



**Borough of Oadby and Wigston
Local Plan 2020 – 2041**

Site Selection Methodology and Rationale

Winter 2024-25

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1. SITE SELECTION METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE

- 1.1 The Oadby & Wigston Borough Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in April 2019. In line with the requirements of the planning regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Oadby and Wigston Borough Council ('the Council') is preparing a new Borough Local Plan. This will determine the overall strategy for future development across the Borough from 2020 to 2041, including the location of residential development to address housing need.
- 1.2 The Site Selection Methodology has been developed to help the Council make informed decisions about the Local Plan's spatial strategy and the selection of site allocations. NPPF paragraph 11 a) states '*all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;*' All housing should be provided in sustainable locations, well located to existing settlements or form part of new 'stand-alone' settlements, to support the delivery of sustainable communities.
- 1.3 The process of selecting sites for allocation in the Plan is a step-by-step process. The site selection process has been developed to determine the most sustainable and developable sites in accordance with the NPPF, which will ensure that the site selection is consistent with the principles of sustainable development and consistent with the policies within the Framework. This paper explains the steps undertaken.
- 1.4 The initial step has been to identify the pool of sites for consideration and assessment. The NPPF requires all local authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment ([SHELAA](#)), to enable them to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area. The Council updates the SHELAA annually.
- 1.5 This was supplemented by the Council undertaking three [Call for Sites](#) public consultation exercises. The first was between 25 September – 20 November 2020. The second was alongside the Regulation 18A Public Consultation on the emerging new Local Plan Issues and Options Draft from 3 September – 29 October 2021. The third was undertaken alongside the Regulation 18B new Local Plan draft Issues and Options public consultation from 3 April – 15 May 2024. These exercises were undertaken to understand what land interests there were in the Borough for potential housing, employment, retail or other development uses from 2031 onwards. A full list of sites is shown in Appendix 1. In total 33 sites were received or considered.
- 1.6 The NPPF (December 2023) suggests that Plans should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that '*all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development*' (NPPF, paragraph 11) and '*be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development*' and be '*prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable*' (NPPF, para 16). It goes on to state that '*Planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability*' (NPPF, para 69).
- 1.7 For development to be considered sustainable it needs to be supported by the appropriate infrastructure and services, such as shops, places of employment and education. For development to be sustainable it should also seek to protect and enhance the natural environment. Development that is isolated and disconnected from existing settlements is unlikely to contribute towards a sustainable pattern of development.
- 1.8 The assessment was also based on information provided by the site promoters at least up until the point of assessment. It may be possible to improve the impact against certain criteria by mitigating negative impacts. However, to provide a consistent approach, it is not

for the Council, to establish the specific mitigation that would be required to improve any negative impacts.

- 1.9 A key part of the evidence base of the Local Plan is the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). It is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Plan. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the Plan, when judged against all reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. The SA allows for the consideration of opportunities to improve environmental, social and economic conditions in the local area and identify how to mitigate the impact of development. All sites were assessed against the Sustainability Framework to consider the sustainability credentials of each site independently and cumulatively. The SA is applied as an iterative learning process running parallel to the preparation of the Plan, meaning it is reviewed and updated as the Local Plan progresses.
- 1.10 It needs to be remembered that the SHELAA, Call for Sites Updates and SA have different purposes:
- The sustainability objectives of an SA are developed to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan as a whole and in some circumstances are not particularly suited to appraising the merits of individual sites.
 - The SA is strategic in nature and does not consider all the factors relevant to the site allocation process. For example, the SA does not consider whether it is possible to provide a safe vehicular access, rather it is more concerned with general accessibility by sustainable transport modes.
 - The SA, unlike the SHELAA, does not assess deliverability/viability factors as they are not necessarily 'sustainability' factors (and therefore not incorporated within the sustainability objectives).
 - The SHELAA, unlike the SA, undertakes assessments on an individual site basis rather than assessing and comparing options against one another or in combination.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.11 Land Use Consultants, as part of their Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Local Plan, undertook an assessment of each site against a range of quantitative and qualitative topics. The scoring was undertaken in March 2024. It is entirely possible that there has been a change in circumstances between the scoring being finalised and the Regulation 19 consultation taking place which could impact the appraisal of a particular site. The consultation is an opportunity to identify any such change in circumstances.
- 1.12 Their assessment of the sites did not present a clear picture of 'winners' and 'losers'. All the sites are assessed as having positive and negative effects as well as uncertain ones. Therefore, the SA did not provide any definitive answers on site selection, arguments could be made for/against any site. The NPPF guidance on deliverability, availability and suitability was then used to shape site selection.

Deliverability and Developability

- 1.13 This uses information from the SHELAA, Call for Sites, as well as any updates from site promoters since these were published. It considers whether the site could be considered deliverable or developable with reference to the definition in the National Planning Policy Framework glossary.

1.14 The NPPF states that *'To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:*

- a) *sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).*
- b) *where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.'*

Availability and Achievability

1.15 This uses information from the SHELAA and Call for Sites, as well as any updates from site promoters since the SHELAA was published. It considers whether the site is available and achievable with reference to the explanations in the Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraphs 19, 20 Reference ID: 3-020-20190722).

'A site can be considered available for development, when, on the best information available (confirmed by the call for sites and information from land owners and legal searches where appropriate), there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development. For example, land controlled by a developer or landowner who has expressed an intention to develop may be considered available.

The existence of planning permission can be a good indication of the availability of sites. Sites meeting the definition of deliverable should be considered available unless evidence indicates otherwise. Sites without permission can be considered available within the first five years, further guidance to this is contained in the 5 year housing land supply guidance. Consideration can also be given to the delivery record of the developers or landowners putting forward sites, and whether the planning background of a site shows a history of unimplemented permissions.'

Suitability

1.16 The Planning Practice Guidance note also contains advice on what suitable means (paragraph 18):

'A site or broad location can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated.

When considering constraints, plan-makers may wish to consider the information collected as part of the initial site survey, as well as other relevant information, such as:

- *national policy;*
- *appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;*
- *contribution to regeneration priority areas;*
- *potential impacts including the effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation'.*

Rationale

- 1.17 One of the key concerns for site assessment is deliverability. There appears to be some doubt over the future of Glen Gorse Golf Club, it is unclear that the members wish to dispose of the course meaning these sites (O&W001, O&W002, OAD008 and WIG 005) may not become available for development in the short term. As other sites do not have this constraint these four sites are not taken forward for consideration as a Regulation 19 allocation. Additionally, the development of these sites could have a significant impact on the existing green wedge and countryside designations.
- 1.18 There is a long-standing commitment to deliver a Potential Transport Route (formerly referred to as the Eastern District Distributor Road in the Borough) which is safeguarded in the adopted Local Plans by both the City of Leicester and the Borough of Oadby & Wigston and this safeguarding has been carried forward into respective emerging draft Local Plans. These designations are supported by Leicestershire County Council as Highways Authority. This safeguarding proposal conflicts with the schemes OAD003 and OAD004 which show residential and commercial development on these allocations. In addition, the strategic flood risk assessment classifies OAD003 as a site with a significant surface water flood risk requiring an exception test. Other sites offering residential development do not have this issue. Potential office type use should be located in town centres, none of which have an identified flooding issue. Their allocation would prevent the delivery of the potential transport route and, as such, would not meet the definition of suitable.
- 1.19 A recent permission at the Wigston Direction for Growth (Wigston Meadows, south-east of Wigston) has met the Council's employment allocation for the emerging plan period (identified by the HENA). So there is no actual need to allocate additional employment sites. Therefore, the following sites were not progressed, OAD005, OAD014, SWIG001. In addition, there are Policy conflicts with OAD005, impact on the green wedge, and, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment classifies it as a site with a significant surface water flood risk requiring an exception test. Potential office type use should be located in town centres, none of which have an identified flooding issue. There is no evidence that leisure or employment is required, so the site at OAD001 does not need a local plan allocation. It may be possible to progress this comparatively small-scale outdoor leisure proposal (OAD001) via an application.
- 1.20 There are several town centre proposals (located on existing car parks), identified in the adopted Local Plan (2019) that have not yet been taken forward by developers. The recent Nexus Main Town Centre Uses Study (2024) has identified that only a modest level of growth in retail floorspace will be required in the 2020-2041 period. In these circumstances Nexus advised that future need could be met from the reuse of existing vacant floorspace within the centres rather than new allocations. There are concerns about the overall viability of these schemes and if schemes may not be viable then they cannot be considered achievable. Therefore, the following are not taken forward, OAD012, OAD013, WIG012, WIG013 and WIG014.
- 1.21 A number of sites have been put forward as either variations on another proposal or as parts of a larger site. One of the key concerns raised by the public in representation on the Regulation 18B Preferred Options consultation was regarding the need to ensure that schemes were large enough to make on-site provision for infrastructure generated by that development. Schemes often need to be of a larger scale to generate sufficient viability to justify on-site infrastructure and therefore sites that were put forward as part of a larger site or sites that were put forward proposing a lower level of development than could be achieved on a site have not been taken forward. OAD002, OAD010 and OAD011 have not been taken forward *per se* as they are considered as part of OAD009. Likewise, WIG003, WIG004, WIG006, WIG007 and WIG011 are considered as part of WIG008.

- 1.22 As noted above, isolated development is unlikely to contribute to sustainable development unless it is of sufficient size to generate a standalone community. Given their location within the Borough (both comparatively isolated) and size (not large enough for a standalone community) neither WIG009 or WIG015 would meet this definition of sustainable development. Additionally, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment classifies both as a site with a significant surface water flood risk requiring an exception test. Other sites of a similar size are available that do not require an exception test.
- 1.23 This leaves eight sites to be put forward as potential site allocations in the Regulation 19 consultation, that between them, meet the identified housing need for the Authority. The Council accepts that as a result of the Regulation 19 consultation that these proposed allocations may change. Appendix 2 shows an assessment of all the sites in one place.

APPENDIX A – SUBMITTED SITE OPTIONS

No.	Ref	Address
1	OAD/001	Land at Stoughton Grange Farm, Oadby
2	OAD/002	Land South of Gartree Road, Oadby
3	OAD/003	Land to the West, South and East of Spire Leicester Hospital, Gartree Road, Oadby
4	OAD/004	Land North of Manor Road, Oadby
5	OAD/005	Land North of Palmerston Way, Oadby
6	OAD/006	Land at Oadby Grange, Oadby
7	OAD/007	Land South of Sutton Close, Oadby
8	OAD/008	Half of Glen Gorse Golf Course, Oadby
9	OAD/009	Land South of Gartree Road and East of Stoughton Road, Oadby (Primary Masterplan)
10	OAD/010	Land South of Gartree Road and East of Stoughton Road, Oadby (Variant Option 1)
11	OAD/011	Land South of Gartree Road and East of Stoughton Road, Oadby (Variant Option 2)
12	OAD/012	Land at East Street Car Park, Oadby (Brooksby Square)
13	OAD/013	Land at Sandhurst Street Car Park, Oadby (Baxter's Place)
14	OAD/014	Sewage Works Employment Extension Oadby
15	OAD/015	Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Development Area, Oadby
16	WIG/001	Land West of Welford Road, Wigston
17	WIG/002	Wigston Meadows Phase 3, Wigston
18	WIG/003	Land North of Denbydale, Wigston
19	WIG/004	Land North of Newton Lane, Wigston
20	WIG/005	Highfield Farm
21	WIG/006	Land off Denbydale and Rosedale Road
22	WIG/007	Land at Seven Oaks Farm, Newton Lane
23	WIG/008	Land at Newton Lane, Wigston
24	WIG/009	Land West of Welford Road, Kilby Bridge
25	WIG/010	Land North of Glen Gorse Golf Course, Wigston
26	WIG/011	Land Adjacent to Newton Lane, Wigston
27	WIG/012	Land north of centre (primarily focused on Junction Road car park) adjacent to Wakes Road / Junction Road, Wigston (Burgess Junction)
28	WIG/013	Frederick Street towards the north of Bell Street, Wigston (Chapel Mill)
29	WIG/014	Land towards the south of the centre (primarily focussed on Paddock Street car park) between Bell Street and Paddock Street, Wigston (Long Lanes)
30	WIG/015	Land at Newton Lane, Wigston
31	SWIG/001	Magna Road Employment Extension, South Wigston
32	O&W/001	Glen Gorse Golf Course,
33	O&W/002	Glen Gorse Golf Course and Highfield Farm

APPENDIX B – SUMMARY OF SITE SELECTION RATIONALE

	Site Ref	Comments
1	OAD001	Potential Leisure or Recreation allocation not considered necessary
2	OAD002	Considered as part of a larger site (OAD009)
3	OAD003	Local policy constraints
4	OAD004	Local policy constraints
5	OAD005	Potential employment use not required and local policy constraints
6	OAD006	Reg 19 Preferred Allocation
7	OAD007	Reg 19 Preferred Allocation
8	OAD008	Deliverability concerns, potential impact on green wedge expansion
9	OAD009	Reg 19 Preferred Allocation
10	OAD010	Considered as part of a larger site (OAD009)
11	OAD011	Considered as part of a larger site (OAD009)
12	OAD012	Unimplemented existing allocation not carried forward
13	OAD013	Unimplemented existing allocation not carried forward
14	OAD014	Unimplemented allocation no longer required
15	OAD015	Reg 19 Preferred Allocation
16	WIG001	Reg 19 Preferred Allocation
17	WIG002	Reg 19 Preferred Allocation
18	WIG003	Considered as part of a larger site (WIG008)
19	WIG004	Considered as part of a larger site (WIG008)
20	WIG005	Deliverability concerns, potential impact on green wedge expansion and countryside land.
21	WIG006	Considered as part of a larger site (WIG008)
22	WIG007	Considered as part of a larger site (WIG008)
23	WIG008	Reg 19 Preferred Allocation
24	WIG009	Isolated from existing development
25	WIG010	Reg 19 Preferred Allocation
26	WIG011	Considered as part of a larger site (WIG008)
27	WIG012	Unimplemented existing allocation not carried forward
28	WIG013	Unimplemented existing allocation not carried forward
29	WIG014	Unimplemented existing allocation not carried forward
30	WIG015	Isolated from existing development
31	SWIG001	Unimplemented allocation not carried forward
32	O&W001	Deliverability concerns, potential impact on green wedge expansion and countryside land.
33	O&W002	Deliverability concerns, potential impact on green wedge expansion and countryside land.