



### Land Use

- 1 Retail frontage on Market Street
- 2 Internal squares within the Marketgate/ Galleries Shopping Centres
- 3 The attractive Makinson Arcade in the heart of the retail core
- 4 Entrance to the Galleries Shopping Centre from Standishgate
- 5 A range of town centre uses on Mesnes Street
- 6 The outdoor market within the Marketgate/ Galleries Shopping Centres
- 7 Banks and Building Societies cluster around Market Place
- 8 The completion of the Grand Arcade will expand the existing retail core to the south-east

### Townscape

- 9 Gateway via Mesnes Street gives a poor first visual impression of the town centre
- 10 Gateway via Market Street is undermined by the width of the ring road and the poor frontage of the Morrison's building
- 11 Imposing landmark building (Council Offices) at the corner with New Market Street and Parsons Walk.
- 12 Mesnes Park provides long range views of the town centre. Landmark buildings provide key features on the skyline.
- 13 Surface car parking and direct views of the Royal Mail Sorting Office provides the Gateway via Dorning Street.
- 14 Coops building provides an imposing landmark on Dorning Street
- 15 The loading bay for the Marketgate/Galleries Shopping Centres terminates the vista along Hallgate
- 16 The narrow courts around Hallgate provide alternative shopping destination



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## Wigan Town Centre Land Use & Townscape

- Mesnes Playing field provides a poor interface between the park and the town centre and lacks any defined function or use.

### Night Time Analysis

- 4.30 Night time issues and opportunities are integral to any successful masterplan. This is to extend the benefits of change beyond the 9-5 working day and ensure that positive change witnessed during the daylight hours is not undermined by negative night time problems.
- 4.31 Wigan has a very concentrated night time economy with a dense cluster of bars and night clubs situated to the south of the study area around Wallgate and Kings Street. Elsewhere the evening economy mainly comprises a number of public houses scattered around the centre and the Gala bingo hall off Crompton Street. Much of the existing night time economy is targeted at the 18-30 age category and the Gap & Market analysis has already identified the lack of night time uses for the middle age category.
- 4.32 The plan overleaf demonstrates the apparent lack of night time uses within or around the Galleries/Marketgate Shopping Centre. This represents significant opportunity to spread the evening economy throughout the town centre and to attract new uses.

The plan also highlights the routes which benefit from high levels of street lighting. The principal through routes are identified as having high levels of lighting as is the ring road, although the latter is orientated towards the vehicular user rather than the pedestrian.



### Vehicular Access and Circulation

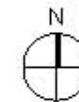
- 4.33 The main vehicular access to the town centre is provided via the ring road comprising Frog Lane, New Market Street, Northway, Powell Street and River Way. A number of roads connect to the ring road providing access to car parking. Vehicular access is restricted on Market Street, Market Place and lower Standishgate. However, Mesnes Street, Crompton Street and Upper Standishgate do provide some through traffic in the north-east of the town centre. In general traffic appears to flow quite well around the Town Centre although the volume of traffic using the ring road does create problems for other users.

### Public Transportation Accessibility

- 4.34 Wigan town centre benefits from a large bus station located directly adjacent to the principal shopping area of the town and from two railway stations. The bus station provides vital



-  Key Night-Time Uses
-  High levels of street Lighting



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## Wigan Town Centre Night-time Appraisal

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connections to the outer lying areas providing regular services across the town and the wider region. The bus station is situated to the rear of properties fronting Market Street and is accessed via narrow pedestrian alleyways. The connection between the bus station and Market Street is relatively poor having little visual prominence in the street-scene and restricting pedestrian flow to this key resource.

- 4.35 Wigan Wallgate and Wigan North Western railways stations are located on Standishgate in the south of the town centre and provide comprehensive services across the region and beyond. Every effort should be made to capitalise on these key sustainable transport connections.

### Car Parking

- 4.36 Car parking in the town centre is generally provided in multi-storey and surface car parks located around the town centre. Multi-storey car parks are located off Mesnes Terrace (325 spaces), Water Street (520 spaces) and the Galleries Shopping Centre (625 spaces) and provide to a total of 1470 spaces. There are a further eight surface car parks providing an additional 829 spaces, the major ones being Chapel Lane (320 spaces), Parsons Walk (178 spaces) and Harrogate Street (107 spaces). In addition a

total of approximately 314 on-street parking spaces are also available<sup>1</sup>.

### Pedestrian Accessibility

- 4.37 The plan overleaf shows the key pedestrian routes in and around Wigan town centre. The plan identifies the main pedestrian routes emphasising Market Street, Market Place and Standishgate. The plan also identifies key secondary pedestrian routes. These secondary routes serve as important connecting pedestrian routes to key arrival points within the town centre including the bus station and multi-storey car parks. The identified principal and secondary routes provide unrestricted access for pedestrians.
- 4.38 In addition to this network of routes a complex arrangement of pedestrian routes also exists within the Galleries/Marketgate Shopping Centres. These routes provide restricted access through the centre via a range of covered and uncovered arcades, passageways and alleyways. These routes provide restricted access insofar that they are gated when the shopping centre is closed during the evening and at night. This significantly affects the permeability of the town centre during these periods.

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<sup>1</sup> A number of the multi-storey and surface car parks have restricted access during the week.

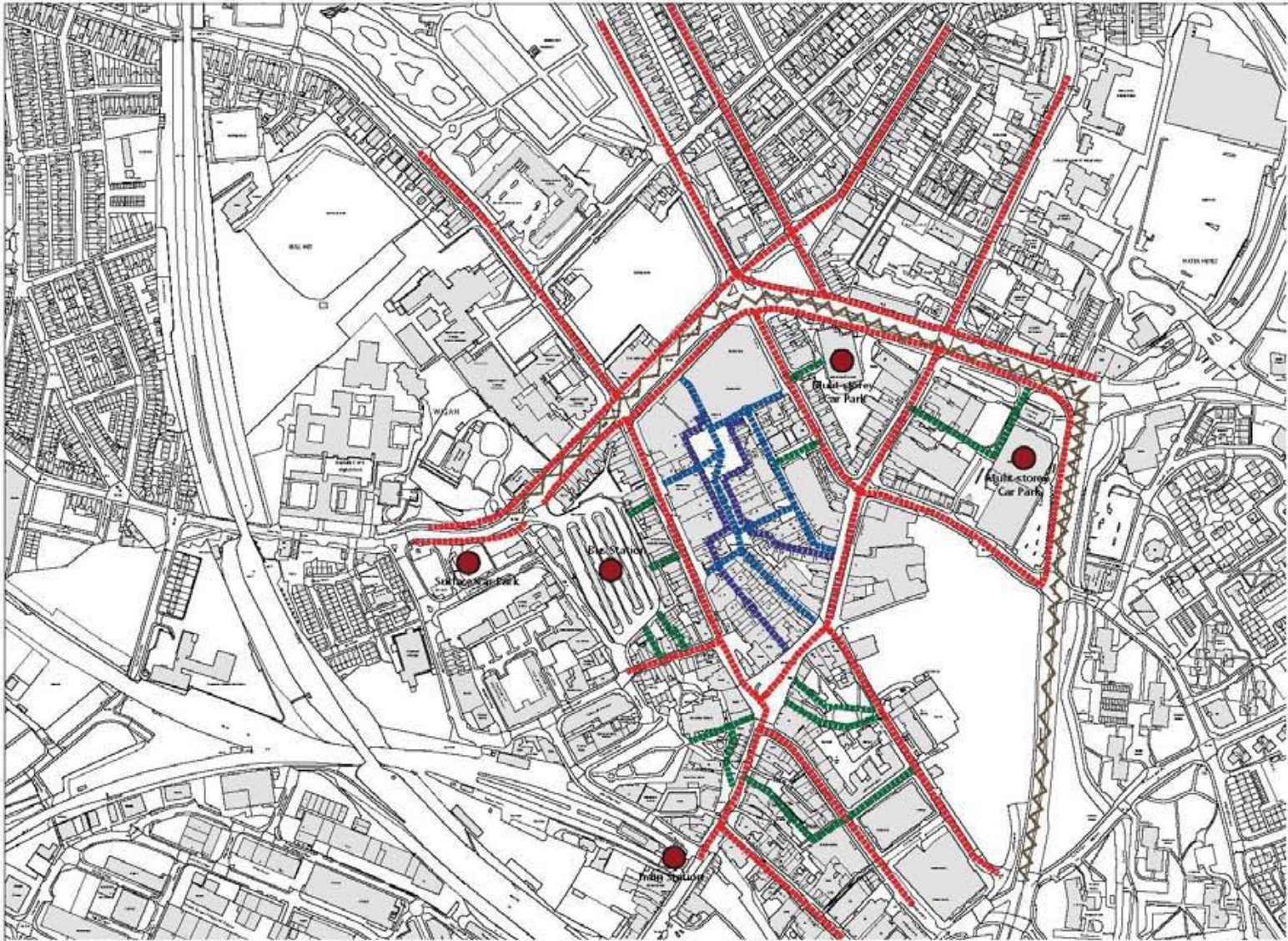
- 4.39 Beyond the town centre the ring road provides the greatest barrier to pedestrian movement. The scale of the ring road and the volume of traffic passing along it create an intimidating and hostile environment for pedestrians. Although pedestrian crossing facilities are provided at key points, greater effort could be made to promote pedestrian priority and minimise the disruption to pedestrian flow.

#### **Pedestrianised Streets**

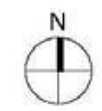
- 4.40 Wigan town centre has a number of semi-pedestrianised streets namely Market Street, Market Place and lower Standishgate and this helps to create a pleasant pedestrian environment in these core shopping areas. The Galleries/Marketgate Shopping Centres provide a fully pedestrianised environment as will the Grand Arcade.
- 4.41 The Council is currently investigating the partial pedestrianisation of a section of Wallgate due to a relatively high pedestrian accident rate in the area. Other than this there is at present no clear demand for the pedestrianisation of additional areas in the town centre. Any future schemes must consider carefully the impact of such on the generation of activity so as not to harm the existing vitality and viability of the town centre.

#### **Cycling Accessibility**

- 4.42 Many of the issues facing pedestrians within Wigan town centre are closely paralleled for cyclists, particularly the barrier effect of the ring road.
- 4.43 A Cycle Accessibility Study has recently been completed which makes a number of recommendations to improve cycling in and around the town centre. This study identifies demand for a range of cycling infrastructure including advance stop lines and cycle lanes. At present however the provision of cycle infrastructure is relatively poor with cyclists expected to share the highway with vehicular traffic. Cyclists within the town centre are subject to the same restrictions as vehicular traffic.
- 4.44 The location of cycle parking has not been noted. If it does exist it does not occupy a prominent position within the town centre.



-  Principal Pedestrian Routes
-  Secondary Pedestrian Routes
-  Restricted Access Pedestrian Routes (Ground Floor)
-  Restricted Access Pedestrian Routes (First Floor)
-  Barrier to Pedestrian Movement
-  Key Arrival Points



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## Wigan Town Centre Pedestrian Movement

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### Accessibility for those with Mobility Impairment

- 4.45 A full audit of provision within the town centre for those with mobility impairment is required.

### Conclusion

- 4.46 The Northern Crescent area is divided into two distinct parts by the section of the ring road comprising New Market Street, Northway and Powell Street. The ring road is a main vehicular route which provides a number of poor quality gateways to the town centre to the south. It also acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement, particularly between the town centre and Mesnes Park and restricts the growth of the town centre to the north. The current retail core is focused around Marketgate and Galleries shopping centres and Market Place and Standishgate. The centres provide poor frontage onto Market Street and Mesnes Street and contain a complex pattern of internal pedestrian routes which lack legibility and dilute footfall.

## 5.0 GALLERIES & MARKETGATE CENTRE REVIEW

### Introduction

- 5.1 The Marketgate and Galleries Shopping centres were built as two independent schemes, the Marketgate Centre having been completed in 1972, and the Galleries completed in June 1990. The two centres have a history of changing ownerships, and came into a single ownership in 2002 when Prime Commercial Properties (PCP) acquired both investments. The investment was subsequently sold in April 2006 to Propinvest Limited as part of a portfolio transaction. Propinvest have subsequently acquired the Makinson Arcade which previously separated the ownerships of the Marketgate and Galleries Shopping Centres.

### Trading Conditions

- 5.2 From inspection of the shopping centres it is apparent that certain areas of the Marketgate Centre in particular have struggled to attract and retain tenants within the centre. The development of the Marketgate Centre independent from the later Galleries Shopping Centre has resulted in the design of the Centre being compromised as it does not provide for the optimum control of pedestrian flow. This has led to those parts of the mall that do not form through routes for pedestrians being

largely unseen and by pedestrians. This has clearly had a negative impact of the trading potential of these units and eventually rental levels. This pattern has now led to a number of instances where it would appear that businesses have not wanted to, or have not be able to, remain in the centre leading to a significant number of voids units. This is particularly the case on Market Street Mall (lower ground floor) where there are currently 12 void units out 14 units. Notably the only units that have remained open are those at the entrance to the mall at Billinge Arcade / Market Street.

- 5.3 Since it is apparent that the Marketgate Centre is struggling to let in the current environment, the opening of the Grand Arcade will do one of two things (though probably both):

(1) Attract the new and better tenants away. It is understood that Boots have taken a lease in the new shopping centre and (subject to availability). As other tenants reach the ends of their lease obligations they may well consider alternative locations. It is already known that new entrants to the town (Waterstones etc) have been attracted by the development of the Grand Arcades and as such it is difficult for Marketgate shopping centre to attract anchor tenants (the recognised anchors are already present in town) to reverse the trend of decline when there is a better alternative available.

(2) The development of the Grand Arcade and resulting expansion of the size, range and quality of the town's retail offer will encourage those shoppers who are leaking from the town to return thus increasing the attractiveness of the town and improving its ranking position. As this improves other retailers will be attracted subject to suitable accommodation being available. This will drive rental growth and thus improve the underlying development viability of making significant changes to the underperforming parts of the Marketgate Shopping Centre. These changes (notably an increase in the profile and size of a number of units is a pre-requisite to capturing the opportunities in this scenario).

#### Movement and Townscape Issues

- 5.4 The internal and external layout of the Marketgate and Galleries Shopping centres together with the indoor market creates a number of issues to be considered in the emerging strategy. These relate to both the viability and attractiveness of the centre (internal issues) and how it relates to the wider townscape (external issues).
- 5.5 A number of these points have been referred to in the wider townscape analysis and earlier in this section. However it is worth rehearsing these again here:

#### Internal

- Lack of profile of many of the units;
- Poor relationship with the rest of the town;
- Confusing pattern of pedestrian routes - lack of clarity;
- Lack of profile of the market;
- Poor quality of the indoor market.

#### External

- Poor quality facades onto Market Street and Northway - lack of active frontage;
- Exposed service yard on Market Street;
- Lack of evening/ night time activity;
- Impermeable urban block when the centres are closed;

#### Consultations with ProplInvest

- 5.6 Consultations with ProplInvest point to their aspirations to improve the fortunes of the shopping centre. At this time these are:

### Short-term

- Acquiring the multi-storey car park and investing in improvements.
- Addressing the vacancy in the Markets Street Mall by introducing a large space user into the area. No tenant has yet been secured. This unit would have a frontage to Market Street.
- Re-letting the Boots unit.

### Medium to Longer term

- Re-develop Wigan Square by constructing four or five new retail units in eastern area of the square effectively extending Leigh Arcade. The Square would effectively be removed at ground floor level. A new Square would be created at first floor level. This clearly has a direct impact on the future of the out door market which is recognised and requires discussions with key stakeholders including the Council.
- Relocate the outdoor market to Market Street to improve the fortunes of both.
- Construct new retail space circa 4180sqm (45,000sqft) in the area above Morrison's and the Market Hall to strengthen the Northern end of the

shopping centre. This space would be aimed at large space users.

5.7 As regards the relationship with the Bus Station, Propinvest would welcome improvements to the public realm and access routes between the bus station and the Marketgate Centre. They suggest that Orrell Arcade generates around 40,000 movements per week largely due to the bus station. As such they consider the links between the Bus Station and Market Street are key and could be improved.

5.8 Propinvest are keen to work with the Council and indeed with other stakeholders such as Modus to develop proposals.

### **Options**

5.9 In the light of this assessment there are a number of approaches taking forward the Marketgate and Galleries Shopping. These are outlined overleaf.

### Option Development: Marketgate and Galleries Shopping Centres

Development Initiative	Rational	Time Frame	Issues / Deliverability	Possible Actions by WMBC
Do minimum	A` passive response to potential opportunities (and risks) generated by the Grand Arcade development and general growth in the retail sector.	Short-term	Likely to result in the continued decline of the centre.	None
Reconfigure the lower ground floor of the Marketgate Shopping Centre and Wigan Square	To respond to the vacancy and to capture the increased shopper activity in the town on opening of the Grand Arcade. Strengthening the Marketgate Centre will assist in maintaining a balance in the town centre and prevent further decline in this part. New development on Wigan Square could strengthen The Galleries offer and satisfy increased demand for retail space on opening of the Grand Arcade.	Short	Propinvest are developing a proposal to bring vacant areas back into use. Ideally this should be through an anchor tenant to encourage movement between the north and south.	Liaise with the Propinvest regarding embryonic proposals.  Review options for reorganising the market offer to release development proposals in the Wigan Square area.  Liaise with the Market traders regarding relocation to Market Street or other alternatives.
Morrison's site / Market Hall - Investigate the potential to create a new retail space over the existing uses as being considered by Propinvest.  Demolish the existing Morrison's and Market hall ( to be relocated) and develop a new 80,000sqft super market for Morrison's	Re-address the decline of the northern end of the Galleries shopping centre and encourage pedestrian flow through the centre.  To address the lack of a quality food offer in the town (as identified in the Wigan Borough Retail Study 2001/16) and crucially provide a strong anchor in the northern part of the town to drive pedestrian flow between the Grand Arcade Shopping Centre and the northern area of the town centre (through the Galleries and Marketgate Shopping Centres).	Short/ Medium	Impact on the existing structures and the continued operation of the ground floor uses during the work.  The Council would have substantial leverage through their long leasehold interest in the Market Hall, the Market Square and the ownership of the Multi Storey car park (Prop Invest have indicated they would very much like to acquire the car park to raise it to more acceptable modern standards, and also their current ambitions require the relocation of the outdoor market.  CBRE have spoken to Morrison's and they have indicated that this could be of interest to them.	Liaise with Propinvest and market traders.  Appraise the options available in broad financial terms to understand the potential additional value arising from using the Councils' assets to facilitate and promote radical development activity.

Residential Development	Continue the introduction of town centre apartments to attract citizens who can support a more diverse range of nightlife and leisure facilities	Short/ Medium	Viability will be crucial issue due to sensitivity to sales values.  Affordable housing policy could undermine viability. The tower proposed by Modus is unlikely to be developed until 50% of the units are pre-sold. Should it appear that this will not proceed in the short to medium term then capacity could be delivered on other sites in the Northern Crescent area.	Consider PPG 17 issues in respect of the playing fields site adjacent to the Civic buildings
New Hotel	To encourage and support the growth of business in the town and broaden the very narrow current offer and increase competitiveness	Medium	Could form part of a mixed use development within the study area or be stand alone in a visible location. A new hotel is planned at the Trencherfield Mill scheme.	Engage with the Hotel operators to establish the strength of the interest and any time constraints which may be of relevance. Understand the detailed requirement.
Improved Restaurant Offer	The improved retailing in the town should support demand for a better quality restaurant offer in the town that can be used by shoppers and workers during the day		Probably best suited to a location near the Grand Arcade and close to (but not in) the existing area of bars and clubs.	The Market Place is a good candidate subject to availability albeit outside the study area.

## 6. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Introduction

- 6.1 As this point in the report it useful to confirm the key strengths and weaknesses of the Northern Crescent area as a basis for developing options. These are summarised in the table overleaf.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Transportation / Access</b>	
<p>High profile location adjacent to the ring road and central retail area</p> <p>Adjacent to the bus station</p> <p>Served by a number of car parks</p>	<p>Ring road creates a barrier to pedestrian movement</p> <p>Poor relationship with the Standishgate central shopping area</p> <p>Complex network of pedestrian routes within Galleries/Marketgate Shopping Centres - poor legibility</p> <p>Servicing area on Market Street</p> <p>Restricted access in the evening and at night through Galleries/Marketgate Shopping Centres</p> <p>Unclear linkage with the Bus Station</p>
<b>Commercial Environment</b>	
<p>Number of independent traders - give town individuality</p> <p>Grand Arcade will improve the overall offer of the town and prevent leakage to other rival towns</p>	<p>Competition from higher other centres such as Bolton</p> <p>Possible shift in focus of retail activity from the northern crescent area to the south leading to an increase in vacancy rates in this part of town</p>
<b>Built Environment</b>	

<p>General retention of historic street pattern and preservation of important historical assets - Makinson Arcade, Industrial Buildings, All Saints Church</p> <p>A pleasant mix of architectural styles and periods and good integration of modern development around Market Place and lower Standishgate</p> <p>Attractive narrow courts off Hallgate provide a pleasant alternative shopping destination</p> <p>Dominant features on the skyline include the tower of All Saints Church and the clock tower of the former Grammar school</p> <p>Number of key landmark buildings provide important reference points within the town</p>	<p>Galleries/Marketgate Shopping Centres provide poor frontage onto Market Street, New Market Street and Mesnes Street</p> <p>Number of visually exposed inappropriate buildings that detract from the character of the town centre (Royal Mail, British Telecom)</p> <p>Lack of legibility within Galleries/Marketgate Shopping Centres</p> <p>Poor quality gateways into the town centre from the ring road</p> <p>Exposed service yard for Galleries/Marketgate Shopping Centres terminates the vista along Hallgate</p>
<p><b>Public Realm</b></p>	
<p>Fine grained street pattern of historic core</p> <p>Shared surfaces and pedestrian priority measures in place along principal shopping streets</p> <p>Market Place as focal point for activity</p>	<p>Significant variation in the quality of the public realm, particularly between the north and south of the town centre</p> <p>Poor quality street furniture, signage and surfacing gives negative impression of certain areas and creates visual clutter</p>
<p><b>Natural Assets</b></p>	
<p>Close proximity to the attractive Mesnes Park</p> <p>Topography provides good views of the town centre skyline from Mesnes Park</p>	<p>Poorly defined and landscaped Mesnes playing field provides inadequate interface between Mesnes Park and the town centre.</p>