

The Vision

The Vision for the area has been developed over recent years following extensive background work and discussions with all the main stakeholders.

It can be described as “A lively mixed use quarter, providing a home for cultural activities, businesses, housing, leisure and tourism”.

The vision also includes the following:

- An area which is busy during the daytime and evenings and where people feel comfortable and safe
- A place where the community are involved in shaping its future
- An area which provides job opportunities for local people
- A distinct place where the true heritage value is clearly recognised and understood



- A high quality public realm that includes public art as a key component
- An area that is connected with the town centre and adjacent areas
- A place where the potential of the canal and river is fully realised

The aim is to create a new and vibrant community and cultural quarter, where people can live, work and play. The area also aims to be an attractive destination for visitors, which has a range of activities appealing to all types of people.



The Current Position

The Pier Quarter occupies an important strategic location between Wigan town centre and the Robin Park leisure and retail complex, containing the JJB Stadium.

The Pier Quarter acts as a gateway to the town with major radial routes, Pottery Road, Wallgate (A49) and Chapel Lane/Poolstock, passing through the area and along its eastern boundary.

The area has a diverse character and range of uses, including a number of dominant multi-storey mills set alongside the canal and river, a range of older industrial buildings, more recent commercial buildings and small pockets of housing.

The Pier Quarter includes the area of the Wigan Pier Conservation Area which contains a number of listed buildings and structures. These buildings together with the presence of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the River Douglas help to form the special character of the area.

Whilst the area has benefited from investment as part of the Wigan Pier project in the 1980's, the benefits of this investment have not been felt across the wider area and several problems remain. In addition, whilst the heritage based tourism had been successful in its earlier years, the tourism offer was clearly in need of updating to meet the requirements of the present day.

The main environmental, economic and social problems are:

- The dominance of traffic which causes severance of different parts of the quarter

- Unattractive and poorly maintained buildings which damage the area's image
- Vacant or underused buildings which are an underused resource
- Lack of evening activity and community 'presence'
- A shortage of local facilities
- Links to the town centre and surrounding areas are poor

The first stages in the regeneration of the area are now under way, and these will start to address some of the above problems. A detailed proposal for the Trencherfield Mill area has now been approved by the council, whilst a number of individual funding approvals have now been obtained.

The strategy highlights the next stages in the regeneration of the area, the priorities for investment, and the key principles which will guide development within the Pier Quarter.



Existing Policies and Strategies

The policies within the plan are consistent with national, regional and local planning policies which seek to promote the sustainable regeneration and re-use of accessible urban sites such as the Pier Quarter.

National planning policies

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 emphasises the need for sustainable development in accessible locations such as the Pier Quarter. It also promotes high quality design in all new developments.

Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 3 promotes the use of 'brownfield' or previously used sites and buildings for housing use. Suitable sites for housing redevelopment should also be readily accessible by public transport.

PPS 6 emphasises that town centres should continue to be the main location for retail development, in order to ensure that they remain viable centres serving the wider community. Outside these town centres larger new retail developments, in areas like the Pier Quarter, will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where a series of strict criteria can be met.

PPG 15 provides guidance on the conservation of the nation's Listed Buildings and on preserving and enhancing the character of designated Conservation Areas. National Planning Policy promotes conservation-led regeneration, which provides a long-term future for listed buildings.

Regional Policies

At the regional level, the Pier Quarter

strategy is consistent with the main themes and principles of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North-West. The general strategy for the Pier Quarter promotes high quality sustainable development built around a major transport hub, with improved links to the wider region via major transport routes.

Objectives 8 and 9 of the Regional Economic Strategy seek to develop the strategic transport, communication and economic infrastructure and ensure the availability of a range of employment sites across the region. The Pier Quarter Strategy shows how the development of this area can contribute to these objectives.

The major urban renaissance initiative, The Northern Way, which is being led by the 3 northern development agencies, aims to create sustainable and prosperous communities across the North and to create the right conditions for communities to thrive. The Northern Way recognises that there is untapped potential for jobs and growth in the region and that there is a need to increase prosperity and to close the 'productivity gap' with other parts of the country.

The Northern Way initiative also aims to strengthen the North's knowledge base and to develop a greater share of the country's knowledge based industries. The Pier Quarter Strategy recognises that parts of this area (and adjacent areas such as Westwood Park) could play a key role in forming a home for 'clusters' of knowledge based industries set within a high quality, accessible urban site.

Existing Policies and Strategies

Council Planning Policies

The council's planning policies for the area are set out in the Revised Deposit Draft Wigan Unitary Development Plan - February 2004. The Unitary Development Plan will be incorporated within the council's new Local Development Framework, introduced under the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The plan includes a specific policy covering the Pier Quarter area.

- Policy EM1H states that "The Wigan Pier Quarter is identified for comprehensive, mixed use conservation-led regeneration comprising employment, housing, tourism, leisure and other major visitor attractors." The Policy then sets out key features against which 'development' proposals will be judged, and the circumstances under which retail development may be acceptable.
- Policies EV4 and EV4A set out the Council's policies for preserving and enhancing the character of its conservation areas (including the Wigan Pier Conservation Area).
- Policy EV4B sets out how the council will ensure the protection of and encourage the enhancement of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and their settings.

A number of other plan policies will be relevant to the area, and these include:

- EM1A, EM1B, EM1C, EM1D – Employment and employment area policies
- EM2A – Tourism development

- S1E, S1F – Retail policies
- R1B, R1D, R1D, R1G – Housing policies
- EV3F – Impact of development on the canal and river
- EV3H – Public Art
- EV4E – Archaeology
- A1, A1S – Accessibility and Car Parking
- G1C – Flood Risk
- A1K – Integration of rail stations

Other Strategies and Policies

The Strategy for the Pier Quarter has also taken into account a range of adopted local policies and strategies and the findings of other studies.

- The Wigan Borough Partnership's Community Plan is intended to guide and influence all activities within the borough. The main principles of the Community Plan have been included within this Strategy. These are creating strong communities, promoting social inclusion, working in partnership, ensuring sustainable development and learning from experience.
- The Economic Development Plan created by the Wigan Economic Partnership recognises the economic development potential of the area as part of the South Wigan and Ince Economic Development Zone. Development of the Pier Quarter will complement proposed developments at Westwood Park and Pemberton Colliery.
- The Pier Quarter area falls within the area covered by the Wigan South Central Implementation Strategy

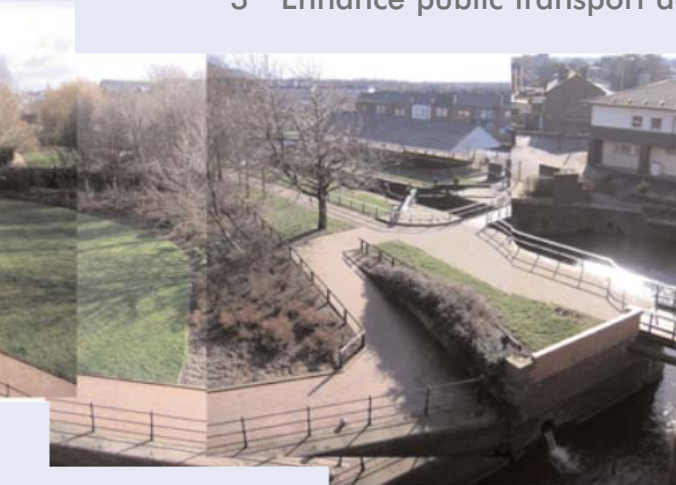


endorsed by the Northwest Regional Development Agency and Wigan Council, following the publishing of the Mersey Belt Study Policy Statement in 2003. A number of the Strategic Objectives from the Implementation Strategy are particularly relevant to the Pier Quarter. These are:

- 1 Realise the full economic potential for knowledge based industries of key employment sites, including the Pier Quarter area.
- 2 Develop a high quality physical environment to attract knowledge based industries.
- 3 Enhance public transport access

towards other modes of transport. Within the Pier Quarter, the provision of new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes and bus priority measures continues to implement this strategy.

- The Cultural Strategy for the area, 'Northern Soul', recognises the potential to develop the area as a home for a wide range of cultural activities. The Trencherfield Mill scheme will include space for performance and other cultural activities, which will help to meet an identified need.
- The local authority owns and manages a number of sites and



to employment sites through the implementation of the Wigan Integrated Transport Scheme, including the Transport Hub based around the 2 railway stations.

- 4 Expand and grow the creative industries and tourism sectors.
- The Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 'Investing in Excellence' aims to shift the balance of priority from the private car

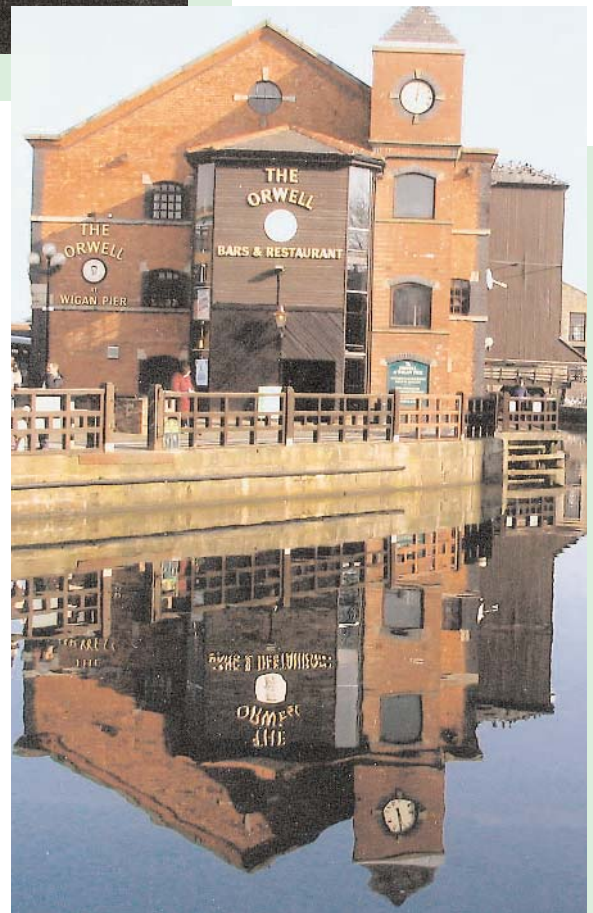
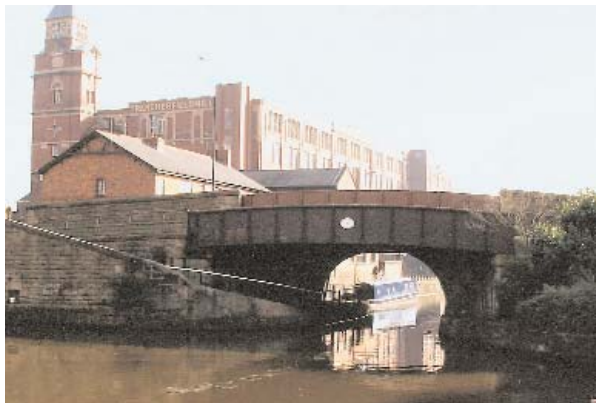
properties within the Pier Quarter area. The council's Asset Management Strategy explains how the local authority will properly manage its assets and how these assets can be used to their full potential.

- An 'Economic Appraisal of Development Opportunities' study was carried out by consultants, BDP Planning (June 2001). This identified some of the major problems and issues within the area and suggested

Existing Policies and Strategies

a number of key projects to tackle these issues.

- Consultants RKL have prepared a Public Art Strategy for the Pier Quarter (October 2004). The strategy shows how an integrated public art strategy could help to create a new image for the area and help to enhance the distinctive qualities of the site.
- Architects, Austin-Smith:Lord and arts consultants, da capo carried out a Feasibility Study looking at the potential for a new performance venue within the area (November 2003). The study looked at a number of options for providing this facility within the Trencherfield Mill area.
- In 2005 Locum Destinations have been working with all stakeholders to identify the user requirements and options for a culture and heritage centre, which will incorporate the new performance venue. These requirements will now be taken forward with a full feasibility study.



Guiding Principles

There are a number of guiding principles which will be applied and which will underpin the strategy for the area:

- All development proposals should contribute towards an acceptable balance of uses. Whilst this cannot be prescriptive, the area should include:
 - A significant residential element which will help to create a sustainable and viable community
 - A critical mass of cultural activities and creative businesses
 - A range of employment uses which provide job opportunities for local people. This includes the need to support existing businesses wherever possible, where these uses are compatible with the new uses within the area.
 - Community, leisure or tourism uses which provide a different offer to the town centre and Robin Park and do not harm the amenity of existing residents

Making sure these components are included will help to create both a destination for visitors and a unique mixed-use community.

- The Pier Quarter should incorporate the highest quality design in new developments and improvement schemes. Many parts of the area have suffered from mundane designs in the post war years. The aim must now be to raise the standards of design and development as part of the area's regeneration and in line with the council's Design Quality initiative. This includes the potential

for innovative and contemporary designs within the historic setting.

- Linked to the above, the creation of a high quality environment is crucial to the future success of the area. This principle applies not only to buildings, but also to the spaces in between buildings, which should be carefully designed. In all public spaces, particular consideration should be given to the function of the area and the choice of paving materials, landscaping, lighting etc. Public art should be included wherever possible. A detailed Public Realm Strategy has been prepared to offer further guidance.
- Conservation-led regeneration should form the basis of the improvements within the historic conservation area. This should include both the refurbishment and reuse of important buildings and the promotion of good contemporary design, which complements and enhances the area's historic assets.



- Development proposals should assist in connecting the Pier Quarter to the town centre and other adjacent areas. The aim is to reduce the impacts of traffic and create a network of safe and attractive pedestrian routes around the area. The canal towpath will play an important role within this network.
- Community involvement within the area should be positively encouraged. This includes local stakeholders having a role in both the development and the management of the area. The established Pier Quarter Partnership and the local Township Forum will play a key role in ensuring community involvement.
- Opportunities for enhancing local biodiversity should be considered and incorporated into new schemes, wherever possible. This is particularly relevant on sites close to the canal and the River Douglas.

