

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan



Contents

The Borough	2
The Context.....	2
The Residents	2
The Place	2
Local Challenges and Opportunities.....	3
Communities and Place.....	3
Challenges.....	3
Opportunities	4
Investment Activity	5
Supporting Local Business	5
Challenges.....	5
Opportunities	6
Investment Activity	6
People and Skills	7
Challenges.....	7
Opportunities	7
Investment Activity	7

The Borough

The Context

The Borough is small in size (only 2,400ha in size or 9square miles), with around two thirds of this urban (part of the Leicester city conurbation), along with boundaries with Harborough District and Blaby District. Mid 2020 estimates put the population at 57,3113 and makes it one of the smallest in the county and indeed the country.

The Residents

The ethnic and cultural composition of the Borough is diverse. The overall Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population (i.e. residents in categories other than White British) is 28.4 % (16,536 people). This figure is almost triple the Leicestershire County average of 11.07% and approximately double the East Midlands regional figure of 14.6%.

There is a higher percentage of older (over 74s) people than average (10.7% vs 8.3% regionally and 8.1% nationally), lower level of economically active (68.9% vs 69.9% nationally), more students (8.7% vs 5.8% nationally) and more retired people (15.0% vs 13.7% nationally).

Life expectancy for men in the Borough (78.8 years) is on par with the regional (78.5) and national averages (78.7). Whereas females on average are likely to live 2 years longer (at 84.2 years) than the regional (82.3) and national average (82.6).

There is a real dichotomy between those who live in Borough and those that work here. In 2020, the median resident earnings for the Oadby and Wigston Borough were £596.80. The England average was £589.80. Between 2014 and 2020 Oadby and Wigston Borough median resident earnings grew by £145.90 (which was much quicker than the national average of £66.20). In comparison, those who work in the Borough (i.e. workplace earnings) had median earnings of £450. The England average was £589.90 (which is significantly lower by £139.90). Between 2014 and 2020 Oadby and Wigston Borough median workplace earnings grew by £35.50 (and as the national growth was £66.40 this means that the gap is increasing). This is shown by the workplace weekly earnings in 2021 in Oadby and Wigston was in the bottom 10 of all local councils in England at £477.9 (ranked 303/309).

Nearly 90% of Oadby and Wigston's businesses are micro businesses (employing less than 10 people), with 0.2% being large companies employing over 250 people.

Surveys considering local social relationship, belonging and satisfaction with the local area as a place to live all suggest that the diverse population of the Borough feel that they belong (over twice the national average with a score of 0.028 vs 0.011). The Place Survey 2008 also shows this with an 83% satisfaction rate with the Borough as a place to live (as opposed to the national average of 79%).

The Place

The Borough largely consists of three main settlements (Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston). Using average indicative new build house prices, Oadby is perceived as the most affluent area within the Borough. Average indicative new build house prices range from £160,000 to £670,000. Wigston is somewhere in the middle regarding affluence with average indicative new build house prices ranging from £133,000 to £303,000, and South Wigston is perceived as being the least affluent with average new build house prices ranging between £129,000 and £280,000. Borough wide, the affordability gap (£9,338) is much smaller than the national average (£42,272) meaning houses should be more affordable to buy than across the country.

This is demonstrated by the fact that 81.5% of all homes are owner occupied, this is higher than the Leicestershire and national average (64.1%), whilst only 7.5% are social rented homes (county and national average is over 17.7%) and 9% are within the private sector (national average of 15.4%).

There are low levels of crime within the Borough, with the crime rate 30% lower than the national average in 2019 (7.07 crime per 1,000 population vs 104.0 across England).

The main settlements are:

- **Oadby**, a large village by the 1860s, established itself around agriculture. It expanded rapidly in the early 1900s as wealthy Leicester City business people built large family houses immediately to the east of the village. These houses still remain as fine examples of the Arts and Crafts movement, although many are now in the ownership of the University of Leicester which established its Oadby Campus after the Second World War.
- **Wigston**, originally two settlements, was amalgamated into Wigston Magna in 1529. The two settlements were linked by a series of 'Lanes' which still remain. The canal and railway brought further growth to what had been a predominantly agricultural community, resulting in further development to meet industrial and housing needs. This continued after the Second World War with numerous housing estates rapidly extending the size of the town.
- **South Wigston**, a new town developed in the mid to late 1800s (by Orson Wright the owner of a large brickworks) followed the tradition of 'model' towns by Victorian philanthropists. Unlike other 'model' towns of the time, it was not just intended to house workers of the brickyard though. Other commercial premises, particularly associated with the clothing industry were established right from the start. The railway was fundamental to this development. The Victorian barracks, now used as the Territorial Army Headquarters, predated this growth. The current mature trees, open space and road layout to the north of the barracks date from the 19th century Glen Parva Grange Estate.

Local Challenges and Opportunities

Communities and Place

Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.

Building resilient and safe neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built environment and innovative approaches to crime prevention.

Challenges

The Borough is small in size (only 2,400ha in size or 9square miles), with around two thirds of this urban (part of the Leicester city conurbation), along with boundaries with Harborough and Blaby District Councils. Mid 2020 estimates put the population at 57,3113 and makes it one of the smallest in the county. The Borough largely consists of three main settlements: Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston.

There are a number of challenges within the "Community and Place" investment priority. The main ones include:

- Lack of Pride in Place - Community Needs Index that was developed to identify areas experiencing poor community and civic infrastructure, relative isolation and low levels of participation in community life – the score was 65.0 compared with the national average of 70.
- Pockets of deprivation – there are stark contrast within the Borough with Oadby having less areas categorised as the most deprived areas nationally in comparison to Wigston. Whereas, Wigston has five LSOA's that are in the 30% most deprived areas nationally. Furthermore, South Wigston (22.3) has the highest deprivation score in Oadby and Wigston (13.0), and is higher than Leicestershire (12.3) and England (21.7).
- Child poverty - South Wigston is significantly worse than England in the child poverty domain (20.9% vs 11.8% for the Borough) and is not significantly different for income deprivation (13.2% vs 8.6 for the Borough) . This does not translate into child obesity according to the figures, as this is lower (8.1%) than the regional (8/7%) and national (9.5%) averages.
- Adult physical activity – physical activity amongst adults within the Borough tend to be lower than the national average (61% vs 64%).
- Health pressures – Due to the higher percentages of over 74s, there is increased pressure on the emergency hospital admissions for the Borough. Of notable interest, is the high levels of emergency hospital admissions for COPD in South Wigston (which is over double the national average) and also higher for stroke related admissions. There are also higher pockets than national average of admissions for COPD for Wigston residents and MI in Oadby. This is not the same for 0-64 years old, as they on average have less life limiting long term illnesses (13.7% for the Borough vs 16.4% national).
- Environment: Air quality – although the Borough have average background concentrations from the four air pollutants: nitrogen dioxide, benzene, sulphur dioxide and particulates, there are pockets of concern.
- Vacancy rates – there is some significant fluctuations with the vacancy rates in 2021 over the three towns. In terms of the data collected: April 2021 saw vacancy rates at Oadby – 8.8% (this reduced to 6.3% in November 2021), South Wigston - 7.6% (this reduced to 5.1% in November 2021) and Wigston – 13.5% (8.8% in November 2021) compared with the national average of 14.0 (changing to 11.5% in November 2021). Whilst normally lower than the national average, the nature of the shops has been noted as a real area of concern, as a significant proportion of shops in the three towns are made up from independent retailers: 46.4% in Oadby, 67.7% in South Wigston and 50.0% in Wigston. Therefore, maintaining the reducing vacancy rates will be challenging in these uncertain economic times.

Opportunities

Surveys considering local social relationship, belonging and satisfaction with the local area as a place to live all suggest that the diverse population of the Borough feel that they belong (over twice the national average with a score of 0.028 vs 0.011) . The Place Survey 2008 also shows this with 83% satisfaction rate with the Borough as a place to live (as opposed to the national average of 79%). That being said, there is still more that can be done and these are the main opportunities that have been identified :

The main opportunities include:

- Placemaking funding – UKSPF provide funding to improve overall pride of place and residents/businesses satisfaction.

- Priority investment areas – identification of interventions for economic stimulation in the three main town centres and creating a bespoke vision for each area.
- Large amounts of open space, public parks and gardens – there is 8.7% of the Borough, which is classed as green space, as opposed to the national average of 2.2%. Of this 1.3% are public parks and gardens (as opposed to 0.8% across England).
- Increase footfall within the town centres – aspiration to increase the number of visitors and reduce the vacancy rates within the town centre.

Investment Activity

Town Centres & Placemaking

- Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme
- Town Centre Improvements (Action Plans)
- Business Improvement District
- Digital Highstreets (Infrastructure)
- Accessible Town Initiatives
- Environmental Improvements
- Feasibility Studies

Tourism & Visitor Economy

- Place Making, Promotion & Identity
- Sustainable Tourism
- Markets, Events & Local Campaigns

Communities, Health & Wellbeing

- Active Referrals
- Mental Health & Dementia Plans
- Social Prescribing / Volunteering Capacity
- Community & Sports Club Framework

Supporting Local Business

Creating jobs and boosting community cohesion, through investments that build on existing industries and institutions, and range from support for starting businesses to visible improvements to local retail, hospitality and leisure sector facilities.

Increasing private sector investment in growth- enhancing activities, through targeted support for small and medium- sized businesses to undertake new-to- firm innovation, adopt productivity- enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques, and start or grow their exports.

Challenges

There is a real dichotomy between those who live in Borough and those that work here. In 2020, the median resident earnings for the Oadby and Wigston Borough were £596.80. The England average was £589.80. Between 2014 and 2020 Oadby and Wigston Borough median resident earnings grew by £145.90 (which was much quicker than the national average of £66.20). In comparison, those who work in the Borough (i.e. workplace earnings) had median earnings of £450. The England average was £589.90 (which is significantly lower by £139.90). Between 2014 and 2020 Oadby and Wigston Borough median workplace earnings grew by £35.50 (and as the national growth was £66.40 this means that the gap is

increasing) . This is shown by the workplace weekly earnings in 2021 in Oadby and Wigston was in the bottom 10 of all local councils in England at £477.9 (ranked 303/309).

Due to the dichotomy within the Borough with those who live and work here, this section will focus on the businesses and their employees. With this in mind, the main challenges to support local businesses within the Borough include:

- Low skilled/paid workforce - in the bottom 10 with £477.9 for work place earnings, meaning that the Borough was ranked 303/309 of all English councils in 2021 . As detailed previously, this situation is worsening, with the gap increasing.
- Small static business base – there are only 4,500 businesses within the Borough, with a small number of start-ups each year (290 in 2020) and a similar number closing (215 in the same year). The Survival rates of newly born enterprises are also higher than the regional and national average . This presents the challenge of limited options to change the business base without significant intervention, as there is limited churn of companies within the existing employment sites in the Borough.
- Over representation of certain business sectors – manufacturing (12.5%), education (12.5%) wholesale (8.8%) and retail (11.2%) are significantly over represented within the Borough, compared with the national average (7.8%, 8.4%. 3.9% and 9.2% respectively) .

Opportunities

Nearly 90% of Oadby and Wigston’s businesses are micro businesses (employing less than 10 people), with 0.2% being large companies . This presents opportunities to support these local, small businesses which are likely to require more tailored support than the big national companies.

The main opportunities for the Borough include:

- Tailored business support provision – known third party providers operating outside the Borough, but within the potential to shape a bespoke offer for the Borough’s businesses.
- Innovation support – to provide support for local businesses to innovate and increase their competitiveness in the market.
- Generic support and membership – provide opportunity for networking and support through external partnerships and forums, such as the FSB and Chamber of Commerce.
- Recognition of the Council role in the global warming challenge - The Council will contribute towards reducing carbon emissions both in terms of actions that it can take as an organisation in its own right and in terms of the Council’s role in influencing local residents and businesses.

Investment Activity

Business Support, Innovation & Growth

- Working Partnerships for Business Support
- Business Partnerships & Networks
- Entrepreneurial Start Up's & tailored Business Support specifically to small businesses
- Business Support Grants
- Specialist Programmes & Skills Workshops
- Vibrant & Thriving Town Centres
 - Markets, Events & Festivals

- Repurposing of vacant & underused buildings
- Area Investment Plans

People and Skills

Supporting people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support, including access to basic skills.

Challenges

The ethnic and cultural composition of the Borough is diverse. The overall Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population (i.e. residents in categories other than White British) is 28.4 % (16,536 people). This figure is almost triple the Leicestershire County average of 11.07% and approximately double the East Midlands regional figure of 14.6%.

There is a higher percentage of older (over 74s) people than average (10.7% vs 8.3% regionally and 8.1% nationally), lower level of economically active (68.9% vs 69.9% nationally), more students (8.7% vs 5.8% nationally) and more retired people (15.0% vs 13.7% nationally).

Due to the dichotomy with those who live and work in the Borough, this section will focus on the residents. With this in mind, the main challenges for the “People and Skills” investment priority are

- Connectivity - to key services, digital infrastructure, isolation and strength of the local jobs market – half the national average (10 vs 20).
- Digital skills - those who are not employed and within deprived areas, have much lower digital skills than the average across England (3% vs 9%) .
- Unemployed residents – not all residents are employed - 76.2% (ranked at 148/309 English councils) compared with Leicestershire is 78.5 and the regional average of 74.1% .
- Skilled workforce out migration – there are low levels of the population with no qualifications (22.6% vs regional average of 24.7%) and higher levels of residents with degree qualifications (25.6% vs 23.6 regionally).

Opportunities

Life expectancy for men in the Borough (78.8 years) is on par with the regional (78.5) and national averages (78.7). Whereas females on average are likely to live 2 years longer (at 84.2 years) than the regional (82.3) and national average (82.6) .

The main opportunities include :

- Improve people’s life chances to succeed – chance to refine, influence and shape the Employment and Skills training provision to better suit and place our residents to succeed.
- Digital skills – need to encourage additional digital skills within the Borough to build on the current level of high educated residents.
- Multiply funding – the current allocation for Multiply funding at the County provides a refreshed basis to work with education and training providers for bespoke training schemes within the Borough.

Investment Activity

- Workplace Skills, Training & Workshop
- Youth Employment Support
- Local Enterprise / Employment Hub(s)

- Digital Skills Partnership SP (DCMS)
- LCC Multiply Programme