

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY

2020 - 2030





Foreword



This is Wigan's Employment and Skills Strategy for the borough. It sets out our ambitions for a thriving economy which provides opportunities for our residents to achieve their aspirations.

During the Big Listening Project, residents told us that they want better employment and training opportunities, so that everyone is well equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to enter and progress in their career of choice. Following these conversations, we developed our overarching Deal 2030 strategy, where 'Economic Growth that benefits everyone' features as one of the ten key ambitions. Through our Economic Vision we have also prioritised entrepreneurialism in the borough with the aim of Wigan being a magnet for young people, our "Generation W", where they can innovate and thrive.

This strategy sets out how we will achieve these ambitions by working with our partners over the next ten years making sure that Wigan Borough and our residents are ready for whatever the future holds.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D Molyneux".

Councillor David Molyneux, Leader of Wigan Council

OUR VISION



A collaborative and forward-facing skills and employability system in Wigan, which equips people to make the right choices and gain the right skills to achieve an aspirational career that contributes to increased local productivity in a future proofed inclusive economy



Context



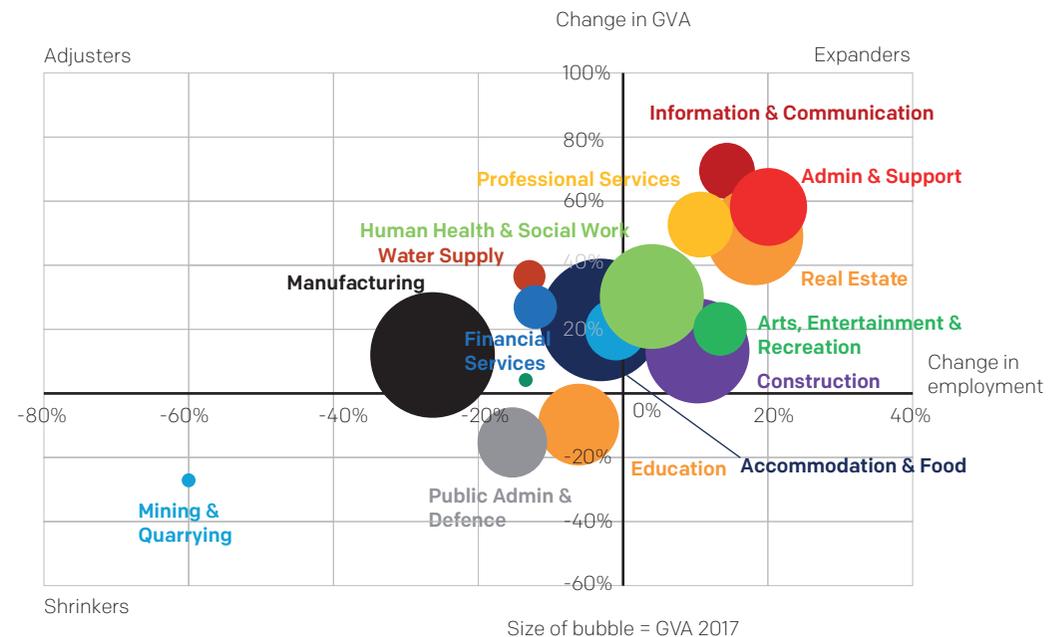
This strategy has been co-designed with partners and sets out how we will work together over the next decade to create a strong and productive workforce, driven by innovation, entrepreneurialism, and pride in the borough.

Whether its improving access to careers guidance, delivering higher level skills, or better connecting businesses to schools and training providers, we will build on our existing partnerships to respond to our local challenges both now and in the future.

The emphasis of the Framework is on identifying what needs to be done to address the skills and productivity challenges Wigan faces. As such it defines the key priorities in this area, whilst aligning with other related strategies and plans including The Deal 2030, The Economic Vision and the Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework.

This document summarises the strategy, the evidence base, and the action plan. Alongside this summary, fuller detail is given in three formal reports:

- **Volume 1: Evidence Base Data Pack** - a detailed analysis of the Skills and Employability landscape in Wigan
- **Volume 2: The Strategic Framework** - building on the evidence base and presenting the Strategic Framework for the refreshed strategy, including five Strategic Imperatives and four Cross-cutting Themes; and
- **Volume 3: The Action Plan** - which sets out the measures that need to be taken to deliver this Strategic Framework.



Wigan's Socio-Economic Challenges



De-industrialisation has impacted Wigan, and our dominant employment sectors are Retail, Health and Social Care, and Public Services. Typically, these sectors provide low-skilled, low-paid jobs and suffer from lower levels of productivity.

Economic Performance

Wigan has a performance gap to close. Compared to GM and the UK, Wigan has significant output and productivity gaps.

- **Output:** In 2016, Wigan produced £14k of GVA for every person living in the Borough, 42% lower than the average for the UK (£25k). This gap has been persistent and growing over time.
- **Productivity:** In 2016, Wigan's GVA per employee (£39k) was 19% lower than the UK average (£48k), but the gap is narrowing (Figure 1)



Source: Greater Manchester Forecasting Model, 2017

Enterprise



Businesses are the wealth generators of an economy, providing employment and upskilling opportunities. For every 10,000 residents in Wigan, there are 299 businesses, compared to 402 in GM and 499 in England. The current business base is not providing enough high skilled job opportunities, which is leading to skilled residents seeking work outside the borough.



Skills



Wigan has a great primary education record and its Secondary Education Provision is improving; Wigan has a slightly higher percentage of its pupils continuing with education post Key Stage 4 than GM's population, though this is below the national average.

For Further Education, A-level attainment performs broadly in line with national averages, with stronger performance when vocational routes are taken.

Labour Supply



Wigan has strong levels of employment, but we need to do more to reduce the level of people who are economically inactive, that is out of work and not actively seeking employment, or in low paid jobs. We have local areas with high levels of worklessness and low-income households, where young people do not have sight of aspirational role models or the pathways into higher level careers that would increase their social mobility.

Future Changes



Digital innovation and climate change are creating challenges to the way businesses operate, with a need to more innovatively use automation and green technology. High value sectors such as Digital, Construction, Engineering and Logistics are expected to grow both in terms of output and employment in Wigan. However, there are also sectors which are forecast to continue to decline for example Public Administration and Education. Our local workforce will therefore need to adapt to these changes and the challenges they bring, and this strategy sets out our plans for lifelong learning and retraining to support this.



The Strategic Framework



These are the key components of the strategy:

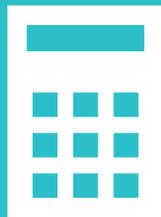
Strategic Imperative 1: Skills Driving Productivity



There is a significant productivity gap with GM and, more noticeably, the rest of the UK. This gap is largely a result of too many low skilled, low pay jobs in low value sectors. This needs to be addressed in order to achieve a more productive economy, which, in turn, improves competitiveness and economic success.

Sub Objectives

- Increasing the skills levels of all Wigan's residents, year on year;
- Increasing the number of employment opportunities in high growth, high value sectors;
- Establishing an effective 'skills escalator' to enable workers to progress continuously, freeing up entry opportunities for others; and
- Developing and articulating a Unique Selling Point (USP) for Wigan that enables specialist skills development.



Strategic Imperative 2: Demanding Employers



Wigan's business community has a significant role to play in providing employment opportunities and upskilling the workforce. Ultimately, businesses must act as the local 'demand driver' for skills, determining how many workers are needed and at what skill levels.

Sub-Objectives

- Building awareness of the benefits of skills and learning throughout working lives;
- Incentivising increased business investment in skills and training;
- Encouraging the business base to be more enterprising; and
- Providing the business base with real-time intelligence on future trends that impact skills needs.



Strategic Imperative 3: Supply that Delights and Delivers



Skills providers need to be responsive to changing national and global conditions, and how these market and technology changes flow-down to affect local businesses. Those working within the supply side (Further Education Colleges, Education and Training Providers, etc.) need to be known to, and work effectively with, employers across all parts of the economy.

Sub-Objectives

- Developing a seamless, comprehensible and communicated skills provider system locally;
- Ensuring that skills providers are not solely output focussed, but instead, driven by the outcomes and impact of their activities, and designed to build on the assets of Wigan's businesses, residents and place;
- Making it easier for employers to understand, and engage with, suppliers; and
- Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance(CEIAG) and ensuring this is made accessible at all transition points in education and working life. Insufficient understanding of options limits choices.



Strategic Imperative 4: Daring to Aspire and Achieve



Social mobility challenges in Wigan have held back equal access to opportunities. We need to turn this around, and ensure personal ambition becomes embedded increasingly in Wigan's DNA. Individuals' early encounters with employers and role models can shape and influence future ambition and aspirations. Raising aspirations will ultimately result in a higher skilled workforce, that is employed in a more enterprising business base.

Sub-Objectives

- Embedding learning and upskilling as 'normal and routine' behaviours throughout working lives;
- Identifying relevant local role models who can engage with the population and raise aspirations which skills and training provision can address;
- Equipping people to make the right choices about their jobs and careers; and
- Increasing the extent of quality engagement between employers, young people and workplaces.



Strategic Imperative 5: Learning for Life



The structure of Wigan's Working Age Population is changing, and new and recent entrants to the labour force will need to work longer and in more job roles during their working lives. It is important that the workforce is equipped with transferable skills that allow them to transition between different sectors and occupations over time.

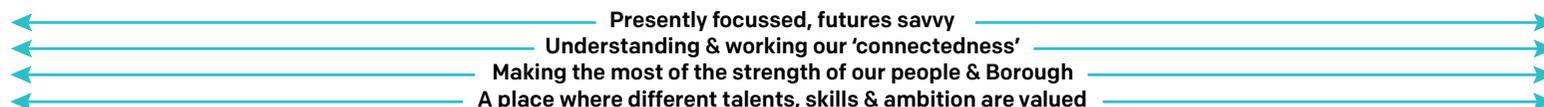
Sub-Objectives

- Developing accessible training and development programmes that match economic demands in response to market and technology change;
- Developing individual's end-to-end understanding of skills, occupations and employability and why these matter in the workforce;
- Enabling retraining opportunities and career moves across the economy; and
- Developing transferable skills enabling greater career flexibility



Figure 2: Wigan's Skills and Employability Strategic Framework

Skills Driving Wigan's Productivity	Demanding Employers	Supply that Delights and Delivers	Daring to Aspire and Achieve	Learning is for Life
Rationale				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wigan's productivity is 50% lower than UK with a widening gap Wigan's productivity in bottom 20 of all UK Local Authorities Skills a key driver of productivity Improved productivity leads to more local wealth and economic resilience 27% of Working Aged population (WAP) NVQ4+ qualified High-skilled residents are leaving Wigan for better paid jobs elsewhere Too many low skilled jobs, with low pay in value sectors - with no clear progression pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the UK, employers (especially SME's) don't understand consistently the value of skills/learning Enterprising firms create more and better jobs 8.6k businesses in Wigan... but they are not creating enough demand for skilled jobs Employers are not articulating full skills needs to providers A strong core of engaged businesses which gives scope for this to become the norm Public sector can play major demonstrator role, as well as providing routes into work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills provision landscape appears complex and fragmented It needs to be made clear to residents how to access skills services: who, when, how do I use this? Skills suppliers need to be better aligned with the changing nature of work (models, tech and soft skills) Insufficient understanding among all people limits choices Sub-optimal Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) CEIAG needed throughout education and working lives Wigan has strong take up of apprenticeships... But there are risks in the sustainability of supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant local pockets of historically high-levels of claimants and long-term unemployed History of paternalistic employers - entrepreneurship not yet part of the DNA Social mobility is a key challenge Lack of role models is a key gap in provision Early and varied encounters with employers are positive and need to be provided Being skilled/successful is not yet something to be proud of locally Important to ensure parity of esteem between academic and vocational routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13% of WAP are receiving job related training (3 months) Age structure of WAP is changing - shift to longer work lives New and recent entrants to labour force will need to work longer & transfer between jobs Global technology trends and demand for future skills will require retraining (automation!) Soft skills (e.g..... creativity) now in high demand Lifelong learning enables workers to adapt to changing demands for skills & have meaningful and rewarding jobs
Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close economic development gaps with GM and UK, year-on-year. A lifetimes work! Increase skills levels of all, year-on-year Increase number of employment opportunities in high growth sectors Deliver skills escalator - upwards/ onwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build businesses' awareness of benefits of skills/ learning Encourage business base to be more enterprising Provide right incentives for employers... not just cash Provide business base with real-time intelligence on future and market/tech change ... equip them to do the thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherent, comprehensible and communicable local skills-provider system Move agenda from activities/ outputs and on to outcomes/ impacts Improve CEIAG and ensure accessible at all points in a career and education Coherent employment support offer for WAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed learning and upskilling as normal behaviours Identify relevant role models who can raise aspirations Equip people to make the right choices about their jobs and careers Increase levels of employer engagement with young people and achieve wider Gatsby benchmarks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop accessible training and development programmes Develop end-to-end understanding of skills, occupations and employability Ensure retraining opportunities Develop transferable skills enabling greater flexibility Address barriers to WAP accessing skills development



Four Cross-Cutting Themes



The Strategy is underpinned with four Cross-Cutting themes, as follows:

- Presently focussed, futures savvy;
- Understanding and working our 'connectedness';
- Making the most of the strength of our people and the Borough; and
- A place where different talents, skills and ambition are valued.

The Cross-Cutting themes will set the culture and delivery approach of the Strategic Imperatives, so ensuring close integration and consistency in the delivery of the subsequent actions.

The themes are expanded opposite:



Cross-Cutting Theme 1: Presently focussed, futures savvy

We will continue to collect information regarding future markets and technologies and ensure that businesses, employers and skills providers understand how best to exploit and drive these opportunities, on a sustainable basis.

Cross-Cutting Theme 2: Understanding and working our 'connectedness'

Our connectivity to Manchester, Liverpool, and beyond is a great opportunity, with successful businesses and employment opportunities on Wigan's doorstep. The Strategy will ensure Wigan residents are equipped to tap into this.

Cross-Cutting Theme 3: Making the most of the strength of our people and the Borough

Wigan's assets, including location, environment, people, leadership from the Council, a core of engaged, generous business, and strong vocational pathways to employment are a strong foundation. The borough is also seen as a leading area for Place Based delivery and partnership working through The Deal.

Cross-Cutting Theme 4: A place where different talents, skills and ambition are valued

It is crucial that actions to improve skills and employability work for the highest skilled residents looking to progress even further, and those that are remote from the world of work but looking to engage. Wigan values the strengths of all its residents and will provide the best tailored support for individual differing needs.

The Action Plan



Informed by the Strategy, an Action Plan of 29 targeted actions has been developed. This Plan is founded in evidence of what is required, what is currently in place, what is already in planning, and what is good practice elsewhere. The actions are attributed to each of the five Strategic Imperatives and include:

- Eight existing actions to continue and refine;
- Eight pipeline actions to develop and influence;
- Nine new actions to complement and build on existing and pipeline actions; and
- Four actions with cross-cutting themes.

These are brought together in Table 1.

A more detailed Action Plan with priorities, indicative timings, and suggested activities, and a description of the full methodology used in identifying these actions is given in Volume 3.

Table 1: Summary Action Plan for Wigan's Employment and Skills Strategy

Strategic Imperative	Existing Actions	Pipeline Actions	New Actions
SI1: Skills Driving Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI1D: Ever-increasing emphasis on productivity in existing skills provision • SI1E: Increase coverage of Wigan's Deal for Business • SI1F: Progressive procurement to drive skills investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI1B: Redesigned local Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) offer: Catering for all ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI1A: Define and communicate the USP of Wigan's skills offer • SI1C: Quarterly Skills Report on Wigan's Skills/ Productivity position
SI2: Demanding Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI2A: Expanded employers engagement programme embedded in refreshed CEIAG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI2C: Wigan's Annual Skills Stakeholders Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI2B: Launch Wigan Exemplar Companies Programme • SI2D: Wigan's Skills Survey to access business needs
SI3: Supply that delights and Delivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI3A: Establish bridge between opportunities, employers and providers on Apprenticeship provision • SI3D: Ensure Funding for Careers Hub continues post 2020 with improved/ expanded functionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI3B: Centralised and comprehensive tracking of NEETs • SI3E: Central coordination of Work Experience Placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI3C: Establish Task/ Finish Group for 16-24 years NEET/Youth Unemployment reduction
SI4: Daring to Aspire and Achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI4C: Expand a bespoke service offer preparing vulnerable for work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI4D: Annual Careers Fair for Wigan, bringing together schools, the college and businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI4A: Deliver Higher Education Skills and Enterprise Centre for Wigan • SI4B: Whole Wigan coordination of Mentoring programmes
SI5: Learning is for Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI5E: Utilise Service Delivery footprints to establish stronger link between health programmes and employment support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI5A: Work with GMCA to align Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded delivery to key economic sectors and demand • SI5C: Ensure alignment of activities with national Retraining Scheme roll-out in 2020 • SI5D: Promote Apprenticeships for 19+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SI5B: Establish 19+ Working Group, as part of redesigned CEIAG support offer • SI5F: Career workshops for older residents



Cross-cutting Themes	New Action
CCT1: Presently focussed, futures savvy	A formal Wigan Skills Observatory to provide real time intelligence on Skills and Employment issues.
CCT2: Understanding and working our outward 'connectedness'	Ensure Wigan is represented on relevant boards/fora nationally/ locally relating to Skills and Employment
CCT3: Making the most of the strengths of our people and Borough	Regular programme of 'Skills Matters' Thinkpieces to promote Wigan's Skills and Employment Assets
CCT4: A place where different talents, skills and ambition are valued	A new Governance Structure for the oversight, implementation and delivery of the refreshed Skills and Employment Strategy

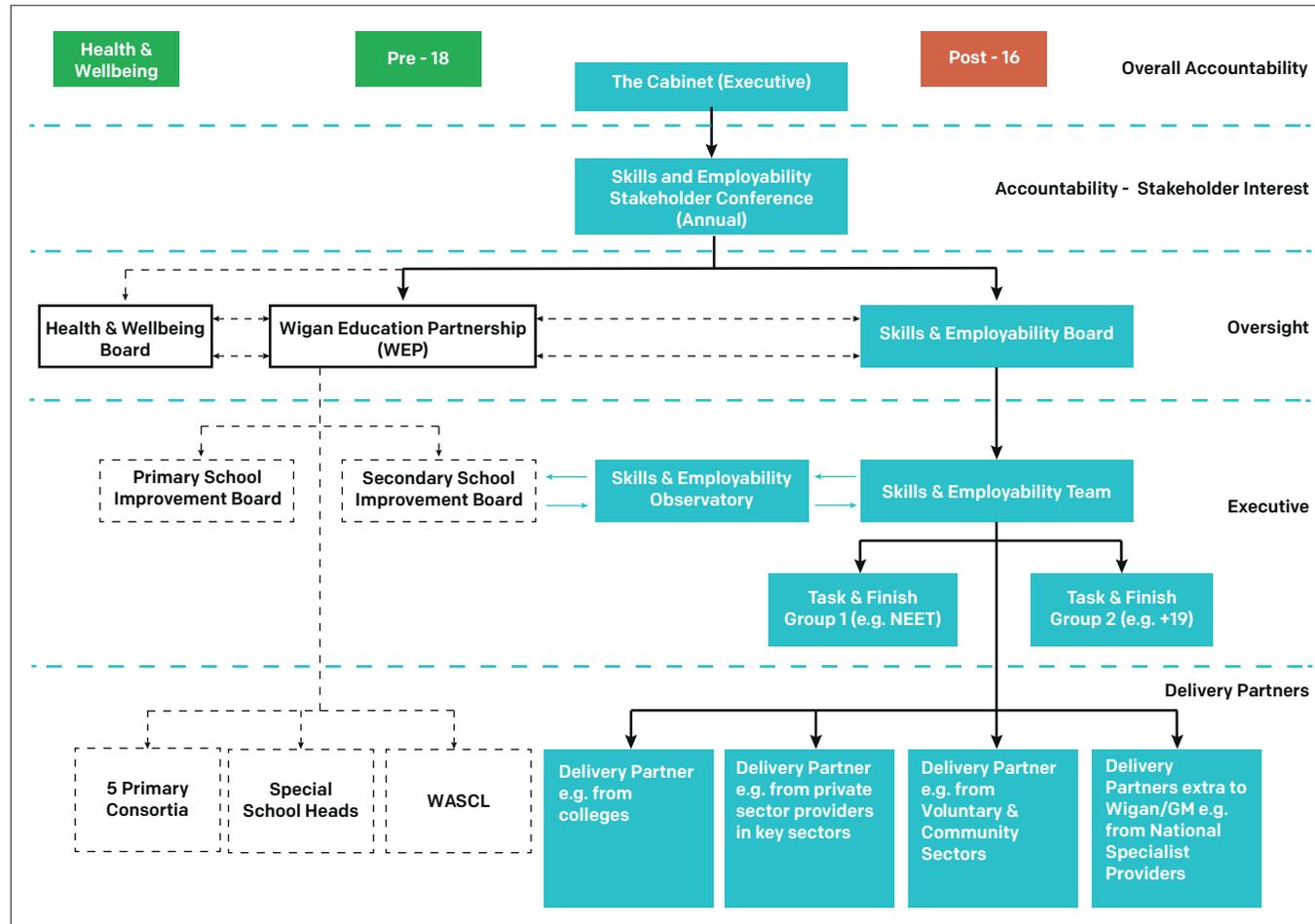
Governance



The governance structure proposed for the Strategy and this Action Plan has been developed through consultation with senior stakeholders at Wigan Council and GM Combined Authority. It embodies accountability and responsibility from democratic strategic oversight, execution, and delivery perspectives.

The proposed structure aligns with governance in Education and Health and Wellbeing in the Borough and will enable the Skills and Employability Board and Team to deliver on the actions outlined in this document. The governance structure is given in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Wigan's Skills and Employment Governance Structure



Monitoring & Evaluation



The strategy is underpinned with a robust monitoring and evaluation framework that is overseen by the Skills and Employability Board.

The key indicators

The main indicators and source are detailed below.

Indicator	Source	Frequency
Gross value added (productivity)	GM Forecasting Model – Baseline data	Annual
Gross value added (productivity) per worker	GM Forecasting Model – Baseline data	Annual
Working Age Population Qualified to NVQ levels 1-4	ONS Annual Population Survey	Annual
Apprenticeship Starts	DfE	Quarterly (in arrears)
Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) – 16-17	DfE	Monthly
Youth Unemployment (18-24) and Adult Unemployment (18-64)	Claimant Count	2-monthly (in arrears)
Median, gross annual earning for full-time employees	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings	Annual
Employer Skills Gaps	Business Survey	To be defined
Jobs Advertised by Industry Sector	Labour Insights - GMCA	Quarterly
Registered Business Start Up per 10,000 of population	ONS Business Demography	Annual
Survival Rate of New Business (2-5 years)	ONS Business Demography	Annual
Number of Businesses in high growth sectors	ONS Business Demography	Annual

Glossary of terms:



Gatsby Benchmarks - The national framework for good practice in Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in schools.

GVA – Gross Value Added is the value generated by any unit engaged in the production of goods and services.

SMEs - Small to medium sized enterprises which can employ anywhere between 10 to 250 people.

Productivity - Measures the output per employee in a period of time.

Service Delivery Footprints – An administrative boundary devised to separate Wigan into 7 areas with population sizes between 30,000 and 50,000.

NEET - An acronym that stands for not in education, employment, or training.

AEB - The Adult Education Budget funds qualifications and programmes for learners aged 19+.

Careers Hub - Careers Hub is a group of between 20 and 40 secondary schools and colleges in a dedicated area who work together to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks. Collaborating with business partners, the public, education and voluntary sectors, they help deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks and improve careers outcomes for young people.

Skills Observatory – A term used to describe our dedicated resource to scan, monitor and analyse the employability & skills landscape of Wigan.