

Wigan Borough  
**vision** 2026  
Community Strategy



# A Community Strategy for Wigan Borough: 2008-2026



**W**hat might Wigan look like 18 years from now? This community strategy is based on what local people have said they wanted to see the borough look like in 2026 and what needs to happen in order to make it a reality. We are all looking forward to the Olympics and the sport and culture that goes with it - but the future won't stop in 2012. We want the borough to continue to be a place where we make the most of all our opportunities, locally, across the region and the country.

We're involved in Communik8 and the UK Youth Parliament because we care about the issues that affect young people and the areas we live in. Being involved gives us the opportunity to discuss the issues concerning young people of the borough as well as share ideas and things that are working well. 2026 seems like a long time away, but babies born this year will turn 18 then. As representatives of these organisations for young people we are committed to working with all our partners to ensure that the vision for the young adults of 2026 can be achieved.

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## Here's how the document works



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# What kind of place do we

## vision2026

During spring 2008 families and residents from across Wigan Borough came together to talk about their aspirations for their children for the future.



Imagining the birthday party of an 18 year old in the year 2026 this is the kind of place they said that they wanted children to be able to enjoy . . .

### Health & Happiness

"More local health care - cottage hospital"

"Small local shops are selling quality produce"

"Locally produced foods and knowing sources"

"Less stress. Greater feel good factor"

"Money, material items don't always make you happy."

"Food - Healthy food made cheaper than unhealthy food"

"Prevention' NOT cure - more community based services"

"Don't like to see teenage pregnancy - don't want it to get any worse"

"Smoking will be completely gone"

"Raise drinking age to 21 - with no drinking on streets"

"Less pollution from all sources and less cars on the road"

"More ways of voicing concerns and easier access to actions/getting things done"

"Better planning so fewer bottlenecks"

### Relationships & Community

"Tolerance/respect for all people - respect for oneself and others"

"People value people more rather than things"

"Opportunities within Wigan so that families can stay together"

"People will spend more time in their own community"

"People are respected within the community"

Capturing motivation.

More people achieving more.

"Good family values driven by pride and activity at a community level"

"More community spirit - help each other in a crisis - people take time to speak to each other"

"Driven by pride and activity at community level"

"A community that is cohesive, forward thinking and supportive."

"Family ties to be strong and we'll all still be doing things together"

"Voting on community issues and big changes in borough using internet and mobile phone"

"Funding for people who actually want to develop, want to change"

"Less travelling abroad: people go to the Costa Del Douglas."

### Travel & the Environment

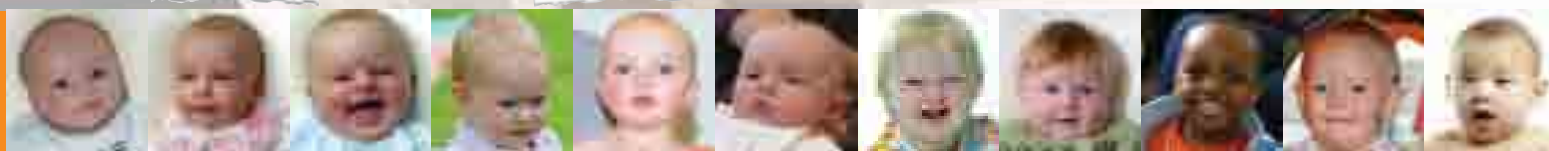
"Recycling is a way of life."

Development with alternative transport in mind.

Improved routes for improved traffic flow.

Different fuels for cars and industry.

"Less commuting for employment"



# want for the future?

## Work & Education

"Big employers need to invest in the community"

"Shorter working week to promote more volunteering"

"Want to promote staying on at school rather than going to work."

"I would like the job situation to be better, wages higher and childcare much cheaper."  
"Universities closer to home/ financial support to continue in education."

"Excellent education and industries so that people can work flexibly and have career opportunities."

"We look after what we've got. We're no longer a "throw away" society."

"Public transport gets you where you want to go safely and affordably"

"Get from Leigh to Wigan in 10 minutes - A5225 exists"

"Local people to help maintain parks/open space"

Café' culture – cosmopolitan.

"Enough to put in private pension"  
"Budgeting skills - compulsory at schools"

"Knowing the value of money - work for it - save up for things"

## Money & Home

"Allotments in gardens"  
"More focus on life skills - sewing - cooking"

"Better quality traditional houses like 30 years ago with a garden"

"More flexible learning – suited to each individual"

"All products to be biodegradable - harmless to the environment"

"Social life to not be mainly attracted to pubs/clubs of Wigan other leisure social activities for 18 year olds"

"I'd like to see cheaper and more accessible leisure facilities"

"Socialising at home or in communities - not necessarily pub"

"More income available to save"

"People wealthier in both cash and self belief"

## Leisure

"More holidays in UK due to global warming - travel restrictions"

"Open play space for all ages of young people - not always to be 'fenced' in"

Renewable energy being used to power buildings etc.

"Think about community facilities when building new housing estates"

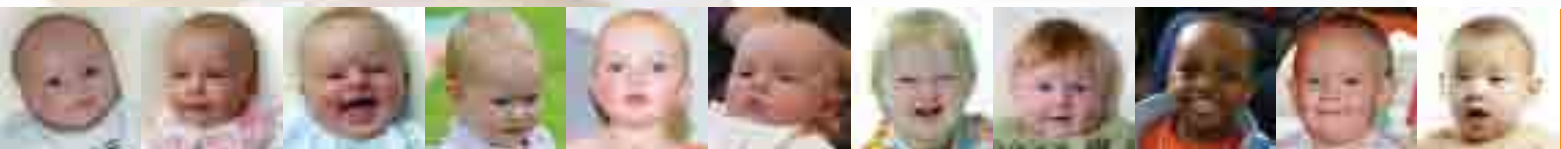
"Using venues better - using web to find out what is going on locally - approaching people more"

"People are wealthier in both cash and self belief"

"Being green is easier & simpler from your home"

If you want to read more about these conversations then go to:

[www.wigan.gov.uk/vision2026](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/vision2026)



# Where are we now?

We know that in simple terms people are:

Better **educated Living** longer More likely to be **in work**

- but we also face a range of **challenges:**

Life expectancy is still 2 years below the England average for men and women. The biggest causes of **shortened life expectancy** in Wigan are coronary heart disease, digestive diseases (inc. cirrhosis), stroke, lung cancer and respiratory diseases.

**Wigan is ageing:** by 2015 there will be 5,300 more women and 6,000 more men over 65 in Wigan than in 2008.

High **teenage pregnancy** rate: higher than regional and national averages.

**Low level of skills and qualifications**

- **Less than two thirds** of Wigan's working age population are qualified to level 2 (lower than national and regional average)
- **Less than 1 in 5** people are qualified to Level 4 or above
- GCSE attainment in the top 3% disadvantaged neighbourhoods is only **38%** compared to Borough average of 61%.
- People living in deprived areas are **less likely** to enter higher education.

**Wigan is ranked as 67th most deprived local authority in England.** 29 of Wigan's 200 neighbourhoods fall within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

**Wigan has large numbers of people out of work** - often related to sickness or long term conditions. Problems are worse in certain neighbourhoods; 49 of Wigan's 200 neighbourhoods fall within the 10% most deprived in England when measured for employment.

**Levels of crime are lower than regional average** but still major problems in **disadvantaged** neighbourhoods.

**Housing affordability** is an issue for many people especially people on low incomes (wages are £30 week lower than the regional average). Wigan is **7th highest for homelessness** in England.

**Climate change** will affect everything we do and the choices that we make.

People are less satisfied with parks and open spaces than they used to be.

Deliberate fire setting in Wigan Borough costs over **£4m per year.**

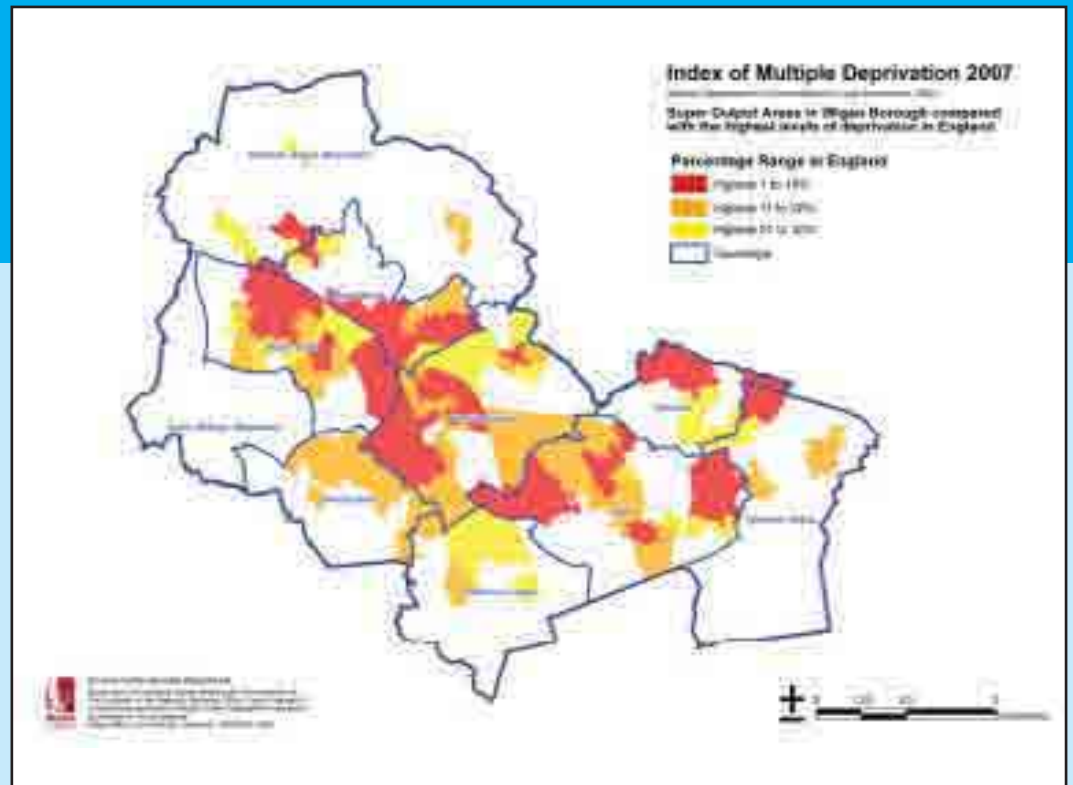
**Alcohol** - more than a quarter of men and women locally drink more than the recommended weekly level. High level of admission to hospital for alcohol-related problems. **Binge drinking** is also a problem and particularly common in younger groups.

Car ownership in Wigan is average for England and North West – although it is lower in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Overall, only **14% of people** use **public transport** (bus or train).

If the borough is going to achieve the aspirations of local people for 2026 there is clearly a lot to do – and much of this effort will need to address the needs of people living in less advantaged neighbourhoods.

Many people also face disadvantage because of their age, gender, faith, sexual orientation, disability or race.

We are committed to tackling those inequalities and making the borough a place where **everyone** enjoys equal opportunities.



## Inequality has many dimensions

Of the 400	Affluent 200	Deprived 200
Claim incapacity benefit	10	46
Having a limiting long-term illness	25	62
Smoke	29	75
Live alone as a pensioner	51	94
Claim pension credit	26	96
Live to the age of	77 male 83 female	70 male 75 female
Burglary	2 per year	3 per year
Domestic Violence	1 every 7 years	1 per year
Live on benefits	17	88

In 2007 a big study of Wigan looked at the life chance of 400 babies born in the Borough. Of the total 400, the study measured 200 that went to the most affluent areas and 200 who went home to the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

This table tells you how big the difference in life chances, health and life expectancy really is. The Wigan of the future needs to be a fairer place – where it does not matter where you live in order to enjoy the right standard of living and life chances. Everyone should be able to access the same opportunities.

Although most local residents are living longer, are better educated and more likely to be in work than was the case 20 years ago, some parts of the borough suffer badly in comparison with neighbouring communities, the rest of the northwest and the rest of the country. The gap between the disadvantaged and affluent neighbourhoods simply isn't closing quickly enough and inequalities are being passed down through generations. This means that some areas and some people will need more support, help and resources than others.

# vision2026 priorities

Based on what people have said about their future aspirations – and taking into account the level of local need - what should be the key priorities for the borough?



Opportunities exist that allow people to fulfil their ambitions within a local and regional economy that provides ease of access to jobs and services. People will have increased income levels and will be able to access better quality, affordable homes in safe neighbourhoods. Our communities will look to the future and protect our environment for future generations.



Providing opportunities that help support people to make choices that improve quality of life and enable people to live longer particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds



The people of the borough have raised aspirations for what they as individuals can achieve, particularly young people and people from disadvantaged communities. People of all ages are equipped with the right life skills and the qualifications employers need to achieve their ambitions and which enable them to participate.



Communities are at the heart of all we do, where people support and care for the wellbeing of others and the future. A community with a strong sense of what it is capable of achieving and where there are opportunities to get involved, particularly for young people, in shaping the future.