

Duty to Co-operate Statement January 2025

Oadby and Wigston Local Plan
2020-2041

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Localism Act (2011) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) local authorities must address strategic planning matters in their Local Plans. The duty to co-operate is the mechanism for ensuring that this happens.
- 1.2 As part of the examination process, local authorities should demonstrate how they have managed strategic planning matters in the Local Plan in a concise and focused statement.
- 1.3 This Statement has been prepared to support the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan and the subsequent Submission (Regulation 22) and Examination (Regulation 24) Stage of the Local Plan. The statement presents a summary of the approach taken so far by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council to address the duty to co-operate (“the Duty”) and show how the Council has discharged the Duty to Co-operate in relation to the production of the Local Plan. It identifies and explains ways in which the Council has collaborated and co-operated with other public bodies, stakeholders and organisations throughout the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 1.4 Relevant planning policy issues to be considered under the Duty to Co-operate are explained in the NPPF December 2023 (paragraphs 24 to 27)¹. Paragraph 20 of the NPPF sets out the strategic issues where co-operation might be appropriate, and this includes:
 - Housing (including affordable housing) and jobs needed in the area;
 - Provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - Provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - Provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
 - Climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 1.5 The Duty to Co-operate is tested at examination whenever an Authority prepares or reviews its Local Plan. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)² makes clear that in demonstrating compliance with the Duty, an Authority needs to submit robust evidence of the efforts they have made to co-operate on strategic cross-boundary issues. The Borough Council has taken every step possible to ensure that engagement with key partners has been consistent and transparent on a variety of strategic matters to demonstrate compliance with the Duty.
- 1.6 The Localism Act (2011) makes strategic planning the responsibility of local councils. Section 110 of the Localism Act, which amended the Compulsory and Purchase Act (2004), introduced in Section 33A, sets out the ‘duty to co-operate’ and places a legal duty on all Local Planning Authorities, County Council’s and other prescribed bodies to co-operate with each other when preparing Development Plan Documents in order to address strategic planning issues relevant to their areas. This duty to co-operate:

¹ National Planning Policy Framework (2021) [\[Link\]](#)

² National Planning Policy Guidance: Plan Making [\[Link\]](#)

- relates to a 'strategic matters' defined as sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two Local Planning Authority areas or on a matter that falls within the remit of a County Council;
- requires that Councils set out planning policies to address such issues,
- requires that Councils and other bodies 'engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to develop strategic policies; and,
- requires Councils to consider joint approaches to Plan making.

1.7 The prescribed Local Planning Authorities and County Council for Oadby and Wigston Borough Council are identified as follows:

Leicestershire Authorities

- Blaby District Council
- Charnwood Borough Council*
- Harborough District Council
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council*
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Melton Borough Council *
- North West Leicestershire Borough Council *

* Not adjoining Oadby and Wigston Borough Council but within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area.

2. Preparation of the Oadby and Wigston Local Plan (2020-2041)

- 2.1 The current adopted Borough of Oadby and Wigston Local Plan³ was adopted in April 2019. The current Local Plan sets out the policies that the Council uses to manage growth and change as well as determine planning applications. The Plan covers the period 2011 to 2031.
- 2.2 The emerging draft Oadby and Wigston Local Plan is planning for the period 2020 to 2041 and once adopted, will fulfil its role as providing the Borough Council and its stakeholders with a clear and comprehensive steer on the spatial strategy for local planning matters in the Borough, implementing circa 38 up to date Policies and eight new proposed site allocations to deliver the Council's remaining housing requirement over this period. The current Local Plan (2019) policies formed the basis of this emerging Plan and through updating and / or evolving them following Regulation 18A issues and Options (2021) and then Regulation 18B Preferred Options (2024) periods of public consultations, the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan represents what the Council believes to be the most sustainable, sound and robust Plan to deliver prosperous and sustainable growth in the Borough for years to come.
- 2.3 The Council has also undertaken three formal Call for Sites consultations to inform the preparation of the Plan. These exercises were undertaken to understand what land interests there are in the Borough for potential housing, as well as employment, retail or other development uses up to 2041. The Council has published the Regulation 18B Statement of Consultation (Winter 2024-25)⁴ that sets out all representations received in Spring 2024, together with Council Officers responses. This sets out how consultation was undertaken and provides a summary of the main issues raised and explains how these representations have been addressed and how they have informed the preparation of the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan.
- 2.4 To inform the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan, the Borough Council commissioned a plethora of evidence-based documents, engaging with a wide range of key stakeholders in the process. These evidence-based projects have included:
 - Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1 and 2)
 - Main Town Centre Uses Study
 - Specialised Housing to Support People with Disabilities and an Ageing Population
 - Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (to include baseline biodiversity assessment)
 - Green and Blue Infrastructure Study
 - Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Space Strategy
 - Indoor and Built Facilities Study
 - Open Space and Recreational Facilities Study
 - Local Plan Whole Plan Viability Assessment

³ Oadby and Wigston Local Plan (2019) [\[Link\]](#)

⁴ Regulation 18B Statement of Consultation (2024) [\[Link\]](#)

- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

2.5 In addition to this, the Borough Council has been producing a range of evidence-based documents internally to further inform the preparation of the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan to date and whilst doing so, working collaboratively with all key Partners in the attempt to ensure the Council delivers a sound and robust suite of evidence.

3. Identifying Oadby and Wigston's strategic priorities

3.1 The Oadby and Wigston Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan is wide ranging, and the Plan sets out the key topic areas in its Policy approach and site allocations that will be addressed over the plan-period to 2041 at both a strategic and local level. These strategic priorities include:

Environment and Sustainability

- To mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, increase the potential for renewable energy generation and minimise demand for energy resources.
- Increase and improve the network of habitats for wildlife and provide a biodiversity net gain.

Strategic Housing

- Work together with other Leicestershire authorities within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area, to ensure that the assessed need for market and affordable housing up to 2041 will be met across the Borough, including considerations around Leicester City Council's unmet housing need.
- To work together with other Leicester and Leicestershire authorities to meeting the needs for the gypsy and travelling showpeople community.
- To provide the right type of accommodation for the changing demographic structure of the population including the challenges presented by an aging population.

Economy and Employment

- To improve employment opportunities through facilitating and supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economic base across the Borough, including the provision of employment land offering opportunities for businesses to establish and grow, and providing the opportunities for business 'churn'.
- To deliver regeneration and enhance the vitality and viability of town, district and local centres in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. Identify a local retail hierarchy for the Borough which sets out the role and function of each centre, taking account of current national policy, guidance and permitted development rights

Green Infrastructure and Healthy Living

- To ensure that the Borough of Oadby and Wigston contains a strong network of multifunctional green infrastructure which provides health and environmental benefits and enhances the overall quality of life of its sustainable communities.
- To ensure a wide range and mix of high quality cultural, educational and health facilities will be provided in the most appropriate and sustainable locations.
- Promote the positive management of the Green Wedges so that their cumulative impact help to support healthy lifestyles in terms of limiting the effects of pollution on health, providing recreational opportunities, enhancing the natural environment, and guiding development. Continue to work jointly with Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities to ensure the functionality of the green wedges are maintained as a vital asset whilst allowing for sustainable growth.

Transport and Connectivity

- To make provision for transport networks that support sustainable growth in Oadby and Wigston and to promote low emission transport choices.
- To ensure the impact on transport connectivity across the strategic and local road network is considered where further strategic growth could have impact on the highway network in terms of capacity on an individual and cumulative basis.

Infrastructure and Viability

- To work collaboratively with all key Partner organisations and to secure the delivery or provision of vital infrastructure including health, education, utilities, flood risk and strategic sustainable transport links.
- Ensure that mitigation measures proposed within the draft Local Plan and in neighbouring Local Plans are viability tested and considered cumulatively.

4. Who we co-operate with

- 4.1 Through the duty to co-operate the Council is expected to demonstrate evidence of having successfully co-operated to plan for issues with cross boundary impacts when it's Local Plan is submitted for examination. It is considered that the key requirement is therefore to present clear 'outcomes' that have emerged from the process of cooperation that has taken place. Across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) there has been wide ranging co-operation, particularly in respect of joint evidence gathering, and some that pre-dates the Duty to Co-operate requirement. Later parts of this statement detail where such joint evidence gathering has taken place.
- 4.2 In addition to the above, the Duty also includes 'prescribed' bodies set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). These include:
- The Environment Agency
 - The Coal Authority
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - The Civil Aviation Authority
 - Homes England
 - Integrated Care Boards (formerly Clinical Commissioning Groups)
 - The Office for Rail Regulation
 - Leicestershire County Council (Highway Authority)
 - Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust
 - National Grid UK
 - National Highways
 - Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities
 - Network Rail
 - Public Health England
 - Sport England
 - The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership
 - The Leicestershire Local Nature Partnership
- 4.3 There may be other non-prescribed bodies (not subject to the legal Duty to Co-operate) that will be engaged through the plan making process.

5. How Local Authorities work jointly across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area

- 5.1 Engagement required varies depending on the nature of the issues being addressed and could range from consulting on an issue, meetings or preparing a joint evidence base.
- 5.2 To demonstrate that the duty has been met, policy making authorities are required to prepare and maintain Statements of Common Ground (SoCG), documenting the progress made during the process of planning for strategic cross boundary matters. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is currently party to two SoCG:

Table 1: Current Statements of Common Ground jointly prepared by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council (as of January 2025)

Statement of Common Ground	Parties	Link
Leicester & Leicestershire Authorities - Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing and Employment Land Needs (June 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaby District Council • Charnwood Borough Council • Harborough District Council • Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council* • Leicester City Council (Unitary) • Melton Borough Council • North West Leicestershire District Council • Oadby & Wigston Borough Council • Leicestershire County Council** 	Leicester & Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground
South Leicestershire Local Plan Making Statement of Comment Ground (November 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaby District Council • Harborough District Council • Oadby & Wigston Borough Council • Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council*** 	South Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground

* Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) do not agree to the step in the HENA Housing Distribution Paper (2022) methodology from paragraph 6.21 to 6.24 and the subsequent table 6.9 which apportions 187 dwellings per year of Leicester's unmet housing need. Although this objection is an 'area of disagreement' detailed in the SoCG, the Borough Council resolved to become a signatory to the SoCG at Council on 30 January 2024.

** The SOCG has been prepared jointly by the eight plan making authorities and Leicestershire County Council as an additional signatory given their statutory responsibilities.

*** Given their shared geographical boundary with Blaby District Council, HBBC are an additional signatory to this SoCG. The authorities and HBBC have and continue to maintain an ongoing and effective relationship on cross boundary strategic issues and will ensure the evidence the authorities commission as listed above will reflect evidence produced by HBBC to inform their Local Plan.

- 5.3 The Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing and Employment Land Needs (June 2022) was prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire

authorities to demonstrate the Duty to Co-operate in plan making. The key strategic matters covered are Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Employment Needs to 2036, Unmet Need to 2036, and apportioning that unmet need to 2036. As Leicester City's unmet housing need has only been robustly evidenced for the period up to 2036, it is considered reasonable and appropriate to roll forward the figure of 240 dwellings per annum for the entire Plan period, including between 2036 and 2041. The apportionment is being fully tested by individual councils through the preparation of their own Local Plans.

- 5.4 For Oadby and Wigston, the outcome of this testing has illustrated that the Council can meet both its own need as well as the unmet need apportioned by the SoCG. Importantly, the SoCG also set out that if any Council's evidence shows that it cannot meet this need, then the apportionment of unmet need will need to be jointly reviewed and updated so as not to cause undue delay to the preparation of Local Plans.
- 5.5 The South Leicestershire Local Plan Making Statement of Common Ground (2021) focuses on three strategic cross boundary issues and associated evidence base (strategic transport, infrastructure delivery and whole plan viability), as well as seeking to align local plan timescales. This statement is directly relevant for the plan making authorities of Oadby and Wigston, Blaby and Harborough district/boroughs, but has been produced with the support of Leicestershire County Council (as the local highways authority) and Hinckley and Bosworth Council (as an adjacent neighbour to Blaby District).

Joint Working

- 5.6 There are a number of officer forums within the HMA which aim to promote joint work and to address key strategic issues such as delivery of housing, employment and key infrastructure by local planning authorities, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Business and Skills Partnership. These are as follows:
 - Strategic Planning Group (SPG)
 - Planning Officers' Forum (POF)
 - Task and Finish Group (T&F)
 - Members Advisory Group (MAG)
- 5.7 The role of Strategic Planning Group (SPG) is to oversee policy development for spatial planning, housing and infrastructure amongst Leicestershire local authorities. The Group meets regularly and is attended by senior management team representatives from all authorities across the HMA (including Leicestershire County Council and Homes England).
- 5.8 SPG oversees the commissioning and running of joint work, for example, the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA, 2022) and provides a forum at a high level for discussing common issues and developing understanding.
- 5.9 The Planning Officers' Forum (POF) is a formal meeting of Chief Officers (or their nominee) responsible for planning and transport services within the HMA. The Forum provides professional advice to the Strategic Planning Group that supports its overall direction and work programme and the Chair of POF represents the views of the wider Forum at meetings of SPG. POF meets regularly in synergy with SPG.
- 5.10 The Task and Finish Group (T&F) is a formal meeting of the managers responsible for planning and transport policy within the HMA and reports to POF with the Chair attending POF as required.

5.11 The work of SPG and the subsidiary officer groups is overseen by a Member Advisory Group (MAG) which comprises of one senior Member representative from each local authority, plus an observer from the LLEP. The MAG meets on a regular frequency and its role is advisory with decisions being the responsibility of each individual member authority.

6. Duty to Co-operate

- 6.1 The Duty to Co-operate (DtC) does not necessarily require agreement. However, the Council will endeavour to co-operate on cross-boundary and strategic planning matters and will aim to seek agreement or areas of agreement through Statements of Common Ground (SoCG), as far as this is possible. The Council will aim to ensure they are proactive and constructive in co-operating on cross-boundary planning matters; to achieve a legally 'sound' Local Plan in this respect.
- 6.2 While the duty does not apply to residents and developers, the Council's engagement with these organisations and others is essential to the development of the Local Plan. Details of this are set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), except for developers, as this relates to the delivery of proposed allocated sites.
- 6.3 Here the Council proposes to use Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to assist in demonstrating to the Plan's Inspector that proposed sites can deliver the necessary infrastructure requirements, having worked constructively and on an on-going basis with the developer and landowner throughout the process of allocating the site and master-planning the design features of most importance, similarly to the DtC process.
- 6.4 It is important for the Examination in Public (EiP) stage of the Local Plan that the Council can demonstrate the approach and process it followed to working with its prescribed bodies on strategic issues of a cross-boundary nature, and, that these are identified early in the process.
- 6.5 This assists with showing the required co-operation between authorities on an on-going basis and what outcomes and actions have resulted that may have influenced the Plan. This goes towards demonstrating the Plan is sound.
- 6.6 This report outlines how Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has prepared the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Draft Local Plan in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate. It sets out how the Council has engaged with the prescribed bodies on relevant strategic and cross-boundary matters by providing evidence of engagement through a number of different methods during the stages of the Local Plan.
- 6.7 This statement will be reviewed and updated as the Local Plan is progressed through the plan process, eventually being published alongside the Submission Draft Local Plan as an examination document. This will ensure that it reflects ongoing engagement and cooperation prior to the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State.
- 6.8 This may include coverage of new issues or agreements on strategic matters as well as further discussions with prescribed bodies. There is an intention to demonstrate continued engagement during and beyond the Regulation 19 consultation, noting that any further changes to the plan would be presented through proposed modifications ahead of examination.
- 6.9 The Council has also prepared a separate Local Plan Statement of Consultation detailing how the Council undertook public consultation during the Regulation 18B Preferred Options consultation process and how the consultation responses have been used to inform the preparation of the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan.

7. Statements of Common Ground

- 7.1 To demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, the Local Plan work will include Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). These documents will address strategic matters or issues of a common nature between the Council and a statutory body or organisation that are being addressed and progressed throughout the plan making process to provide transparency, and wherever possible, working towards areas of agreement.
- 7.2 Individual SoCG will be agreed to assist in the collaboration between the Council and the prescribed body to demonstrate that the Duty to Co-operate has taken place and clearly set out where there is an agreement, where this is possible.
- 7.3 MoUs will be worked up with landowners and developers rather than SoCG, because although they are not strictly DtC bodies in the delivery of proposed strategic allocated sites, the Council feels it is important to demonstrate that co-operation has been continual throughout the plan making process to show delivery of its proposed allocated sites. This will ensure that the necessary development requirements, timescales and other build factors have been considered up front to assist in demonstrating deliverability of proposed development at the Examination in Public.
- 7.4 The signed SoCG and MoUs will follow at the Matter's Stage, as appropriate, as we continue discussions with our DtC Bodies, developers and landowners through the Regulation 19 stage to help inform the Submission Plan.
- 7.5 The table below indicates whether a Statement of Common Ground is being prepared or needed. Statements of Common Ground will be Appended to the final 'Duty to Co-operate Statement of Compliance' and submitted to the examination.

Table 2. Progress on Statements of Common Ground with key organisations

Organisation	Status
Historic England	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Natural England	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
National Highways	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Environment Agency	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Sport England	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Local Education Authority	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Local Highways Authority	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Lead Local Flood Authority	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Minerals and Waste Authority	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Public Health	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Integrated Care Board	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Leicestershire County Council	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Harborough District Council	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Leicester City Council	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Blaby District Council	Discussions on need for SoCG ongoing
Other Leicestershire Local Planning Authorities	No SoCG considered necessary. DtC to be Confirmed by e-mail

- 7.6 Other key organisations which are not prescribed bodies under the Duty to Co-operate, but which have been engaged through the preparation of the Plan and its supporting evidence include (but are not limited to) power supply companies; water supply and disposal companies; Local and National power supply companies (gas and electricity); Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust; Sport England and other sporting National Governing Bodies.

8. Ongoing Engagement as part of the Duty to Co-operate

- 8.1 This section outlines the process that the council has undertaken to proactively and effectively engage with neighbouring planning authorities, prescribed bodies and other relevant public bodies, to meet the duty to co-operate requirements. This has been achieved through written representations on draft policies, stakeholder meetings, and engagement during the preparation of evidence base documents.
- 8.2 Whilst it covers engagement from the start of the plan process, the section focusses on the progression of the Local Plan from the Regulation 18B: Preferred Options document to the Regulation 19: Pre-submission document and will be updated prior to submission to the Secretary of State.
- 8.3 The Regulation 18B consultation confirmed that the Plan generated no unmet housing or employment needs arising from the Local Plan and its evidence.

Housing

- 8.4 The Council has followed a robust approach to meet the local housing needs for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston, including meeting affordable housing needs. As the Council is seeking to meet its housing requirement in full, under the Duty to Co-operate it will not be reliant on any other local authority within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area to help meet its own need. Although, the Council can meet its own need in full, it is aware that the City of Leicester has declared an unmet need and will need help from other HMA partners to deliver its unmet need up to 2036.
- 8.5 The planned amount of housing therefore not only addresses our own needs but also contributes a modest proportion towards meeting Leicester City's housing need. This collaborative approach is necessary because we are part of the same housing market area. Leicester provides many of the commercial developments, job opportunities, cultural opportunities and services we rely on, making interdependent growth crucial for the quality of life across Leicestershire. The Borough Council's housing requirement is 240 dwellings per annum over a 21-year plan period, equating to 5,040 homes between 2020 and 2041.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

- 8.6 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) undertaken by ORS (2024) has been prepared to better understand the latest accommodation needs for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople within the Borough. The Report identifies that the Borough of Oadby and Wigston continues to have a zero identified need for permanent sites and limited need for transit pitches. However, the Council will continue to support a County-wide approach to meeting Transit provision that could accommodate any families wishing to visit the area.
- 8.7 This approach will ensure that the Council meets the requirements of the Housing Act (1985), the Housing and Planning Act (2016), the NPPF (2023) and Planning Policy Guidance (2014) as amended by Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) (which included a change to the definition of Travellers for planning purposes).

Employment

- 8.8 Based on the jointly prepared Housing and Economic Needs Assessment 2022 (HENA) and local assessments of employment land need, the Borough of Oadby and Wigston has a total employment need of 4.1 hectares over the Plan period with this split into 1 hectare E(g)

(employment) use and 3.1 hectares B2/B8 (small) use. There is no larger scale B8 need within the Borough area.

- 8.9 The HENA also identifies an unmet employment land need arising from Leicester of 23 hectares, however the HENA Distribution Paper (2022) concludes that Charnwood Borough Council is best able to suitably meet this unmet need in full. This reflects the existing over-supply of employment land compared to Charnwood Borough's own needs; combined with the availability of employment sites and land which is close to the City and can contribute to delivering employment land which can service the needs of Leicester-based companies.
- 8.10 The Council currently has 5 hectares of land designated for employment use within the Borough, with extant outline planning permission, however, this has yet to have been built out. As the Council's identified employment need for the Plan period is being met (exceeded) in full, this Plan will not allocate any further land for employment use.

Drainage and Flooding

- 8.11 The Borough falls entirely within the Severn Water Authority area for the purposes of water supply and the disposal of wastewater. The majority of the Severn Trent Water area is now classified as an 'area of serious water stress' and therefore, all new developments in the Borough are required to implement water efficient technology and fittings which have energy efficiency benefits.
- 8.12 The Environment Agency is responsible for flooding issues within the Borough. Leicestershire County Council are the Lead Local Flood Authority responsible for co-ordinating flood risk management in Leicestershire.
- 8.13 Duty to co-operate discussions have taken place with the Environment Agency (EA) and Officers of the County Council responsible for Local Flood issues. This includes working with the Environment Agency to agree the methodology and provide data for the update to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Water Cycle Study. The Environment Agency, alongside Natural England and other key stakeholder were consulted on these reports.
- 8.14 There are areas within the Borough that are within flood zone 3 and other areas that experience surface water flooding. Any development that increases surface water run-off could have adverse downstream impacts. Discussions with the EA have considered the impacts of proposed development on drainage and flooding. No downstream implications have been identified necessitating discussions with other Local Authority partners.

Provision of Infrastructure

- 8.15 The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which has and will continue to be developed alongside the Local Plan. The IDP is a 'live' document that will respond to changes and be adaptable throughout the lifetime of the Plan. The IDP has been prepared in consultation and through detailed engagement with key infrastructure and service providers including the following:

Table 3. Infrastructure delivery partners and stakeholders

Infrastructure Type	Key Stakeholders
Transport	National Highways; Leicestershire County Council Highway Authority, Local bus operators, Network Rail
Flood Risk Management	Environment Agency; Leicestershire County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority); Severn Trent Water.
Utilities	National Grid and the local Distribution Network Operator, National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED); Cadent Gas; Severn Trent Water
Education	Leicestershire County Council Education Authority
Healthcare	Leicester NHS Trust; Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board (LLR ICB); Leicestershire County Council Public Health
Emergency Services	Leicestershire Police; East Midlands Ambulance Services (EMAS); Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services (LFRS)

Health

- 8.16 The Borough falls within the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board (ICB) area. Duty to co-operate discussions have involved numerous meetings and correspondence with the ICB via quarterly meetings, as well as through cross-boundary meetings and proposed site allocation discussion.
- 8.17 DtC discussions with the ICB ensures that policies and allocations are able to be delivered whilst providing sufficient health care facilities to mitigate the impact of population growth as a result of new development over the Plan-period to 2041.

Education

- 8.18 Leicestershire County Council is the Local Education Authority (LEA) for the area. Extensive discussions have and continue to be held with Officers of the LEA in order to ensure that policies and allocations are able to be delivered whilst providing sufficient education provision.

Transport - Local and Strategic

- 8.19 Leicestershire County Council is the Local Highway Authority (LHA) for the area. Extensive discussions have and continue to be held with Officers of the LHA in order to ensure that policies and allocations are able to be delivered whilst providing sufficient highways and transport infrastructure.

Historic Environment

- 8.19 Responsibility for archaeology and the historic environment is administered by Leicestershire County Council (Archaeology). Historic England is responsible for designated heritage assets including Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings. There are currently 10 Conservation Areas, and 39 Listed Buildings and Structures situated in the Borough.

Discussions with Historic England and Leicestershire County Council have been ongoing at all key stages of plan production. This informed the proposed policies and choice of allocations in the Local Plan.

Natural Environment

- 8.20 Discussions have been ongoing with Natural England and Leicestershire County Council (Ecological advisors) at all key stages of plan production. This informed the proposed policies and choice of allocations in the Local Plan.

Minerals and Waste Planning

- 8.20 Discussions have been ongoing with Leicestershire County Council (as the Minerals and Waste Authority) at all key stages of plan production. This informed the proposed policies and choice of allocations in the Local Plan.

Cooperation with neighbouring local authorities

- 8.21 The Leicester and Leicestershire area also comprises the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area and the Functional Economic Market Area (HMA). The Leicester and Leicestershire HMA authorities work together on a number of different strategies, partnerships, evidence base documents and processes and regularly meet under the Duty to Co-operate. Close joint working between the HMA authorities ensures that there is a fully 'joined up' partnership approach to tackling strategic issues affecting each local authority as well as the wider HMA; for example, transport and highway assessment evidence, housing and economic needs assessments, and strategic employment distribution.
- 8.22 In addition to the wider HMA working mentioned above, the Council also works closely with both Leicester City Council and Harborough District Council due to many cross-boundary aspects, including the green swathes of land that are defined and designated as Green Wedges. Green Wedges play a vital role strategically by providing 'green lungs' out from the City of Leicester into the open countryside of the surrounding District and Borough Council areas.
- 8.23 The Council is working closely and aligning its Policy approach with Harborough District Council as a result of the joint-commitment to bring forward the cross-boundary site allocation (Policy AP5 in this Council's Local Plan) at Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Development Area.
- 8.24 The Council has and continues to work collaboratively with Harborough District Council (and Leicestershire County Council) in relation to this proposed allocation of strategic significance.
- 8.25 It is recognised by all Partners that this ongoing collaboration must also be aligned and delivered with Leicester City Council, recognising the relationship that a growth allocation in this location will have with the City.

Cooperation with Prescribed Bodies

Environment Agency

- 8.26 The Environment Agency have proactively engaged at each stage of public consultation, relevant evidence base involvements, as well as other matters, such as, Duty to Co-operate engagement. The Environment Agency agreed the methodology and provided data and feedback for the Council's Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, as well as

the jointly commissioned Water Cycle Study. The Environment Agency, alongside Natural England and other key stakeholder were consulted and engaged as necessary on all other relevant evidence, including the Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan, as well as preparation of the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to ensure that the Plan and the IDP reflect the comments and requirements of key stakeholders in relation to the water environment.

Historic England

- 8.27 Historic England has provided feedback to ensure that the policies in the Local Plan will not have a detrimental impact on the Borough.

Natural England

- 8.28 Natural England has provided feedback to ensure that the policies in the Local Plan will not have a detrimental impact on any protected habitats.

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board (LLR ICB)

- 8.28 The Council has worked closely with the LLR ICB and discussions have taken place regarding requirements for primary health care arising from strategic growth. This has been taken into consideration within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and relevant Policies in the Local Plan and supporting evidence.

National Highways

- 8.29 The scope and functionality of the strategic Transport evidence has been shared with National Highways for validation. National Highways has provided feedback on relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Sport England

- 8.30 Sport England is a non-departmental body under the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields. The Council has worked with Sport England to agree the approach to the Council's Playing Pitch and Outdoor Spaces Strategy (2024). Sport England has provided feedback on relevant policies in the Local Plan.

National Grid

- 8.31 National Grid has provided feedback on relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust

- 8.32 Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust has provided feedback on relevant policies in the Local Plan

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 This Duty to Co-operate Statement is the first stage in Oadby and Wigston Borough Council preparing Statements of Common Ground with relevant prescribed Duty to Co-operate and other public bodies and will be subject to review and updating, as the Local Plan is progressed through the next stages of the plan process.
- 9.2 Engagement will remain ongoing throughout the Regulation 19 consultation period to ensure that it reflects ongoing and continuous engagement on key strategic planning matters informing the Local Plan.
- 9.3 Statements of Common Ground will be prepared with prescribed bodies and other stakeholders, where considered necessary by the Council, to support the examination of the Local Plan. In addition, Memorandums of Understanding will also be worked up with landowners and developers to demonstrate that cooperation has been continual throughout the plan making process and to illustrate certainty in terms of deliverability.
- 9.4 These will be published in due course as part of the library of evidence to underpin the Local Plan as it proceeds through to the Examination in Public. The Council will continue to work collaboratively with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities and prescribed bodies to ensure that it's duty to co-operate is met in full.