



Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire briefing: Responding to Oadby and Wigston's Local Plan consultation.

N.B. The deadline for responses is 12pm Fri 21st Feb.

If you live in the Borough of Oadby and Wigston please email a personal response to the consultation.

Your response can be as short as you want.

Make sure you give your address and postcode so they know you are a local resident – otherwise your response will not be counted! Also put in the subject line that it is a response to the Local Plan consultation.

Email your response to:

planningpolicy@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

The main Local Plan document containing Oadby and Wigston's draft policies (they are in green) is [here](#).

You can see the whole Local Plan consultation page [here](#).

Once we have completed it, you'll be able to find Climate Action's full detailed response on our Low Carbon Planning and

Below is a summary of the key points we will be making in our consultation response. We suggest you pick 2 or 3 things to comment on which you care about from the following list, giving examples from your own personal experience.

Please don't use our exact wording in your response.

Key points Climate Action think need making:

1. Detail.
2. Energy efficiency and insulation.
3. Solar generation.
4. Housing density.
5. Improve bus services.
6. Design against car use.
7. Access to services.
8. Paving front gardens.

- 1. Detail. While it contains many excellent aspirations, the plan lacks detail, targets and specific requirements (as opposed to hopes and expectations) making them unlikely to be acted on.**

Eg buildings are "expected" to improve energy efficiency but the policies don't say to what standards, or make this a requirement rather than an expectation. Obviously new development will have to achieve the Future Homes Standards of efficiency, but this should be a minimum and the Council should expect and will support improvements on it – for example with a target of PassivHaus standard. (Page 43, Policy 5a on climate change.)

- 2. Energy efficiency and insulation. The plan should require a fabric first approach to energy efficiency. In other words insulation should be used to achieve the vast majority of reduction in energy use before additions like solar generation and electric heat pumps are factored in. This would improve resilience to the effects of climate change as well as substantially reducing the houses carbon footprints and cost of heating and cooling them.**

We want specific details, for example a requirement to use insulation to reduce energy use by 80% or to PassivHaus standard. (Page 43, Policy 5a on climate change.)

- 3. Solar generation. Require more than 10% of each home's energy use to be provided by solar on the roof of the building. We suggest 30%.**

(Page 54 Policy 8, part 1, Renewable Energy.) It's it's good that the Council are requiring some energy to be generated on the building. However, the wording needs clarifying to make it clear that you are talking about whole solar systems which generate rather than just wiring in preparation for systems to be added.

By requiring buildings to be built with a fabric first approach the building will require less energy to heat and cool and it is therefore possible to require a higher proportion of energy to be generated onsite – hence our suggestion of 30%.

Buildings need to be oriented so as to maximise solar gain.

- 4. Housing density. Require higher housing density to minimise land use, support less car use and increase energy efficiency. This also allows for more green space, reducing climate impacts.**

(P59 Policy 3a Housing density.) We advocate for an increase of 20dph (dwellings per hectare) for each of the minimum housing densities you propose for different areas. A higher housing density does not have to change the character of an area with careful design. Higher housing density means less land ends up concrete and tarmaced over, allowing more of the area being developed to be retained as greenspace. This reduces both flood risk and the build-up of heat during heatwaves. It also leaves outside green space where mini forest and ponds can be put in supporting both nature and residents access to nature.

In the town centres 70-80dph can easily be achieved while still offering some private outside space and fitting within your design suggestions. Small rows of terraces with occasional connected 3-4 story flats can achieve this. ([See the Goldsmith development](#) in Norwich as an example of 75dph housing density with access to private outside space – it would not need to look like this.)

For policy 3b on the edges of urban areas we propose 50 dph, again using small groups of terraces as a way to increase energy efficiency, decrease land use and reduce sprawl which increases car dependency.

For policy 3c we want 40dph as a minimum.

These should all be combined with an increased requirement of affordable social housing to 30% on greenfield and 20% of the homes built on brownfield sites.

Leicester City's economic viability assessment found this to be entirely valid and there is no reason to think it is less so in Oadby and Wigston. The economics should be helped by the higher housing density requirements as it will allow for more units to be built on less land.

5. Improve bus services requiring bus stops within 300m of all new homes, developers contributions towards improved bus services, and ensuring roads are built to support sensible bus routes.

The transport policies in this Local Plan say the Council supports a shift from car towards sustainable modes of transport, but lacks detail and requirements. What specifically will the council do to ensure functional bus services, including to secondary schools? E.g. Leicester as a whole needs circular bus routes ensuring that movement to nearby places, eg Oadby and Wigston is easy, unlike at present. Will the Council work with the transport authorities to put such services into place, require developers contributions to fund bus provision, and require services to be running before housing is put on the market?

6. Design against car use giving specific examples and requirements, including encouraging parking on houses to be distanced from housing to the ends of roads.

This plan has good ambitions to encourage a shift towards active and public modes of transport. However it says nothing about requiring design which actively discourages car use which is a huge missed opportunity to create a much larger modal shift. A carrot and stick approach is more effective than carrots alone. We want to see parking designed to be slightly less convenient, with residents car parks separated to the ends of roads (with tree cover to reduce flood risk, enhance biodiversity, absorb air pollution, or solar panels covering these car parks to for charging points) instead of on the whole street. This means streets can be narrower with more street trees, making them more active transport and child friendly and less polluted.

7. Ensure access to services within a 15 minute walk. In the case of primary schools and basic food shops they should be within 10 minutes walk of all new homes built.

Policy 17 3a sustainable transport. The Plan's basic hope for accessible services is excellent. However, to be effective, a walking distance to key services needs to be made a requirement - it is not sufficient to simply "encourage and support". Shops and primary schools should be within 10 mins walk, other key services within 15 mins walk and secondary schools within 15 mins cycling distance with segregated cycle lanes leading to them.

8. Paving front gardens substantially increases flood risk and temperature extremes as well as impacting negatively on nature, community cohesion and mental health.

Climate change is causing increasing heavy rain storms, as well as much more intense Summer heatwaves.

We support the Plan's position that where paving occurs it should be done with grasscrete. However we don't support the use of block paving which cannot absorb heavy rain and therefore does little to reduce flood risk.

We want to see you discourage paving, and requiring that when it does occur grasscrete or gravel be used, slightly sloped towards at a minimum of 2m² planted with trees or shrubs to help absorb runoff during heavy rain. The trees and shrubs would also reduce surface temperature extremes, and improve biodiversity and visual amenity.