



Wigan Town Centre Northern Crescent Issues and Options – Public Consultation

Findings and Results - Summary

April 2008

Introduction

Wigan Council recently published its consultation document on the Northern Crescent, which invited the public to submit comments and ideas on a wide range of issues and options.

Approximately 600 local businesses, residents, landowners and other interested parties were invited by letter to submit their comments by filling in a pro-forma questionnaire which addressed ten 'issues'. Statutory consultees with an interest in the area were also invited to respond. Those who were contacted include:

- Town centre management
- Township forum
- Wigan market management
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Sport England
- Major landowners
- All businesses within the defined area
- Market stall holders

The document was also advertised on the Wigan Council website.

The consultation period began on 13 February 2008 until 7 March 2008. However, a number of comments were also received outside this timeframe. In total, 25 responses were received from the public and our statutory consultees, with this document providing a summary of the comments.

The rejuvenation of the Northern Crescent is a huge task, and these comments are the first step in what will be a long process. The next stage will be to consult directly with the main property holders in the area with a view to developing a detailed design brief for the Northern Crescent.

The comments and ideas which we have received will all be assessed in greater detail and will form the basis for the following stages in the process.

Summary of Responses

Issue 1 - The area does not contain a sufficient 'anchor' development, which will draw additional visitors into this area. BDP have suggested that a major food store may be the most appropriate 'anchor' development.

Question 1 - What type of development would help to attract more visitors and raise the profile of this area?

Leisure and Entertainment	Food Store	Department Store	Neither	Other
9 – 53%	2 – 12%	2 – 12%	2 – 12%	2 – 12%

Issue 2 - The Northern Crescent area contains some office accommodation of varying quality, and the town centre has only a limited offer in terms of leisure activities and the evening economy.

Question 2 - Would you like to see more office or leisure development within this area?

Yes Leisure	Yes Office	Mixed Uses	None
10 – 59%	1 – 6%	5 – 29%	1 – 6%

Issue 3 - The BDP report identifies an emerging housing market within this part of the town centre.

Question 3 - Do you think additional housing would benefit this part of the town centre?

Yes	No	Unsure
10 – 53%	8 – 42%	1 – 5%

Issue 4 - The Galleries and Marketgate retail developments contain a number of vacancies (above the national average).

Question 4 -

a) Do these vacancies affect your view of the centres?

Yes	No
10 – 83%	2 – 17%

Issue 4 - The Galleries and Marketgate retail developments contain a number of vacancies (above the national average).

Question 4 -

b) What do think can be done to reduce the level of vacancies?

Reduce rents / rates	Remodelling	Soft measures	Other
13 – 50%	3 – 12%	7 – 27%	3 – 12%

Issue 5 - The Galleries / Marketgate centres are felt to have a “complex pattern of pedestrian routes” which affects their attractiveness to investors and visitors. In addition, the shopping centres only provide limited frontages to the main shopping streets.

Question 5 -

a) Do you agree with the above comments?

Yes	No
11 – 73%	4 – 27%

Issue 5 - The Galleries / Marketgate centres are felt to have a “complex pattern of pedestrian routes” which affects their attractiveness to investors and visitors. In addition, the shopping centres only provide limited frontages to the main shopping streets.

Question 5 -
b) If so, do you think these centres should be remodelled?

Yes	No	Soft Measures	Other
11 – 65%	0	4 – 24%	2 – 12%

Issue 6 - Market trading conditions are challenging due to competition from mainstream retailers and discount stores. In this situation, many traders are operating at the margins of profitability.

Question 6 - How could the indoor and outdoor markets be improved?

Improved retail offer	Improved design/layout	Reduce rents	Soft measures	Other
3 – 12%	4 – 16%	6 – 24%	9 – 36%	3 – 12%

Issue 7 - Mesnes Park is to benefit from a multi-million pound improvement project over the next few years. The Mesnes Playing Fields (located behind the Civic Buildings) provide an opportunity to link the improved park to the main shopping areas.

Question 7 - How could the Mesnes Playing Fields be treated to help connect Mesnes Park to the town centre?

Improved access	Entertainment / leisure	More parking	Other
7 – 35%	6 – 30%	5 – 25%	2 – 10%

Issue 8 - The existing Galleries Multi-Storey Car Park requires upgrading to meet the requirements of its users.

Question 8 -

a) Is car parking within the area satisfactory?

Yes	No	Other
4 – 27%	9 – 60%	2 – 13%

Issue 8 - The existing Galleries Multi-Storey Car Park requires upgrading to meet the requirements of its users.

Question 8 -

b) If not, how could it be improved?

More parking	Improve current	Reduce charges	Other
9 – 50%	6 – 33%	3 – 17%	0

Issue 9 - The town centre ring road (New Market Street / Riverway) creates a barrier for pedestrians between the town centre and surrounding districts.

Question 9 - How can access to the Northern Crescent area be improved?

Underpass/footbridge	Traffic diversions	Pelican crossings	Other
9 – 56%	1 – 6%	3 – 19%	3 – 19%

Issue 10 - The Lower Standishgate area (from Crompton Street to the Gateway House complex) is showing signs of decline.

Question 10 - What actions are needed to revitalise this area?

New retail	Environmental improvements	Leisure / Entertainment	Reduce Rents	Area not a priority for redevelopment / Redevelopment would not be worthwhile
2 – 11%	6 – 32%	3 – 16%	2 – 11%	6 – 32%