through a predominantly urban catchment, passing through Oadby where it receives urban runoff.
- 5.15 As identifiable on the Environment Agency flooding maps, Flood Zones 2 and 3 fall within the Green Wedge and run along the Wash Brook Water course. In addition, outside of the

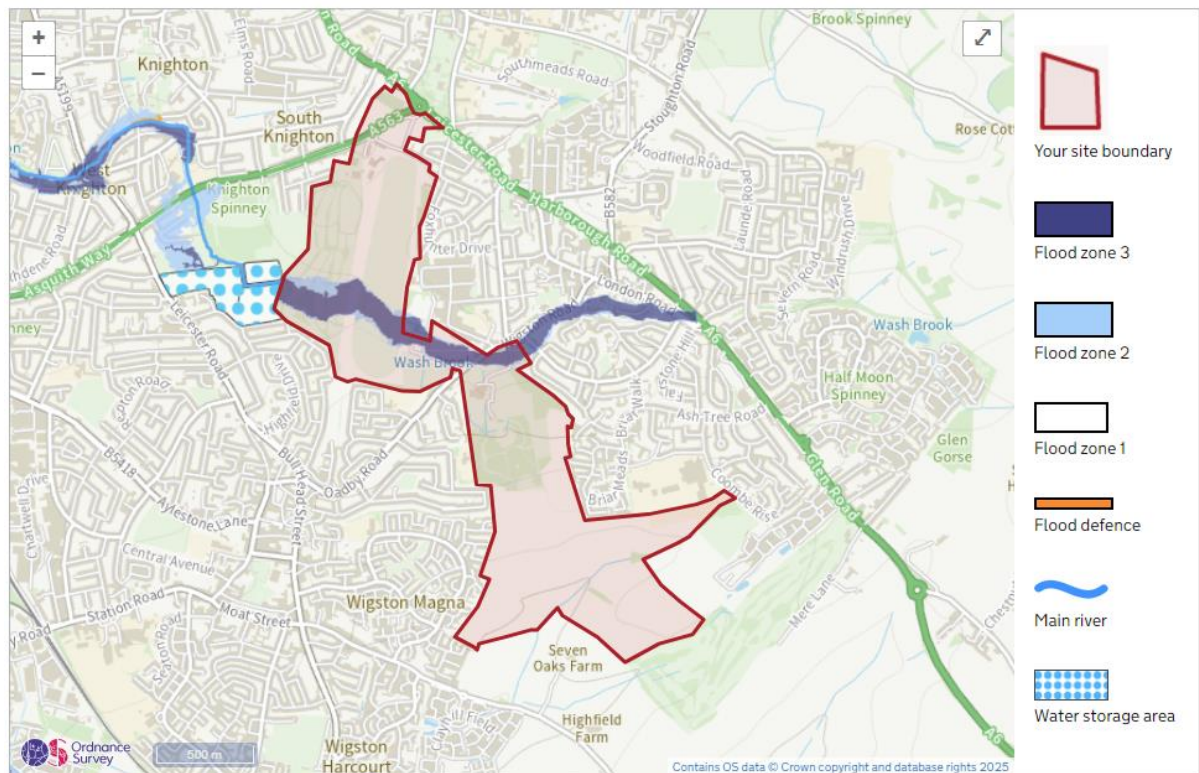
<sup>8</sup> [Space for Wildlife – the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026 \(lrwt.org.uk\)](https://www.lrwt.org.uk/)

<sup>9</sup> Source: Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre

administrative area of Oadby and Wigston but within the Leicester City section of the Green Wedge there is an area of land located on Knighton Park which forms part of a flood storage area. This area of land becomes flooded during heavy periods of rainfall and rather than flooding occurring downstream which would affect residential properties this area of parkland acts as a basin for flood water storage.

- 5.16 The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017) identifies that there is a fluvial flood risk from the Wash Brook and that its floodplain crosses through urban areas, presenting a risk to property. It undertook climate change modelling and identified that there were sensitivities with the Wash Brook in the Borough in relation to an increase in flows due to climate change. The Council commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024).

Figure 5. Flood zone map for The Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge. Source: Environment Agency (<https://www.flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>) Note, the site boundary of the green wedge has been drawn as accurately as possible with the tools provided.



## Air Quality

- 5.17 The Oadby and Wigston Air Quality Annual Status Report (2024)<sup>10</sup> identifies that there are no air quality management areas (AQMA) within the Borough. There are no air quality monitoring devices located within or within close proximity to the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/files/documents/air\\_quality\\_annual\\_status\\_report\\_2024/OWBC%20ASR%202024.pdf](https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/files/documents/air_quality_annual_status_report_2024/OWBC%20ASR%202024.pdf)

- 5.18 Having said this, Leicester City Council has declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), the area is defined in the Leicester City Council Air Quality Action Plan (2015-2026)<sup>11</sup>. This shows that Palmerston Way up to the boundary with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and the Green Wedge is identified as an Air Quality Management Area.

### Connection to green infrastructure in the wider area

- 5.19 The Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester and Leicestershire (2017)<sup>12</sup> recognises the important role green wedges play in relation to providing multi-functional green infrastructure. The Green wedge is identified as a green infrastructure asset within the Study and Green Infrastructure Opportunities identified.
- 5.20 The identified opportunity areas include the Wigston Green Wedge Access Project, the aim of this opportunity is to enhance green infrastructure assets within the green wedge for access to nature and ecological connectivity. The Study also highlights the potential to create the area as becoming a new strategic destination for outdoor recreation. It notes that the area is positive in terms of health and equality, a place for recreation and play whilst also being a strategic destination.



- 5.21 The second green infrastructure opportunity within the Green Wedge is the Oadby and Wigston Green Way, this recommended that there is an attractive, accessible pedestrian/cycle route from the city towards Brocks Hill Country Park and beyond. This would be positive regarding active travel and connectivity.
- 5.22 The Study recommends that green wedges ‘work harder’ by delivering a range of green infrastructure benefits to their neighbouring communities.
- 5.23 Adjacent to the Green Wedge is Knighton Park which falls within the Green Wedge in Leicester City’s boundary. This is an important recreational space for surrounding local residents and it also helps provide connectivity with the Borough’s interconnecting green infrastructure.

### Minerals and Waste Plan

- 5.24 Within the Adopted Leicester and Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (up to 2031) (2019)<sup>13</sup> the supporting text to the Plan sets out how mineral and waste operations should be considered within green wedges. It states ‘*Mineral developments would be acceptable in a Green wedge provided that appropriate measures are taken to ensure that such development does not*

<sup>11</sup> [Leicester City Council \(2015\) Healthier Air for Leicester: Leicester’s Air Quality Action Plan \(2015-2026\) \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk)

<sup>12</sup> [Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester and Leicestershire \(2017\) \(llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk\)](https://llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2019/10/3/Leicestershire-Minerals-and-Waste-Local-Plan-Up-to-2031-Adopted-2019.pdf>

*adversely affect the Green wedge's strategic planning function. Waste developments are, in the main, less appropriate in Green wedge locations. However, there may be benefits of siting facilities close to the waste arising or the particular locational requirements of certain types of waste development means that they may best be placed away from sensitive urban uses. In these instances land on the urban fringe may provide the most sustainable option. Nevertheless, any proposal for waste management development in the Green Wedge would still need to comply with appropriate policies'.*

- 5.25 The accompanying Minerals and Waster Safeguarding Document for Oadby and Wigston (2015)<sup>14</sup> highlights that there are no mineral safeguarding areas which fall within the Green Wedge. An area is identified as a waste site for safeguarding within the Green Wedge and that is the Oadby Civic Amenity Site. Also adjacent to the Green Wedge boundary is the Oadby Sewage Treatment Works operated by Severn Trent Water and this site is also identified for safeguarding.

### Development Management decisions within the Green Wedge

- 5.26 The historic planning applications contained in Table 1 have been identified as having a potential impact on the Green Wedge, applications which were perceived to have little impact on the Green Wedge or were withdrawn have not been included within the table.

**Table 1 Planning Applications within the Green wedge**

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
19/00162/FUL	Leicester Golf Centre Leicester Road Oadby Leicestershire LE2 4AJ	Erection of 15m high ball netting to extend 150m out from the either side of the existing golf range building.	Grant
19/00220/FUL	Beauchamp College Ridge Way Oadby Leicestershire LE2 5TP	Demolition of existing single storey teaching block and construction of new 2 storey teaching facility	Grant
19/00439/FUL	Leicester Racecourse Leicester Road Oadby Leicestershire LE2 4AL	Extension to the existing Weighing Room to provide additional accommodation, internal modifications and refurbishment	Grant
20/00061/COU	Oadby Town Football Club Wigston Road Oadby Leicester Leicestershire LE2 5QG	Temporary (5 year) use of existing hardstanding for scaffold storage (Class B8) including erection of structure for storage of scaffolding and ancillary items.	Refused

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2019/10/3/SUB8-Oadby-Safeguarding-2015.pdf>



<b>20/00335/FUL</b>	Oadby Town Football Club Wigston Road Oadby Leicester Leicestershire LE2 5QG	Erection of Extension to Clubhouse and associated Terrace, provision of Car Parking Area, Landscaping and No. 2 Disabled Access Ramps (Part Retrospective).	Grant
<b>21/00483/VAC</b>	Leicester Racecourse Leicester Road Oadby Leicestershire LE2 4AL	Variation of condition 3 (Approved Plans) of planning application 19/00439/FUL to allow for a minor location amendment, change of external material to brick and omission of high level glazing	Grants
<b>22/00037/R3FUL</b>	Brocks Hill Visitor Centre And Country Park Washbrook Lane Oadby Leicestershire LE2 5JJ	Construction of two storey and single storey side extensions, dormer window and internal mezzanine floor area. Installation and replacement of solar panels, creation of external plant compound and change of use to a mixed use for offices and café use falling within Use Class E, meeting use falling within Use Class F1 and Local Government Office use.	Grant
<b>22/00293/FUL</b>	Land East Of Washbrook Lane Oadby Leicestershire	Proposed construction of football centre comprising of 6 x 4G pitches, club room and changing facilities, fencing, floodlighting and car park.	Refused  Appeal in Progress (as of writing this report)
<b>22/00356/NMA</b>	Brocks Hill Visitor Centre And Country Park Washbrook Lane Oadby Leicestershire LE2 5JJ	Changes to windows on south elevation and main double height glazing to north elevation.	Grant
<b>24/00038/CLE</b>	Land East Of Oadby Town Football Club Washbrook Lane Oadby Leicestershire	Certificate of Lawfulness Existing to presumed to sui-generis (storage of cars and vans)	Grant

- 5.27 There has also been major development located adjacent to the green wedge which is worth noting. Planning application, 19/00356/OUT, Land at Cottage Farm, Bloor Homes for a development of 350 dwellings which was granted permission. This development is significant as it draws the built form of Oadby closer to Wigston and it will be important to note the landscape impact of this development on the nearby Green Wedge.

### **Evidence of development pressures**

- 5.28 The Council's three formal Call for Sites Public Consultations took place from Midday Friday, 25 September 2020 until Midday Friday, 20 November 2020, as well as alongside the Regulation 18A Public Consultation on the emerging new Local Plan Issues and Options Draft from midday Friday, 3 September 2021 and midday Friday, 29 October 2021. Most recently, it completed a Call for Sites alongside the Regulation 18B Public Consultation on the emerging new Local Plan Preferred Options from midday Wednesday, 3 April 2024, to midday Wednesday, 15 May 2024.
- 5.29 Due to the unique nature of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston, the Council invited the submission of any land parcels (no minimum site size threshold) from all interested parties, including local residents; businesses; landowners; developers; and, agents, to identify potential sites for consideration for development which could comprise part of the Borough's housing and economic development land supply.
- 5.30 The following site options were submitted for housing or economic development through this process and are either fully or partially located within Oadby and Wigston Green wedge:
- OAD/005 Land North of Palmerston Way, Oadby – An institutional or similar style use, yet to be determined.
  - OAD/007 – Land South of Sutton Close, Oadby – Residential between 50 - 170 units.
  - WIG/003 – Land North of Denbydale, Wigston – Residential, approximately 50 – 60 dwellings.
  - WIG/004 – Land North of Newton Lane, Wigston – Residential between 1000 – 1,300 units
  - WIG/006 – Land off Denbydale and Rosedale Road, Wigston – Residential between 150 - 155 units (part of the site falls outside the current designation)
  - WIG/007 - Land at Seven Oaks Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston – Residential between 610 - 810 units (part of the site falls outside the current designation)
  - WIG/008 - Land at Newton Lane, Wigston – Residential between 1,400 – 1,700 units (part of the site falls outside the current designation)
  - WIG/010 - Land North of Glen Gorse Golf Course, Wigston Residential between 280 - 370 units
  - WIG/011 - Land Adjacent to Newton Lane, Wigston - Residential or Residential Institution: approximately 350 – 395 dwellings.
- 5.31 The following sites have been submitted for consideration of housing or economic development within proximity to the green wedge but do not fall within the current boundary designation:
- OAD/008 Half of Glen Gorse Golf Course, Oadby – Residential between 224 - 336 units
  - WIG/003 Land north of Denbydale, Wigston – Residential 50 - 60 units

- O&W/001 – Glen Gorse Golf Course – Residential between 630 and 1,080 units
- O&W/002 – Glen Gorse Golf Course and Highfield Farm – Residential and Leisure, approximately 630 – 1,080 dwellings and 6,000 sqm of non-residential floorspace.

- 5.32 As illustrated above, there are several sites which have been put forward as expressions of interest to be considered through the Local Plan process. These submissions cover the entirety of the Green Wedge in assessment areas 4 and 6, and cover most of area 5.
- 5.33 Through the last review of green wedges there was no green wedge land removed from the Oadby and Wigston Green wedge designation as part of the Local Plan Review. However,
- 5.34 extensions were made, taking on board the recommendations of the Green Wedge Review 2017<sup>15</sup>. Recommendation 2 for the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge suggested *‘to keep the boundaries of the green wedge in the main identical to the existing, however draw in the remaining land area on which the Lucas Marsh Local Nature Reserve is situated (shown below). The entire designation of the Lucas Marsh Local Nature Reserve would then become part of the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge. The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust as well as Natural England encourage visitors to access the reserve. It is said that the reserve attracts a variety of birdlife including Robin, Chiff Chaff and Great Spotted Woodpecker. 28 The reserve would add to the recreational resource of the green wedge and would further encourage public use of the green wedge’*. The entirety of Lucas March is now located within the green wedge.
- 5.35 The third recommendation in the Green Wedge Review 2017 was *‘should the Land at Cottage Farm be allocated for development within the new Local Plan, the southern area of the Oadby and Wigston Green wedge should be extended southwards to guide development form in the future years by defining development limits. Extending southwards would also prevent any future coalescence of the two settlements of Wigston and Oadby’*. The land at Cottage Farm was allocated through the Local Plan and the green wedge boundary extended according to recommendation 3. The extension is identified as Area 6 through this Review.

### Transport routes and infrastructure

- 5.36 There are two strategic transport routes which run through the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge including: A563 Palmerston Way and the B582 Wigston Road. Palmerston Way is a Primary A Road which is also known as part of the Leicester South Outer Ring Road, this is a heavily used road which connects the southern part of Leicester with the motorway network.
- 5.37 The B582 Wigston Road is a B Road and is the primary route between the settlements of Oadby and Wigston. This road is also heavily used as the main routeway between the two settlements.

<sup>15</sup> [Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge Review \(2017\) \(oadby-wigston.gov.uk\)](https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk)

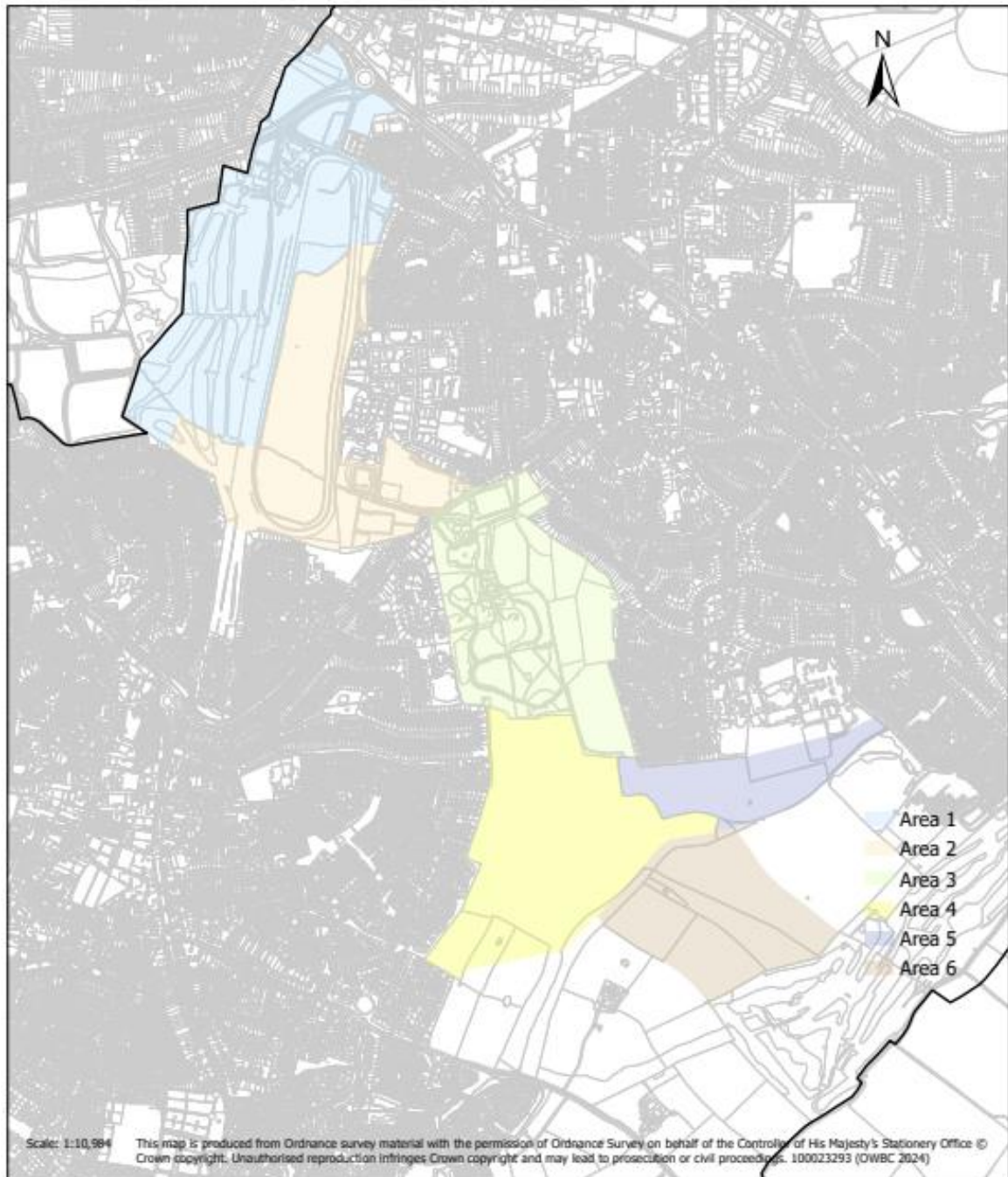
## **6. Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge Site Surveys**

6.1 To ensure a detailed survey and to aid the review process, the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge has also been assessed on a micro level. The Green Wedge was split into 6 areas so that a more detailed analysis could be undertaken on site. The areas were determined by land-use, field boundaries and landscape. A map of the areas is shown in Figure 6. The areas identified are listed as follows:

- Area 1 – Land adjacent Palmerston Way, including Leicester Golf Course and Leicester Racecourse North
- Area 2 – Leicester Racecourse South and North of Wigston Road
- Area 3 – Brocks Hill Country Park and surrounds
- Area 4 – Land to the east of Wigston Meadows
- Area 5 – Land to the south of Briar Mead and Gartree High School and Beauchamp College, Oadby
- Area 6 – Land to the East of Sevenoaks Farm and West of Glen Gorse Golf Course

6.2 Site assessments were carried out on the green wedge. The pro forma set out in the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Methodology was used. This chapter sets out the main findings of the on-site surveys and draws from the desk top survey to provide a micro review.

Figure 6. Map of the 6 sub-areas of the existing Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge



### Area 1: Land adjacent Palmerston Way, including Leicester Golf Course and Leicester Racecourse North



- 6.3 The current boundary of this area follows the borough boundary with Leicester City towards its western edge, the Wigston settlement urban area towards its south western edge and the Oadby settlement urban area towards its north eastern edge.
- 6.4 The land area in Area 1 is relatively flat with only subtle increases or decreases in land heights. The lowest area is towards the south western corner of the assessment area with the higher land generally more towards the north. The Washbrook water course runs through the southern section of the Area 1, meaning there is a relatively high probability for potential flooding, with the immediate area surrounding the watercourse being designated Flood Risk Zone 2 and 3 by the Environment Agency<sup>16</sup>. There are also remnants of ridge and furrow land towards the northern tip of this assessment area.
- 6.5 This sub area includes a public right of way that runs through the northern area joining the built up area of Oadby with the urban area of Leicester City. Access onto this part of the green wedge is through use of Leicester Golf Course or the racecourse or through informal non designated desire lines.
- 6.6 Most of the vegetation within Area 1 is of a managed nature and located on Leicester Golf Course. Trees and bushes line much of each hole on the course, as well as surrounding the greens.
- 6.7 A site has been put forward within this area of the green wedge known as OAD/005 Land North of Palmerston Way, Oadby. The site suggestion is for an institutional or similar style use, yet to be determined.

<sup>16</sup> National Government: Flood Map for Planning ([flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk](https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk))

## Area 2: Leicester Racecourse South and North of Wigston Road



- 6.8 Most of this assessment area is made up of outdoor sporting facilities, for example the Leicester Tigers training facility, the Leicester Racecourse and a small section of Leicester Golf Course. Also situated within this area is Wigston Road allotments and part of Leicestershire County Council's refuse and recycling facility. The built development within this area is that associated with the Leicester Tigers training ground, for example the sports and training pavilion, and the County Council's refuse and recycling facility. In terms of highway infrastructure, this area only has access roads relating to the Council's Depot and Leicestershire County Council's waste refuse and recycling site and Wigston Road allotments.
- 6.9 The eastern boundary of the area follows the built up urban area of the settlement of Oadby down towards Wigston Road. The southern boundary of the area follows the built form of Wigston, however does not include part of the former 'straight mile' of Leicester Racecourse or the playing fields to St John's Fisher Catholic Primary School, Wigston.
- 6.10 This area compared to other areas within the green wedge is relatively flat, with only very gentle undulations. This area is the lowest part of the entire green wedge (in terms of height above sea level), and forms an almost shallow valley. The Washbrook water course runs through the area, therefore there is a relatively high probability of potential flooding, with the immediate area surrounding the water course being designated Flood Risk Zone 2 and 3 by the Environment Agency<sup>17</sup>.
- 6.11 There are no designated cycleways, byways, bridleways or public rights of way in Area 2. Formal access to this part of the green wedge would be using one of the numerous sporting facilities or using Wigston Road allotments. Informal access to this area would be using non-designated desire lines.
- 6.12 Like Area 1, most of the vegetation is located on the golf course, however the part of the Wash Brook that runs through this area has its banks lined with various species of trees.

<sup>17</sup> [National Government: Flood Map for Planning \(flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/422222/flood-map-for-planning-service.gov.uk)

### Area 3: Brocks Hill Country Park and surrounds



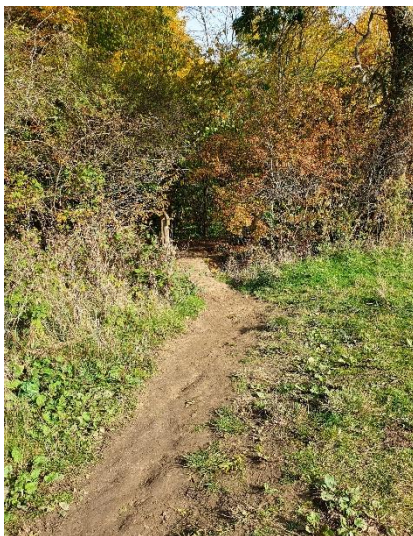
- 6.13 Most of the land situated within this area is made up of Brocks Hill Country Park and Parklands Leisure Centre. Also located in area 3 is Oadby Town Football Club directly adjacent to Wigston Road. Built development within this area is directly related to sports, leisure, recreation and employment facilities, for example the football pavilion and stadia, Brocks Hill Council Offices and Parklands Leisure Centre facilities. Comparable to area 2, the only roads that are found within this area are part of Wigston Road, and access roads to the football ground, country park and leisure centre. This area is predominately used for recreation purposes with the land uses in this area. There is a large children's adventure play area within the Country Park and evidence of lots of users using this area for dog walking.
- 6.14 The eastern boundary of area 3 follows the edge of the built area of Oadby, the boundary was amended in 'The Borough of Oadby and Wigston Local Plan 2011-2031' to include the entirety of the Local Wildlife Site (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation – Lucas Marsh Local Nature Reserve) designation. The western boundary directly follows the outer limits to Wigston's urban area, however, does not include the playing fields to Glenmere Community Primary School. The southern boundary consists of agricultural fields.
- 6.15 The topography of this area compared to the previous two areas has distinct differences in height. From the Wigston Road area up to the most southern part of the area the ground rises nearly 40 metres to a distinct ridge line that is some 115 metres above sea level. The Washbrook water course runs through the area towards the north, meaning there is a relatively high probability for potential flooding, with the immediate area surrounding the water course being designated Flood Risk Zone 2 and 3 by the Environment Agency<sup>18</sup>
- 6.16 There are no designated cycleways, byways, bridleways or public rights of way, however there is unrestricted public access to the green wedge through Brocks Hill Country Park. The country park has several footpath routes that lead into and around the green wedge. Walkable routes into the park are available for residents of both Oadby and Wigston. There is also a large car park for the leisure centre and county park which increases the catchment use. The footpaths within the park are of a good quality, there is a mix of hard surfaced routes and several well-trodden natural walkways. There are three grassland meadows which have public access around the edges creating loop walks. There was a good level of use of the park whilst on site with users being of

<sup>18</sup> [National Government: Flood Map for Planning \(flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/424242/flood-map-for-planning.pdf)



varied ages and abilities. The main use was people walking dogs but there was also evidence of people on family walks and jogging.

- 6.17 Much of the vegetation within area 3 is situated on Brocks Hill Country Park, however there are also several hedgerows delineating farmers' fields. There is a mix of woodlands trees with some trees being more established and others which appeared to be quite young and newly planted. There were also several sporadic mature trees on the edge of the park adjacent to the field boundaries. There was an abundance of wildlife within this section of the green wedge visible during the site visit including the Green Woodpecker, Red Kite, blackbirds, blue tits, tree sparrows and squirrels.
- 6.18 The vegetation within the park and its surrounds impacts on settlement perception. Although within one of the narrowest parts of the green wedge it is not possible to view more than one settlement from within or on the edge of the green wedge. The woodland planting aids this perception, particularly when within the centre of Brocks Hill Country Park as it provides a tranquil wild space within the urban area. This space provides a 'green environment' within a predominantly urban area either side. There is an informal access route from the Wigston Meadows Estate via fields.
- 6.19 The main development that has occurred since the last Green Wedge Review has been the change of use of Brocks Hill Visitor Centre to the Borough Council's offices. Since planning permission was granted, the offices have been built out and in active use since the Summer of 2023. A café has also opened on the ground floor of the Brocks Hill building, attracting many people to the Country Park.
- 6.20 There are no alternative strong defensible boundaries within this section of the green wedge.



#### Area 4: Land East of Wigston Meadows



- 6.21 The main land use within this area is agriculture. Whilst out on site there was a feeling of openness and there were far reaching views when looking to the south. It was characterised by ploughed fields, which were separated by mature hedgerows and scattered mature trees.
- 6.22 The length of the western boundary for this area relates directly to the urban edge of Wigston, whereas the southern edge of the area directly abuts the wider countryside. There are no formal vehicular access roads within this area.
- 6.23 This area, like area 3, has distinct changes in elevation. The northern area sees a continuation of the high ridge (110 – 115 metre) noted in area 3, however as you move southwards the land slopes away and falls to a height above sea level of 95 – 100 metres. There is a small water course which runs along the bottom of the valley between area 4 and Area 6, at the time of the site visit (early autumn) this brook was virtually dry. There were some low level pylons running through the site. According to the Environment Agency flood maps<sup>19</sup> there is a possibility that the area could be susceptible to surface water flooding.
- 6.24 Most of the vegetation within area 4 is situated on the arable fields themselves, however there are several hedgerows delineating each of these fields.
- 6.25 There are no designated cycleways, byways, bridleways, however this area does have a public right of way running through it which allows unrestricted public access to the green wedge. The public right of way runs from the Canvey Close / Tendring Drive area of Wigston and out to the southern countryside areas of the Borough and beyond. There is a kissing gate to access the agricultural area which provides the access to the formal right of way. The footpath is well signposted along the route with way finders. There are also informal walkways along the field edge, these appear to be well used due to the level of use noted whilst on site and the trodden nature of the footpaths. These informal routeways can be accessed from the formal public right of way but also from a more informal access from the green corridor located off Rosedale and an access from Brocks Hill Country Park which appears to be more formal in nature.
- 6.26 Although this area is in agricultural use and fields were ploughed at the time of the visit, the space is also used locally for public access purposes and this was evident whilst on site. The formal and informal footways were being used by families, dog walkers and people taking exercise. The area provides a green space within an urban area as it provides connectivity to the Brocks Hill Country Park, a green space cited between two urban areas. It also provides access to the wider countryside.

<sup>19</sup> [National government: Check your long term flood risk \(check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk)

- 6.27 Regarding settlement perception there is intervisibility and intervisibility within this section of the green wedge with both Oadby and Wigston being able to be viewed at various points. The settlements are within close proximity and this perception is caused by the openness and rolling topography of this area and Area 5. Due to the openness of this area, built development would have a significant visual impact within this area, particularly close to Brocks Hill Country Park where the topography is higher and the area is in close proximity to Oadby visually.
- 6.28 There have been several sites submitted for consideration as residential development options throughout the call for sites process, as set out previously in the report, including WIG/003, WIG/004, WIG/006, WIG/007, WIG/008 and WIG/010.



### Area 5: South of Briar Mead, Gartree High School and Beauchamp College



- 6.29 The land uses found within this area consists mainly of arable farmland which at the time of site visits had been recently ploughed. The area closer to Brocks Hill Country Park to the north was more grassland in nature and of a more unmanaged nature. There are however parts of the playing fields for Gartree High School and Beauchamp College that also lay within the green wedge boundary.
- 6.30 The northern and eastern boundaries of this area follow the outer limits of Oadby's urban edge, however, only takes account of around half the playing fields for the two schools mentioned above. The southern boundary of the area directly abuts a residential site allocation known as Cottage Farm, Oadby, at the time of the site visit Heras Fencing had been placed around the edge of the neighbouring field and earth mounds were present. Once built out, the area 5 will become more enclosed by built development. There are no formal vehicular access roads within this area. It is apparent that since the designation of the green wedge in 1999, the schools have extended their playing fields into the Green Wedge. As there is no built development in these land areas the use satisfies policy that seeks to protect the green wedges and provides a softer edge to the more prominent school buildings. Coombe Park runs along part of the southern boundary and provides a tree lined boundary.
- 6.31 Area 5 has very similar topographical features and changes in elevation to Area 4, which it directly abuts. Generally the highest point is the ridge line (that runs west to east), however in the far eastern corner of the area there is a peak of 120 metres above sea level. The land then falls away to the south to around 80 – 85 metres above sea level. There is a small brook which runs along the southern edge of Area 5, at the time of the site visit the brook was partially dry. According to the Environment Agency flood maps<sup>20</sup> there is a possibility that the area could be susceptible to surface water flooding.
- 6.32 Area 5 has no designated cycleways, byways, bridleways, however, does have a public right of way running along its southern boundary which allows unrestricted public access to the green wedge. The public right of way runs from the Coombe Rise area of Oadby southwards to the countryside areas of the Borough.
- 6.33 Although this area is in agricultural use and fields were ploughed at the time of the visit, the space is also used locally for public access purposes and this was evident whilst on site., There were

<sup>20</sup> [National government Check your long term flood risk \(check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk\)](https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk)

numerous walkers, dog walkers, joggers and a cyclist using the area at the time of the visit and therefore, the area also provides informal access for local residents as a recreational space.

- 6.34 Most of the vegetation within area 5 is situated on the arable fields themselves, however there are several mature hedgerows and scattered trees delineating each of these fields. The area provides a habitat for a variety of wildlife and a Red Kite was cited whilst on site.
- 6.35 There is intervisibility and intervisibility within this section of the green wedge with the edges of Oadby and Wigston being visible. The school buildings of Gartree High School and Beauchamp College have a particular strong presence on the edge of the green wedge boundary.
- 6.36 There has been an site submitted for consideration as a residential development option through the call for sites process within this area as set out previously in this report. This site is known as OAD/007: Land South of Sutton Close, Oadby and was for residential development of around 50 to 170 dwellings.



## Area 6: East of Sevenoaks Farm and West of Glen Gorse Golf Course



- 6.37 The land uses found within this area consists mainly of arable farmland which at the time of site visits had been recently ploughed.
- 6.38 The northern boundary of this area follows the field patterns of the adjacent assessment areas 4 and 5. The outer limits of Oadby's urban edge are visible. The eastern boundary of the area directly abuts a residential site allocation known as Cottage Farm, Oadby, at the time of the site visit Heras Fencing had been placed around the edge of the neighbouring field and earth mounds were present. Once built out Area 6 will be adjacent to the built form of the settlement of Oadby and it will become more enclosed by built development. There are no formal vehicular access roads within this area. The southern boundary of the assessment area abuts Glen Gorse Golf Course and the western edge is adjacent to agricultural fields which stretches out to the wider countryside.
- 6.39 The topography of Area 6 rises from the valley floor where the brook is located in a south-easterly direction towards the golf course. From the brook adjacent to Area 4 the area sits at around 100 metres above sea level, as stated the topography rises towards the golf course with the highest point being the ridge point at around 120 metres above sea level. The small brook runs along the northern edge of Area 6, at the time of the site visit the brook was partially dry. According to the Environment Agency flood maps<sup>21</sup> this area could be susceptible to surface water flooding.
- 6.40 Area 6 has no designated cycleways, byways, bridleways, however, does have a public right of way running through the centre which allows unrestricted public access to the green wedge. The public right of way runs from Tendring Drive through Area 4 and Area 6 before crossing Glen Gorse Golf Course and connecting to the wider Leicestershire countryside. There were also informal walkways which were well trodden along the northern boundary connecting to the field currently allocated for residential development.
- 6.41 Area 6 is a green space within an urban area, and provides formal and informal routeways. It appeared to be less utilised than the walkways located in adjacent area 4, this could be because area 4 is adjacent to the urban area of Wigston and Area 6 was located further away. Having said this, Area 6 will become adjacent to the built form of Oadby once the Cottage Farm residential allocation is built out and there has the prospect of performing a similar role to Area 4 in terms of level of usage as it will provide connectivity to the wider countryside and Brocks Hill Country Park.
- 6.42 The kissing gate linking the Area 6 with Area 4 was overgrown and unusable, however a farmers gate adjacent had been left open providing access to the public right of way which overcome this

<sup>21</sup> [National government Check your long term flood risk \(check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk\)](https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk)

access issue at the time of the site visit. If the farmer's gate was closed and locked this would act as a barrier to accessing Area 6. The public right of way had recently been ploughed which made it difficult for wayfinding.

- 6.43 Much of the vegetation within Area 6 is situated around the edge of the arable fields themselves. The vegetation was mature in nature along the northern edge with some high trees and shrubbery. As the northern edge is in the valley and at a low level Area 6 felt quite screened in this section of Area 6. This is opposed to the more elevated section of Area 6 where the area was a lot more visible from surrounding areas. There was also a small natural wooded area separating fields within Area 6 adjacent to sub area 4.
- 6.44 There is intervisibility within this section of the green wedge with the edges of Oadby and Wigston being visible, this was particularly noted when standing at the valley floor with properties within Oadby visible and the newly built properties in the Wigston Direction for Growth as this wouldn't have been the situation when undertaking site visits for the 2017 Green Wedge Review. Both settlements were also visible when standing from the elevated position, it is important to note that the built form of Oadby will be adjacent to the boundary of Area 6 once the Cottage Farm development is complete.
- 6.45 There have been a three sites submitted for consideration for residential development options through the call for sites process within this area as set out previously in this report. This includes WIG/007, WIG/008 and WIG/010.



## **7. Evaluation**

### **Introduction**

- 7.1 The evaluation criteria set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Joint Green Wedge Methodology Paper will be used to assess the green wedge on a macro level. This evaluation will consider each of the criteria in turn and are set out below.

### **Preventing the merging of settlements**

- 7.2 A strategic role of the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge is to ensure that there is clear separation between the settlements of Oadby, Wigston and the main Leicester conurbation.
- 7.3 There is intervisibility (seeing one settlement from the edge of the other) within the green wedge which is evident in several locations across the green wedge. This was particularly evident in assessment areas 4 and 5. The Cottage Farm, Oadby residential development will bring the built form of Oadby closer to Wigston along the southern section of the green wedge although the gap will be larger than the current narrowest part. Whilst on site visits in areas 4, 5 and 6 there was the perception that the physical gap between the settlements of Oadby and Wigston was relatively small in certain locations and this feeling was due to the undulating topography with the brook acting as the valley floor and vegetation not being strong in terms of screening when in elevated positions on ridgelines.
- 7.4 The green wedge acts as a buffer between Oadby and Wigston, the narrowest part of the green wedge is located along Wigston Road where the green wedge contains sporting facilities either side of this connecting road. The settlements of Oadby and Wigston have historically merged in this location where Wigston Road, Oadby merges into Oadby Road, Wigston and the settlement signage (outside of the green wedge) demarcates the different settlements. The narrowest part of the green wedge therefore does not prevent the merging of settlements in its strictest sense as they have already merged although for someone who was unfamiliar with the area this narrow section provides a break in residential development which may give the perception of a transition between settlements.
- 7.5 The Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge aids the separation of the settlements of Oadby and Wigston.

### **Guiding development form**

- 7.6 The green wedge has successfully guided the development form of the settlements of Oadby and Wigston. As the green wedge penetrates the urban area, the green wedge has guided development form to allow for this green lung to remain. As the green wedge emerges out of the urban area into the wider Leicestershire countryside, agricultural uses are the prominent land use resulting in the green wedge being of an open aspect. This is particularly evident adjacent to areas 4 and 5 where the urban fringe has exposed settlement edges with both Oadby and Wigston being located on higher ground.
- 7.7 The central section of the green wedge is strongly influenced by the presence of Brocks Hill Country Park, and it plays an important role in guiding development form in this area with its woodlands and meadows.
- 7.8 There are identified flood risk areas adjacent to the Wash Brook which flows through the Green Wedge as it moves westwards from its source east of Oadby to its confluence with the River Soar in Leicester and surface water flooding around the brook which flows through the green wedge. The green wedge provides flood alleviation benefits through natural flood management and is particularly valuable to communities living upstream of the Wash Brook.



- 7.9 When determining the locations of new development, the green wedge will guide the development form of these new communities. It will be important to ensure the new neighbourhoods are defined, that they are designed in a way which brings the countryside into the urban area, and, there are appropriate landscape buffers.

### **Providing a green lung into urban areas**

- 7.10 The green wedge abuts the conurbations of Oadby, Wigston and Leicester and expands outwards creating a green lung outwards and into the open countryside for these communities. It is an important designation as it provides green infrastructure and wildlife links between the Leicester conurbation the wider Leicestershire countryside. It enhances the attractiveness of the urban fringe whilst enabling urban residents to take advantage of the countryside beyond, improving the quality of life of residents.
- 7.11 The green wedge helps to preserve and promote wildlife and landscape character. For instance, Brocks Hill Country Park and its surrounds is an important resource which is rich in wildlife, and is characterised by broad leaved plantation woodland, wild meadows and ponds which all support flora and fauna. The Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester and Leicestershire (2017)<sup>22</sup> recognises the important role green wedges play in relation to providing multi-functional green infrastructure and supporting the ecological network. One of the opportunity areas identified is the Wigston Green Wedge Access Project, the aim of this opportunity is to enhance green infrastructure assets within the green wedge for access to nature and ecological connectivity. Brocks Hill is one most important sites within the Borough in terms of functional value for the local community and a biodiversity asset. This was evident from the level of use identified whilst on the site visits.
- 7.12 The Green Infrastructure Strategy (2017) identifies the green wedge should 'work harder' in terms of green infrastructure and notes an opportunity entitled the Oadby and Wigston Green Way, this recommends that there is an attractive, accessible pedestrian/cycle route from the city towards Brocks Hill Country Park and beyond. This would be a positive opportunity in terms of access and recreation especially as demand for development occurs. There is a value in the role which open landscape plays visually and in terms of improving quality of life and bringing biodiversity benefits.
- 7.13 The National Planning Practice Guidance on the Natural Environment<sup>23</sup> highlights that '*Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services*'. It is clear from the desktop survey and site visits that the Green Wedge performs positively in this regard.
- 7.14 Although there are no air quality management areas within the Borough the green wedge provides a green lung due to the busy road infrastructure present (A563 Palmerston Way and the B582 Wigston Road) as it provides a green buffer.
- 7.15 It is evident that the green wedge does provide a green lung for both the immediate green wedge area and at the wider level sustaining positive green infrastructure routes and aids connectivity into the countryside from the urban areas of the Borough. Due to the nature of Brocks Hill Country Park it is recognised that this can also provide a green lung to communities beyond the immediate urban areas due to its wide appeal and strategic importance.

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<sup>22</sup> [Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester and Leicestershire \(2017\)](http://llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk)  
([llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk](http://llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk))

<sup>23</sup> [NPPG Natural Environment Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 8-005-20190721 \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/617622/nppg-natural-environment-paragraph-005-reference-id-8-005-20190721.pdf)

## A recreational resource

- 7.16 There are several public and private recreational amenities within the green wedge which can be accessed from each of the settlements. These include:
- Brocks Hill Country Park
  - Allotments
  - Woodland Walks
  - Football Ground (stadium)
  - Rugby Training Ground
  - Leicester Racecourse
  - Golf Course
  - Public Rights of Way
  - School Playing Fields
  - Leisure Centre
- 7.17 These recreational resources provide access to the green wedge for residents of the Borough and draws people in from beyond the wider surrounding area.
- 7.18 There is a good network of access paths within the green wedge were consisted of public rights of way, informal walk ways and the numerous pathways in and around Brocks Hill Country Park. Most of the public right of ways were of good quality with clear signage to aid the legibility of the routes, they also appeared to be well utilised. Informal routes were evident which diverged from the more formal routes.
- 7.19 Abutting the boundary of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston but within the wider green wedge is Knighton Park in Leicester City. This is a large formal park with access to numerous paths, play areas, sports pitches, tennis courts, gym equipment and woodland walks which provides a continuation of the recreational resource within the green wedge.
- 7.20 The green wedge is important in terms of enabling healthy lifestyles. The National Planning Practice Guidance on Healthy and safe communities<sup>24</sup>notes how positive planning can contribute to healthier communities through the *'design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure are major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together in two ways: in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system'*. The green wedge helps to promote healthy lifestyles through the provision of open space and recreational facilities, as well as green routeways for walking and cycling.

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<sup>24</sup> [NPPG Healthy and Safe Communities Paragraph: 001 Reference ID:53-001-20190722 \(gov.uk\)](#)

## 8. Recommendations and conclusions

- 8.1 Strategically, at a macro level, the Green Wedge meets the four green wedge functions. This section of the Green Wedge Review will draw together all the findings of the desk top survey and site visits to assess how the green wedge performs at a micro level against the functions.

### **Area 1: Land adjacent to Palmerston Way, including Leicester Golf Course and Leicester Racecourse North**

- 8.2 This area is made up of differing land uses, the area to the north of Palmerston Way is a natural space made up of grassland and copses. This contrasts with the area to the south of Palmerston Way which are man-made and maintained private recreational spaces in the form of Leicester Racecourse and Leicester Golf Centre. This area provides a recreational resource via private access but also via public rights of way which run through the area.
- 8.3 The area acts as a green lung which accommodates a mix of uses that relate to the local community whilst containing areas that promote biodiversity. The area provides connectivity of green and blue infrastructure spaces and corridors which deliver a range of green infrastructure functions such as lessening the impact of climate change, reducing water runoff, and providing areas for biodiversity and allowing connectivity between them.
- 8.4 This area of the green wedge penetrates the urban fabric of Oadby and Leicester enabling a visual and physical separation between the conurbations.

### **Area 2: Leicester Racecourse South and North of Wigston Road**

- 8.5 Although physically Oadby and Wigston are joined along the Oadby Road/Wigston Road/Sandy Rise junction, road users continue along Wigston Road where a green break in the built form occurs when the allotments are reached and this green breaks gives the feeling of separation. This area serves the role of preventing the merging of settlements in the wider context.
- 8.6 The area guides development form by retaining a visual green break between the settlements of Oadby and Wigston and provides a sense of arrival and clear divide between the two.
- 8.7 As highlighted in the site surveys this area of the green wedge is multifunctional in terms of the uses provided within this section and there are several sports and recreational facilities within this area. The sports facilities are privately owned but are an important local asset to the local community. There are also allotments within this section of the green wedge which provide a recreational resource and act as a green lung.
- 8.8 Similarly to Area 1, the area provides a green lung as it supports the continuation of the green and blue infrastructure network which separates the main urban settlements of the Borough enabling many green infrastructure functions to be realised whilst supporting connectivity for biodiversity and ecological resilience.
- 8.9 Wigston Road is an important local transport route which connects Oadby and Wigston and enables both vehicular and pedestrian connectivity to the recreational opportunities provided within Area 2 and 3.

### **Area 3: Brocks Hill Country Park and surrounds**

- 8.10 Similarly to Area 2, physically, Oadby and Wigston are joined along the Oadby Road/Wigston Road/Sandy Rise junction, road users continue along Wigston Road where a green break in the built form occurs when the allotments are reached and this green breaks gives the feeling of separation. This area serves the role of preventing the merging of settlements in the wider context. Brocks Hill Country Park is an area of young woodland and meadows and by its very nature aids the separation of settlements and guide development form as the planting schemes provide natural screening.

- 8.11 There are three predominant uses within this area which all relate to leisure and recreation. Brocks Hill County Park, a Football Ground and Parklands Leisure Centre with the former Brocks Hill Visitor Centre being used as offices for Oadby and Wigston Borough Council. The area acts as both a recreational resource and a green lung. Brocks Hill Country Park is an important green infrastructure asset and is a popular recreational area which was evident during the site visits. Brocks Hill provides a popular area for both community and wildlife. In contrast the football club and Parklands Leisure Centre area characterised by being a more managed and developed area. The topography rises towards Brocks Hill and trees and woodland are a common landscape feature within this area.
- 8.12 Brocks Hill should be supported and sensitively managed to ensure it remains a positive green infrastructure resource and links to the asset should be maintained and improved to maximise access.
- 8.13 It is considered that non material, i.e more minor changes to the boundaries of this sub area would not significantly impact the functioning of the Green Wedge.

#### **Area 4: Land East of Wigston Meadows**

- 8.14 This area is located to the east of the Wigston Meadows Estate and provides a strategic role in guiding development form and preventing the coalescence of Oadby and Wigston. The area is sensitive due to the topography with the water course acting as the valley floor and the topography rising towards Wigston and Oadby on either side. This topographical feature aids the intervisibility of the two settlements, where this is more evident is the fields adjacent to Tendring Drive. Area 5 of the green wedge is particularly visible from this area due to the rising topography.
- 8.15 The Area provides an important role as a green lung and recreational resource with public rights of way running from Wigston (Tendring Drive) and linking to Oadby and the wider countryside. There are also several informal walkways from the edge of Wigston which link to the formal public right of way as well as an informal walkway which links into Brocks Hill Country Park. This area is important locally for access to the countryside and provides residents located in the Wigston Meadows area pedestrian access to Brocks Hill Country Park which is identified as a key Borough green infrastructure asset, without this access residents in this area would more likely use private vehicular modes of transport to access this space.
- 8.16 It is considered that non material, i.e more minor changes to the boundaries of this sub area would not significantly impact the functioning of the Green Wedge.

#### **Area 5: South of Briar Mead, Gartree High School and Beauchamp College**

- 8.17 This section of the green wedge is on the urban edge of Oadby and as highlighted in the site surveys, there is intervisibility within this section of the green wedge with the edges of Oadby and Wigston being visible. The school buildings of Gartree High School and Beauchamp College have a particular strong presence on the edge of the green wedge boundary. The prominence of the built up area is partly due to the topography of this area of the green wedge with fields rising towards Oadby. This section of the green wedge helps to prevent the merging of settlements.
- 8.18 The area guides development form and there is a strong urban edge to the rear of the properties located on Tilton Close and Sutton Close with a more transient green edge of the school playing fields before the rear of the school buildings which are a prominent feature on the sky line. Having said this, the Cottage Farm development will have an impact on this section of the green wedge once built and therefore could impact on the evaluation of this area of the green wedge.

- 8.19 The area acts as a green lung providing connectivity from Brocks Hill County Park and the wider open countryside. The area contains mature vegetation around the field boundaries in the form of hedgerows and scattered trees and provides a habitats for a variety of wildlife.
- 8.20 The area is publicly accessible via public rights of way which appear to be well utilised and provide a recreational resource.
- 8.21 It is considered that non material, i.e more minor changes to the boundaries of this sub area would not significantly impact the functioning of the Green Wedge.

### **Area 6: East of Sevenoaks Farm and West of Glen Gorse Golf Course**

- 8.22 This section of the green wedge was designated through the Local Plan which was adopted in 2019 because of a recommendation in the previous Green wedge.
- 8.23 Area 6 provides a continuation of the green active travel routes connecting Wigston and Oadby to the wider open countryside. There are both formal public rights of way as well as informal walkways in this section of the green wedge which were well trodden demonstrating that this area acts as a recreational resource to the local communities of Oadby and Wigston promoting healthier living and positive well-being.
- 8.24 The area acts as a green lung providing green infrastructure connections and linkages through the countryside to assets such as Glen Gorse Golf Course and Brocks Hill. Surrounding the area was mature vegetation in the form of hedgerows, scattered and clusters of trees, as well as a water course which provides important habitats for wildlife as well connectivity to improve ecological resilience.
- 8.25 There is intervisibility within this section of the green wedge with the edges of Oadby and Wigston being visible, this was particularly noted when standing at the valley floor with properties within Oadby visible and the newly built properties in the Wigston Direction for Growth as this wouldn't have been the situation when undertaking site visits for the 2017 Green Wedge Review. Both settlements were also visible when standing from the elevated position, it is important to note that the built form of Oadby will be adjacent to the boundary of Area 6 once the Cottage Farm development is complete and therefore this section of the green wedge will have a key role regarding guiding development form, in addition to preventing the merging of settlements.
- 8.26 It is considered that non material, i.e more minor changes to the boundaries of this sub area would not significantly impact the functioning of the Green Wedge.

### **Potential revisions to the Green Wedge**

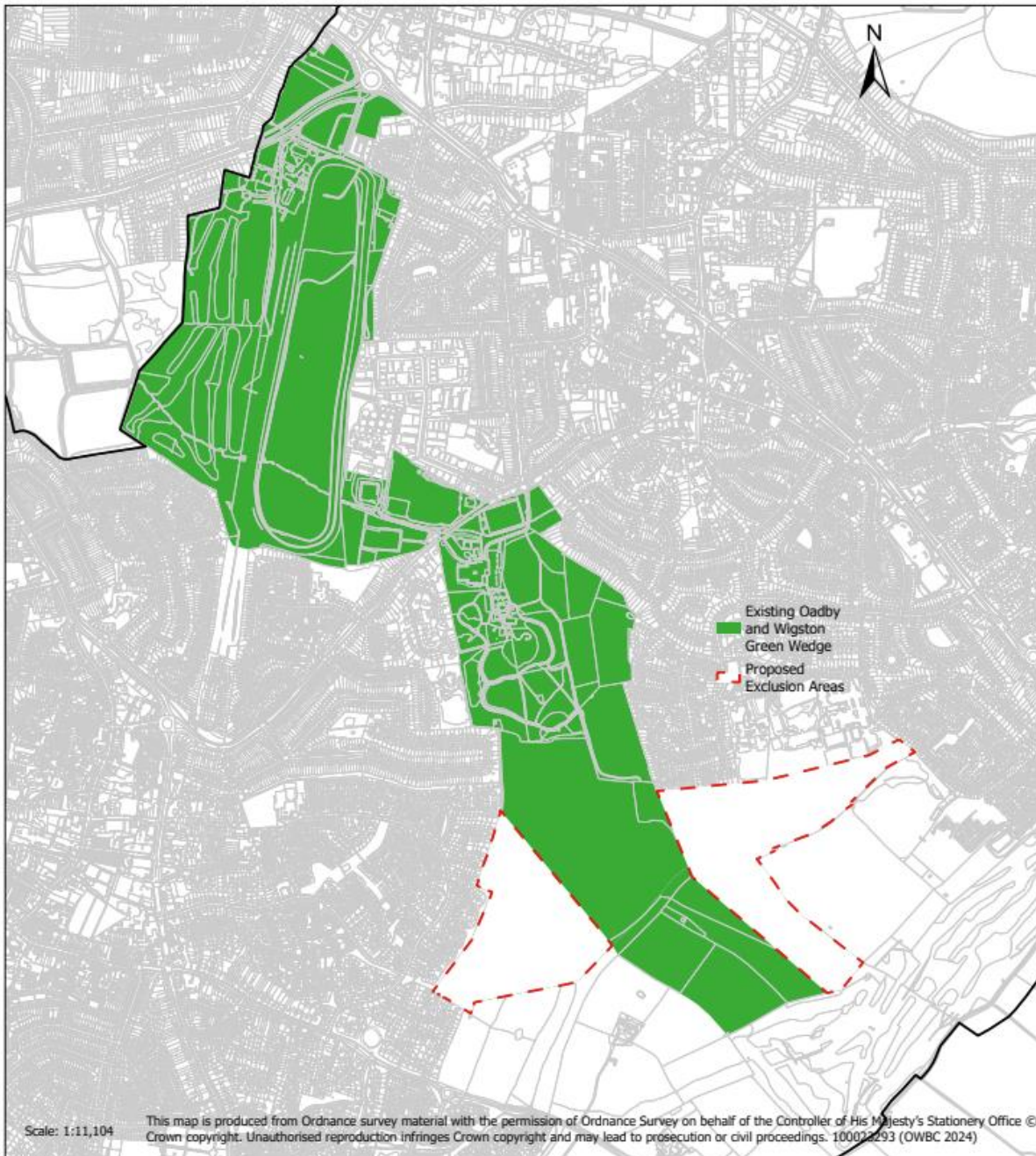
- 8.27 Two boundary amendments were made to the green wedge through the adoption of the Local Plan (2019). These amendments included the addition of:
- Lucas Marsh Local Nature Reserve
  - Area 6: East of Sevenoaks Farm and West of Glen Gorse Golf Course
- 8.28 This assessment has determined that the areas have been a successful additions to the green wedge, aiding its function.
- 8.29 Since the last Green Wedge Review was completed, there have been no significant planning applications which have resulted in new developments taking place in the green wedge to require amendments to the boundary due to new uses. Many of the applications have been changes to existing uses or built structures within the green wedge.

- 8.30 However, the Council has a clear housing requirement to meet for the Plan period 2020-2041. The draft Local Plan's Spatial Strategy outlines the housing requirement to build 5,040 homes in the Plan period. Accounting for completions and commitments as of April 2024 and planning with a buffer, the Council has to allocate land for a remaining circa 3,500 dwellings. Of the 33 sites submitted to the Council through the Call for Sites process, 9 sites fully or partially fall within the boundary of the green wedge. Specifically, one site falls into area 1, four sites fall into area 4, one site falls into area 5, two sites fall into area 6, and one site falls into both areas 4 and 6.
- 8.31 All sites submitted as part of the Call for Sites process were considered by the Council. Detailed conclusions are evidenced in the Site Methodology and Rationale Paper.
- 8.32 Whilst the Council's preferred approach to the type of land on which housing is delivered is via a sequential approach utilising previously developed land in the town centres and urban areas in the first instance, these areas are extremely limited in terms of available land, as over the years the Council has 'sweated' these areas as much as it can. Because of this, the sites submitted to the Council through the Call for Sites process were in the main on greenfield sites. As discussed, many of these fall within the existing Green Wedge. Through the site selection methodology, as outlined in the Site Assessment Methodology & Rationale Paper, the Council has assessed sites and made informed decisions on land suitability for development.
- 8.33 The Council also considered evidence and the need to maximise use of space to allocate new land. The Council's approach for delivering housing is to 'build big' to prevent piecemeal development and deliver the infrastructure made necessary by the development as infrastructure delivery has not, in the past, always kept pace with new development. The Site Assessment paper concluded that the site proposed in area 1 of the green wedge (site OAD/005) for potential employment use is not required in the 2020-2041 Plan period.
- 8.34 Considering the above, no change has been proposed to the Oadby and Green wedge areas 1, 2 and 3. This is due to limited development interest and the green wedge areas working well as they are in fulfilling all four objectives of a green wedge.
- 8.35 Considering the housing requirement, as well as the desktop surveys and site surveys assessments in the report, the Council has had to take a flexible approach to changing exact boundaries of the Southern half of the green wedge to accommodate its housing need and protect the countryside. Green Wedge areas 4, 5 and 6 have therefore seen some form of change to their exact boundaries.
- 8.36 The boundary changes come after having exhausted other options in the 'three-pronged' approach of first building in town centres, then on small sites within or lying adjacent to the urban area and eventually on large allocations. More information can be found in the draft Local Plan's Spatial Strategy (Policy 1). Where the green wedge boundaries have been revised, only the amount of green wedge land needed to ensure the Borough's housing needs can be met have been proposed for de-designation.
- 8.37 Exact new proposed boundaries for the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge are shown in figure 7.
- 8.38 In summary, the proposed changes have been to de-designate the previous 'wing' like stretches of the green wedge in areas 4 and 5, and reduce area 6. The reduction to areas 4 and 6 are to allow the building out of further stages of the existing Cottage Farm development in Oadby. Proposed development on area 5 would be a new housing development, part of the Council's 'build-big' approach. In total, the proposed change represents a reduction from 193.3 hectares to 159.6 hectares of land designated as Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge. This is a reduction of 17.4%. The current adopted green wedge is around 1.6km wide at its widest (from the field boundary adjacent to Denbydale Road, Wigston, to the edge of the field boundary adjacent to Coombe Rise, Oadby) and around 173 metres at its narrowest (along Wigston Road, Oadby). The proposed changes reduce the widest point to around 1km (from the back of Brighton Avenue to Leicester

Road/Palmerston Way roundabout). The narrowest point remains the same. The biggest overall reduction of green wedge is seen in area 4.

- 8.39 Land de-designated from green wedge have been on sites deemed the most sustainable for housing development in the Borough. The opportunity of benefits to the Borough through its allocation are seen to outweigh the benefits to the public of retaining the land as undeveloped green wedge. It is important to note that as discussed in the above sections, areas 4, 5 and 6 are some of the least accessible parts of the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge. The site allocations in this part of the Borough must enable linkages into the remaining green wedge through improved access and landscaping which seek to enable new and improved linkages for walking, cycling and wheeling routes in and around the area, once built out. At present, much of the green wedge proposed for de-designation is not easily accessible. All open space in new development in the green wedge will be publicly accessible. The open space and active travel routes brought forward by development in de-designated green wedge areas have the opportunity to bring important positive implications to the Borough's residents through promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing traffic and congestion on Wigston Road (the B582) and improving access to all other parts of the green wedge and into the wider countryside.
- 8.40 The new boundaries are robust and defensible in meeting the four objectives of a green wedge. Although the 'wings' had provided a strong buffer in preventing the merging of settlements, amendments to the green wedge guides development as an extension to the existing urban areas without merging the settlements of Oadby and Wigston. The proposed changes ensure the green wedge continues to work as a strong green lung between the urban areas and into the countryside, with more opportunities for use by the community in being a better recreational resource for generations to come throughout the Borough.
- 8.41 Although the amendments to the green wedge represent a 17.4% reduction, the proposed green wedge will continue to meet all four objectives of a green wedge on a macro scale.

Figure 7. Illustration of changes to the Oadby and Wigston green wedge





### The Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge

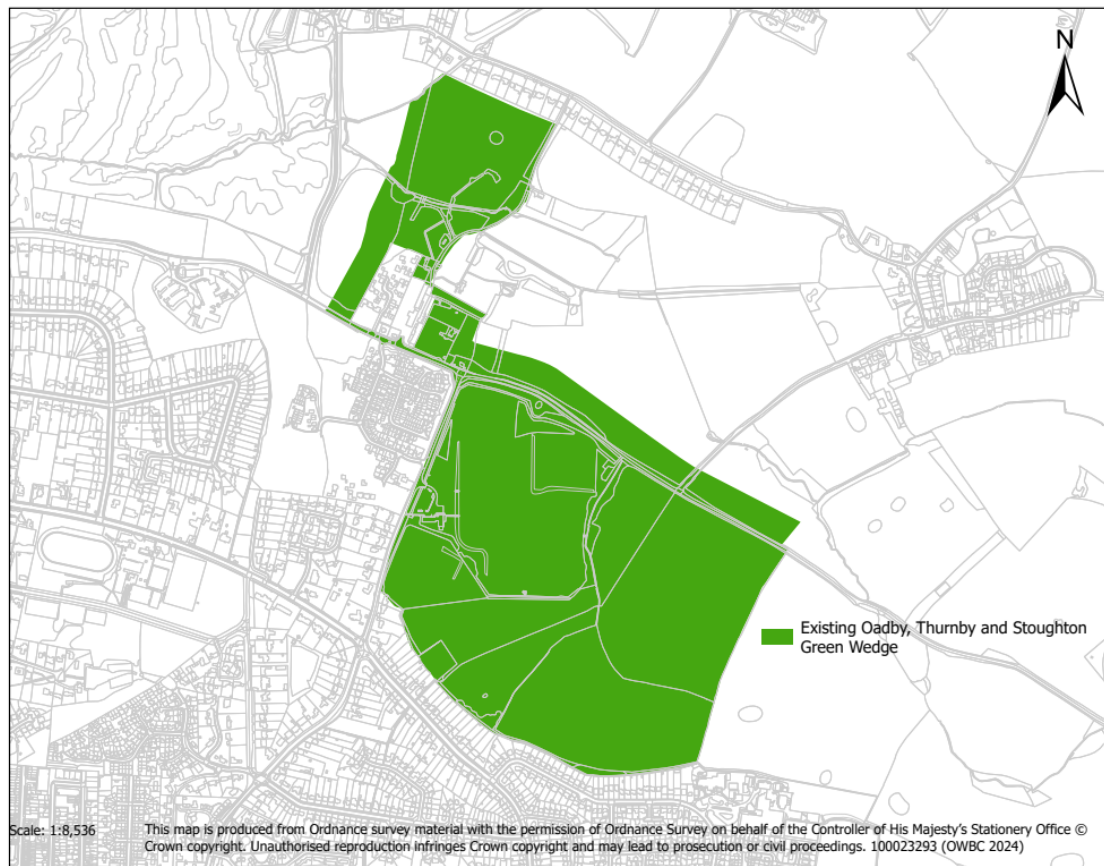


## 9. Desktop Survey

### Introduction

- 9.1 A desktop survey has been undertaken to review the Green Wedge's functions at a macro level. It is important to note that only a small section of this Green Wedge falls within the Borough and covers a larger area spanning into Harborough District and Leicester City administrative areas.

Figure 8. Map of existing Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge



### Historical landscapes and archaeological remains

- 9.2 Historic landscape characterisation (HLC) is a method of identification and interpretation of the varying historic character within an area. It reveals the patterns and connections within a landscape, spatially and through time, for example in relation to buildings and patterns (of fields, streets and routeways). The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project included an assessment of the green wedge area. The south-western section of green wedge is characterised by fields and enclosed land, in particular:
- Large Irregular Fields - This grouping is made up of Large Irregular Fields exhibiting a significant number of sinuous boundaries, which cannot be assigned to one of the other character types. This HLC Type has been formed primarily through changes in agricultural practice which begin during the late 19th century and continue through much of the 20th. Some blocks of fields that fall within this HLC Type are likely to be the product of the land management practices of larger estates.

- Planned Enclosure -Planned Enclosure includes small or large fields with boundaries showing a geometric planned appearance. Laid out by surveyors this HLC Type is the result of later enclosure dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. This type includes commons enclosed by Act of Parliament.

9.3 Within the Green Wedge there are number of known archaeological sites and historic buildings, these include:

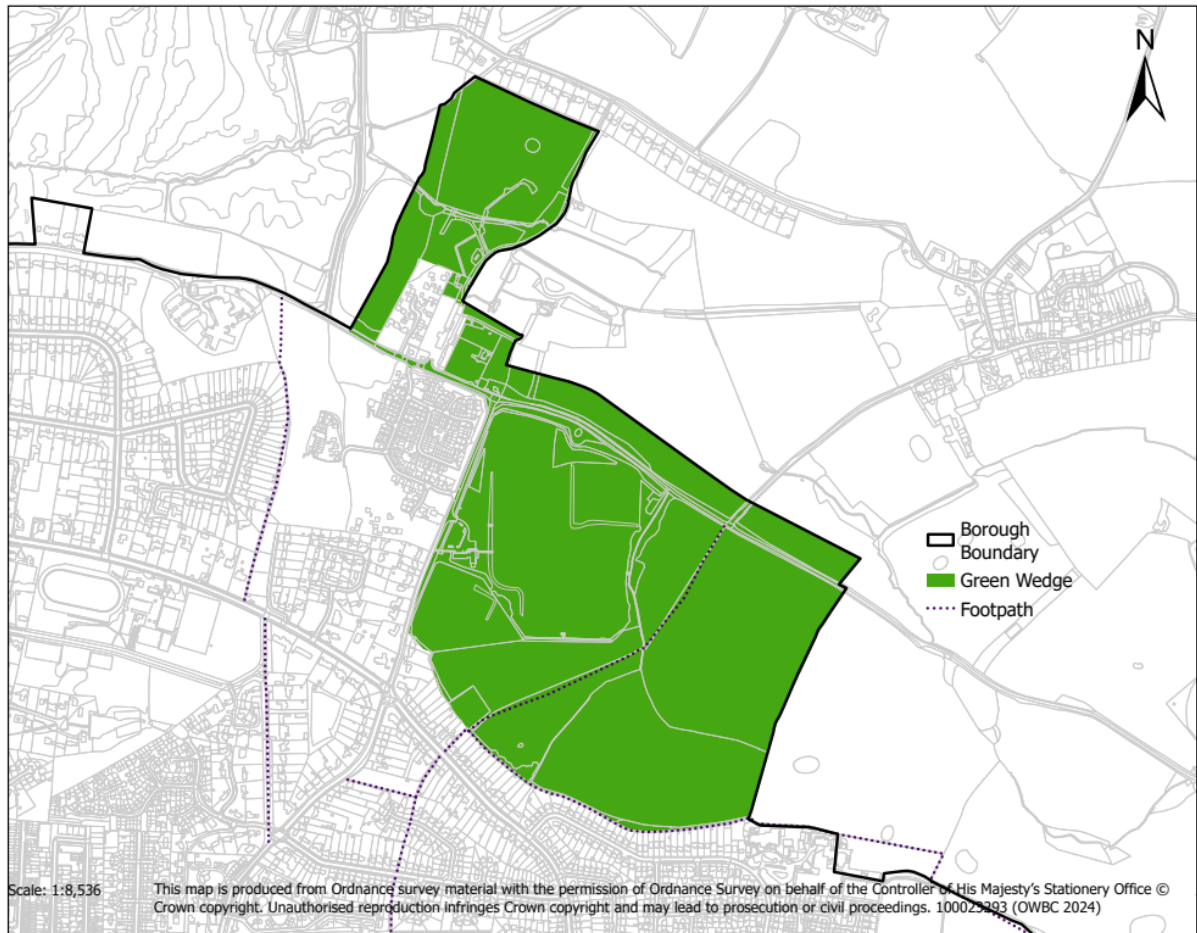
- Roman Road - Gartree Road
- Stoughton Grange mansion, Stoughton (crosses boundary with Harborough DC)
- Parkland at Stoughton Grange including Dam's Spinney, Stoughton (crosses boundary with Harborough DC and Leicester City Council)
- Earthwork west of Brook Spinney, Stoughton (crosses boundary with Harborough DC)
- Flint scatter south of Dam's Spinney (Stoughton Estate Survey Fields 1, 2, 7 & 8), Stoughton
- Iron Age/Roman site south of Dam's Spinney (Stoughton Estate Survey Field 1), Stoughton
- Medieval buckle from south of Dam's Spinney, Oadby
- Possible Roman site east of University Playing Fields (Stoughton Estate Survey Field 7), Stoughton
- Anglo-Saxon pottery found east of University Playing Fields (Stoughton Estate Survey Field 7), Stoughton
- Anglo-Saxon pottery from south of Dam's Spinney (Stoughton Estate Survey Field 1), Stoughton
- South Lodge, Gartree Road (North Side), Oadby
- Roman pottery found north-east of Manor Road Extension (Stoughton Estate Survey Field 8), Stoughton (crosses boundary with Harborough DC)
- Post-medieval/modern formal gardens, Stoughton Grange, Oadby
- The Pantiles (vine house and garden), Gartree Road, Oadby
- Medieval/post-medieval pond north-west of Stoughton Grange, Stoughton (crosses boundary with Leicester City Council)

### Access

9.4 There are several public rights of way (see figure 9) which run through the green wedge area. There are two rights of way which can be accessed from Manor Road extension, one leads through agricultural fields to Gartree Road/Gaulby Lane and the second runs along the rear of properties off Copse Close and the Manor High School Campus before splitting into two and leading to Windrush Drive and Gartree Road.

9.5 Public access is also provided as part of the University of Leicester Sports Pitches located off Stoughton Road.

Figure 9. Map of footpaths in and around the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge.



## Land use within the Green wedge

9.6 There are various land uses within the green wedge these include:

- Agricultural Land
- Farm Park
- Sports pitches
- Residential property and curtilage



9.7 Adjacent/nearby land uses include:

- Shady Lane Arboretum
- Stoughton Grange Shopping Centre
- Agricultural land
- Existing residential development
- Residential developments under construction

## Ecology

9.8 The Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey, Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline and Local Wildlife Site Assessment (2024) assessed the sites falling in the green wedge. The survey highlighted that there were habitats present within the site to potentially support reptiles, amphibians, bats and birds. While there are some good habitat connectivity, some woodland parcels are less well connected, or not connected.

9.9 The Leicestershire Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026<sup>25</sup> identifies Priority Habitats and Species and there is evidence within the green wedge of habitats and species on this list this includes (but are not limited to) bats, mature trees and hedgerows (species-rich hedgerows are present within the green wedge). From information provided by the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre, it is also evident that the green wedge includes significant habitats, species and other features which are priority habitats or species, or which may act to support or function as habitats, wildlife corridors or stepping stones within the wider landscape and which may support priority species. The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey highlighted that mature trees are a priority habitat within the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan and act as an important habitat resource for hole-nesting birds, roosting bats, fungi, lichens and saproxylic insects and that concentrations of mature trees are particularly valuable.

<sup>25</sup> [Space for Wildlife – the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026 \(lrwt.org.uk\)](https://www.lrwt.org.uk)

9.10 Local Wildlife Sites are spread across the green wedge, these sites are a mix of potential, candidate and notified local wildlife sites<sup>26</sup> and are listed below:

- Roadside near Stoughton Farm Park
- Gartree Road Mature Trees
- Oadby, boundary hedgerow

9.11 There are also several Local Wildlife sites which abut the boundary of the green wedge or fall within the wider green wedge adjacent to the Oadby and Wigston border and form important stepping stone habitats these include:

- Stoughton Grange, Dam's Spinney and Lake
- Leicestershire Golf Course and adjacent Sites
- Stackyard Spinney
- Mature pedunculate oak

9.12 From the desktop review in relation to ecology the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green wedge provides an important role in providing habitat connectivity and stepping stones which helps facilitate animal migration and movement. This is particularly important due to the urban nature of the surrounding area and the green wedge provides the links from the urban area into the countryside, whilst protecting the network of natural habitats and nature conservation areas.



### Water management

9.13 There are two unnamed ordinary watercourses which run through the green wedge. One which runs through northern section of the green wedge which is a tributary to the Evington Brook which flows through the wider green wedge area. The second is an unnamed watercourse which delineates agricultural field boundaries to the western section of the green wedge.

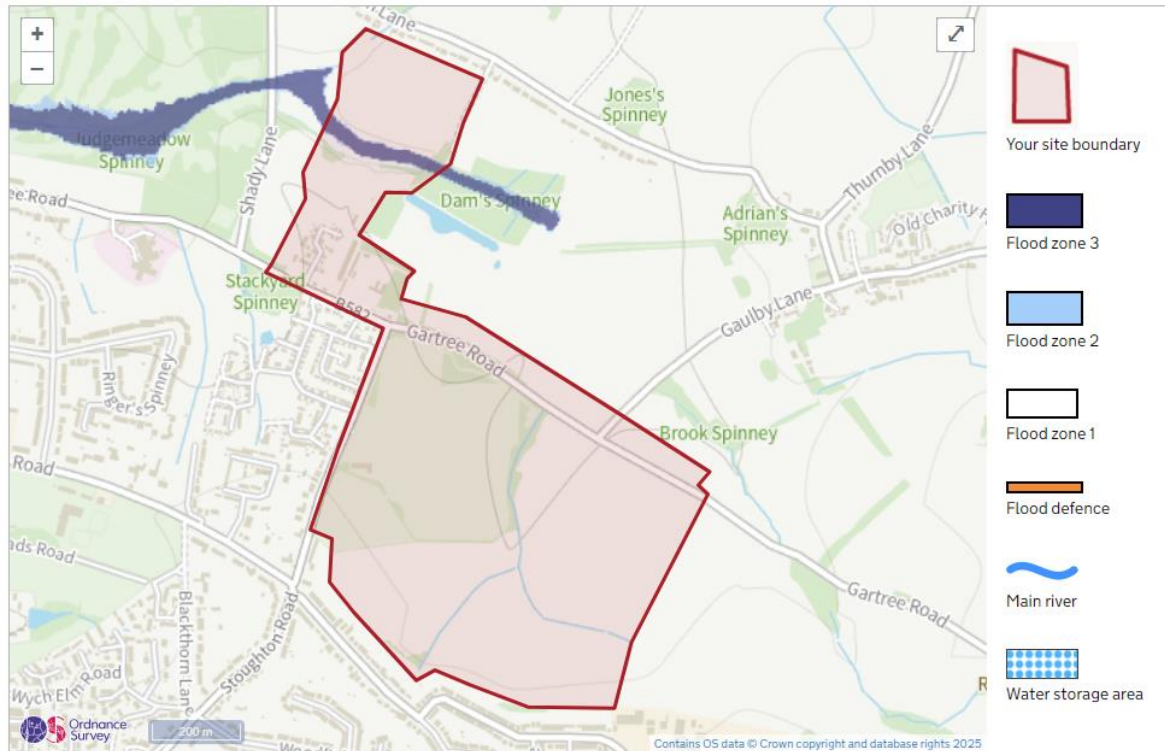
9.14 As shown in figure 10, and identifiable on the Environment Agency flooding maps<sup>27</sup>, Flood Zones 2 and 3 fall within the green wedge, this area of flooding follows the tributary of the Evington Brook. These flood zones continue to follow the route of the Evington Brook in the wider green wedge area through Shady Lane Arboretum and Leicestershire Golf Course.

<sup>26</sup> Source: Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre

<sup>27</sup> [National Government: Flood Map for Planning \(flood-map-for-planning-service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/362222/flood-map-for-planning-service.gov.uk)

- 9.15 The Environment Agency's Surface Water Map<sup>28</sup> also indicate the area to the south of Gartree Road and North of Gartree Road are at high risk of surface water flooding.

Figure 10. Flood zone map for The Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge. Source: Environment Agency (<https://www.flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>) Note, the site boundary of the green wedge has been drawn as accurately as possible with the tools provided.



## Air Quality

- 9.16 The Oadby and Wigston Air Quality Annual Status Report (2022)<sup>29</sup> identifies that there are no air quality management areas (AQMA) within the Borough. There are no air quality monitoring devices located within or within close proximity to the Oadby Thurnby and Stoughton Green wedge.

## Connection to green infrastructure in the wider area

- 9.17 The Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester and Leicestershire (2017)<sup>30</sup> recognises the important role green wedges play in relation to providing multi-functional green infrastructure. The Green Wedge is identified as a green infrastructure asset within the Study and Green Infrastructure Opportunities identified.

<sup>28</sup> National government: Check Long Term Flood Risk Service ([check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk](https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/))

<sup>29</sup> Oadby and Wigston Air Quality Annual Status Report (2022) ([oadby-wigston.gov.uk](https://oadby-wigston.gov.uk/))

<sup>30</sup> Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester and Leicestershire (2017) ([llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk](https://llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk/))



9.18 One of the identified opportunity areas which skirts the northern edge of the green wedge within Oadby and Wigston (but continues across the wider green wedge) is the 'Great Stretton Green Way', the aim of this opportunity is to create an attractive accessible pedestrian/cycle route to historic villages and heritage features. The Study also highlights the potential of this northern section of the green wedge to be an active travel route, the main principles to be encouraged are as follows:

- Enable both on and off road sustainable transport routes and provide safe crossing points on roads.
- Protect, enhance and create access and connectivity between existing and future urban areas, employment centres and parks, green corridors and GI assets.
- Contribute to the creation of joint heritage and wildlife trails.

9.19 The Study recommends that green wedges 'work harder' by delivering a range of green infrastructure benefits to their neighbouring communities.

### Minerals and Waste Plan

9.20 The Adopted Leicester and Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (up to 2031) (2019)<sup>31</sup>the supporting text to the Plan sets out how mineral and waste operations should be considered within green wedges. It states '*Mineral developments would be acceptable in a Green wedge provided that appropriate measures are taken to ensure that such development does not adversely affect the Green wedge's strategic planning function. Waste developments are, in the main, less appropriate in Green wedge locations. However, there may be benefits of siting facilities close to the waste arising or the particular locational requirements of certain types of waste development means that they may best be placed away from sensitive urban uses. In these instances land on the urban fringe may provide the most sustainable option. Nevertheless, any proposal for waste management development in the Green wedge would still need to comply with appropriate policies*'.

9.21 The accompanying Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Document for Oadby and Wigston (2015)<sup>32</sup> highlights that there are no mineral or waste safeguarding areas which fall within the green wedge.

### Development Management decisions within the Green Wedge

9.22 The historical Planning Applications contained in Table 12 have been identified as having a potential impact on the Green wedge, applications which were perceived to have little impact on the green wedge or were withdrawn have not been included within the table.

<sup>31</sup> [Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Up to 2031 \(2019\) \(Leicestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leicestershire-minerals-and-waste-local-plan-up-to-2031-2019)

<sup>32</sup> [Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Document for Oadby and Wigston \(2015\) \(leicestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leicestershire-minerals-and-waste-safeguarding-document-for-oadby-and-wigston-2015)



**Table 2. Planning Applications within the Green wedge**

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
<b>19/00330/LBC</b>	Grange Lodge 3 Gartree Road Oadby Leicestershire LE2 2FG	Replacement of the lead flashing to the ridges of the hipped roof sections.	Grant
<b>19/00421/FUL</b>	Leicester University Sports Ground Stoughton Road Oadby Leicestershire LE2 4FS	Installation of floodlighting system to provide 18no. 15 metre high columns with mounted LED lighting to existing sports pitches.	Grant
<b>20/00166/FUL</b>	Stoughton Farm Park Gartree Road Oadby Leicester Leicestershire LE2 2FB	Change of use of existing stables (Use Class: Sui Generis) to a dog grooming business (Use Class: Sui Generis), the erection of wire fencing, and associated alterations [Re-submission of 20/00009/FUL].	Grant
<b>21/00096/FUL</b>	Land North Of South Lodge Stoughton Farm Park Gartree Road Oadby Leicester Leicestershire LE2 2FB	Use of land for the siting of twelve units of accommodation made up of six timber pods, five yurts and one 'Safari' tent for occupation as holiday lets with ancillary use of land for recreation and car parking.	Grant

### **Evidence of development pressures**

- 9.23 The Council's three formal Call for Sites Public Consultations took place from Midday Friday, 25 September 2020 until Midday Friday, 20 November 2020, as well as alongside the Regulation 18A Public Consultation on the emerging new Local Plan Issues and Options Draft from midday Friday, 3 September 2021 and midday Friday, 29 October 2021. Most recently, it completed a Call for Sites alongside the Regulation 18B Public Consultation on the emerging new Local Plan Preferred Options from midday Wednesday, 3 April 2024, to midday Wednesday, 15 May 2024.
- 9.24 The following site options were submitted for housing and economic development through this process and are located within the Oadby, Thurnby Stoughton Green wedge:
- OAD/001 – Land at Stoughton Grange Farm, Oadby - Leisure and Recreation
  - OAD/002 Land South of Gartree Road, Oadby – Residential, approximately 467 dwellings.

- OAD/009 - Land South of Gartree Road and East of Stoughton Road, Oadby (Primary Masterplan) - Residential approximately 600 dwellings and approximately 0.4 hectares of Commercial or Community uses.
- OAD/010 - Land South of Gartree Road and East of Stoughton Road, Oadby (Variant Option 1) – Residential, approximately 380 dwellings, and approximately 0.4 hectares of Commercial or Community uses, plus a Cemetery.
- OAD/011 - Land South of Gartree Road and East of Stoughton Road, Oadby (Variant Option 2) – Residential, approximately 500 dwellings, and approximately 0.4 hectares of Commercial or Community uses, plus a Cemetery.

- 9.25 Sites have been submitted directly adjacent to the Borough Boundary (and the green wedge) through the Harborough District Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). Some of these sites fall within the wider green wedge outside the Borough and demonstrates the wider development pressures facing the green wedge and impact these could have if they were to go ahead on the functions of the green wedge. The sites are illustrated on the Harborough SHELAA Map 2021 (published 2022)<sup>33</sup>.
- 9.26 As illustrated above there are several sites which have been put forward options to be considered through the Local Plan process. These submissions cover much of the green wedge area within the Borough and development pressures are also faced outside of, but adjacent to the Borough’s boundary. With such development pressures within this area, careful consideration will need to be taken to ensure the integrity and functions of the green wedge are maintained.
- 9.27 Through the last review of the green wedge in this location, parcels of land were released as part of the Local Plan (2019) and a section allocated for residential development. Subsequently, planning permission has been received for 310 dwellings on Land Opposite Stoughton Farm Park, Gartree Road and this site is now under construction.

### **Transport routes and infrastructure**

- 9.28 Gartree Road runs through the green wedge and this connects Oadby and many outlying villages to the outskirts of Leicester. Stoughton Road is also an important local Road which provides connectivity from Oadby and Wigston to the eastern side of Leicester City and into the wider Leicestershire area.

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<sup>33</sup> [Harborough District Council SHELAA 2021 Map \(Augst 2022\)](#)

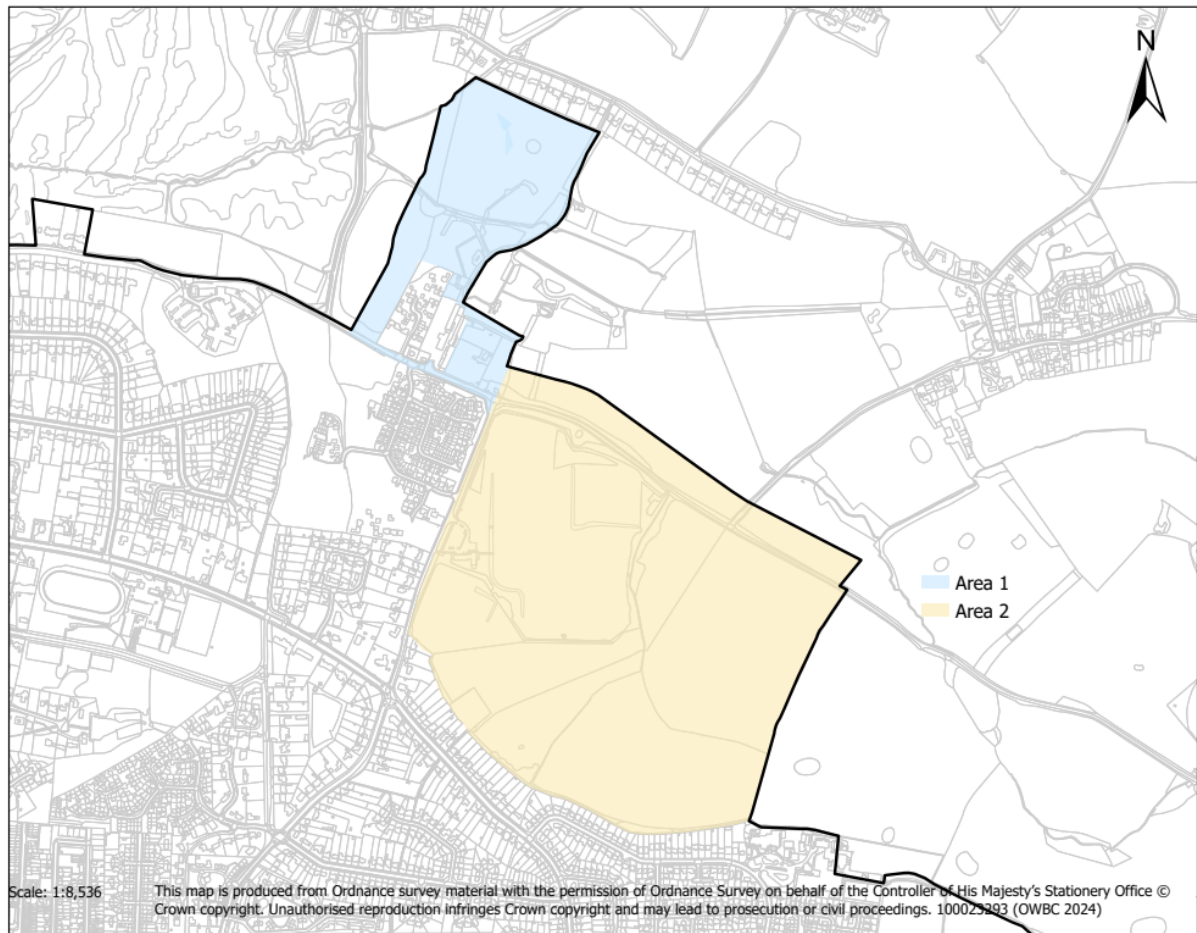
## 10. Site Surveys

10.1 To ensure a detailed survey and to aid the review process, the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge has also been assessed on a micro level. The Green Wedge was split into 2 areas so that a more detailed analysis could be undertaken on site. The areas are determined by land-use, field boundaries and landscape. A map of the areas is shown in figure 11. The areas identified are listed as follows:

- Area 1 – Land to the North of Gartree Road
- Area 2 – Land to the North of Manor Road Extension and East of Stoughton Road

10.2 Site assessments were carried out on the green wedge. The pro forma set out in the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Methodology was used. This chapter sets out the main findings of the on-site surveys and draws from the desk top survey to provide a micro review.

Figure 11. Map of the 6 sub-areas of the existing Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge



### Area 1: Land to the North of Gartree Road



- 10.3 Area 1 is relatively small due to the Borough's boundary, although to the west, the Green Wedge continues into Leicester City's administrative area and to the east, into Harborough District's administrative area. To the south of the green wedge boundary is the recently developed Stoughton Farm Park, Gartree Road development (Bellway/Ashberry Homes) and to the north, properties located on Stoughton Lane, Stoughton. The area is also bordered by the Stoughton Grange Retail and Business Park which consists of a farm shop, public house, hairdressers, play village, accountants, offices, and personal care. Located within this area is the newly reopened Stoughton Farm Park and pastoral farmland.
- 10.4 The land situated within area 1 peaks towards the northern section of the area (close to the properties off Stoughton Lane) at 95 to 100 metres above sea level respectively and troughs to around 85 metres above sea level towards its western boundary. There is a branch of the Evington Brook that runs through the most northern portion of this area north of Stoughton Grange.
- 10.5 There is a public right of way which can be accessed from the Stoughton Grange Business Park which provides a circular walk (within and outside of Area 1) around farmland, woodland and a large pond. This walk skirts the eastern and southern boundary of Area 1 before heading into the green wedge which falls within neighbouring Harborough District Council administrative area. Public access can also be obtained when visiting the Stoughton Farm Park visitor attraction. There is intervisibility within this section of the green wedge with the edges of Oadby and Stoughton being visible.
- 10.6 Most of the land type in this area is arable and pastoral farmland there is not a significant amount of vegetation, however, the hedgerows that form field boundaries and the streams and ponds do provide habitats for several species.
- 10.7 There has been one site received in the Call for Sites contained within area 1 of the Oadby, Thurby and Stoughton Green Wedge. This is site option OAD/001, submitted for consideration for leisure and employment uses.

### Area 2: Land to the North of Manor Road Extension and East of Stoughton Road



- 10.8 Area 2 is made up of two main land uses; University of Leicester sports pitches that include rugby, cricket and football; and, agricultural farmland. As well as the above, there is a presence of mature trees and hedgerows delineating certain areas of the land. There is very little built development within this area, with only the pavilion and it's parking facilities for the sports pitches on the University of Leicester's playing fields. In addition there are two main road links running through this part of the area, the B582 Gartree Road running east to west and the B582 Stoughton Road running north to south.
- 10.9 The southern and western boundary directly follow the most outer limits of the Oadby built development (which includes the Stoughton Park development). Towards the north, the area boundary follows the local authority area boundary, with beyond still being green wedge in Harborough District. The most eastern boundary, like the northern edge, follows the extent of the Oadby and Wigston Borough boundary with open countryside beyond.
- 10.10 The entire southern area adjacent to the urban area forms an almost plateau (some 110 - 115 metres above sea level) within the area, from which the land form falls the further north you go, the lowest point being around 90 metres above sea level. A water course runs from north to south through the area, splitting its course the further south it runs. Due to this, the land surrounding the water course is susceptible to surface water flooding.
- 10.11 The area has no designated cycleways, or byways or bridleways, however there are public rights of way that run through the green wedge. There is a public right of way that connects Gartree Road to the urban area of Oadby, however once Gartree Road is reached there is no continuation off road and pedestrians would need to walk on the road. There is another public right of way that runs adjacent to the urban boundary on a west to east route. There are also several informal walking routes around the perimeter of the fields which look well used by walkers. Access to this area of the green wedge can also be obtained through use of the sporting facilities.
- 10.12 Most of the land type is pasture/hayfields and mown sports pitches there is not a significant amount of vegetation, however there is a watercourse/ditch that runs through the area which will support several species. The fields are delineated by hedgerows and mature trees provide habitats for several species.
- 10.13 There have been a number of sites received covering area 2 of the Oadby, Thurby and Stoughton Green Wedge through the Call for Sites process. These are OAD/002 and OAD/009 with OAD/010 and OAD/011 as additional variations of the site.

## 11. Evaluation

### Introduction

- 11.1 The evaluation criteria set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Joint Green wedge Methodology Paper will be used to assess the green wedge. This evaluation will consider each of the criteria in turn and are set out below.

### Preventing the merging of settlements

- 11.2 A strategic role of the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge is to ensure that there is clear separation between built up area of Leicester City, Oadby, Stoughton and Bushby. At a more local level the green wedge prevents the merging of Oadby with parts of Leicester around the Golf Course as well as parts of the village of Stoughton.
- 11.3 There is intervisibility (seeing one settlement from the edge of the other) within the green wedge between Oadby and Stoughton (area 1) and this is the narrowest part of the green wedge. In terms of perception between Oadby and Stoughton, area 1 was much closer with the rising topography making the properties on Stoughton Lane visible and prominent on the skyline. Area 2 felt more distant, with just the church spire visible.
- 11.4 The Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green wedge aids the separation of the settlements of Oadby and Stoughton locally and on a wider scale Leicester City and Bushby with the Green wedge allocations in Leicester City and Harborough.

### Guiding development form

- 11.5 The green wedge has historically guided the development form of Oadby and continues to do so. This is evident through the recent developments off Gartree Road which were allocated through the Local Plan (2019).
- 11.6 The green wedge plays a key role in the green infrastructure network of the Borough and ensures there is a continuous network running from Leicester City to the countryside areas of the Borough and Harborough District beyond.
- 11.7 The Local Plan is currently being reviewed and greenfield development will be required outside of the current urban settlement. As highlighted above sites have been put forward within and adjacent to the Borough's boundary. Green wedge boundaries may need to be revised to accommodate growth due to the small nature of the Borough and availability of land. When determining the locations of new development the green wedge will guide the development form of these new communities; it will be important to ensure the new neighbourhoods are defined, that they are designed in a way which brings the countryside into the urban area and are more than landscape buffers.
- 11.8 The green wedge boundary is distinctly defined; it is very much urban one side, open green wedge (and its associated infrastructure) the other. There is no 'blurring' of the boundary between the built up areas and open undeveloped areas of the green wedge.

### Providing a green lung into urban areas

- 11.9 The green wedge abuts the settlement of Oadby and at a wider scale the conurbations of Leicester, Bushby and Stoughton creating a green lung for these communities. It is an important designation as it provides landscape and wildlife links between the Leicester conurbation and the wider countryside. It enhances the attractiveness of the urban fringe whilst enabling urban residents to take advantage of the countryside beyond improving the quality of life of residents.

- 11.10 The National Planning Practice Guidance on the Natural Environment<sup>34</sup> highlights that ‘*Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services*’. It is clear from the desktop survey and site visits that the Green wedge performs positively in this regard.
- 11.11 As well as public rights of way, access to the green wedge can be obtained by more informal desire line pathways and from use of Stoughton Grange and the university sports pitches located along Stoughton Road. Looking slightly wider than the Borough’s boundary, formal access can also be obtained from the use of The Leicestershire Golf Course situated directly adjacent to the Borough in Leicester City. The green wedge enables the promotion of healthier living and positive well-being.
- 11.12 As well as providing access to the countryside for the Borough’s residents, the green wedge also plays an important role in terms of providing a multifaceted green and blue infrastructure network which protects and enhances existing biodiversity by providing habitats and connectivity between them, reduces water runoff, improves air and water quality as well as encouraging active travel through walking and cycling.

### **A recreational resource**

- 11.13 There are recreational amenities within the green wedge which are publicly accessible. These include:
- Farm Park
  - Sports pitches
  - Network of public rights of way
  - Informal pedestrian walkway around agricultural fields
- 11.14 These recreational resources provide access to the green wedge for residents of the Borough and draws people in from beyond the wider surrounding area.
- 11.15 There is a good network of access paths within the green wedge which consisted of public rights of way and informal walk ways. The public right of ways were of good quality with clear signage to aid the legibility of the routes, they also appeared to be well utilised. Informal routes were evident which diverged from the more formal routes and appeared to be well trodden.
- 11.16 Just outside the boundary of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council but within the wider green wedge is Shady Lane Arboretum. This is a large woodland park with access to numerous paths, rough grassland and Evington Brook which provides a continuation of the recreational resource within the green wedge.
- 11.17 The green wedge has high recreational value at both a local level and a cross boundary level. The Leicestershire Golf Course (within Leicester City Council area), Shady Lane Arboretum (within Leicester City Council area), the University sports pitches and Stoughton Grange play an important role in encouraging and maintaining healthy lifestyles using the green wedge.

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<sup>34</sup> [NPPG Natural Environment Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 8-005-20190721 \(gov.uk\)](#)

## 12. Recommendations and conclusions

- 12.1 Strategically at a macro level, the Green Wedge meets the four Green Wedge functions. The green wedge provides Leicester City, Harborough District and the settlement of Oadby access to the open countryside and beyond; it defines and has historically guided built development form; it provides a recreational resource, for example Stoughton Grange and the university sports pitches; and it ensures that the built form of Leicester City, Oadby and Harborough District do not merge into one entity. The green wedge is also a key component of the Borough's Strategic Green Infrastructure network where it acts as a Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridor.
- 12.2 This section of the Green Wedge Review will draw together all the findings of the desk top survey and site visits to assess how the green wedge performs at a micro level against the functions.

### Area 1: Land to the North of Gartree Road

- 12.3 Area 1 is a relatively small area of the green wedge due to the drawing of the administrative boundaries. Nevertheless, it plays an important puzzle piece which makes up part of the larger jigsaw of the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge, which stretches beyond the Borough's boundary into Harborough District and Leicester City. Therefore, it is important to consider this area of the green wedge in this context due to its size.
- 12.4 This area is located to the north of Oadby and provides a strategic role in guiding development form and preventing the coalescence of Oadby and Stoughton. The area is sensitive due to the topography rising towards Stoughton which makes the properties located on Stoughton Lane, Stoughton particularly visible from the edge of the green wedge. The topography enables greater intervisibility between Oadby and Stoughton, and therefore makes the area more sensitive regarding coalescence and visual perception in terms of settlement identity.
- 12.5 Area 1 plays an important role in terms of the wider green wedge as along with adjacent land in neighbouring Districts it provides the green link from Gartree Road, Oadby to Stoughton and the outer limits of Leicester City. There is some mature vegetation within this area with small copses of trees in a prominent position.
- 12.6 The area also acts as a recreational resource with a circular walking route that runs partly along the eastern and southern boundary of Area 1 and continuing in the wider green wedge. There are also private recreational opportunities within area in the form of the Farm Park.
- 12.7 It is considered that non material, i.e more minor changes to the boundaries of this sub area would not significantly impact the functioning of the Green Wedge.

### Area 2: Land to the north of Manor Road Extension and East of Stoughton Road

- 12.8 Area 2 of the green wedge has an open feel on the northern edge of Oadby. It is not possible to visualise another settlement from within this area, this is possibly due to vegetation cover. However the church spire of Stoughton is visible so there is a sense that another settlement is within close proximity.
- 12.9 Any release of green wedge land would need to be carefully planned in respect of landscape and visual impact due to the variable topography which elevates the urban edge of Oadby and the proximity of Stoughton to Gartree Road.



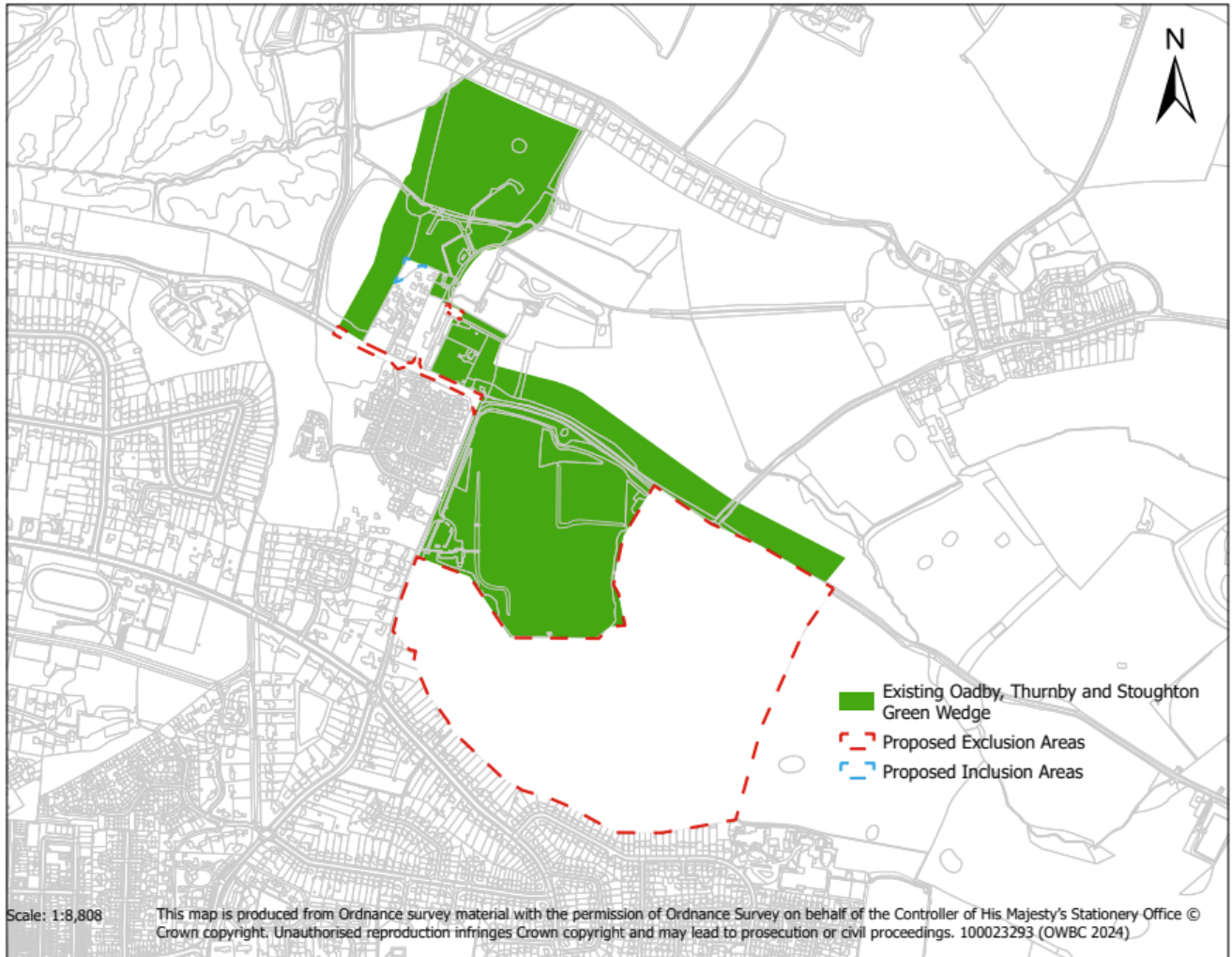
- 12.10 It is clear from the site visits that this area is important in terms of acting as a green lung and a recreational resource. The area not only consists of formal public rights of way but also numerous informal walking routes, all of which appeared to be well-trodden at the time of the site visit. The area also provides limited-access recreational opportunities at the University of Leicester Playing Fields.
- 12.11 In terms of a green lung, this area provides an important role environmentally regarding green infrastructure provision and wildlife sites. There is the presence of three wildlife sites within this area which incorporate mature trees, species rich hedgerow, strips of woodland and a field pond. There is also a water body which runs through the site. All these habitats have the potential to support Great Crested Newts, badgers, otters, water vole and white-clawed crayfish.
- 12.12 Area 2 performs strongly in relation to providing a recreational resource and a green lung as set out in this Review. The area also aids guiding development form and settlement separation between Oadby and Stoughton however Stoughton is not visible from Area 2 (except the church spire) which gives the sense of distance between the two settlements. This said, it could be due to the strong vegetation and the time of year site visits took place and greater visibility may be possible during the winter months.
- 12.13 It is considered that non material, i.e more minor changes to the boundaries of this sub area would not significantly impact the functioning of the Green Wedge.

### **Revisions to the Green Wedge**

- 12.14 Boundary amendments were made to the green wedge through the adoption of the Local Plan (2019) because of the recommendations made in the Green Wedge Review (2017). These amendments included the removal of land to the west of Stoughton Road, the Spire Hospital and Stoughton Grange Business Park.
- 12.15 Since this time, the area of land to the west of Stoughton Road has been developed for residential use by Bellway Homes and Ashbury Homes and the Stoughton Grange Business Park has continued to run and grow as a business area. This assessment has determined that the areas currently designated as Green Wedge fulfil the objectives of a green wedge.
- 12.16 As mentioned in above sections, the Council has a clear housing requirement to fulfil for the Plan period 2020-2041. The Council received submissions in both area 1 and area 2 of the Oadby, Thurby and Stoughton Green Wedge. These have been assessed by the Council and detailed conclusions are evidenced in the Site Methodology and Rationale Paper. The Site Assessment paper concluded that the site proposed in Area 1 (site OAD/001) for potential leisure and employment use is not required in the 2020-2041 Plan period.
- Due to the new housing development at Stoughton Grange, minor changes to the exact green wedge boundaries in area 1 have been made to ensure the area continues to fulfil the role of a green wedge. The green wedge has two minor areas proposed for exclusion, but also proposes a minor extension. The exclusion areas account for existing built development..
- 12.17 Area 2 received development interest on Land South of Gartree Road and East of Stoughton Road. Considering the housing requirement as well as the desktop surveys and site surveys assessments in the report, the Council has taken a flexible approach to changing exact boundaries of Area 2, with a proposal to reduce its designation by around a half to accommodate its housing need and protect the countryside. This is discussed in more detail below.

- 12.18 The proposed boundary changes come after having exhausted other options in the ‘three-pronged’ approach of first building in town centres, then on small sites within or lying adjacent to the urban area and eventually on large allocations. More information can be found in the Local Plan’s Spatial Strategy (Policy 1). Where the green wedge boundaries have been proposed as revisions, only the amount of green wedge land needed to ensure the Borough’s housing needs can be met have been proposed for de-designation.
- 12.19 Exact new proposed boundaries for the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge are shown in figure 12.
- 12.20 In summary, the designation of the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge is proposed to reduce from 70.3 hectares to 34.5 hectares in the Borough. This is a reduction of 51%. It is important to note that Leicester City Council’s designation lying adjacent to the Borough’s designation represents around 101 hectares, and Harborough District Council’s designation represents around 280 hectares. Therefore, in total, the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge will change from a total of around 452 hectares to 416 hectares (a reduction of 8%) across the three Districts. Not accounting for roads, the green wedge as adopted in 2019 is around 940 metres at its widest (from behind the Cow and Plough pub/restaurant, to the Eastern boundary) and around 65 metres at its narrowest (to the left of settlements in the northern part of area 1). Both the widest and narrowest parts of the green wedge remain the same after the proposed de-designation.
- 12.21 Land proposed as de-designated as green wedge have been on sites deemed the most sustainable for housing development in the Borough. The Council has been aware of interest in the site Land South of Gartree Road. The release of this land for housing is now necessary for the Council to meet its housing requirement. Much of the site for de-designation is accessible by the public footpath running through and along the southern boundary of the site.
- 12.22 No other extensions to the green wedge are proposed through this review, this is because the green wedge is bordered by built development within the Borough boundary and adjacent to the boundary the green wedge continues into Leicester City and Harborough District administrative areas.
- 12.23 The new boundary is considered robust and defensible in meeting the four objectives of a green wedge as it will prevent further merging of settlements, continue to guide development form and will carry on its role in contributing to the green lung provided by the wider green wedge into Harborough and the City. As the university playing fields remain in the green wedge, no impacts to the site as a recreational resource are identified.

Figure 12. Illustration of changes to the Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge



## 13. Conclusion

- 13.1 This Study has evaluated how the two green wedges within the Borough perform against the identified four functions of the green wedge set out in the Joint Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Methodology. These four functions include: preventing the merging of settlements, guiding development form; acting as a green lung and providing a recreational resource.
- 13.2 The Review has found that the two green wedges meet the four functions at a macro scale and play an important multifunctional role which are well used by the communities which live within close proximity. The green wedges provide the following uses:
- formal and informal recreation
  - Habitats and linkages for biodiversity
  - Maintaining settlement identity by providing green gaps
  - Publicly accessible green infrastructure
  - Provides links into the countryside from the urban edge
  - Active travel route
  - Agricultural role
- 13.3 The findings of this Green Wedge Review is an evidence base document to support the production of the draft Local Plan 2020-2041. As outlined in this Review, whilst the principles of the four functions of Green Wedge designations must remain the priority, the existing boundaries have been assessed and they have had to be re-considered in order to accommodate and allocate land necessary to meeting the Council's housing requirement up to 2041.
- 13.4 Overall, this report identifies that changes to the green wedges represent a 26.4% decrease across the Borough. The green wedges, as proposed to be revised, will continue to fulfil all four functions at a macro scale, and the areas proposed de-designated as green wedge will enable sustainable developments that provide accessible linkages into the Green Wedges for generations to come.

## Appendix 1: Glossary

### Archaeological Sites

Archaeological remains are important resources often containing valuable information about the past. They are part of the areas heritage and are of great historic value. The Borough contains many sites of archaeological interest ranging from Medieval pendant from The Race Course, Oadby to Possible Roman site east of University Playing Fields, Stoughton.

### Biodiversity

Encompasses the whole of the natural world and all living things on the planet. It includes plants, animals and micro-organisms which, together, interact in complex ways with the environment to create living ecosystems.

### Coalescence

The merging or coming together of separate towns or villages to form a single entity.

### Core Strategy

Sets out the long-term spatial vision for the local planning authority's area, the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision.

### Development Plan Document

Spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination, and form the Development Plan for a local authority area.

### Green Corridors

Linear sections of habitat which connect other habitat areas at either end or along the way.

### Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI)

A term encompassing all physical resources and natural systems, including ecological, geological, historical assets, and incorporates blue infrastructure.

### Historic Landscape Characterisation

Framework to aid our understanding of the landscape as a whole and provide us with an important tool that will contribute to the decision making process especially where issues affecting the landscape, both rural and urban are to be considered. Produced by Leicestershire County Council.

### Intervisibility

It is possible to see one settlement from the edge of the other.

### Local Plan

The Local Plan is the key document which helps develop the Borough of Oadby & Wigston. It sets out the vision and framework to achieve development, addressing the needs and opportunities of the area. It also guides decisions on whether planning applications can be granted.

### Sites and Monument Record (SMR)

Detailed records of the known archaeological investigations (sites or events), remains (monuments), findspots, buried deposits, and areas of archaeological potential of various kinds.

### Remote Access

The site provides a valuable, visual green space resource to the community along several distinct sightlines and at a distance.

### **Settlement Boundary**

Marks the extent of the built up area and the countryside beyond. They are used to prevent the unregulated encroachment of development into the countryside. A settlement boundary is sometimes also known as a village envelope.

### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected by the Statute under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and usually managed by Natural England. Their designation provides protection to features of regional/national biodiversity.

### **Site Specific Allocations**

Allocations of areas of land for specific purposes (e.g. housing, green wedge or employment land) or for mixed uses or development to be contained in the Local Plan.

### **Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs)**

Sustainable Urban Drainage System is a sequence of management practices and control structures designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable fashion than some conventional techniques.

### **Urban area**

The urban area consists of the settlements of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston.

## Appendix 2: Oadby and Wigston Green wedge Site Surveys

### Area 1 – Land adjacent to Palmerston Way, including Leicester Golf Course and Leicester Racecourse North

Land Use Description:	Racecourse, Golf Course, The Kube (Event Venue) Major Road, natural area of land (grassland, copses)
Adjacent land uses:	Residential (Leicester City and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council residential areas), Knighton Park,
Landscape features:	North of Palmerston Way: copses, grassland, mature hedgerows border South of Palmerston Way: Maintained grassland as part of the racecourse site. The Golf Course is characterised by trees marking out the golf course route
Topography:	There is a slight incline northwards from Wigston towards Leicester on the golf course.
Settlement perception:	The green wedge is quite narrow near the Palmerston Way/A6 junction and the perception of distance between Oadby and the outskirts of Leicester City is close
Boundaries:	The green wedge is bounded by built development so no alternative boundary exists
Extent of built development:	There is a fair amount of built development associated with the racecourse, including stables, grandstands, supporting buildings. The golf course also has a club house and driving range. There is also The Kube Exhibition Centre within the vicinity of the racecourse and golf course.
Green space in urban area:	The area does provide a green space in an urban area; however it cannot be freely accessed by members of the public, it can only be accessed if attending an event at the racecourse or paying to use the golf course.
Recreational space:	A vast proportion of this area is Leicester Golf Course which provides a recreational space, however this must be paid for
Public access:	There is public access to the green wedge but this is only when attending an event at the racecourse or paying to use the golf course.
Footpaths and bridleways:	There is a public right of way which runs across the northern section of this area, connecting Granville Avenue, Oadby to Palmerston Way, this skirts around the northern tip of the racecourse.

### Area 2 – Leicester Racecourse and north of Wigston Road

Land Use Description:	Racecourse (Horse), Wigston Road Allotments, Oval Park Training Ground (Rugby). Oadby Recycling and Household Waste Site
Adjacent land uses:	Golf course, residential properties, sewage treatment works, employment area, football ground
Landscape features:	Maintained spaces in the form of the racecourse, Oval Park Training Ground (Rugby)
Topography:	The topography is relatively flat in this area

Settlement perception:	The gap between Wigston and Oadby is relatively small, although the boundary between Oadby and Wigston is located outside the green wedge and the towns have joined this section of the green wedge provides a green break which gives the perception of a break between the settlements.
Boundaries:	There is not an alternative strong defensible boundary within this section of the green wedge.
Extent of built development:	There are number of built structures within this section of the green wedge including: Oadby Wyggestonian Rugby Club House, residential properties, Oadby Recycling and Household Waste Site, Council Depot
Green space in urban area:	This area provides a green space in the urban area when travelling along Wigston Road, the Rugby pitches are a dominant feature along this connecting road and provide a visual break in the built form.
Recreational space:	This area is predominately used for recreation purposes with the land uses in this area although the spaces can only be accessed if participating in the activity or a member of the Rugby Club or allotments.
Public access:	There is public access into this area of the green wedge, although as specified above only if you are member of the allotments or rugby club. There is public access to the Oadby Recycling and Household Waste Site during opening hours.
Footpaths and bridleways:	There are no public footpaths within this area of the green wedge other than the pedestrian footpath on Wigston Road

### **Area 3 – Brocks Hill Country Park and surrounds**

Land Use Description:	Country Park with associated visitor centre (visitor centre undergoing building work whilst on site for change of use to Council Office with café), Leisure Centre, Car Park, Football Ground, wildlife areas.
Adjacent land uses:	Agricultural fields, residential built up area, Rugby Training Ground.
Landscape features:	Woodlands (some young and other areas more established), sporadic mature tree on the edges, open grassland meadows, hedgerows and shrubs border the area, some are quite high providing screening and a natural edge.
Topography:	The topography gradually rises from Wigston Road towards the countryside edge. There is more of a rise within the Country Park itself towards the countryside beyond.
Settlement perception:	It is not possible to view more than one settlement in this location, this is partly due to the woodland planting which means when you are within the centre of the Country Park neighbouring land uses (i.e. residential properties) are not visible. It gives the perception that you are some distance from the built up area and it provides a tranquil space.
Boundaries:	There is not an alternative strong defensible boundary within this section of the green wedge.



Extent of built development:	<p>There are number of built structures within this section of the green wedge including: Visitor Centre; Leisure Centre; Wind Turbine; Car Park; and Football Ground (small stadium area and changing facilities/bar area).</p> <p>The northern section of this green wedge area has a more urban feel with the football ground and leisure centre, the further into the Country Park the less built development there is and it is a more predominantly natural area with hard surfaced paths.</p>
Green space in urban area:	<p>This space provides a 'green environment' within a predominantly urban area either side. Informal access route from the Wigston Meadows Estate via fields. There was an abundance of wildlife within this section of the green visible during the site visit including the Green Woodpecker, Red Kite, blackbirds, blue tits, tree sparrows and squirrels.</p>
Recreational space:	<p>This area is predominately used for recreation purposes with the land uses in this area. There is a large children's adventure play area within the Country Park and evidence of lots of users using this area for dog walking. There are numerous pathways within the country park which are hard surfaced and there are also more informal pathways which are well trodden.</p>
Public access:	<p>There is lots of public access in this part of the green wedge due to the presence of the country park. There is walkable access for both Oadby and Wigston residents. There is also a large car park for the leisure centre and country park which increases the use catchment for accessibility.</p>
Footpaths and bridleways:	<p>The footpaths within the park are of a good quality, the hard surfaced paths are stone with loose chippings and there are a number of well-trodden natural walkways through the wooded area of the park. There are three grassland meadows and there is evidence of public use around the edge as well as access from residential gardens into the park.</p> <p>There is a good level of use of the park by families, people exercising and dog walkers.</p>

#### **Area 4 – Land East of Wigston Meadows**

Land Use Description:	Agricultural fields
Adjacent land uses:	Residential, country park, agriculture
Landscape features:	Feeling of openness and far reaching views when looking to the south. Ploughed fields, fields are separated by mature hedgerows and scattered mature tree.
Topography:	The area is flat towards the urban edge and undulates downwards towards a brook. Low level pylons through some of the site.
Settlement perception:	It is possible to see the urban edge of both Oadby and Wigston from the boundary of the green wedge and standing within. The two settlements feel very close and this is due to the openness of this area.
Boundaries:	The green wedge is bounded by residential properties on the Wigston Meadows Estate. There is also a formal pathway that runs along the edge

of the green wedge which connects to Glenmere Primary School. A green corridor softens the urban edge of the Wigston Meadows estate and provides informal access to the green wedge. Beyond the green wedge to the south are agricultural fields and there is an open feel and far reaching views. It is possible to view the Wigston Direction for Growth from this part of the green wedge

- Extent of built development: Low level pylons run through this area of the green wedge, there were no other built structures visible on site. Due to the openness of this area built development would have a significant visual impact within this area, particularly close to Brocks Hill Country Park where the topography is higher and the area is in close proximity to Oadby visually.
- Green space in urban area: This area provides connectivity to the Brocks Hill Country Park a green space cited between two urban areas. It provides access to the wider countryside.
- Recreational space: Although this area is in agricultural use and fields were ploughed at the time of the visit, the space is used for recreation purposes and this was evident whilst on site. The formal and informal footways were being used by families, dog walkers and people taking exercise.
- Public access: There is public access into this section of the green wedge through the use of formal public rights of way and informal.
- Footpaths and bridleways: Access to the green wedge is via a formal public right of way which is signposted from within the built up urban area. There is a kissing gate to access the agricultural area which provides the access to the formal right of way. The footpath is well signposted along the route with way finders. There are also informal walkways along the field edge, these appear to well used due to the level of use noted whilst on site and the trodden nature of the footpaths. These informal routeways can be access from the formal public right of way but also from a more informal access from the green corridor located off Rosedale and also an access from Brocks Hill Country Park which appears to be more formal in nature.

### **Area 5 – South of Briar Mead, Gartree High School and Beauchamp College, Oadby**

- Land Use Description: Agricultural fields, School Playing Fields
- Adjacent land uses: Residential, schools, agriculture, public open space
- Landscape features: Ploughed fields, bordered by mature hedgerows and scattered trees.
- Topography: The area is relatively flat in places with a gentle sloping.
- Settlement perception: It is possible to see the urban edge of both Oadby and Wigston within this part of the green wedge. Gartree High School and Beauchamp College have a strong presence.
- Boundaries: The green wedge is bounded by residential properties located within Oadby and the school playing fields which provides a softer transition before the more prominent school buildings. Coombe Park runs along the southern boundary which provides a tree lined boundary. Next to Coombe Park is an agricultural field, although builders fencing around the edge

suggests that the development will be located on this field. Beyond these areas are the agricultural fields located in area 4.

Extent of built development:	There is no built development within this section of the green wedge.
Green space in urban area:	Yes, provides a green area adjacent to Oadby, whilst on site there were numerous walkers, dog walkers, joggers and a cyclist. Provides a habitat for a number of birds including Red Kite's.
Recreational space:	Yes, this space provides an area for walking and exercise.
Public access:	Gates well used and maintained, sign post covered by leaves.
Footpaths and bridleways:	Very well used by walkers and dog walkers. One cyclist observed whilst out on site.

### **Area 6 – East of Sevenoaks Farm and West of Glen Gorse Golf Course**

Land Use Description:	Agricultural fields
Adjacent land uses:	Agriculture, Golf Course, residential development site
Landscape features:	Ploughed fields, Mature hedgerows and trees around the edge of the fields. There is a small unmanaged wooded area dividing the lower half of the area.
Topography:	The area rises from the brook in a southerly direction.
Settlement perception:	From the northern edge of the area close to the brook both Oadby and Wigston can be viewed in this location. As the topography rises in this area both settlements can be viewed from the elevated position also. It is important to note that the built form of Oadby will be adjacent to this area of the Green wedge once the residential allocation is built out bringing the distance between the two settlements in this location even closer.
Boundaries:	The green wedge is bounded by residential housing allocation (Cottage Farm Direction for Growth Allocation) and temporary metal site fencing was in position whilst out on site. This will provide a new built boundary to the green wedge once developed. Mature trees and hedgerows run along part of this boundary and will provide screening. Beyond this area to the south is Glen Gorse Golf Club and agricultural fields are located to the west.
Extent of built development:	There is no built development within this section of the green wedge and the area has a more rural feel compared to neighbouring assessment areas.
Green space in urban area:	Yes, this area includes the continuation of the public right of way which connects area 4 adjacent to Wigston to Glen Gorse Golf Course and the wider countryside beyond.
Recreational space:	Yes, this space provides an area for walking although may be less utilised than adjacent areas closer to the urban areas as it had a more isolated feel.
Public access:	The kissing gate linking the two fields was overgrown and unusable, a farmers gate adjacent was open and this appeared to be main access used

rather than the designated entrance. Public access was available via the public right of way through the site and then an informal path had been well trodden linking into the area allocated for development.

**Footpaths and bridleways:**

The public right of way had been ploughed over making it tricky to navigate, another footpath around the northern edge of the larger field in this area connects to the area allocated for housing.

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## Appendix 3: Oadby, Thurnby and Stoughton Green Wedge Site Surveys

### Area 1 – Land to the North of Gartree Road

Land Use Description:	Stoughton Farm Park, Agricultural fields, residential property
Adjacent land uses:	Residential (Leicester City and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council residential areas), agriculture, Stoughton Grange (Farm Shop, Public House, Children’s Play, small businesses)
Landscape features:	Some mature trees and copses border fields. Paddocks for livestock. Pasture and hayfields
Topography:	There is an incline northwards from Gartree Road towards properties on Stoughton Lane within Leicester administrative areas.
Settlement perception:	From the edge of Stoughton Grange Car Park it is possible to view the rear of properties located in Stoughton on Stoughton Lane
Boundaries:	The green wedge within the Borough boundary is bounded by built development to the north and south. However, the green wedge spans into neighbouring authority areas where the area is more open in nature.
Extent of built development:	There is a residential property within the green wedge, and there is some small manmade buildings associated with livestock at the farm park.
Green space in urban area:	The area does provide a green space in an urban area; however it cannot be freely accessed by members of the public, it can only be accessed if attending the farm park.
Recreational space:	Farm Park
Public access:	There is public access to the green wedge but this is only when visiting the farm park.
Footpaths and bridleways:	There are no public rights of way within this area.

### Area 2 – Land to the North of Manor Road Extension and East of Stoughton Road

Land Use Description:	Agricultural fields, University of Leicester Playing Fields.
Adjacent land uses:	Residential, agriculture.
Landscape features:	Some mature trees and copses border fields. There is a particular strong border of mature trees along the boundary between the University of Leicester Playing Fields and the agricultural fields. Some more mature trees are also scattered amongst hedgerows which demarcate the field boundaries. There is a small watercourse/ditch which runs through the area. Pasture and hayfields
Topography:	The topography falls from Gartree Road towards the watercourse/ditch that divides the fields before rising towards the properties located on Manor Road Extension.
Settlement perception:	Although on the edge of Oadby this area feels more rural in nature the closer to Gartree Road. The spire of Stoughton Church is visible from this area but this feels some distance away.

Boundaries:	The green wedge along the southern and western green wedge boundary is bordered by residential properties. To the north and east the green wedge continues into Harborough District and is more open in nature.
Extent of built development:	There is built development associated with the University of Leicester Sports Facilities, this is in the form of a brick built pavilion and car park.
Green space in urban area:	The area does provide a green space in an urban area, the area is adjacent to Oadby with public access via the public right of way system.
Recreational space:	The University of Leicester Playing Fields provides opportunities for sporting activities, however this is a private facility not open freely to the public. The area provides walking opportunities in a countryside setting.
Public access:	There is public access to the green wedge via the walkways.
Footpaths and bridleways:	There is a public right of Way which runs from Manor Road Extension to Gartree Road, unfortunately the formal footpath stops at Gartree Road with no off road connectivity beyond this point for continuation unless walking on the road. The second right of way runs parallel to the rear of the properties on Manor Road Extension and Copse Close, this walkway had a more enclosed feel due to the vegetation in parts. The public right of way connects to the wider countryside in Harborough District with a number of public rights of way which lead back to Windrush Drive, Oadby and the Wash Brook.

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