

# Housing Topic Paper

To support the Oadby & Wigston Borough Council  
Local Plan Review 2020-2041

Winter 2024/2025

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# 1. Introduction

1.1. The draft Local Plan 2020-2041 sets out the Borough's housing requirement for the Plan period and includes site allocations to achieve the housing requirement, as well as policies on the types of dwellings that should be provided. This Housing Topic Paper is part of the evidence base to support the draft Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Local Plan in the delivery of its housing need over the Plan period. This paper discusses the rationale and justification for the Council's intent to adopt housing policies that reflect the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF), National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), Building Regulations and [Leicester & Leicestershire Housing & Economic Needs Assessment](#) (HENA, June 2022). The policies discussed are:

- Policy 9: Affordable Housing
- Policy 10: Housing Density
- Policy 12: Housing Choices
  - Requirements for Specific Groups
  - Internal and External Space Standards
  - Self-build and Custom Housebuilding

## Local Context

- 1.2. The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is one of the smallest legislative boundary areas outside of London, with 24km<sup>2</sup> hosting a total population of 57,700 (Census 2021). The Borough is therefore highly urbanised and relatively compact, and as of 2021, is the fifth most densely populated of the East Midlands' 35 local authority areas. This results in a variety of unique challenges and opportunities.
- 1.3. Situated directly South of the City of Leicester, the Borough shares a boundary with Leicester City Council, Harborough District Council (to the East and South of the Borough) and Blaby District Council (to the West and South of the Borough). The proximity to both the City and the surrounding countryside makes Oadby and Wigston unique in its character and landscape.
- 1.4. 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. In line with the NPPF requirement to start reviewing Plans within 5 years, the Council is preparing a new Local Plan to cover the period 2020-2041.

## Housing Requirement

- 1.5. The NPPF includes a number of policies supporting the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes in England. The NPPF states that the minimum number of homes required should be informed by a local housing needs assessment, using the standard method in NPPG as a starting point to help the Government achieve its national housing target of 300,000 net additional homes a year.
- 1.6. To establish local need, the nine local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire commissioned and published the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA, June 2022) as a strategic planning document to provide updated evidence regarding the overall housing and economic growth needed, including type and mix of housing.

- 1.7. The HENA reviewed the Government's standard method and applied broader considerations including the performance of the economy and the need for affordable housing. The assessment was published in June 2022 and concluded that for Oadby and Wigston, the housing need per annum is 188 dwellings a year for the period 2020-2041. This is in line with the standard method figure. Further to this, in the same year, Local Authorities within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area agreed, as required in the NPPF, a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) in relation to Leicester City's declared unmet housing and employment needs for the period 2020-2036. As part of this SoCG, the Council agreed the principle of accommodating a portion of Leicester City's unmet housing need. The Council's proportion of Leicester City's unmet housing need is 52 homes a year. The SoCG figures have been tested and put into Plans. Changes to the agreed housing figures could have an impact on Leicester City's Plan. To avoid any doubt, it is considered reasonable and appropriate to roll forward this unmet housing figure for the Borough's entire Plan period, including between 2036 and 2041.
- 1.8. Combining the Council's standard method housing need figure (188) and portion of the City's unmet need (52), the Council is required to make provision for 240 dwellings per annum. On the basis of a 21-year period, the need from 2020-2041 is a total of 5,040 dwellings.
- 1.9. Although the Sustainability Appraisal recommended that the medium-growth figure of 214 dpa is the most sustainable, taking account of all available strategic and local evidence and the Borough's housing requirement up to 2041, the Council has opted to allocate enough land to accommodate the delivery of the highest growth figure of 240 dpa over the entirety of the Plan period. This figure of 240 is the highest growth figure tested in strategic and local evidence and the Sustainability Appraisal illustrates that this can be accommodated and still be sustainable.
- 1.10. Policy 1 in the draft Local Plan 2020-2041 is the Spatial Strategy for Development within the Borough. This strategic policy addresses the scale of development required in the Borough to meet the local housing need and the level of infrastructure to support it. As Table 1 from the Spatial Strategy illustrates, as the Plan period has already started, of the 5,040 dwellings required over the Plan period, the current remaining requirement is 3,027, which incorporates a 10 per cent Lapse Rate. The Plan seeks to allocate sufficient land to accommodate this housing requirement, plus an additional 15 per cent supply buffer, bringing the total requirement to 3,481 dwellings. Through the allocation of eight Site Allocations, the Plan is therefore allocating land that can accommodate at least 3,524 dwellings. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council is allocating in excess of its Plan period requirement, which in turn is in excess of its local need.

**Table 1. Housing requirement for the Plan period (as of 31.03.2024) (Extract from the Spatial Strategy)**

a	Housing Need 2020-2041	5,040
b	Completions 01/04/20 – 31/03/24	990
c	Remaining Housing Need (a – b)	4,050
d	Committed development (with planning permission: 118 under construction, 1,019 not under construction)	1,137
e	10 per cent Lapse Rate	114
f	Residential Need (c – d + e)	3,027
g	15 per cent Supply Buffer	454
h	Number of dwellings to be allocated (f + g) (requirement)	3,481
i	Requirement per annum (17 years remaining)	205

### Achieving the Housing Requirement

1.11. The Spatial Strategy further explains that the Council seeks to deliver this requirement through a sequential approach. An extract of the Spatial Strategy is below:

*Para 4.2.6 'The Council would always seek to actively encourage the reuse of previously developed land, however, is aware that prioritising this over sustainable growth areas would not be positive planning and would be at odds with national policy and guidance. The Council will take a three 'pronged' approach to providing the homes that the Borough needs. The three approaches are; encourage and enable the provision of new additional homes within the town centre of Wigston and the district centres of Oadby and South Wigston; encourage and enable the provision of new additional homes on smaller sites within or directly adjacent to the urban area of the Borough; and, allocate provision of new additional homes within the eight Allocation Sites, as set out in this Local Plan'.*

1.12. The Council completed three Call for Sites Public Consultations between 2020 and 2024<sup>1</sup>, inviting all interested parties to identify potential sites for consideration for development. A total of 26 submissions were received throughout the three Call for Sites, many of which are situated on land currently designated as Green Wedge and / or Countryside. The Council also carried forward and tested a total of 7 site options that were allocated in the current Local Plan (2019) but have not yet received planning permission. The Winter 2024/25 [Call for Sites document](#) does not assess the extent to whether a site is deemed appropriate or not, but includes all details of Site Options received to date.

1.13. 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. Through the site selection methodology, as outlined in the [Site Assessment Methodology & Rationale Paper](#), the Council has assessed sites and made informed

<sup>1</sup> 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. A third Call for Sites was completed 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.

decisions on land suitability for development. The Council has also considered evidence and the need to maximise use of space to allocate new land. The Council's approach for delivering housing in the period 2020-2041 is to 'build big' to prevent piecemeal development and ensure the delivery of the infrastructure deemed necessary to mitigate its impact. The Council and its infrastructure delivery partners are aware that infrastructure delivery has not, in the past, always kept pace with new development coming forward. This is because, (a) the small scale nature of the Borough, and (b) the previous piecemeal development that has occurred within the Borough area.

- 1.14. The allocation of 8 sites with capacity of at least 3,524 dwellings will deliver at least 1,834 new homes across 4 sites in Wigston and at least 1,690 new homes across 4 sites in Oadby. The total number of new homes on Site Allocations is greater than the Borough's level of need. As explained in the Spatial Strategy:

*Para 4.2.10 "...This is to allow for some flexibility in delivery of new homes on each of the sites and in recognition that there could be unforeseen delays or obstacles that slow progress down. The inclusion of a healthy 'buffer' allows for flexibility over the full duration of the Plan period. The Council is also allocating a range of size of housing sites, ensuring that the development comes forward by various developers and different times, meaning that the Council is not 'putting all its eggs in one basket'.*

- 1.15. Allocating over the requirement also adds flexibility to applicants should they need to use space for more infrastructure, such as Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) or open space, or more affordable housing in order to achieve a more comprehensive and sustainable development.
- 1.16. The Council has opted to take a conservative approach to its housing delivery and its housing trajectory by; not allocating undeveloped town centre sites; not factoring in windfall development sites; or sites identified in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The reasons for not taking account of such sites and therefore not incorporating these into the housing delivery calculations are explained below.
- 1.17. The last Plan allocated 5 undeveloped town centre sites for residential development, of which there has been limited interest in the form of applications or pre-applications to date. The Council has therefore taken a pragmatic approach not to rely on the delivery of these sites in the 2020-2041 Plan period. However, these sites are still available for new housing development, which would be in addition to the planned housing delivery.
- 1.18. The Brownfield Land Register 2024 identified land suitable and available for residential development. Of the 13 sites on the Register, 4 have planning permission and have therefore been included in the committed development figure for establishing housing need (part 'd' of Table 1 above). The remaining 9 sites do not have planning permission. Again, the Council has taken the pragmatic approach not to rely on the delivery of these sites in the 2020-2041 Plan period.
- 1.19. The Council also considered the contribution of windfall development and sites identified in the SHELAA to achieving the housing requirement. The [2024 SHELAA](#) identified 53 new dwellings developable within the next 0-5 years. A review of windfall delivery over the last 10 years (2014/15 monitoring year to 2023/2024 monitoring year) was carried out, using the same method for calculating a total reliable windfall allowance per year that had been

accepted by the Planning Inspector for the current Local Plan (2019). The calculation for identifying windfall sites able to be relied upon is identified in the following calculation:

$$(A/B)/C = D$$

Where:

A = Net total of housing completions delivered in the last 10 years at the time of preparation for the Pre-Submission draft Local Plan

B = 10 years

C = 4. The number 4 has been used to account for a large buffer by assuming only 25% of windfall development will definitely be built out

D = Total reliable windfall allowance per year

1.20. For this Plan preparation, the calculation resulted in:

$$(409 / 10) / 4 = 10.225$$

1.21. 10 net windfall dwellings a year would provide 170 dwellings over the remaining Plan period (10 x 17 years). While the Council has historically seen a consistent supply of windfall sites, the Council has decided not to rely on these sites coming forward. Whilst an estimate for windfall delivery can be projected over a short period of time with some confidence, the delivery of windfall sites is generally more vulnerable to fluctuate, stall and vary with impacts from factors such as changes to the housing market and material costs.

1.22. Together, sites identified in the SHELAA and best-guess windfall projections could provide an additional 223 dwellings (53 + 170), or 7.4 per cent of the total remaining housing requirement for the Plan period. These sites could provide a significant contribution to the Council's housing delivery, and they still can, however the Council needs to be pragmatic in its approach.

1.23. It should be noted that this approach does not preclude such development in the Borough coming forwards and the Plan will both enable and encourage the delivery of high-quality new developments that accord with all relevant Policies and guidance set out in the Plan. Should development on SHELAA sites, undeveloped town centre sites, windfall development or brownfield sites come forward, the Council will take account of the new homes and include them in the monitoring towards meeting the housing requirement.

## **Whole Plan Viability Assessment**

1.24. All policy requirements discussed in this Housing Topic Paper have been included in viability testing<sup>2</sup>. The 2020-2041 Local Plan contains site allocation policies for each site, providing a steer on the level of housing and infrastructure growth expected from the site in line with the policies discussed in the Plan.

1.25. To reflect the unique viability circumstances of site allocation AP5 as a cross-boundary site with Harborough District Council, policy requirements in Allocation Policy 5 have been tested through a joint cross-boundary viability report between Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Harborough District Council<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Oadby and Wigston Local Plan Viability Study ([HDH Planning & Development Ltd, November 2024](#))

<sup>3</sup> Harborough District Council Local Plan Viability Oadby SDA Cross Boundary Assessment Report

## **Meeting Local Housing Needs**

- 1.26. The NPPF states that authorities should assess the housing size, type and tenure needed by different groups in the community and reflect these in planning policies. This includes, but is not limited to, those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people; students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.
  
- 1.27. As the Borough is fairly constrained by its size and the types of sites to be allocated in the Plan are predominantly greenfield sites with limited distinct character to carry forward. It is important for the local community both now and in the future to ensure that new housing developments on greenfield allocations are not built in isolation, but rather seen as a continuation of the most appropriate current stock of housing serving the needs of the community.
  
- 1.28. The NPPF expects local authorities to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare. The Borough Council will seek to fulfil this NPPF requirement as far as possible.
  
- 1.29. This document is a summary of the evidence that has been used to inform the policies proposed to ensure the Plan meets the needs of residents and the objectives of sustainable development.
  
- 1.30. The Council's monitoring position will be updated at the end of each monitoring year.



## 2. Affordable housing

### Context Policy

- 2.1. The NPPF requires a minimum of 10 per cent affordable housing to be sought on all major development, with some exemptions. Furthermore, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount to support the re-use of brownfield land.
- 2.2. Chapter 9 of the HENA sets out the Affordable Housing need in Leicester and Leicestershire, and the proportion of need for each of the eight local authorities. The HENA directs the affordable housing in Oadby and Wigston to a split of 33 per cent affordable home ownership, and 67 per cent affordable rent. It specifically identifies an estimated annual need of 69 dwellings for affordable home ownership and 139 dwellings for affordable rent.
- 2.3. The Councils Local Plan 2011-2031 required a minimum 10/20/30 per cent affordable housing split between the settlements of South Wigston, Wigston and Oadby. As demonstrated in the Council's [Authority Monitoring Report \(AMR\) 2024](#), 20.89 per cent of dwellings delivered across the whole Borough have been affordable dwellings. The 2011-2031 Plan's approach is therefore successfully achieving the delivery of 20 per cent affordable housing across the Borough.
- 2.4. The Council Regulation 18B draft Local Plan sought to continue this Policy requirement, subject to further evidence. However, the Whole Plan Viability Assessment (2024) has recommended that the Policy approach should now seek to achieve a minimum of 20 per cent on all Greenfield sites and a minimum of 10 per cent on Brownfield sites. In the context of the Council's waiting list, it would not be appropriate for the affordable housing policy to seek to deliver less than 20 per cent affordable housing on each of the 8 site allocations up to 2041.

### Approach and Justification

- 2.5. The draft Local Plan's approach to the provision of affordable housing has been informed by past delivery and the Whole Plan Viability Assessment (2024). Local Plan Policy 9 Affordable Housing policy seeks a 20 per cent affordable housing delivery on all major greenfield sites in the Borough and 10 per cent affordable housing delivery on major brownfield sites. This is supported by the Viability Assessment.
- 2.6. As previously mentioned, policy requirements for Site Allocation AP5 were tested through a joint cross-boundary viability report between Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Harborough District Council. The viability testing found a target of 40 per cent affordable housing is viable for the site. Allocation Policy AP5 therefore requires a 40 per cent affordable housing delivery on the site. This policy approach is independent to the rest of the Borough area.
- 2.7. Policy 9 further specifies on the split of affordable housing. In line with the HENA, the policy requires that of affordable housing, 33 per cent are for affordable home ownership. In consultation with the Council's housing team to identify local need, the policy asks that of the 67 per cent identified in the HENA for affordable rent, 33 per cent are for social rent and 34 per cent are for affordable rent.

2.8. The 8 sites allocated for housing will deliver at least 3,524 dwellings, of which, a minimum of 705 will be affordable. Around 233 of these will therefore be for affordable home ownership, and around 472 will be for affordable rent. This meets the need identified in the HENA.

### 3. Housing Density

#### Context

- 3.1. The Borough of Oadby and Wigston serves as an urban continuation to Leicester City and is characterised by urban densities in the built-up areas, as well as open countryside and green wedges. Remaining undeveloped land in the Borough is limited.
- 3.2. The NPPF clearly requires Local Planning Authorities to ensure developments are not built at low densities and must make optimal use of the potential of each site. In line with NPPF, the Council has considered:
  - a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
  - b) local market conditions and viability;
  - c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
  - d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
  - e) the importance of securing well-designed and beautiful, attractive and healthy places.
- 3.3. The Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) [Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Methodology Paper](#) has been adopted and used by all local authorities in Leicestershire. The standard development ratio for sites discussed in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Methodology Paper is as follows:
  - For sites up to 0.4 hectares in size, 100 per cent of a sites total area will be used within site capacity calculations.
  - For sites between 0.4 hectares and 2 hectares, 82.5 per cent of a sites total area will be used within site capacity calculations.
  - For sites between 2 hectares and 35 hectares, 62.5 per cent of a sites total area will be used within site capacity calculations.
  - For sites of 35 hectares and more, only 50 per cent of a sites total area will be used within site capacity calculations.
- 3.4. This approach was decided in discussion with stakeholders at developer panels and has successfully been applied in the Council’s Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). This approach allows local authorities a mechanism for forecasting site capacity, i.e the number of homes likely to be delivered on a future development site.
- 3.5. The current Local Plan (2019) sets out that all development should be built to certain minimum density standards. For example, 50 dwellings per hectare in town and district centres, 40 dwellings per hectare in other urban areas and 30 dwellings per hectare outside of these areas. This policy approach has been successful in delivering development at appropriate densities.

#### Policy approach and justification

- 3.6. The Council is aware that having a high density figure would not be appropriate throughout the entire Borough area, and so had carried forward a ‘sliding’ scale for flexibility relating to location, as well as responding to the distinct character areas of the Borough.

3.7. The Council's policy approach to housing density standards was consulted on as part of the Local Plan Regulation 18B consultation in Spring 2024 and has since been tested for viability. Considering these, the Housing Density Policy asks for:

- a) At least 50 homes per hectare on average at proposed development sites that have a gross site size of 0.3 hectares and larger and are located within the town centre boundary of Wigston or the district centre boundaries of Oadby and South Wigston.
- b) At least 40 homes per hectare on average at proposed development sites that have a gross site size of 0.3 hectares and larger and are located outside of the town centre boundary of Wigston or district centre boundaries of Oadby and South Wigston, but within the existing urban area of the Borough.
- c) At least 30 dwellings per hectare on average at proposed development sites that have a gross site size of 0.3 hectares and larger and are located on peripheral urban area and / or emerging countryside sites.

3.8. Density plays an important role in the overall perception and liveability of space and is a key component for developers to consider at master planning stage. The above ratios are used to ensure that the quantum of development on the limited sites available to the Council are appropriate and comply with NPPF policy, and are expected from all relevant development unless site specific considerations and / or details dictate otherwise. Any proposals for a lower dwelling per hectare figure would need to submit robust evidence for non-compliance to the Council at the earliest stages of a development proposal.

## 4. Requirements for specific groups

### Overview

- 4.1. To provide new development that meets the housing needs of older persons and people with disabilities, Policy 12 seeks all new dwellings to comply with Part M Building Regulations Standard M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings (or equivalent replacement standards). It further seeks that 5 per cent of these comply with Standard M4(3)(2)(a) Category 3: Wheelchair Adaptable (or equivalent replacement standards).
- 4.2. As mentioned, Paragraph 63 of the NPPF sets out the requirement for local planning authorities to assess the size, type and tenure of housing need for different groups of the community, including older people and people with disabilities<sup>4</sup>. This should then be reflected in local planning policies.
- 4.3. The NPPG on Housing for Older and Disabled People published in 2019 emphasises that ‘*the need to provide housing for older people is critical*’ as people live longer lives. An understanding of housing an ageing population is therefore something to be considered in the early stages of plan-making. The NPPG provides further detail on this requirement:

*‘Plan-making authorities should set clear policies to address the housing needs of groups with particular needs such as older and disabled people. These policies can set out how the plan-making authority will consider proposals for the different types of housing that these groups are likely to require. They could also provide indicative figures or a range for the number of units of specialist housing for older people needed across the plan area throughout the plan period. (63-006-20190626)*

*Where an identified need exists, plans are expected to make use of the [optional technical housing standards](#) (footnote 46 of the National Planning Policy Framework) to help bring forward an adequate supply of accessible housing...Planning policies for accessible housing need to be based on evidence of need, viability and a consideration of site specific factors. (63-009-20190626)*

***Plans need to provide for specialist housing for older people where a need exists. Innovative and diverse housing models will need to be considered where appropriate. Many older people may not want or need specialist accommodation or care and may wish to stay or move to general housing that is already suitable, such as bungalows, or homes which can be adapted to meet a change in their needs. Plan-makers will therefore need to identify the role that general housing may play as part of their assessment. Plan-makers will need to consider the size, location and quality of dwellings needed in the future for older people in order to allow them to live independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible, or to move to more suitable accommodation if they so wish. (63-012-20190626)***

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<sup>4</sup> Annex 2 of the NPPF contains the following definitions for older persons and people with disabilities:

**Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

**People with disabilities:** People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

- 4.4. The HENA (June 2022) identified a potential shortfall in accommodation for both older and disabled people within the Borough by 2041. In light of HENA findings, the Council carried out further research on housing for older persons and people with disabilities through commissioning Nexus to complete and deliver a [Specialised Housing Study: Older & Disabled People](#) (March 2024).
- 4.5. The Specialised Housing Study: Older & Disabled People sought to establish the need for accommodation for older persons and disabled people in the Borough and made a series of recommendations of areas that planning policies should address.

## Demographic Data

- 4.6. The NPPG recognises the national trend in an increasing elderly population whereby the number of people aged 85 and over is set to double from 1.6 million in 2016 to 3.2 million by 2041. The HENA found that the population above the age of 65 represent 21.7 per cent of the Borough total. This is higher than the Leicester and Leicestershire average of 17.7 per cent, as well as the England average of 18.4 per cent. Furthermore, the population aged 85 and over in the Borough represent 3.8 per cent of the population compared to 2.3 per cent across Leicester and Leicestershire (2019 ONS mid-year estimates).
- 4.7. The Specialised Housing Study goes on to show that the 65 and over age group are projected to rise from representing 21.3 per cent of the Borough population in 2021, to 26 per cent by the year 2041. A copy of figure 4.2 of the Specialised Housing Study is included below.

**Figure 1. Extract from the Specialist Housing Study, March 2024**

Age Group	Number					% of total population				
	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
People aged 65-69	2,987	3,442	3,691	3,549	3,202	5.2%	5.9%	6.2%	6.0%	5.3%
People aged 70-74	3,051	2,789	3,211	3,467	3,362	5.3%	4.8%	5.4%	5.8%	5.6%
People aged 75-79	2,381	2,789	2,588	2,988	3,251	4.1%	4.8%	4.4%	5.0%	5.4%
People aged 80-84	1,848	2,028	2,406	2,274	2,645	3.2%	3.5%	4.1%	3.8%	4.4%
People aged 85-89	1,304	1,349	1,533	1,849	1,799	2.3%	2.3%	2.6%	3.1%	3.0%
People aged 90 and over	732	839	922	1,079	1,330	1.3%	1.4%	1.6%	1.8%	2.2%
<b>Total population 65 and over</b>	<b>12,303</b>	<b>13,244</b>	<b>14,360</b>	<b>15,239</b>	<b>15,683</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>26.0%</b>
Total population	57,753	58,254	59,073	59,625	60,419					

Source: Census 2021 and 2018-based subnational population projections (alternative internal migration model)

- 4.8. The HENA recognises a population of 17.3 per cent in Oadby and Wigston living with a health problem. This is higher than the Leicester and Leicestershire average of 16.6 per cent. More specifically, the Specialised Housing Study predicts a 27.6 per cent increase in the number of wheelchair users between 2021 and 2041, which represents 12.3 per cent of housing need. It also predicts a 46.8 per cent increase in people living with dementia, of which 38.3 per cent are expected to have mobility problems between 2020 and 2041.

## Recommendations and Policy Requirements

- 4.9. Older persons, people with physical disabilities and people with mental impairments have diverse housing needs. The Nexus Specialised Housing Study found there is a need in the Borough for all types of accommodation for older and disabled persons over the Plan period, with insufficient supply currently coming forward in the Borough. For the most part, accommodation that is appropriate for older persons is functional in also meeting the needs of people with disabilities.
- 4.10. While a proportion may require full residential or nursing care housing facilities, most older persons and people with disabilities can stay in mainstream housing if well-designed to require minimal alterations, living as normal lives as possible and receiving in-home care when needed.
- 4.11. In line with the NPPF and NPPG, the Council is taking a pragmatic approach to providing housing for older and disabled persons that reflects anticipated changes to building regulations.
- 4.12. The first approach in policy is to require 100 per cent of new build homes to comply with Part M Building Regulations Standard M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings (or equivalent replacement standards). In response to the Government consultation, 'Raising accessibility standards for new homes: A consultation paper' in July 2022, the Government confirmed its intention to make Part M4(2) standards mandatory for all housing through Building Regulations.
- 4.13. The second policy approach is to require 5 per cent of these to comply with Standard M4(3)(2)(a) Category 3: Wheelchair Adaptable (or equivalent replacement standards). These percentage requirements reflect a pragmatic balance between demographic change identified by the HENA and Nexus study for the Plan period, as well as the outcomes of the Whole Plan Viability Assessment.
- 4.14. Whilst the policy does not specify a breakdown of how the percentage requirements should be achieved, many resources, such as the 'What people want' paper produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (November 2024)<sup>5</sup>, recognise that single-floor dwellings and properties with stair free access are most successful in providing step and stair free access that people want and need. Bungalows are particularly successful as properties that are safe and accessible. The 'What people want' paper also found that older people generally '*preferred bungalows to houses, and houses to flats. Furthermore, participants were willing to pay more for homes with step free access at the entrance, and a home where a level access shower could be installed easily*'.
- 4.15. Through market research, the Specialised Housing Study confirmed this trend is present in the Borough. It found that '*there is a significant demand for bungalows mainly by older people. However, there appears to be a lack of bungalows available to meet this demand and limited stock coming forward given new bungalows are rarely constructed*'. Given the scale of need and current lack in new supply reacting to the housing market, Nexus recommend the Council retain existing homes to prevent the loss of existing accommodation for older persons and people with disabilities unless meeting a certain

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<sup>5</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/673f1d09b3f0df6d2ebaf02d/What\\_older\\_people\\_want\\_research\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/673f1d09b3f0df6d2ebaf02d/What_older_people_want_research_report.pdf)

criterion. Policy 12: Housing Choices therefore also seeks to resist any net loss of existing residential accommodation. The only acceptable exemptions to this include demonstrating that the proposed change will provide a local community service / facility that meets an identified need in the Borough. It is worth noting that the Government's housing target is a 'net' figure. The retention of existing homes prevents the unnecessary loss of dwellings which have an impact on the Council achieving its 'net' requirement.

- 4.16. The Council requires all housebuilders to fulfil the Policy and expects requirements to be achieved through a sensible approach that reflects patterns of the housing market.



## 5. Internal Space Standards

### Overview

- 5.1. Policy 12: Housing Choices seeks to require all new dwellings across all tenures to, at a minimum, meet the government's [Nationally Described Space Standards](#) (NDSS).
- 5.2. In recent years, the Council has received a number of comments and concerns from members of the public and locally elected Councillors relating to issues experienced while living in new homes from major housebuilders in the Borough. The narrative of comments has been that homes are often too small, not fit for purpose and negatively affecting the experience of everyday tasks in the home.
- 5.3. The Council therefore assessed the majority of major sites developed in the Borough over the last Plan period. Headlining evidence finds that 55 per cent of house types and 59 per cent of the total number of homes built or committed by major house builders in the Borough are under NDSS.

### Nationally Described Space Standards

- 5.4. The NDSS form part of a wider [housing standards review package](#) published by the Government in March 2015, streamlining national standards required to internal floor space, accessible and adaptable housing and water efficiency.
- 5.5. The NDSS sets out required Gross Internal (floor) Area (GIA) for all new dwellings across all tenures, in line with the number of bedrooms and bed spaces provided. The minimum standards allow for different combinations of single, twin and double bedrooms, but also accounts for the additional appropriate living, dining, kitchen and storage space provided for the number of persons living in the whole dwelling. A summary of the NDSS is provided in an extract of the technical standards below.

**Figure 2. Extract from the nationally described housing standards for minimal gross internal floor areas and storage (m<sup>2</sup>).<sup>6</sup>**

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) *			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

<sup>1</sup> Where \* in the table represents where a one bedroom one person flat has a shower room rather than a bathroom, the floor area requirement may be reduced to 37m<sup>2</sup>.

- 5.6. In April 2021, amendments to The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO) made compliance with the NDSS mandatory for all development permitted under permitted development rights, as shown in the extract below:

*'Schedule 2 does not grant permission for, or authorise any development of, any new dwellinghouse ... that does not comply with the nationally described space standards issues by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015' Section 3, (9A)(b)*

- 5.7. Complying with NDSS is not incorporated into the Building Regulations and so establishing compliance outside of permitted development rights rests with the Local Planning Authorities. In line with the Government's drive for best practice in the GPDO and local knowledge of a large proportion of new homes built under space standards across the Borough, the Council is seeking a policy to make all new development compliant with the NDSS.

### **National Planning Policy Context**

- 5.8. The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) states that planning policies should ensure developments *'create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users'* (para 135f). The footnote expands on this and confirms that local policies *'should make use of the Government's optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable housing, where this would address an identified need for such properties'*. The Council is therefore seeking to implement NDSS within Policy 12 to ensure good quality homes that positively contribute to the community's health and wellbeing are built across all tenure types in the Borough.

### **Methodology**

- 5.9. Five major sites in the Borough were selected for this assessment, three being the Council's allocated Direction for Growth areas. All applications were permitted and house types approved within the current Local Plan period and have either been delivered or are currently being built out as of 1 April 2024. All applications for development discussed in this report were submitted to the Council after the NDSS were announced in 2015. A total of seven different house builders have contributed to the sites assessed.
- 5.10. Over the last five monitoring years (1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024), the homes delivered on these major sites have made up 92 per cent of all new homes delivered in the Borough. Specifically, the three Direction for Growth areas have contributed 88 per cent of all new homes in the Borough for the past five monitoring periods. The evaluation of these sites was therefore a proportional and appropriate sample for this evidence.
- 5.11. The method used to evaluate conformity was as the space standard advises; to assume the number of habitants by total bedspaces provided in the dwelling. The GIA of each house type was determined by that outlined on the last approved drawing for that house type. If measurements were only given in square feet, a conversion to square metres was completed. Where a house builder had not included measurements on the drawing of a house type, an Officer measured the GIA of the plans using a reliable measuring tool. Other details on the methodological process are as follows:

- The number of each house type delivered on sites was determined by the make-up indicated in the last approved site layout plan.
- Where the house builder submitted variations of the same house type, but the final built version was unclear from the site layout, a 50/50 split between the variations was assumed. House types with two or more variations submitted were counted as one house type.
- Where a house builder built the same house type across different phases of the same development or across different tenure types, house types were not duplicated.
- Where the NDSS do not indicate a minimum GIA for the size of a house type and level of occupancy provided, for example, for a five bedroom 10 persons dwelling, the house type was assumed as compliant with standards.
- Bedspaces were assumed only by house type plan, regardless of developer comments on the number of persons expected to live in the dwelling.

## Findings

### House Types

5.12. A total of 182 house types were identified across the five major developments assessed. Of the 182, 55 per cent were found to be under the NDSS, with the highest number of dwellings under NDSS on one site being 75 per cent, as shown below in Table 2.

**Table 2. Total house types assessed against the NDSS.**

Site location	House types provided on site	House types under NDSS (number)	House types under NDSS (percentage)
Wigston DFG	61	36	59 per cent
Stoughton Grange DFG	39	14	36 per cent
Cottage Farm DFG	40	23	58 per cent
St Pettrox Nursery	10	4	40 per cent
Meadow Hill, Cooks Lane	32	24	75 per cent
Total	182	101	55 per cent

### Number of Homes

5.13. When translated to number of homes delivered or committed, this is 1,362 homes built or to be built under these house types. Of these, 59 per cent (809) are under the NDSS. Table 3 breaks this down further.

**Table 3. Total homes assessed against the NDSS.**

<b>Wigston DFG</b>	<b>Dwellings permitted</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (number)</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (percentage)</b>
Phase 1A	482	247	51 per cent
Phase 1B	38	13	34 per cent
Phase 2A	36	29	81 per cent
Total on site	556	289	52 per cent
<b>Stoughton Grange DFG</b>	<b>Dwellings permitted</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (number)</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (percentage)</b>
Total on site	310	159	51 per cent
<b>Cottage Farm DFG</b>	<b>Dwellings permitted</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (number)</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (percentage)</b>
Phase 1	151	102	68 per cent
Phase 2A	250	202	81 per cent
Total on site	401	304	76 per cent
<b>St Pettrox Nursery</b>	<b>Dwellings permitted</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (number)</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (percentage)</b>
Total on site	42	12	29 per cent
<b>Meadow Hill, Cookes Lane</b>	<b>Dwellings permitted</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (number)</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (percentage)</b>
Total on site	53	45	85 per cent
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Dwellings permitted</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (number)</b>	<b>Dwellings under NDSS (percentage)</b>
	1,362	809	59 per cent

### Affordable Housing

5.14. NDSS apply on all homes of all tenures. The evidence collected finds that dwellings allocated as affordable housing are more likely to be under NDSS than market dwellings, as 84 per cent of affordable dwellings assessed did not meet the NDSS compared to the 59 per cent average outlined above. This is shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. Affordable housing tenure type assessed against the NDSS.**

	<b>Affordable dwellings permitted</b>	<b>Affordable dwellings under NDSS (number)</b>	<b>Affordable dwellings under NDSS (percentage)</b>
Wigston DFG	103	59	57 per cent
Stoughton Grange DFG	93	91	98 per cent
Cottage Farm	120	114	95 per cent
St Pettrox Nursery	8	8	100 per cent
Meadow Hill, Cooks Lane	12	unknown	unknown
Total	324 <sup>7</sup>	272	84 per cent

<sup>7</sup> This total does not take account of the Meadow Hill, Cooks Lane development as the site layout within the application does not specify which plots and house types are affordable.

- 5.15. It should be noted that the Council's housing Register indicates, and has done so for the last three consecutive years, that one and two-bedroom dwellings are the most sought after in terms of house size by bedroom number. This indicates a local need for lower number bedroom homes that are compliant with NDSS.

### **Considerations for the new Local Plan**

- 5.16. Having assessed five major developments in the Borough, which provide the overwhelming majority of dwellings in the Borough, the Council has evidence to suggest that while NDSS have been in place since 2015, more than half of new homes built or committed on sites of major development in the Borough are under the nationally described space standards.
- 5.17. As mentioned, major development has a significant and important contribution to housing delivery in the Borough, however compliance with NDSS has not come naturally on such sites.
- 5.18. In summary, the Council has sufficient evidence to demonstrate that a significant proportion of recently built or permitted homes in the Borough do not meet the nationally described minimum space standards. The Council is therefore seeking to require compliance with the NDSS within the Local Plan Policy so that all residents in all tenure types have adequate internal floor space to lead good quality, happy and healthy lives, both now and in the future.
- 5.19. Planning applications proposing dwellings under the NDSS are therefore less likely to positively move forward in the planning application process.

## 6. Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

### Context

- 6.1. The Council is seeking to roll forward Policy 14 Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding in the adopted Local Plan 2011-2031 as part of Policy 12 Housing Choices in the draft Local Plan 2020-2041 based upon the Council's position and need identified for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding. The following section outlines the number of people on the Register from its first publication online to 30 October 2024 and discusses the number of self-build and custom-build applications received, refused and granted by the authority since 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022. In summary, as of 30 October 2024, there are 33 applicants on the Register, 23 of which meet the local connection test.
- 6.2. Self-build and custom-build housing are defined in the NPPF as '*Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual*' (Annex 2: Glossary).
- 6.3. In accordance with the [Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 \(as amended by the Housing Planning act 2016\)](#), local authorities are required to provide and keep a Register of individuals and associations with an interest in self and custom-build housing. Local authorities also have to give regard to this and give enough sustainable development permissions to meet the identified demand. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) states that planning authorities should '*seek opportunities, through policies and decisions, to support small sites to come forward for community-led development for housing and self-build and custom build housing*' (Para 70b).
- 6.4. Under National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), individuals or associations of individuals who apply for entry on the Register and meet all the eligibility criteria must be entered on Part 1. Entries for Part 1 of the Register must be counted towards the number of suitable services plots the Council must grant development permission for. Entries on Part 2 do not count towards demand for the purpose of the 2015 Act but relevant authorities must have regard to the entries on Part 2 when carrying out planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions.
- 6.5. Local planning authorities are encouraged to publish headline data on the demand for self and custom build housing in their Authority Monitoring Report. Whilst the Borough is seen as an attractive place to live (for many reasons such as its proximity to Leicester City, the countryside and concentration of schools), the Council has seen limited interest in self and custom build housing compared to other authorities in Leicestershire. Due to the low number of customers on the Register, the Council has not previously published headline data in the Authority Monitoring Report.
- 6.6. Note that at the time of writing (Winter 2024), the Council is undertaking a review of the Register, a website review and a formal update to the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding form. This review is being carried out as a result of recommendations received via an Action Plan from the Right to Build Taskforce in October 2023, and one-to-one guidance from a Task Force Expert in the Summer of 2024. The review of the Register will enable the Council to better understand its need due to more detailed questions included than in the previous form and ensure those on the Register before the update are still interested in this type of housebuilding.

## The Register

6.7. As of the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024, there are 33 individuals on the Register and 0 groups or associations of individuals on the Register. There are a total of 23 entries on Part 1 of the Register. There have been no requests for removal from the Register.

**Table 5. Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register as of 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

Self and custom build monitoring year	Individuals added on the Register	Associations added on the Register	Cumulative total of individuals and associations on Part 1 and Part 2 of the Register	Individuals and associations on Part 1 of the Register	Cumulative total of individuals and associations on Part 1 of the Register
31 Oct 2015 – 30 Oct 2016	2	0	2	1	1
31 Oct 2016 – 30 Oct 2017	6	0	8	5	6
31 Oct 2017 – 30 Oct 2018	8	0	16	5	11
31 Oct 2018 – 30 Oct 2019	4	0	20	4	15
31 Oct 2019 – 30 Oct 2020	2	0	22	1	16
31 Oct 2020 – 30 Oct 2021	5	0	27	4	20
31 Oct 2021 – 30 Oct 2022	2	0	29	1	21
31 Oct 2022 – 30 Oct 2023	2	0	31	0	21
31 Oct 2023 – 30 Oct 2024	2	0	33	2	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>

## Monitoring

6.8. The Council has monitored self build and custom build housing for a number of years.

Monitoring of planning applications (31st October 2022 – 30th October 2023)

6.9. Three planning applications were submitted to the Council in the 2022/2023 monitoring year. Two applications are for the same address and submitted to the Council by the same applicant. None of the applicants are on the Register. Of the three applications, two were permitted and one was refused. As of April 2024, the approved planning applications have not been completed.

**Table 6. Monitoring of planning applications (31st October 2022 – 30th October 2023)**

Date Application Valid on Uniform	Planning Application Number	Site Address	Settlement	Proposal	Ticked SCB on application	Site Type	No. bedrooms	Units (Gain / Loss)	Permitted / Refused	Applicant on the Register?	Date decision issued	Completion (date)
19.01.2023	22/00473/FUL	Ingleneuk Welford Road Wigston Leicestershire LE18 3TE	Wigston, Kilby Bridge	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of new detached dwelling and associated landscaping works.	Yes	Demolition rebuild from bungalow to 4 bed house	4	0	Permitted	No	26.01.2024	Not complete as of April 2024 Monitoring
04.07.2023	23/00199/FUL	29 Ravensthorpe Road Wigston Leicestershire LE18 3QX	Wigston	Proposed erection of new detached dwelling - revised scheme following implemented consent ref:14/00327/FUL	Yes	Garden plot but has foundations from previously permitted site	3	1	Refused	No	25.08.2023	
12.10.2023	23/00361/FUL	29 Ravensthorpe Road Wigston Leicestershire LE18 3QX	Wigston	Proposed erection of new detached dwelling - revised scheme following implemented consent ref:14/00327/FUL (Resubmission 23/00199/FUL)	Yes	Garden plot but has foundations from previously permitted site	3	1	Permitted	No	07.12.2023	Not complete as of April 2024 monitoring



Monitoring of planning applications (31st October 2023 – 30th October 2024)

6.10. Three planning applications were submitted to the Council in the 2023/2024 monitoring year. The three applications are for three different addresses, each by different applicants. None of the applicants are on the Register. Of the three applications, one was permitted and two were refused.

**Table 6. Monitoring of planning applications (31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024)**

Date Application Valid on Uniform	Planning Application Number	Site Address	Settlement	Proposal	Ticked SCB on application	Site Type	No. bedrooms	Units (Gain / Loss)	Permitted / Refused	Applicant on the Register?	Date decision issued	Completion (date)
29.02.24	24/00063/OUT	24 Wych Elm Road Oadby Leicester Leicestershire LE2 4EF	Oadby	Outline application a 3 bed detached dwelling with integral garage (adjacent to 24 Wych Elm Road)	Yes	Garden plot with shed/outbuilding structure	3	1	Permitted	No	01.05.2024	
17.06.24	24/00226/FUL	24 Turville Close Wigston Leicestershire LE18 3UH	Wigston	Erection of new 2 bed dwelling	Yes	On driveway and in garden of existing house	2	1	Refused	No	12.08.24	
23.08.24	24/00185/FUL	Land At The Maromme Square Wigston Leicestershire	Wigston	Proposed new dwelling	Yes	In garden of existing house	3	1	Refused	No	15.10.24	

## Summary

- 6.11. There are a total of 33 customers on the Council's self-build and custom housebuilding Register. Of these, 23 meet the eligibility criteria of Part 1 of the Register and so must be counted towards the number of suitable services plots the Council must grant development permission for. Due to the Council only monitoring self-build and custom housebuilding from October 2022, the total number of plots permitted since 2015 is unknown.
- 6.12. The Council believes the approach to rolling forward its policy approach to self-build and custom housebuilding is appropriate and justified due to the need and delivery discussed in this report.

**Table 7. Summary table**

Self and custom build monitoring year	Individuals and associations on Part 1 of the Register	Cumulative total of individuals and associations on Part 1 of the Register	Permissions for self-build and custom housebuilding permitted in the Borough
31 Oct 2015 – 30 Oct 2016	1	1	Unknown
31 Oct 2016 – 30 Oct 2017	5	6	Unknown
31 Oct 2017 – 30 Oct 2018	5	11	Unknown
31 Oct 2018 – 30 Oct 2019	4	15	Unknown
31 Oct 2019 – 30 Oct 2020	1	16	Unknown
31 Oct 2020 – 30 Oct 2021	4	20	Unknown
31 Oct 2021 – 30 Oct 2022	1	21	Unknown
31 Oct 2022 – 30 Oct 2023	0	21	2
31 Oct 2023 – 30 Oct 2024	2	23	1

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1. The development coming forward over the Plan period 2020-2041 will be the highest ever delivered within the Borough area, whilst also being some of the last for the Borough due to available land constraints. It is therefore more important than ever to get the right housing and infrastructure in the right places to fulfil identified needs and support remaining growth.
  
- 7.2. The Policies in the Local Plan respond to the local challenges and areas of opportunity across the Borough. Based on evidence, they address specific needs of particular groups and seek the delivery of high quality new homes.