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WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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Wigan Central Area Action Plan Issues Paper

Development Plan Document



Environmental Services Department



Wigan Borough
vision2026
Community Strategy


Environmental Services Department
www.wigan.gov.uk/wigancentralactionplan

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ONE

Introduction

1.1 We have started work on preparing a new plan for Wigan town centre and some of its surrounding areas. The Wigan Central Area Action Plan will identify what new development is required, where this should be located and how it will be delivered and funded. It will also set out what other improvements and infrastructure works, such as new roads and cycleways are needed to continue the regeneration of the town.



Children from St. Mary's and St. John's School, Standishgate help launch work on the Area Action Plan

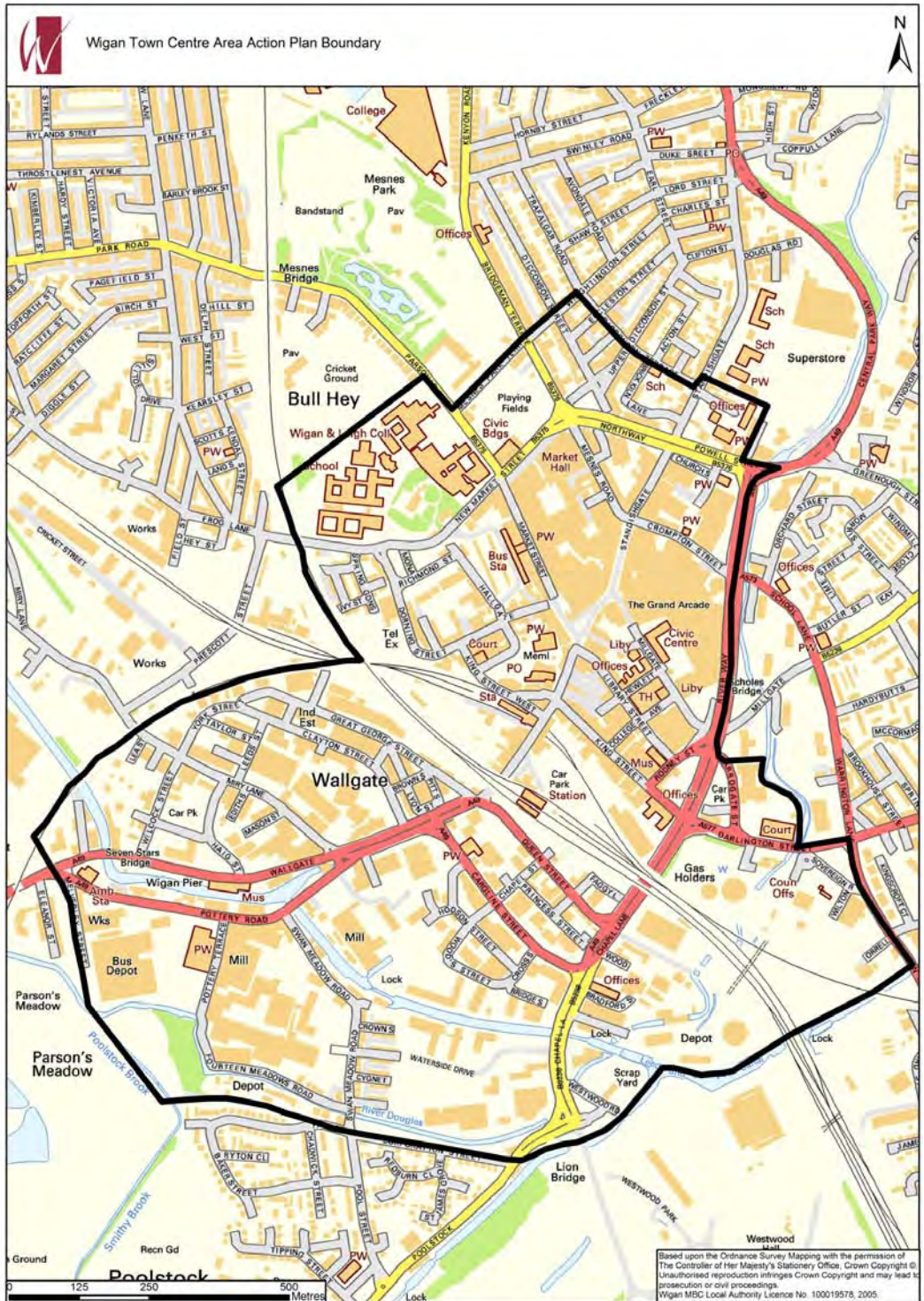
1.2 The plan will set out detailed planning policies for the area up until 2026 and will help the Council make decisions on planning applications. It will also influence decisions about transport, jobs, community and leisure facilities, health provision and education.

1.3 It will cover Wigan's established shopping centre and its rail stations and bus station, along with a number of areas around the town centre which need improvement or which are likely to see major change in future years. These areas are:

- The Eastern Gateway, based around Chapel Lane and Harrogate Street, which includes the Old Town Hall and Former Police Station sites.
- The Northern Crescent, which includes the Galleries and Marketgate Shopping Centres and Lower Standishgate.

- The Pier Quarter, which includes the Eckersley Mill and Trencherfield Mill complexes at Swan Meadow Road.
- The Wallgate / Queen Street / Caroline Street areas.

1.4 The area is approximately 14 square kilometres in size and the proposed boundary for the plan is shown overleaf.



Wigan Central Area Action Plan Boundary

Question 1

Do you think the area proposed for the Area Action Plan is the right one? If not, which areas should be included or removed?

1.5 Wigan town centre is the largest centre within the borough and will continue to be a focus for investment in future years. The Area Action Plan will help to manage and direct this change and ensure that these changes benefit local communities by attracting investment, helping to bring jobs to the area and creating a more attractive environment for everyone. It will address the potential threats to the area, which include competition from other centres across the region and the broader challenges posed by social and economic changes, including the growth of internet shopping.

1.6 The plan will be informed by a number of previous studies and strategies for Wigan town centre and will take a comprehensive and detailed look at what the area needs and how this can be achieved. These studies include:

- The Eastern Gateway Development Framework - 2007
- The Northern Crescent Masterplan and Urban Design Framework - 2007
- The Wigan Pier Quarter Planning and Regeneration Strategy - 2006

1.7 The plan will be based on 3 key principles:

- Community engagement
- Making decisions based on sound evidence.
- Promoting sustainable development

1.8 Community engagement will include more general consultation, such as this Issues Paper, and a series of more focused stakeholder meetings and discussions which will take place throughout the preparation of the plan.

1.9 The plan will be guided by a number of existing reports, studies, policies and strategies which make up our 'Evidence Base'. We will also continue to gather additional evidence to help us gain a clearer picture of what is happening in the area and what future actions may be needed.

1.10 Preparation of the plan will be informed by a Sustainability Appraisal, which includes a Strategic Environmental Assessment. These will help to ensure that the wider social, environmental and economic consequences of the plan's proposals are properly assessed and that these issues are considered at the earliest stage. An initial Scoping Report will be produced to look at what things need to be considered. Although the report has not yet been completed, topics to be considered are likely to include economic factors and deprivation, climate change and energy requirements, public transport availability, the historic environment and townscape, air quality, health inequality and the ability to access key facilities. Further information on the Sustainability Appraisal can be found at www.wigan.gov.uk/wigancentralactionplan

The Issues Paper

1.11 This is only the start of the process of preparing the Area Action Plan and we have produced this Issues Paper to set out what we think are the main things that need to be addressed within the area and where the potential opportunities may be.

1.12 It has been produced to help stimulate discussion and debate about the future of the area and we want to know what sort of place you would like Wigan town centre to be in 2026 and what changes are needed to make this happen.

1.13 Feedback from the consultation on this Issues Paper will be used to develop proposals and policies within the plan.

The Local Development Framework

1.14 The Area Action Plan will form part of our Local Development Framework. This is a series of documents and plans that will become the planning strategy for Wigan Borough.

1.15 Within the framework, our Core Strategy sets out the vision, aims and specific policies for the borough as a whole up until 2026. It also identifies broad locations for development and investment.

1.16 Alongside the Core Strategy, there will be a series of Development Plan Documents which will provide more detail where required and which must be in conformity with the Core Strategy.

1.17 The Wigan Central Area Action Plan will be one of these Development Plan Documents which will provide the detailed planning policies for this area. The plan will allocate specific areas for development, provide detailed guidance for developers and outline what infrastructure works are required. It is an important document that will help to deliver real change across the area over future years.

TWO

How to have your say

2.1 We want as many people as possible to get involved in shaping the plan and the future of the town centre. The Issues Paper provides an opportunity for anyone with an interest in the area to let us have their thoughts on what the plan needs to address.

2.2 The Issues Paper contains a number of questions that we want people to answer. The Evidence Base which has informed it is summarised in Appendix A.

How to comment on the Issues Paper and view the background documents

Copies of the Issues Paper are available at our offices, libraries and online. The documents which make up the Evidence Base for the Issues Paper are available online or at our offices at the Civic Buildings (see below).

To view and download the **Wigan Central Area Action Plan Issues Paper** and to submit comments **online**, go to our website at **www.wigan.gov.uk/wigancentralactionplan**. On that web-page you will find a link to our '**consultation portal**' where you can submit your comments. There is also an 'electronic copy' of the paper document that you can view or print along with a comments form. It is from this web page version that you can submit your comments online.

You can view a copy of the **Issues Paper** at Wigan Council, Environmental Services Department, **Civic Buildings**, New Market Street, Wigan WN1 1RP and **Wigan Town Hall**, Library Street, Wigan, WN1 1YN. Both buildings are open 8.45am-5pm, Monday - Friday.

You can **email** your comments to us at wigancentralaap@wigan.gov.uk - you need to include your **name** and **address**.

You can **write** to us at Planning Policy, Wigan Council, Environmental Services Department, Civic Buildings, New Market Street, Wigan WN1 1RP. Please include your name clearly (not just your signature), your postal address and your email address if you have one.

You can telephone us for information on (01942) 404246 or 808281 but we cannot record comments made on the telephone. Comments need to be made on line, by email or in writing.

You can go online to view the Issues Paper or inspect the paper document at all borough libraries (except the children's library). Please check the individual library opening hours first on the Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust website: www.wlct.org or telephone 01942 827619, if you are not sure.

- **Abram Community Library**, Vicarage Road, Abram, Wigan WN2 5QX
- **Ashton Library**, Wigan Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan WN4 9BH
- **Aspull Library**, Oakfield Crescent, Aspull, Wigan WN2 1XJII
- **Atherton Library**, York Street, Atherton, Manchester M46 9JH
- **Beech Hill Library**, Buckley St West, Beech Hill, Wigan WN6 7PQ
- **Golborne Library**, Tanners Lane, Golborne, Warrington WA3 3AW
- **Hindley Library**, Market Street, Hindley, Wigan, WN2 3AN
- **Hope Community Library**, 2 The Grange Community Complex, Highfield Grange Avenue, Winstanley, Wigan WN3 6GH
- **Ince Library**, Smithy Green, Ince, Wigan WN2 2AT
- **Lamberhead Green Library**, Abraham Guest Specialist Sports and Arts College, Greenhey, Orrell WN5 0DQ
- **Leigh Library**, Turnpike Centre, Civic Square, Market Street, Leigh WN7 1EB
- **Marsh Green Library**, Harrow Road, Marsh Green WN5 0QL
- **Orrell Library**, Orrell Post, Orrell, Wigan WN5 8LY
- **Platt Bridge Library**, Platt Bridge Community First, Rivington Avenue, Platt Bridge, Wigan WN2 5NG
- **Shevington Library**, Gathurst Lane, Shevington, Wigan WN6 8HA
- **Standish Library**, Cross Street, Standish, Wigan WN6 0HQ
- **Tyldesley Library**, Stanley Street, Tyldesley M29 8AH
- **Wigan Library**, College Avenue, Wigan WN1 1NN

Please return your comments to us as soon as possible and by noon on Wednesday 25th May 2011 at the latest.

Please note: We will publish all comments received on our website and in the Consultation Report but we will not publish signatures or telephone numbers, email addresses and postal addresses, except for those of agents.

We can make this information available in other formats and languages on request.

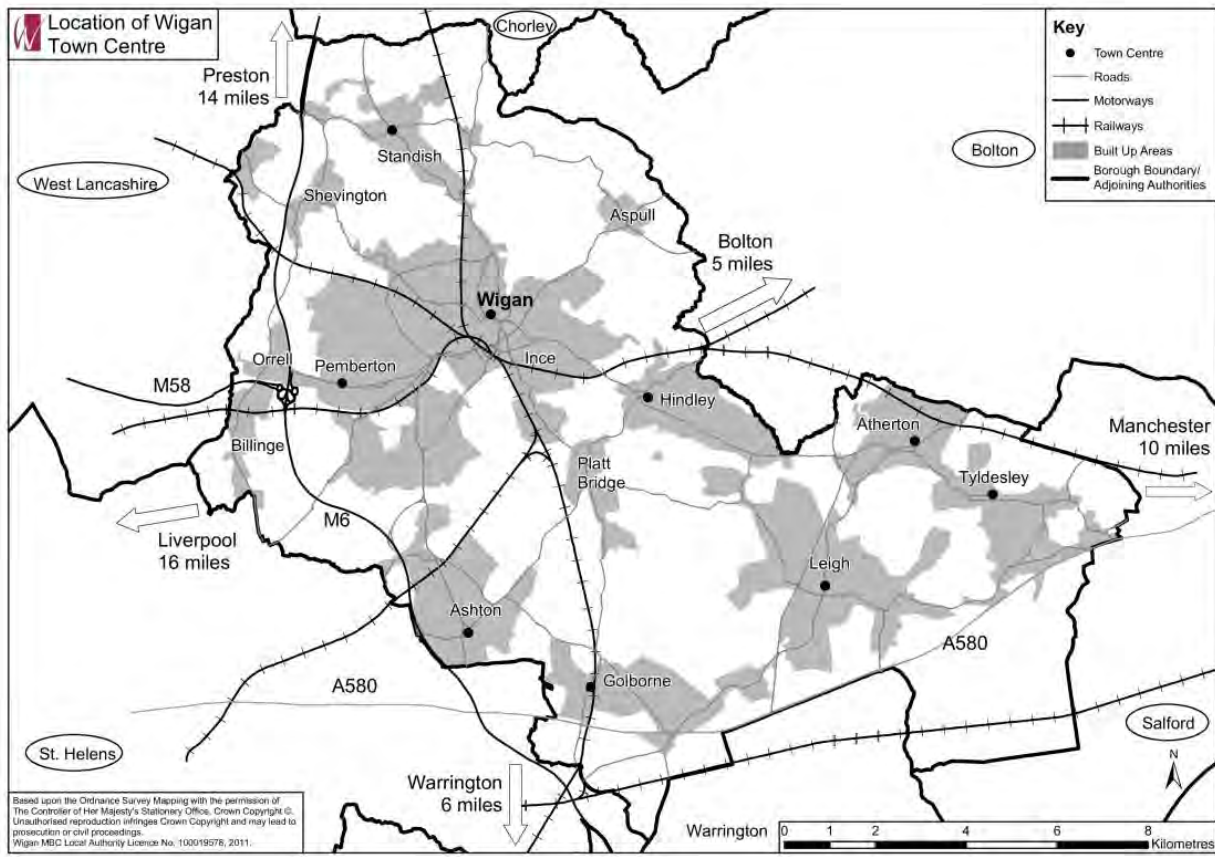
THREE

Current position

3.1 The plan boundary includes a number of distinct Character Areas. These are:

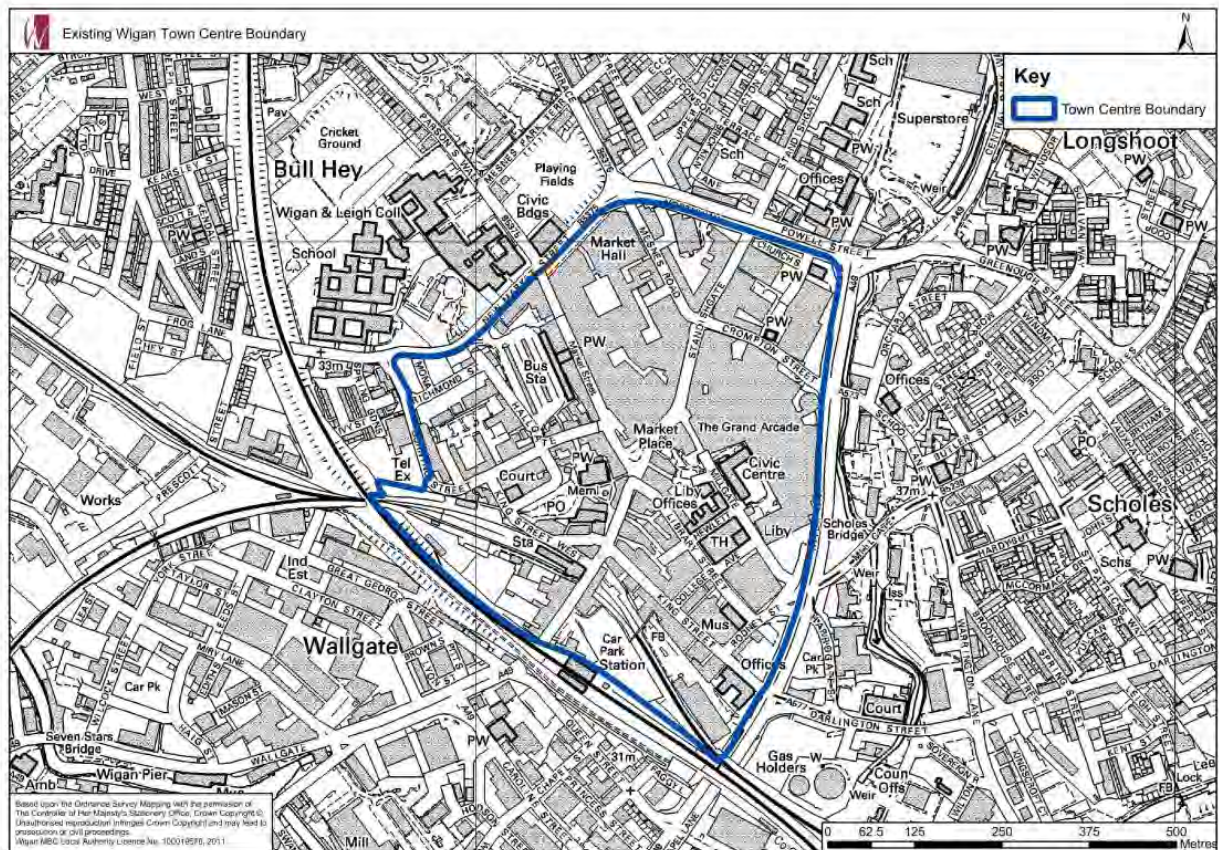
- **The historic core** - around Wallgate and Market Street and containing surviving medieval streets and a number of historic civic and commercial buildings and public spaces. This area also includes the town's two rail stations.
- **The retail centre** - including The Galleries / Marketgate and Grand Arcade shopping centres and peripheral shopping streets such as Lower Standishgate and Crompton Street.
- **Wigan Pier Quarter** - characterised by large commercial and historic mill buildings based around the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.
- **Wallgate / Queen Street / Caroline Street Employment Areas** - a mixture of commercial buildings and non food retail uses, typically modern 'shed' style structures.
- **Chapel Lane / Darlington Street (the Eastern Gateway)** - including a number of derelict and vacant sites and buildings bisected by the town centre relief road.
- **New Market Street / Riverway (the Northern Crescent)** including the Bus Station, various educational facilities and a wide range of older commercial and residential uses.

3.2 The action plan area is surrounded by a variety of land uses and it has an important relationship with these areas. To the north are Mesnes Park and a range of traditional housing, some of which has been converted to office and commercial properties. To the south is a mixture of more recent housing and a potential major employment site at Westwood Park. The eastern boundary of the area is characterised by medium and high rise housing at Scholes, separated from the town centre by the River Douglas. The western and south-western boundaries are adjacent to a mixture of commercial premises and the major Robin Park retail and leisure development. The relationship between Robin Park and the town centre is very important in economic terms and the sporting and leisure facilities in this area attract large numbers of visitors.



Location of Wigan Town Centre

3.3 Wigan town centre is the largest centre in the borough and is the main centre for shopping, services and employment. The town centre plays a vital role as one of the sub-regional town centres in Greater Manchester. It primarily serves the west and centre of the borough but its influence and catchment area extends into the eastern parts of the borough and beyond the borough boundary into parts of Chorley and West Lancashire. Bolton, Warrington and St. Helens are towns of a similar size to Wigan and their presence limits the influence of Wigan in those directions.



Existing Town Centre Boundary - Unitary Development Plan

3.4 The town centre contains over 120,000 square metres of retail floorspace and attracts over 300,000 visitors per week. It includes two main shopping centres, the Grand Arcade which opened in 2007 and the older Galleries / Marketgate complex. These centres are separated by the town's main shopping street, Standishgate, which is part of the pedestrianised retail core. There is also an indoor and outdoor market which is linked to the Galleries shopping centre. Wigan is now ranked 105th nationally out of over 1,000 centres and its position as a shopping destination has improved with the opening of the Grand Arcade centre which has been an important addition to the town's retail attractions. The town centre ground floor vacancy rate is currently lower than the regional average at around 15% and a large proportion of these vacancies are concentrated in specific areas, particularly the Marketgate centre and parts of The Galleries.



The Grand Arcade Shopping Centre



The Galleries Shopping Centre

3.5 The town centre's leisure range is narrow with limited activities or attractions in the early evening. There are a relatively small number of restaurants, below the national average. A small amateur theatre exists at Crompton Street, but there is no town centre cinema, commercial theatre or concert venue. The town is also under represented in the hotel sector with only one of note within the central area. Currently, the pubs and clubs of King Street and Wallgate form the main leisure focus, particularly at the weekend when several thousand people are attracted to the area.

3.6 Wigan is well known for its cultural history and attractions. It is the hometown of several artists, including The Verve, was home to the world famous Wigan Casino and now hosts well respected annual jazz and food and drink festivals.

3.7 There are a number of community facilities including churches, doctors surgeries and dentists dispersed across the area. The main 'civic' facilities are based around the Millgate / Library Street area and they attract substantial numbers of visitors during the daytime. Other public facilities such as the job centre are also located within the town centre. The opening of the Wigan Life Centre, based around the Old Town Hall at Library Street, will bring a number of public offices together to create a 'one stop shop' for local people. The government's Capital and Asset Pathfinder Programme is also looking at how more public and healthcare activities within Wigan town centre could be better joined up to provide a more efficient service for their customers.

3.8 Employment within the central area is provided by retail, offices (which are mainly public sector), education and in industrial and commercial uses around the Queen Street / Wallgate / Wigan Pier Quarter areas. Total employment within the town centre is

approximately 15,000, with retail accounting for around 20%. The town centre has a smaller, less dynamic office market than many other Greater Manchester areas and in particular, knowledge based industries are under represented. In some cases, economic development has been hampered by low land and property values which has affected the viability of schemes.

3.9 Wigan and Leigh College and the Deanery High School are both in the northern part of the plan area. These are large educational facilities that bring significant numbers of students into the town centre area during term times. Two smaller primary schools are also located just outside the area at Standishgate.

3.10 Although the area is mainly urban in nature, there are a number of open spaces which are used for informal recreation to varying degrees. These include green spaces such as Mesnes Playing Fields and Parish Church Gardens, more formal urban landscaping such as Market Place and the Trencherfield Mill Gardens and linear spaces such as the Leeds-Liverpool Canal towpath. Mesnes Park, which is just outside the plan area, provides the main recreational park for town centre users and the wider community. The park is currently being upgraded as part of a major Heritage Lottery Fund scheme. Generally, the area has a hard urban landscape, with few street trees and small pockets of greenery and open space. Within this urban environment several buildings, including many of the older mill and warehouse buildings, create a habitat for a range of birds and bats.

3.11 The River Douglas and Leeds-Liverpool Canal pass through the area to the east and south of the town centre. The canal towpath and riverside footpaths are used for walking and cycling and provide ways into the borough's Greenheart area. They also provide important habitats and corridors for wildlife. A major flood alleviation structure is currently being constructed upstream in the River Douglas valley which will control the flow of the river through the area and reduce the risk of flooding in certain areas.



The refurbished canal towpath in the Wigan Pier Quarter

3.12 Formal sports and other recreation for the area is provided largely by the Robin Park complex, although this is just outside the plan area. This includes an indoor sports hall, tennis centre, outdoor running track and athletics facilities, a multi-screen cinema and a bingo hall. The Robin Park area also includes the 25,000 capacity DW stadium providing a home for the Premiership football side Wigan Athletic and Wigan Warriors Rugby League Club.

3.13 The town centre has retained much of its historic fabric, including its medieval street layout in the Market Place and The Wiend and a number of 'planned' Georgian streets such as King Street. The Market Place forms the historic focus of the town centre and a number of other important spaces including the Parish Church Gardens have been retained. There are 141 Listed buildings, a number of other buildings of local importance and 4 designated conservation areas. These are:

- Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area
- Wigan Pier Quarter Conservation Area
- Dicconson Conservation Area
- Mesnes Conservation Area

3.14 There are a number of important views both within and from outside the area, which add to the unique character of the area. Some of these important views include:

- Views of the Parish Church from Market Place and other points

- Views of the Wigan Pier Quarter mills from higher ground in the Gidlow area
- Panoramic views of the town centre skyline from Scholes and the Seven Stars areas.

3.15 The town centre is served by two separate rail stations. These are Wigan North Western, situated on the West Coast Main Line and Wigan Wallgate which serves more local destinations. Wigan North Western was reconstructed in the 1970's and has been identified by Network Rail as needing improvements to the waiting environment and passenger facilities. Wigan Wallgate is an adapted Victorian facility which also requires some improvements to its forecourt and waiting areas. The two stations are around 100 metres apart, and are separated by a busy and congested road.

3.16 The town's bus station is situated at New Market Street and is not well linked to the rail stations, although it is close to the retail centre. This is a relatively new facility operated by the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive from which 48 general services and 7 school services operate. There are some other groups of bus stops, including outside North Western Station and on Library Street. There are also a number of taxi ranks operating at varying times, including Wallgate, King Street and Standishgate.

3.17 There is an established pedestrianised core, including part of Standishgate, Market Place and Market Street from which vehicles are excluded from 10.30a.m. - 4.00p.m. A number of loading bays are provided within these areas to allow servicing and deliveries outside these hours.

3.18 Several key routes radiate from the town centre, including the A49 Riverway / Pottery Road, the A577 Darlington Street, the A573 Warrington Lane and the B5238 Scholes / Poolstock. These routes are constrained by built development and bridges and peak time congestion is a key feature. The area has a partial Inner Relief Road formed by Riverway / Northway / Central Park Way but the eastern section of the Ring Road from the Saddle Junction to north of the town centre (Wigan Inner Relief Route) has not yet been completed. There are a number of pedestrian footpaths and cyclepaths in the area including the canal towpath and riverside paths, although generally provision for walking and cycling across the area is limited.

3.19 Off street car parking is available at various locations. Over 3,600 general parking spaces are available, which include public multi-storey car parks and privately run car parks available to the general public. Usage varies with the more centrally located car

parks, particularly the Galleries, proving popular with short stay visitors. In addition, over 300 on-street pay and display spaces are available and uncontrolled parking is available on several streets on the fringes of the area. The condition and quality of these car parks is mixed and ranges from newly constructed multi-storey car parks meeting modern standards to temporary surfaced car parks without lighting or on-site supervision.

3.20 The plan area is mainly commercial in character and has only a small residential population, estimated at around 1,700. Pockets of traditional 2 storey terraced housing can be found at Swan Meadow Road (within the Wigan Pier Quarter), at Spring Gardens and around the Dicconson Street area (within the Northern Crescent). More recently, new and converted apartments have been created within the Wigan Pier Quarter at Trencherfield Mill. Around the edges of the plan area, there are a number of established residential communities which use the town centre on a regular basis.

3.21 Although not specifically a feature of the town centre, multiple deprivation is a characteristic of many of the immediate surrounding residential areas. Parts of Marsh Green, Norley Hall, Worsley Hall, Worsley Mesnes and Scholes are amongst the 3% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally. Poor health is a feature of this multiple deprivation and within the plan area 62% of people have good general health, compared to a national average of 69%.

3.22 Incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour have reduced in recent years. A partnership approach with Greater Manchester Police, Wigan Council, other agencies and business owners has been largely successful in managing these issues. An alcohol ban is in place for large parts of the area and specific areas such as the retail core and King Street are subject to targeted crime prevention initiatives at particular times.

3.23 The plan area is constantly evolving and has undergone a number of significant changes in recent years. These changes include the construction of the Grand Arcade shopping centre, substantial investment in the Trencherfield Mill and Pottery Road areas of the Wigan Pier Quarter and the construction of a new multi-storey car park next to Wigan North Western Station. At the current time, the construction of the Wigan Life Centre at Millgate is changing the face of this area and will create a new public service hub including a library / one stop shop facility and replacement swimming pool and leisure suite. This investment will help to stimulate the development of vacant sites within the

local area. Just outside the plan area, work has recently started on the major Saddle Junction Improvement Scheme, which will improve access to the town centre from the south and from the M6.

3.24 Wigan town centre has many strengths. It is an attractive and busy place that has retained the feel of a thriving large market town. Past redevelopments have not destroyed the overall historic character and interesting layout of the town centre. Importantly, the area has a strong community that cares passionately about its future. There are also a series of well established partnerships involving local businesses, the council and others. These partnerships are delivering real improvements, such as the Wallgate Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme. Whilst the plan will need to address the key issues identified in Section 4, it must also build on these existing strengths, which are the building blocks for a successful future.

Question 2

Do you recognise the Wigan Central area as we have set it out within this chapter? If not, what would you change and what evidence can you give us to support your change?

FOUR

Key issues

4.1 A number of broad issues have been identified through an initial Issues Questionnaire consultation in 2010 and a review of the related evidence so far. These key issues are all linked to each other in different ways and must be tackled as a whole to deliver a successful and prosperous town centre in the future.

4.2 In addition to these general issues, there are a number of more specific local issues within the individual character areas or areas of opportunity, which need to be addressed in order to remove barriers to development and to allow these areas to reach their full potential. These specific issues are covered in Chapter 5.

Key Issue 1 - Strengthening the Local Economy

Question 3

There is a need to strengthen the economy in and around Wigan town centre. This is a fundamental issue that the plan will need to address.

Do you agree?

How could the local economy be improved?

4.3 Historically, town centres provided the major economic focus for a wider area. Whilst Wigan town centre does provide an employment base for a number of sectors, it should be providing more employment opportunities and generating more wealth than it currently does in order to fully contribute to the economy of the borough and the wider region. Employment within the area has declined over recent years and the private sector office market is relatively weak. The successful development of the town centre can provide an opportunity to improve the life chances of people in adjacent deprived areas by providing accessible employment opportunities. The challenges for the action plan are to help retain existing employment and to support the growth of a wider range of employment opportunities within the area.

4.4 The majority of responses to the Issues Questionnaire felt that there should be more jobs provided within the central area and that a wider range of jobs are required to allow the retention of local talent.

4.5 Wigan should be able to gain greater benefits from its strategic location close to the M6 Motorway. It is also located on the West Coast Mainline, offering frequent connections to London and Scotland. The electrification of the Wigan - Manchester and Wigan - Liverpool lines by 2014 will provide significant opportunities for the town and the plan will need to examine how it can attract investment and make the most of its strategic position.

4.6 With the opening of the Grand Arcade in 2007, the retail sector is now both a major employer and a contributor to the local economy. Wigan compares well against other town centres in the north west in terms of its retail offer. The number of visitors (footfall) and car park use has held up well in recent years. The Retail Study Update by White Young Green in 2009 identified that there is some additional retail capacity within the area in the short, medium and long term and this sector provides an opportunity to grow the local economy. The plan will need to address how, when and where any additional retail space can be provided within the area. Although there is a smaller format Morrison's store within The Galleries development and an edge of centre Tesco store at Central Park Way, the plan will need to consider the potential for a large format 'anchor' foodstore within the town centre. This analysis of future retail provision will also need to include consideration of the future role and location of the market.

4.7 The evening economy is an important part of the overall town centre economy and supports employment in the leisure and food and drink sectors. Key Issue 4 highlights the need to expand the leisure and cultural offer and this expansion would also have the potential to strengthen the local economy and provide employment.

4.8 Despite the strengths of the retail economy and the evening economy, a number of the employment sectors are under represented. Within the town centre, the financial and business service sector is under provided. The research and development sector is also under represented within the area. This situation can lead to a loss of skills and local talent. How to create a balanced economy which retains these skills and provides a wider range of opportunities for local people is an important issue for the plan to consider.

4.9 The location of any new employment opportunities will also be important. Although parts of the area, including Wallgate and the Pier Quarter provide employment facilities, the suitability of these and the potential for comprehensive redevelopment in the areas of opportunity around the edges of the retail centre will need to be explored.

4.10 The plan will also need to consider the future of the town centre office 'market'. Public sector offices currently play an important role in the town centre economy, but the patterns of employment are changing with the relocation of office functions from Bryan House at Standishgate and Civic Buildings at New Market Street to the Wigan Life Centre. The current reliance on public sector offices for employment within this sector is a potential issue and the opportunity to create a more balanced employment base should be explored.



Vacant unit within the Town Centre

Key Issue 2 - Transforming the Environment

Question 4

There is a need to improve the quality of the environment to attract greater investment and more visitors to the town.

Do you agree?

What improvements do you think are needed?

4.11 Despite a number of improvements over recent years, the environmental quality within the area is mixed. Nearly everyone who responded to our initial issues questionnaire agreed that the environment of the town centre needed to be improved.

4.12 There are a number of key buildings that are important in terms of the image and environmental quality of the action plan area. Many of these buildings within the historic core of the centre make a positive contribution to the street scene. There are others however, that are having a negative effect on the quality of the town centre.

4.13 The derelict appearance of some gateway buildings, such as the Old Town Hall at Library Street affects the image and perception of the town and can influence investment decisions. These buildings and sites are in a number of different private ownerships.

4.14 The continued conservation of key heritage features is important. A variety of architectural styles is represented within the area which give it a special character and have a positive impact on the environment. However, there are examples of some buildings being poorly maintained by their private owners and unsympathetic alterations to buildings, which have been carried out in the past by their owners or tenants.

4.15 How to promote conservation-led regeneration and capitalise on Wigan's many historic assets is an important issue for the plan to consider.

4.16 The Wigan Town Centre Street Scene Strategy was prepared in 2010 to identify what actions are needed to improve the town centre's streets and spaces. The strategy confirms the need to improve the pedestrian environment and identifies problems of street 'clutter', a lack of trees and greenery and the negative impact of traffic in areas such as Lower Standishgate. It sets out a number of priorities for action including including the Market Place, The Wiend, King Street and important gateways such as Riverway. A major improvement scheme to transform the environment of Wallgate is starting shortly and this will include tree planting, energy efficient lighting and the removal of unnecessary guardrails and bollards.

4.17 Major improvements to streets and spaces will have a positive effect on the health and vitality of the town centre and will improve the quality of life for residents, visitors and town centre employees. The plan should consider how these improvements can be achieved as part of a wide ranging transformation.

4.18 There is a limited amount of public open space, particularly within the town centre itself. The plan will need to examine a number of factors, including:

- How the quality of open space can be improved to make it more attractive, usable and safe.
- How the connections from the centre to the Greenheart area and places such as Mesnes Park can be improved.
- The opportunities to green the area through tree planting and other landscaping.
- How the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and River Douglas corridors can be improved as leisure facilities and wildlife corridors.



**Old Town Hall - View from
Riverway**

Key Issue 3 - Improving Accessibility

Question 5

Reducing congestion and improving access to the town centre is a priority. Improving conditions for pedestrians is also important to attract more visitors to the area.

Do you agree that these are important issues?

Which areas are most important to you?

Question 6

Connections between the town's two rail stations and the bus station need to be improved to help people use public transport and create a safer environment.

Do you agree that improvements are needed?

4.19 Localised congestion is a problem on several roads around the area. Wigan town centre is a significant destination for commuter and goods vehicle traffic and large volumes of through traffic pass through the area. Specific problems arise around the morning and evening peak periods. In particular, the following routes suffer from congestion:

- A49 Wallgate / Pottery Road / Queen Street / Caroline Street (this is the busiest all-purpose road in the borough with over 50,000 vehicles per day using the stretch west of Pottery Road)
- A577 Darlington Street East
- B5238 Poolstock Lane
- A573 School Lane / Warrington Lane

4.20 Access difficulties were highlighted in the initial questionnaire, where over two-thirds of respondents felt that it was not easy to get in and out of the town centre.

4.21 Within the town centre, localised congestion around the access to car parks can also occur at busy times and can create queues around their entrances and exits. This is a particular issue in the Lower Standishgate / Mesnes Street and Hewlett Street / Library Street areas, where vehicles using multi-storey car parks create a traffic dominant environment.



Congestion on Mesnes Street

4.22 The experience of regular congestion can deter potential investors and discourage visitors to the area. In this situation, tackling congestion on main access routes and within the area itself becomes a key issue for the plan to address to ensure the continued health and vitality of the area.

4.23 The town centre also serves a local catchment where many people walk, cycle or take the bus into the town centre. This is a positive feature of the area, but the plan will also need to examine how walking, cycling and public transport use can be encouraged further. To help promote this, matters that need to be considered will include:

- How to reduce the barrier effect of the town centre ring road?
- Where can greater priority be given to pedestrians and cyclists without adding to congestion? As part of this, the potential to 'pedestrianise' town centre streets, such as Lower Standishgate will be explored.

4.24 Recent parking surveys have highlighted a number of issues relating to the car parking stock within the area. These are summarised briefly as:

- The location and access arrangements to some car parks are difficult.
- The quality of some car parks is poor with improvements required to lighting, access ways, stairwells, landscaping and customer information (the newer Grand Arcade car parks have raised the standard in terms of their quality of finishes and customer experience).
- The majority of car parks close in the evening. This does not support the growth of the leisure and cultural economy within the area.

4.25 Improving connectivity between the town centre and major facilities such as Robin Park and future development sites such as Westwood is a key issue for the plan. Currently, major roads form significant barriers between these areas and these barriers need to be reduced to promote greater movement and activity.

4.26 The physical separation of the two railway stations and bus station and the barriers between them can create difficulties for public transport users. The environment in between these facilities is traffic dominated and the passenger information and direction signage is poor.

4.27 The plan will need to consider how these facilities and public transport services can be better connected as part of a transport 'hub' within the centre. Wallgate will be required to act as a concourse between the two stations and the plan will look at reducing traffic, in order to encourage pedestrian and cycling flows. This will need to include looking at providing suitable car parking and drop-off facilities for passengers, improvement of public spaces, links with taxis, the scope to improve connections to the Queen Street area and exploring the potential for new commercial development within the station environment. The plan will need to consider the physical relationship between the bus station, other bus facilities and the rail stations and how this could be improved to benefit passengers.



Wigan North Western Railway Station

Key Issue 4 - Widening the Range of Leisure, Culture and Community Activities

Question 7

The need to expand the leisure and cultural activities on offer to provide a wider range of facilities is a key issue for the plan to address.

Do you agree that this is needed?

What do you think is required and where could this be located within the area?

4.28 There is currently a very narrow range in terms of leisure, culture and community facilities in Wigan town centre, where the focus of activity is around Wallgate / King Street and the pub and club based evening economy. Whilst this provides important employment opportunities and is a key part of the centre's economy, there is a need to offer more opportunities for other activities in the evening, particularly for families and other groups who do not visit the area for leisure purposes. The plan will need to examine where and how these facilities can be best provided to boost the town centre's regeneration and to make visiting the centre a safer and more enjoyable experience for people. This was highlighted in the recent issues questionnaire where two-thirds of respondents said there was the need for leisure opportunities to be widened.



The leisure offer within the area is dominated by pubs and clubs



The Clarence Hotel

4.29 There is a clear gap in the 'evening economy' during the early evening hours, when office and retail facilities close and before many of the pubs and bars open. This is a missed opportunity for the centre to capture trade, create employment and develop a more diverse leisure time culture.

4.30 The need to provide leisure and community facilities for all age groups, particularly youth groups, is also an important issue. The town centre provides a very accessible location for such facilities and has the benefit of good public transport links.

4.31 In recent years there has been a local community aspiration to provide a theatre or performing arts venue. The absence of these facilities weakens the overall cultural offer of the town centre.

4.32 The Wigan Pier Quarter Strategy identified the potential for cultural activities within the area as part of a wider mixed-use regeneration. However, this potential has not been realised due to a number of wider economic factors and changes in the property market.

4.33 The plan should initially examine the scope and viability of providing a wider range of leisure and cultural facilities within the central area and identify sites which could accommodate these.

Key Issue 5 - Promoting Education and Learning

Question 8

There is scope to further develop the role of the centre as a base for education and learning.

Would you support this improved role?

4.34 The education facilities within and around the area already provide significant economic benefits to the town centre and contribute to its vitality through the large number of students using the campus facilities.

4.35 The two major educational establishments within the area (Wigan and Leigh College and the Deanery High School) are close to major public transport facilities and within easy walking distance of town centre shops. However, many of their buildings are now outdated and do not meet future requirements.

4.36 Future expansion of this sector in the central area, particularly through higher and further education, would increase the benefits to the area by raising local skills levels and by supporting a range of retail and other services.

4.37 A key issue for the action plan is to ensure that the expansion or redevelopment of the college and school facilities can be supported and that suitable sites are available to accommodate these requirements. As part of this, the plan will need to consider a range of factors including transport links, the potential for community use of facilities and the scope to link facilities together to create a 'learning village'.



Wigan and Leigh College

Key Issue 6 - Managing Change - Creating a Balanced Town Centre

Question 9

Recent developments have shifted the focus of the town centre to the south and east. To maintain a strong town centre there is a need for other areas such as The Galleries and Lower Standishgate to attract investment.

Do you agree?

What areas do you think are in need of investment or improvement?

4.38 Town centres, including Wigan, are constantly evolving and need to respond to changing consumer habits and economic and social conditions.

4.39 In recent years, the focus of investment and activity within the central area has moved to the south and east with the opening of the Grand Arcade shopping centre and the construction of the Wigan Life Centre. Significant investment has also occurred within the Wigan Pier Quarter, but this investment has not included the Queen Street area which sits between the town centre and the Pier Quarter.

4.40 A key issue for future years is to ensure that development, growth and investment takes place in the right areas at the right times and that all parts of the area contribute to an attractive and successful town. Investment in these key areas is needed to better connect the different parts of the town centre to surrounding residential areas and other key destinations such as Robin Park and Mesnes Park.

4.41 The Northern Crescent Masterplan identified the need for an 'anchor' destination at the northern end of the town centre, which would counterbalance the growth of the Grand Arcade and other facilities to the south and east of the plan area.

4.42 We consider that parts of the Queen Street / Caroline Street area have potential for mixed-use development. Development of this area would help to connect the retail centre to the Pier Quarter. Opportunities within this area should be reviewed as part of the Area Action Plan.

4.43 These examples and the evidence from a number of separate studies illustrate the need for a planned approach to creating a balanced centre.

Other Issues

4.44 In addition to these six key issues for the plan area, there are a number of other cross-cutting issues which apply to Wigan town centre in the same way that they apply to many other areas of the borough. These issues are set out briefly below and will also need to be considered in the preparation of the plan.

4.45 The need to promote the centre as a sustainable destination and to create a more energy efficient place that helps reduce the impacts of climate change is important. As part of its wider strategy the plan will need to consider issues such as how to create a

centre that is easy to walk around; how energy requirements can be reduced; the potential for renewable energy production and use; and how to provide shade and deal with the urban 'heat island' effect.

4.46 Although the area is largely urban in nature, the scope to provide appropriate wildlife habitats such as nesting areas on buildings should be examined.

4.47 Across the borough there is a need to provide for a range of housing types to meet the future needs of the population and the plan area has the potential to meet some of this need. At this stage, the low level of housing within the area is not seen as a major concern in itself as the town centre serves and benefits from a much wider residential community. However, the potential for new housing within the area should be explored within the plan. In particular, the plan should consider where new housing could be located and what type of housing would support the regeneration of the area.

4.48 Poor health is a major issue within the borough, particularly in the more deprived neighbourhoods. The health impacts of proposals will need to be considered as part of the plan and future developments will need to be designed to encourage people to live healthier lives, including promoting walking and cycling and access to recreational facilities.

4.49 Creating a safe town centre for everyone is a major cross-cutting issue for the plan to consider. This is an important consideration if the range of leisure activities is to be expanded to attract a wider audience.

Question 10

Do you agree with these other issues that we have identified?

Are there any other issues that you think should be addressed within the plan?

FIVE

Areas of opportunity

5.1 A number of previous studies and recent work on the Core Strategy have identified several broad 'areas of opportunity' within and close to the town centre that have potential for development and improvement. These areas also have a number of economic, environmental or social issues that need addressing to allow the town to achieve its full potential. Within these areas, there are opportunities for new development, refurbishment of existing properties and associated works, which will strengthen the role of the centre and bring long-term benefits to the wider community. It is suggested that the main focus of the plan should be on these areas of opportunity in order to manage and guide the changes that are required.

5.2 The main areas of opportunity can be grouped into two broad areas:

1. **The historic core / retail centre**
2. **An outer 'collar' of opportunities around the retail centre**

The historic core / retail centre

5.3 Within this area there are two major potential opportunities, which could help to strengthen its main functions as a shopping, commercial and leisure centre. These are The Galleries and Marketgate Shopping Centres and the Wallgate corridor.

- **The Galleries / Marketgate Shopping Centres**

Question 11

Do you think that the Galleries and Marketgate shopping centres should be identified as an area of opportunity?

If so, what changes are needed in these areas?

5.4 These centres contain a large number of vacancies, particularly Marketgate. Although they have been affected by the opening of the Grand Arcade, many of these vacancies are longstanding and are a result of their format and layout which does not meet the requirements of today's retailers and customers. The specific issues which affect these centres are:

- An outdated 6 metre 'grid' layout in parts of the Galleries and Marketgate centres.
- A complex two-tier layout within The Galleries which can be confusing to shoppers.
- Blank frontages to existing shopping streets such as Market Street.
- Closure of the centres in the evening, resulting in a large part of the centre being closed.
- Economic difficulties affecting both the indoor and outdoor markets, which are also hidden from the main shopping streets.
- Lack of a large format 'anchor' foodstore.

5.5 The Northern Crescent Masterplan recommended major intervention to remodel the commercial space (including the markets), improve the public areas and provide a stronger link to other parts of the town. The development of the Grand Arcade and the Wigan Life Centre has shifted the focus of activity within the centre and it is important that this focus is 're-balanced' to prevent the decline of individual areas.



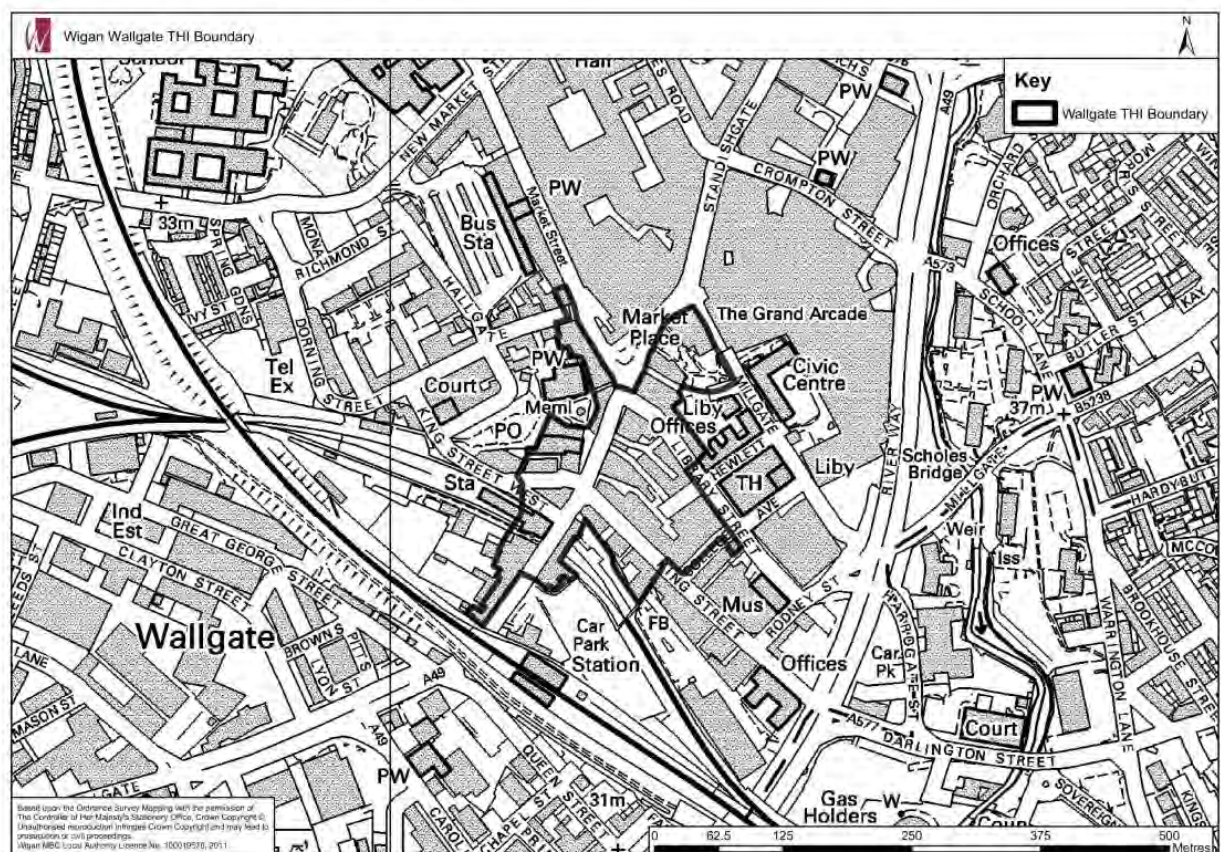
The Galleries Shopping Centre

- **The Wallgate corridor**

Question 12

How can we make the Wallgate corridor a focus for investment?

What is needed to improve this area?



Wigan Wallgate THI Boundary

5.6 The Wallgate corridor, including parts of King Street and Library Street is one of the historic gateways to the town centre, but it has declined as the focus of retail and commercial activity has shifted. There is potential for improvement and investment to bring a number of these vacant historic properties back into use and increase activity. Wallgate also contains the town's two railway stations and forms the first impression for

visitors arriving by rail. The area's potential has been recognised by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of over £1 million for building refurbishment and street improvements, as part of a Townscape Heritage Initiative running from 2010 - 2015.



Grimes Arcade, King Street

5.7 Specific problems within this area, some of which are to be addressed through the Townscape Heritage Initiative, include:

- Significant amounts of vacant floorspace, including upper floors
- Inadequate building maintenance leading to decay
- Traffic congestion and a poor environment for pedestrians
- Physical presence of traffic detracting from the historic area
- A poor environment between the two railway stations (and the bus station).

The outer 'collar of opportunity'

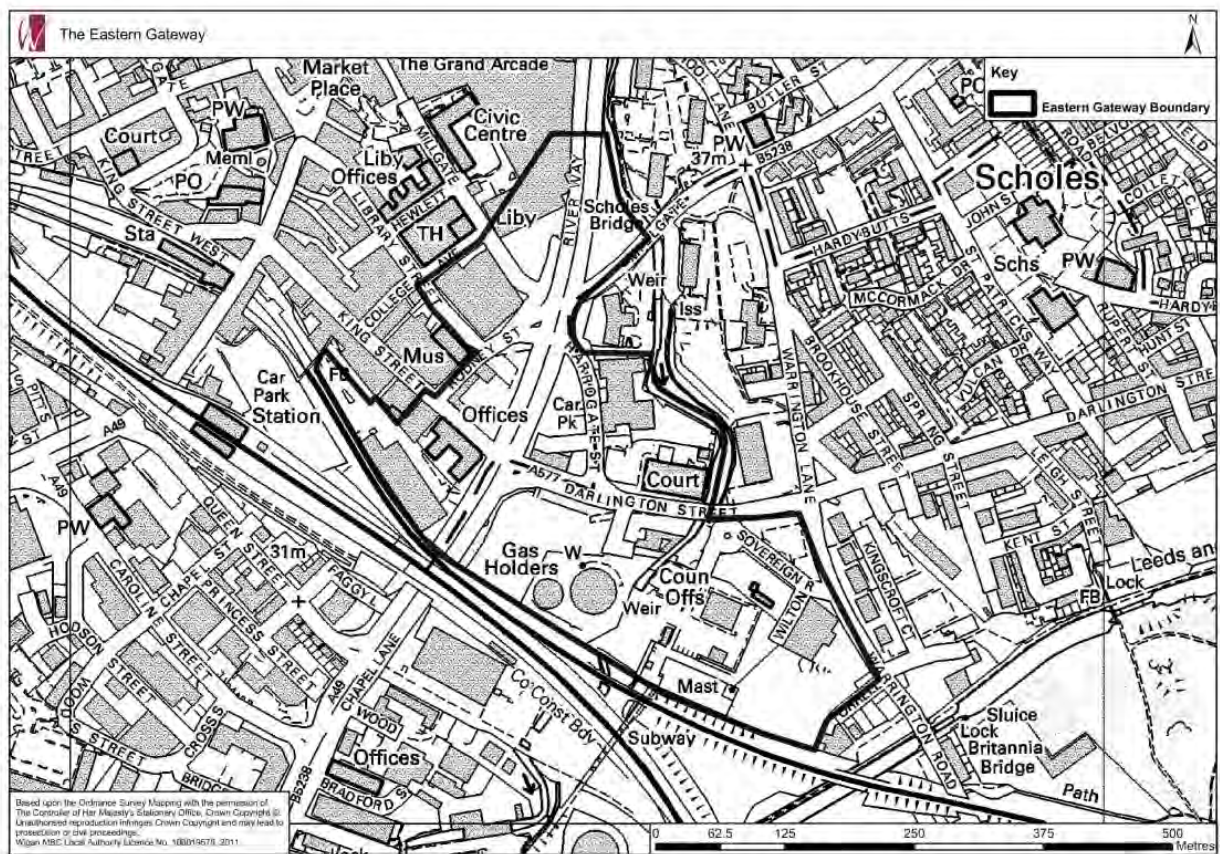
5.8 Around the edge of the retail core, there are a number of areas with considerable potential for redevelopment, refurbishment and improvement. Development of these areas could strengthen the economic role of the centre, widen its appeal and help to better connect them to surrounding residential districts such as Scholes and to major facilities such as Mesnes Park and Robin Park. These areas of opportunity are the 'Eastern Gateway', the 'Northern Crescent', the 'Wigan Pier Quarter' and the 'Queen Street / Caroline Street' areas.

- **Eastern Gateway**

Question 13

Do you agree that the Eastern Gateway should be an area of opportunity?

If so, what should be our priorities within this area?



The Eastern Gateway

5.9 The Eastern Gateway area contains a number of vacant or derelict sites in need of investment and regeneration, including:

- The Old Town Hall site, Riverway

- Former Police Station, Harrogate Street
- Brocol House / Former MFI site at Chapel Lane
- Chapel Lane Car Park / Gas Depot site
- Harrogate Street Car Park
- Former car park site at Millgate.

5.10 The future development of these sites, either individually or as a package would provide the opportunity to extend the town centre attractions and better connect the area to the residential areas at Darlington Street and Scholes.

5.11 The Eastern Gateway has a number of specific issues which will need to be addressed through the Area Action Plan. These include:

- Breaking down the barrier created by the relief road at Riverway / Chapel Lane to allow easier pedestrian movement through the area. However, this section of the A49 is one of the busiest vehicle routes in the borough and a comprehensive, carefully considered solution will be required to allow easier pedestrian movement whilst not adding to congestion.
- The area contains a number of low grade car parks and a parking strategy for this area will be needed.
- Constraints on development, which include contamination and the presence of operational gas holders.
- The area suffers from poor environmental quality and a negative image. A major transformation is required to address these problems, which includes the potential for high quality, iconic building designs.

5.12 These key issues were identified in the Eastern Gateway Development Framework in 2007. The conditions and issues within the area have not significantly altered since this time.

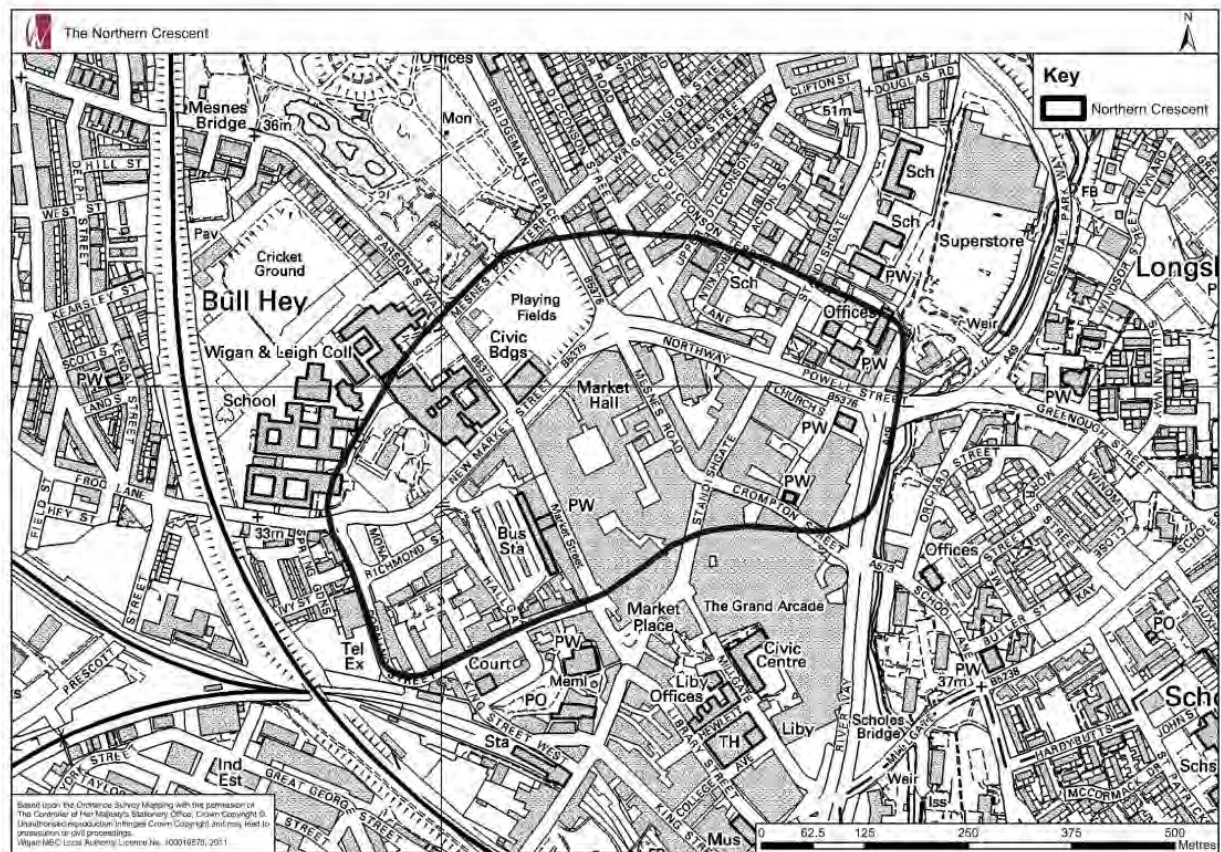
5.13 The main challenge within this area will be to attract developments that are commercially viable, which can be delivered and which complement and support the rest of the town centre.

- **The Northern Crescent**

Question 14

Do you agree that the Northern Crescent area needs improvement?

If so, what works are needed?



The Northern Crescent (including the Galleries / Marketgate centres)

5.14 The Northern Crescent Masterplan identified a number of potential opportunities around the fringes of the town centre. These are in addition to The Galleries and Marketgate centres. The masterplan recognised that the area offers some significant

development potential which could help to counterbalance the effects of the Grand Arcade and Wigan Life Centre on town centre activity. Specific opportunities could include the Mona Street / Dorning Street areas, Lower Standishgate and the Gateway House complex.

5.15 Specific issues identified within this area include:

- Poor pedestrian links between the town centre and the refurbished Mesnes Park partly due to the barrier created by Riverway / New Market Street.
- Potential future vacancies in buildings such as Bryan House and Civic Buildings as services and activities move to the Wigan Life Centre and an improved Civic Quarter. Ultimately, this shift of activity could lead to physical decline if buildings remain unoccupied.
- Mesnes Playing Field is an under-used resource which provides a poor link to Mesnes Park.
- The Lower Standishgate area is traffic dominated and creates a poor environment for pedestrians. This is mainly due to the access arrangements to The Galleries car park.



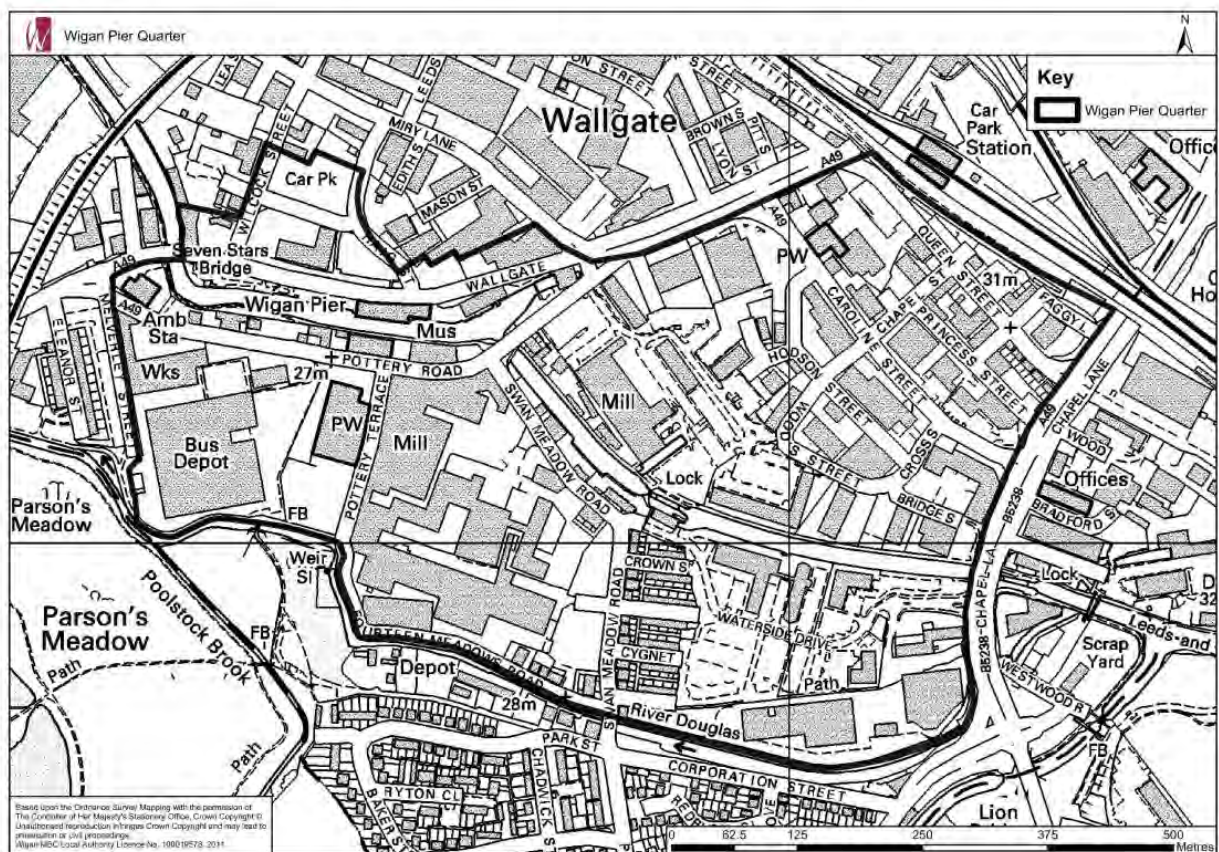
Lower Standishgate

- **The Pier Quarter**

Question 15

The vision for the Pier Quarter was to provide a lively mixed use environment for cultural activities, business, housing, leisure and tourism by 2016.

Some improvements have been achieved such as Trencherfield Mill and the Mayor's Boatyard. Do you think that this is still the right vision for the Pier Quarter?



The Pier Quarter (including Queen Street / Caroline Street)

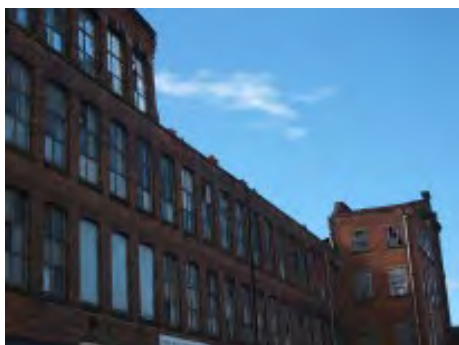
5.16 The Pier Quarter includes the historic Trencherfield Mill and Eckersley Mills, based around the Leeds-Liverpool canal.

5.17 The Wigan Pier Quarter Strategy of 2006 put forward a vision for this area of "a lively mixed-use quarter, providing a home for cultural activities, businesses, housing, leisure and tourism". The strategy identified a number of opportunities including:

- The Eckersley Mills complex at Swan Meadow Road
- The First Bus Depot at Meverley Street
- Various sites along the Pottery Road corridor

5.18 The strategy also identified a number of issues within the area which need to be addressed:

- A lack of evening activity and community 'presence'
- Connections to the town centre and the Robin Park complex are poor and traffic congestion along the Pottery Road corridor is a major problem
- The derelict appearance of the Eckersley Mills and other buildings creates a negative image of the area
- The Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the River Douglas are under-used assets with potential for greater use.



**Vacant commercial space at
Eckersley Mills**

- **Queen Street/Caroline Street**

Question 16

Do you think the Queen Street/Caroline Street area should be a focus for redevelopment and regeneration?

What do you think is needed in this area?

What should we do to safeguard existing businesses in this area?

5.19 Currently, this area contains a variety of lower value uses and poor quality buildings within a traffic and road dominated environment. The area is characterised by irregular plots and buildings within various private ownerships.

5.20 As with the Eastern Gateway, the area contains a number of major opportunities for refurbishment or comprehensive redevelopment which could help to fulfil its potential and become an attractive location between the town centre and the Robin Park leisure and retail complex.

Other areas of opportunity

5.21 Around the fringes of the town centre, there are a number of other 'areas of opportunity'. Although these are not within the proposed Area Action Plan boundary their relationship to the central area will need to be considered. These include:

- Westwood Park - A designated employment site of 17.16ha with the potential for creating up to 2,000 jobs
- Pagefield Mill Complex - This site has planning consent for a mixed use development including conversion of the main building into residential units.
- Robin Park - there are potential development sites at Frith Street (mixed-use commercial) and Robin Park Road (residential).

Question 17

Have we identified the right areas of opportunity? If not, which areas should the plan be considering?

SIX

Next steps

- 6.1** We will consider all the comments that we receive on the Issues Paper and will update and amend it if this is needed. These comments and any relevant new evidence will help to shape the next stages of the plan.
- 6.2** The next stage in the preparation of the plan will be to look at the various options to address the issues identified. These options will need to be assessed to examine their suitability, viability and whether they can realistically be delivered within the plan period.
- 6.3** We will consult with people again at this next stage (the option appraisal) to get their thoughts on the various options. This will take place in the Summer of 2011.
- 6.4** After this, we need to firm up our proposals to produce a 'Draft Plan', which will outline the preferred option or options for the area. This is currently scheduled for the Autumn of 2011 and we will also consult people at this stage.
- 6.5** Following this, we will produce the 'Wigan Central Area Action Plan' that we want to 'adopt'. This will include the preferred option(s) for the plan area, along with the implementation strategy (how it will be delivered) and monitoring (how its success will be measured) outlined. This is scheduled for early 2012.
- 6.6** Any comments or representations received at this stage will be considered at an Examination-in-Public by an Independent Inspector. This is currently scheduled for late summer 2012.
- 6.7** However, you should not wait until this stage to make comments. One of the key principles of the Area Action Plan is for individuals and stakeholders to get involved and to try and resolve any conflicts or issues as soon as possible in the process. This early (and continuous) engagement is in line with our approved Statement of Community Involvement and the government's aim of encouraging greater community involvement in the planning process.

Appendix A

Policy background and key evidence

The Area Action Plan must be in conformity with national and local planning policy. These policies, and the evidence gathered to date through a number of surveys and studies, will help to guide the direction of the plan for the Wigan Central area. This section provides a summary of the planning policy background relevant to the area and an overview of the main evidence gathered to date.

National planning policies

The key national planning policies are:

- **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)** - sets out the government's policies for creating sustainable development and ensuring that development helps to provide access for all members of the community to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities.
- **Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009)** - sets out the government's policies for town centres. The overriding aim is to promote their vitality and viability by planning for the growth and development of existing centres, focusing development in and around existing towns and encouraging a wide range of services in an accessible environment.
- **Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (2001)** - provides guidance on the need to promote more sustainable transport choices and to reduce the need to travel, especially by car. It also emphasises the importance of promoting accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling.

Local planning policies

Wigan Unitary Development Plan (2006)

There are various policies covering the town centre and adjacent areas including the Pier Quarter in our adopted Replacement Unitary Development Plan, which is the current development plan for the borough. In particular, Policy S1 identifies Wigan as a Main

Town Centre which will be promoted as a principal location for shopping, offices, entertainment, leisure, cultural and community facilities. These policies will be superseded by new spatial and core policies within our Core Strategy. The Unitary Development Plan can be viewed at on our website - click on 'Planning' on the home page, then on 'Replacement Unitary Development Plan'.

The emerging Core Strategy

We have prepared a Draft Core Strategy as part of our Local Development Framework, which is due to be adopted in early 2012. The Area Action Plan needs to be in conformity with the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has a key role setting out the vision and strategic objectives for the borough as a whole up to 2026. Within this document, there are a series of policies which will influence the future shape of the Area Action Plan, including:

- Policy SP2- Our Town and Local Centres - promotes Wigan as our 'sub-regional' town centre which will be enhanced as the prime location for shopping, commercial services, education, leisure and cultural uses serving the west and centre of the borough and its wider hinterland and for office-based jobs.
- Policy CP3 - Community Facilities - requires new facilities to be located in accessible locations and preferably within town centres such as Wigan.
- Policy CP5 - Economy and Employment - sets out how we will bring forward a range of employment sites across the borough and promote Wigan town centre as a key location for businesses and jobs.
- Policy CP7- Accessibility - prioritises a number of accessibility improvements within or affecting the Wigan Central Area Action Plan area, including the A49 Diversion, Wigan Inner Relief Road, Saddle Link Road and the Wigan Transport Hub. It also supports the improvement of public transport interchange facilities, particularly in town centres such as Wigan.
- Other policies within the Draft Core Strategy are also relevant to the plan area. The draft plan can be viewed in full at www.wigan.gov.uk/ldfcorestrategy.

The following sections identify the main evidence which has informed this Issues Paper. Further details of these can be viewed at www.wigan.gov.uk/wigancentralactionplan.

Regional studies and strategies

A number of regional studies and strategies have been prepared which are relevant to the action plan area.

- **Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 - published in 2008** - the Regional Spatial Strategy is intended to be abolished by the Government. The Localism Bill will fulfil this intention. Regeneration will be addressed through setting visions in consultation with local people regarding the future of their areas.
- **Greater Manchester Town Centres Study - Drivas Jonas (2010)** - the study was commissioned to examine how Greater Manchester's town centres could contribute to and benefit from the economic growth of the Manchester City Region. It recommends that a new generation of activity needs to be found for town centres that supports economic development, promotes social well-being and cohesion and contributes to the urgent climate change agenda. The study also recommends that there is an urgent need to address issues of street management.

Key local studies and strategies

A number of key local studies have been carried out which will influence the preparation of the Area Action Plan. These include:

- **Wigan Borough Retail and Leisure Survey - White Young Green (2007) (updated in 2009)** - shows Wigan to be a vital and viable town centre and during the recent years highlighting that its ranking in the sub-regional shopping hierarchy has increased. The studies have also identified additional capacity for retail space within Wigan town centre in the short, medium and long-term.
- **Northern Crescent Masterplan Study - BDP (2007)** - identifies a number of key actions and recommendations to ensure the future viability of the Northern Crescent area. The report recommends a major intervention in the Galleries / Marketgate areas to ensure these areas meet the needs of retailers and the expectations of their customers about the quality of the retail environment.

- **Eastern Gateway Development Framework - Wigan Council (2007)** - identifies the potential of the area for mixed-use development with strong links to the town centre and adjacent communities.
- **Wigan Pier Quarter Planning and Regeneration Strategy - Wigan Council (2006)** - outlines the vision for a dynamic, mixed-use community where people can live, work and play and which takes advantage of its location close to the town centre and alongside the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.
- **Strategic Masterplan for Wigan South Central - DTZ (2008)** - identifies the potential of the area to the south of the town centre for development and improvement and to create a new gateway to the town centre.
- **Wigan Town Centre Street Scene Strategy - Wigan Council (2010)** - identifies a number of ways in which the quality of town centre streets and spaces can be improved and sets out priorities for areas of improvement.
- **Wigan Congestion Study - Greater Manchester Transportation Unit (2010)** - highlights a number of congestion hotspots on various town centre access routes.

Other Key Documents

A number of other studies have been undertaken which are relevant to the Area Action Plan. Some of those which are most relevant are summarised below:

- A Gathering Storm? Shop Vacancy Report - Local Data Company, 2010
- Future North West: Our Shared Priorities - 4NW, 2010
- Looking After Our Town Centres - Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009
- NightVision - Town Centres For All - Civic Trust, 2006
- Re-imagining the High Street: Escape from Clone Town Britain - Connect Economies, 2010
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010 Update - Wigan Council, 2010
- Wigan Borough Community Strategy: Vision 2026 - Wigan Council, 2010
- Wigan Employment Land Review and Housing Land Availability Assessment - Wigan Council, 2007