

## Chapter 7 – EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

### Introduction

Economic regeneration remains a fundamental priority. The Council is committed to increasing the number and range of job opportunities for the Borough's residents and encouraging employment development.

Much progress has already been made. The number of jobs in the Borough now exceeds the level in 1971, following a considerable drop in the intervening years. In addition, over one-third of people with jobs now work outside the Borough. Consequently, unemployment has fallen significantly and it is now only slightly above the national, regional and Greater Manchester levels.

However, there is a band of Wards east to west through the middle of the Borough where unemployment is persistently higher than it is for the Borough overall. These Wards also experience problems of low average household income and low educational achievement, together with a high incidence of poor health, disability and child poverty.

Employment in the Borough is also biased towards traditional industries, in particular, manufacturing which is still in decline in terms of numbers employed. It is less well represented in service industries and other growth sectors.

As a result there is still much to be done. It remains an objective to increase the number and range of job opportunities available within the Borough, particularly in the growth sectors. This will help to strengthen the local economy, reduce the need for people to travel longer distances for work, provide jobs for those without work and extend choice for those in jobs that do not meet their needs.

The main change to employment policies in this Plan compared to the first UDP is an increased emphasis on retaining employment land and buildings for employment uses. This is needed, in part, because of the increased pressure on employment sites for housing development. This has arisen because of the national requirement that a high proportion of new housing be built on previously developed land.

It is also needed because a huge amount of employment land has, in the past, become disused and a lot has been redeveloped for other uses, notably housing. This has significantly improved the quality of residential environments and enhanced the image of the Borough. However, as a result, the stock of older employment land and buildings is much reduced. For the most part, what remains is more readily suited to existing and future employment use without undue adverse impact on surrounding areas. Retaining it will enable people to access employment opportunities close to where they live, and reduce the pressure for employment development on greenfield sites in less accessible locations. This is in line with the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RPG 13) and the national agenda for an urban renaissance.

## **EM1 LAND AND BUILDINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT USES**

**THE COUNCIL WILL ENSURE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF LAND AND BUILDINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT USES BY:-**

- (1) SAFEGUARDING AND MAKING THE BEST USE OF EXISTING LAND AND BUILDINGS IN EMPLOYMENT USE;**
- (2) IDENTIFYING 255 HECTARES OF LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT USES;**
- (3) PERMITTING EMPLOYMENT USES ON LAND OR IN BUILDINGS NOT CURRENTLY IN, OR ALLOCATED FOR, EMPLOYMENT USE, PROVIDED THAT THERE WILL BE NO UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT.**

It is essential to the future of Wigan's economy that employment land is safeguarded for employment uses and that, as far as is reasonably possible, it is used efficiently. This will minimise the need for new employment land to be allocated, particularly on greenfield sites.

However, new sites for employment uses are required in order to ensure that the Borough has a variety of sites in a range of locations available to meet different needs, both from the expansion of indigenous companies and from inward investment.

In Wigan Borough, provision will be made to allow for the development of an annual average of at least 15.4 hectares (gross) of land for employment, which equates to 216 hectares, together with a further 43 hectares (gross) to provide a 20% flexibility allowance for choice and range of sites. The total provision required to cover the period of 14 years from April 2002 to April 2016, therefore, is at least 259 hectares (gross). This Plan identifies 201.0 hectares within 26 of the 35 Primary Employment Areas identified under Policy **EM1A**. However, there are significant constraints on further development of the South Lancashire Industrial Estate such that the available land may not be developed-out by April 2016 (see Table 1 under Policy **EM1A**). Therefore, there is a shortfall of up to 91 hectares. This land will be brought forward within a Development Plan Document as part of the Wigan Local Development Framework, before the end of 2009.

In addition, it is not possible to anticipate all future employment site needs. During the lifetime of the Plan other sites might be promoted for employment use to accommodate the needs of a particular business. It is essential that a robust policy framework is in place against which such proposals can be considered.

### **Employment Uses**

For the purposes of this Chapter, employment uses include uses within Use Classes B1 business, B2 general industry and B8 storage and distribution, and other employment uses. However, as Policy considerations make clear (see Policies **EM1A**, **EM1C**, **EM1D** and **G1A** in particular), not all employment uses will be appropriate in all employment locations. Outside of the Use Classes Order, employment uses that may be appropriate include a builders merchant; builders yard; gardening/horticultural contractors base; civil engineering depot; demolition contractor's yard; transport depot; haulage yard; coal merchant; scrap yard; waste transfer depot; waste transfer and recycling facilities; utility company depot; security business; taxi or private hire business; plant hire, skip hire and trade counter. Policy **EM1E** covers the servicing, repair, hire and sale of motor vehicles within employment areas and elsewhere.

## **\* EM1A Primary Employment Areas**

**Within the Primary Employment Areas, development for, or changes of use to, uses within Classes B1, B2 and B8 or other employment uses will be permitted provided that there will be no unacceptable environmental, amenity, highway, road safety or other adverse impact.**

**Other uses will only be permitted when:-**

- (a) They will be small scale and complementary to the primary employment function of the Area or part thereof; or**
- (b) They are on the fringe of the Primary Employment Area and it can be demonstrated that it will improve the physical relationship between the employment uses and adjacent uses, and it will not result in any greater constraint on the development and use of the remaining Employment Area for employment uses.**

**Where all, or a substantial part of a Primary Employment Area is proposed for development or it is substantially undeveloped, a masterplan or development brief shall be agreed with, and approved by, the Council. Development shall accord substantially with the approved masterplan.**

**At sites identified as suitable for knowledge based industries, a legal agreement will be sought to ensure that the site, or an agreed part of the site, is set aside for such businesses over a reasonable period of time.**

*\*(4, 6, 7, 9-12, 14-19, 21, 23-25, 27, 28, See Table 1)*

Primary Employment Areas are identified to safeguard the primary employment land resource in Wigan Borough. The 35 Primary Employment Areas do not comprise the total land requirements for employment uses – Policy **EM1B** refers to development and changes of use on other existing employment sites and additional land will be brought forward - see Policy **EM1**. However, they do include all sites not currently in employment use that are allocated for such uses, with the exception of the mixed use allocation at the former Bickershaw Colliery site (Policy **EM1G**) and the Leigh Sports Village proposal (Policy **C1D**).

The Primary Employment Areas include modern business parks, older industrial estates and other industrial and employment areas. They do not all share the same attributes and characteristics but they do have particular advantages for continuing employment use, including:-

- (a) a critical mass of employment uses and/or land for employment development which is, and will continue to be, capable of meeting a wide variety of business needs;
- (b) an emphasis on reuse and redevelopment of brownfield land and sites, and consequent reduced need to release greenfield sites;
- (c) a balanced geographical spread throughout the Borough;
- (d) good accessibility for workers and potential workers (including in the most disadvantaged areas), by a choice of mode of transport including on foot and, wherever possible, by public transport;
- (e) good accessibility for goods either to and from local markets and suppliers and/or to and from the national road network, including a number of locations with potential for rail connection.

Table 1 lists all the Primary Employment Areas with a short description and shows the total area of land available for development within each at the end of December 2001.

**Table 1**

Ref.	Location (including Proposals Map page number(s))	Description	Area (hectares)	
			Total	Available
EM1A 1	Stone Cross Park, Golborne *(27)	Modern business park, large units	31.6	6.4
EM1A 2	Golborne Enterprise Park (27)	Modern business park, smaller units	4.0	1.1
EM1A 3	Bridge Street, Golborne * (27)	Mixed traditional employment area	7.3	-
EM1A 4	Newton Road, Lowton (27, 28)	Modern business park and traditional employment area	7.1	-
EM1A 5	Moss Industrial Estate, Lowton* (28)	Industrial estate	20.0	4.9
EM1A 6	Parsonage, Leigh *(23)	Reclaimed former colliery and mill land with modern factory	23.6	18.2
EM1A 7	Bridgewater, Leigh (23)	Factory sites	15.3	1.2
EM1A 8	Hope Carr/Leigh Commerce Park, Leigh * (23, 28)	Modern industrial estate and business park extension	33.5	11.0
EM1A 9	Chaddock Lane, Astley * (18, 19, 24, 24)	Mixed employment area with expansion land	41.5	18.6
EM1A 10	Parr Brow, Tyldesley (19, 25)	Small industrial estate, factory and business park	7.4	-
EM1A 11	Chanters Industrial Estate, Hindsford (18)	Low amenity industrial estate	11.4	-
EM1A 12	Gibfield, Atherton * (12, 17)	Mixed employment area with proposed business park	29.8	9.5
EM1A 14	West of Leigh Road, Hindley Green * (16, 17)	Established industrial uses and adjacent land	52.4	-
EM1A 15	Swan Lane, Hindley Green * (17)	Industrial estate with adjacent industrial sites and land	29.6	7.0
EM1A 16	Makerfield Way, Ince (11)	Reclaimed site with mixed employment uses	24.1	11.9
EM1A 17	Wigan Enterprise Park, Ince (11)	Established employment site undergoing reorientation and redevelopment	12.8	1.8
EM1A 18	Dobson Park Industrial Estate, Ince (11)	Industrial estate	13.7	2.1
EM1A 19	Rosebridge, Ince * (10, 11)	Two industrial estates and adjacent factory	8.4	1.2
EM1A 20	Westwood Park, Wigan * (10, 15)	Major development site with existing office development	33.9	21.3
EM1A 21	Wigan Pier Business Park/ Riverside, Wigan (10)	Office park and adjacent factory	5.6	0.9
EM1A 22	Chapel Lane, Wigan (10)	Mixed employment area	7.1	-
EM1A 23	Wallgate, Wigan * (10)	Mixed employment area	17.3	0.3
EM1A 24	Springfield and Miry Lane, Wigan * (7, 10)	Traditional employment area along rail corridor	32.2	5.5
EM1A 25	Martland Park and Heinz, Wigan * (6, 7, 9, 10)	Large factory site and modern business park	100.4	11.9
EM1A 26	Gidlow Lane, Beech Hill (7)	Large factory site	6.6	-
EM1A 27	Bradley Lane, Standish * (4)	Industrial estate and adjacent sites	28.5	3.3
EM1A 28	Richmond Hill Industrial Estate, Pemberton (9)	Small industrial estate	2.2	0.4
EM1A 29	Lamberhead Industrial Estate, Pemberton (9, 14)	Industrial estate	18.0	-
EM1A 30	Pemberton Colliery * (15)	Major development site	20.2	18.7
EM1A 31	Warrington Road Industrial Estate, Wigan * (10, 15)	Industrial estate	8.3	-
EM1A 32	Warrington Road, Hawkley (15)	Factory site and adjacent land	13.7	4.2
EM1A 33	Wheatlea Industrial Estate, Wigan(15)	Industrial estate	20.4	0.4
EM1A 34	Haslemere and Land Gate, Bryn (15, 21)	Two small industrial estates with low amenity uses to rear	7.8	-
EM1A 35	Park Brook, Wigan Road, Bryn * (15, 21)	Established employment site	3.2	-
EM1A 36	South Lancashire Industrial Estate, Ashton * (21)	Industrial estate with expansion land	91.0	39.2#
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>789.9</b>	<b>201.0#</b>

see Appendix 3 regarding known environmental and nature conservation issues within the Primary Employment Area and/or locality.

# Development of the available land at the South Lancashire Industrial Estate must be limited to schemes which, due to their inherent nature or their integration with achievable off-site works, will not significantly increase the traffic flows through Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre.

As Table 1 shows, within the Primary Employment Areas at the end of 2001 there were 201 hectares available for development, either immediately or in the medium to longer term, subject to the identified restrictions at the South Lancashire Industrial Estate.

The employment land identified covers over 50 sites ranging from very small infill sites to larger sites at Westwood Park and Pemberton Colliery.

Two Primary Employment Areas - Westwood Park and Pemberton Colliery - are largely undeveloped. For these and other Primary Employment Areas where substantial development or redevelopment is proposed, including the extension site at Chaddock Lane, Astley (EM1A 9), a masterplan and/or development brief will be required to guide development. The masterplan and/or development brief should be prepared with, and approved by, the Council.

Wigan needs to attract more of the growth sector industries including knowledge-based businesses as highlighted in Regional Planning Guidance, namely:-

- Environmental Technologies;
- Life Science Industries (biotechnology and pharmaceuticals);
- Medical Equipment and Technology;
- Financial and Professional Services;
- Computer Software and Services/Internet-based Services; and
- Creative Industries, (media, advertising and public relations).

These sectors account for a smaller percentage of employment in Wigan Borough than throughout Greater Manchester and the North West, but Wigan does have a small but potentially significant specialism in environmental technologies as well as a important presence in financial and professional services.

Wigan South Central has been identified by the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) as a strategic opportunity for encouraging the development of knowledge-based industry. At least two of the Primary Employment Areas in Wigan Borough, Westwood Park and Wigan Pier Business Park, already accommodate businesses within these sectors and have the potential for further expansion. At Wigan Pier Business Park, this approach could be extended into the adjacent Wigan Pier Quarter (see Policy **EM1H**) and contribute significantly to its regeneration. There is also potential at the Pemberton Colliery site. The Council, in partnership with the NWDA, will identify other sites suitable for knowledge based industries and will work with landowners to agree a means by which they will be made available for such businesses over a reasonable period of time. In such circumstances a legal agreement will be sought between all parties including the NWDA.

Five of the Primary Employment Areas, 6 and 7 and 12, 14 and 15 within the Table, are within an area centred on the A579 Atherleigh Way that is being forwarded by the Council and partners for a comprehensive regeneration initiative. Within these 5 areas there is a total of 35.9 hectares of undeveloped land available for development. The mixed use designation at the former Bickershaw Colliery (Policy **EM1G**) and the proposed Leigh Sports Village (Policy **C1D**) are other important regeneration proposals in the 'Atherleigh Corridor'.

In respect of amenity, Class B2 and B8 uses and other employment uses will not be acceptable in all locations within Primary Employment Areas. Each proposal will be subject to Policy **G1A** (Amenity) and, if possible, features and/or measures to mitigate any adverse amenity impact will be sought. If the required mitigation cannot be achieved, development will not be acceptable.

Proposals that will generate lorry traffic and/or high volumes of other traffic will need to demonstrate that the road connection between the site and the Strategic Route Network (Policy **A1N**) will be suitable for such traffic without undue adverse impact on amenity, congestion or road safety. A Transport Assessment will be required for proposals that will generate high volumes of traffic (Policy **A1A**). Class B1 office uses that will generate significant numbers of trips are subject to Policy **EM1D**.

There are known environmental and nature conservation issues affecting a number of Primary Employment Areas that have been identified with an asterisk in Table 1 above. These issues are outlined in Appendix 3.

Complementary uses are small-scale uses that would provide a service primarily to local employees and businesses, for example, a snack bar, cafe, local shop, day nursery or fitness gym.

### **EM1B Re-use of Employment Land and Buildings for other uses**

**Outside of the Primary Employment Areas covered by Policy EM1A, the development or change of use of land or premises currently or last in employment use to uses other than employment uses, will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:-**

- (a) there is no current or likely future demand for the site or premises for employment uses and it could not reasonably be made suitable to meet current or likely future demand; or**
- (b) the site or use gives rise to a significant environmental problem, such as pollution, noise or traffic generation on unsuitable roads, and redevelopment for uses other than employment uses is the only means by which mitigation can be achieved; or**
- (c) it is the only viable means of retaining a building of architectural or historical significance; or**
- (d) redevelopment and/or change of use of part of the site or premises for/to a use other than an employment use, is the most appropriate means by which upgrading, modernisation or redevelopment of the majority of the site or premises will be achieved, necessary to ensure its retention in employment use; or**
- (e) it is an important component of a wider regeneration proposal supported by the Local Strategic Partnership; or**
- (f) it will meet an established need in accordance with other policies in the Plan and it can be demonstrated that there is no alternative site reasonably available and the benefits, in planning terms, outweigh the loss of the employment land; or**
- (g) it is a small site (below, at or around 0.4 hectares) that is physically isolated from other employment sites; or**

**Development or change of use will not be permitted if it would detract from the employment use of other nearby employment sites.**

This policy is concerned with the circumstances when the loss of an employment site outside of a Primary Employment Area is acceptable. Other than the safeguard in the final sentence about protecting remaining employment sites, it is not concerned with the acceptability of alternative

developments and uses which are subject to other policies in the Plan as applicable. Sites 'last in' employment use are defined as sites that are vacant or unused but for which the last (authorised) use was an employment use.

Outside of the Primary Employment Areas there are many other employment areas and sites that meet the need of businesses and provide employment (or are currently vacant but were most recently in employment use). Altogether, they represent a significant land resource for employment uses which also needs to be safeguarded in support of employment and the local economy.

The Borough has lost significant amounts of employment land to other uses, most notably housing, and this has been appropriate because of the legacy of derelict employment land left by industry and mining and the significant demand for higher standards of housing and amenity. The supply of land for employment and housing has now balanced out with an increased need to retain the employment land that remains. The presumption, therefore, is that employment land will be retained unless clear policy reasons indicate otherwise.

In this context, outside of the Primary Employment Areas it is appropriate to consider circumstances when the benefits for the wider community of redevelopment or change of use would outweigh the loss of employment land. The emphasis is on the applicant to demonstrate this case to the satisfaction of the Council.

In order to demonstrate that the site/premises are no longer suitable for continued employment use, the Council will require evidence that it has been effectively marketed and/or that the means by which it could be made suitable, such as demolition and rebuild have been costed and can be shown to be uneconomic against prevailing land prices and rentals being achieved in the area. The availability of grant assistance to make it financially viable will also need to be discounted. Similar evidence will also be required in order to demonstrate that uses other than employment uses are the only means by which a substantial environmental problem can be mitigated; or that a building of architectural or historic interest can be retained; or that the remainder of the site can be maintained in employment use.

Regeneration is an ongoing priority and, over time, different initiatives are advanced in different areas according to need and opportunity. In some circumstances there can be advantages in reorganising land uses such that it is appropriate for redevelopment of an employment site for other uses. Such a proposal would need to have the support of the Local Strategic Partnership in order to ensure that it is in the wider economic, social and environmental interests of the area.

In order to demonstrate that a development or use proposed is needed and cannot reasonably be implemented on a site not in, or last in, employment use, evidence will need to be presented against relevant planning policy for the development and/or use concerned. For housing this will include evidence of the supply of housing land against the Borough's annual target for new housing set out in Regional Planning Guidance and this Plan. Evidence of capacity on brownfield sites not in, or last in, employment use or otherwise meeting one of the criteria in Policy EM1B will also be relevant.

To be isolated from other employment sites a site should share three-quarters of its boundary with non-employment uses (including on opposite sides of a highway).

Any alternative development or use should not detract from the use of other nearby employment premises for employment purposes, including the need for access by heavy goods vehicles and other commercial vehicles, and will be subject to other policies in the Plan.

Policy **EM1B** does not apply to employment sites that are identified as major developed sites in the Green Belt under Policy **GB1E**.

## **EM1C Employment Development Outside Primary Employment Areas**

**Employment development outside of the Primary Employment Areas, including redevelopment or change of use at, or extension to, existing premises, will be permitted provided that:-**

- (i). As first preference, it will make effective use of an existing building, unless there are no suitable buildings available and viable for the proposed use within an agreed area of search, in which case:**
- (ii). As second preference, it will be all, or substantially, on brownfield land unless it can be demonstrated that there is no such land available, appropriate and viable for the purpose within an agreed area of search; and**
  - (a) there will be no unacceptable environmental or amenity impact;**
  - (b) there will be satisfactory and safe vehicular access and on-site provision for parking and servicing; and**
  - (c) for a site not currently or last in employment use, it is, or is capable of being, accessible by a choice of means of transport, including public transport.**

This policy applies to all employment development and changes of use to employment uses outside of the Primary Employment Areas, both on sites in, or last in, employment use and on other sites. The first and second preferences stated are in line with the core development principles in Regional Planning Guidance.

For proposed development on green-field sites, the areas of search within which the availability of alternative sites will be considered will be principally determined by an understanding of the economic role which the development will serve. It will include its sourcing and market requirements, including access for goods, and its employment requirements, including the number and type of jobs, the skills required and the employment needs and requirements of the workforce, including those seeking work. It is likely to include the relevant Township and adjoining Townships but for larger developments could include the whole of the Borough.

Proposals that will generate lorry traffic and/or high volumes of other traffic will need to demonstrate that the road connection between the site and the Strategic Route Network (Policy **A1N**) will be suitable for such traffic without undue adverse impact on amenity or road safety. Class B1 office uses that will generate significant numbers of trips are subject to Policy **EM1D**.

## **EM1D Offices**

**Office developments (including changes of use) likely to generate significant numbers of trips will be permitted in or adjacent to town centres and in other locations that are, or are capable of being, highly accessible by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling.**

**Such developments will not be permitted in locations that are not highly accessible by a choice of means of transport unless a commitment is secured, through an approved Travel Plan, to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place before the development is occupied to make it highly accessible.**

This policy refers only to office developments (including changes of use) that are likely to generate significant numbers of trips. This is irrespective of whether or not they are within a Primary

Employment Area otherwise covered by Policy **EM1A**. Smaller scale offices will be subject to Policy **EM1A** within Primary Employment Areas, Policy **S1B** within Town Centres and Policy **EM1C** in other locations.

As noted in the introduction to this Chapter, the employment base in Wigan Borough is biased towards traditional industries, many of which are in long term decline. It needs to attract more growth-sector businesses including the 'knowledge-based' sectors highlighted in the Regional Spatial Strategy and under Policy **EM1A** above.

Many growth-sector activities would be considered to be within Use Class B1 and most of these would be office-based. Wigan does not have a strong office market at present. In order to diversify its economy, Wigan needs to create the right conditions and image to attract more office development and foster the creation and expansion of knowledge-based businesses. The alternative is for a high proportion of Wigan's residents to continue to seek knowledge-based employment outside the Borough.

Office uses often benefit from being in or close to town centres where staff can take advantage of retail and leisure activities at lunchtime and before and after work. Town centres also enable people to travel by public transport more easily, thereby reducing the need to travel by car.

However, there are potential benefits in developing offices out-of-centre, in terms of the type of site available and the quality of office environment and wider regeneration benefits that can be achieved. Wigan needs these facilities in order to compete with both long established and proposed developments elsewhere in the region, including Omega, a key to this being its comparative land values. In doing so, it is essential that they are accessible by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling. Where the location is not highly accessible a Travel Plan will be required in accordance with Policy **A1B**, to ensure that appropriate measures are agreed to make it highly accessible. This will be required to be in place when the development is first occupied and will apply long term.

## **EM1E Motor Vehicle Servicing, Repairs, Hire and Sales**

**The development or extension of, or change of use to, motor vehicle servicing, repairs, hire and/or sales will be permitted within areas of predominantly employment and commercial uses, including Primary Employment Areas, provided that the appearance of the use will not unduly dominate the area and there will be no adverse impact on the amenity of nearby uses.**

**The development or extension of, or change of use to, motor vehicle servicing, repairs, hire and/or sales will not be permitted in residential areas or adjacent to residential uses unless the design, layout and precise nature of the business can be shown to not adversely affect the amenity of residential uses and this can be adequately secured by conditions of planning approval.**

**Planning approval for motor vehicle sales will be conditioned to prevent other retail sales except ancillary goods.**

Amenity problems are often associated with motor vehicle servicing, repairs, hire and sales. This policy is intended to ensure that such uses are located within suitable existing employment and commercial areas such that adverse amenity impacts will be avoided.

Unless they are conditioned to prevent it, sites used for motor vehicle sales can subsequently be used for other retailing without needing planning permission. A condition will be put on any such approval in order to ensure that any future proposals for retail will need planning permission and can duly be considered against prevailing planning policies.

Ancillary goods are defined as good related to the primary use such as vehicle parts, accessories and manuals, together with themed goods, provided that such retail sales are incidental to the primary use in terms of scale and the nature of the business.

~~\* EM1F      Restriction of Industrial Development – former Maypole Colliery Site~~

~~The development or change of use of land or buildings for employment uses at the site of the former Maypole Colliery in Abram will only be permitted if:-~~

- ~~(a) it can be demonstrated that there will be no additional disturbance to the amenity of nearby residents in terms of visual appearance, noise, vibration, odour, atmospheric pollution or other nuisance and, in particular, there will be no additional heavy goods vehicle and industrial traffic to and from the site via Park Lane; and~~
- ~~(b) appropriate to the scale and location of the proposal, it will secure the improvement of amenity on the site.~~

~~The Council will seek to enter into a legal agreement with the developer to secure any necessary works, including off-site works, in accordance with this policy.~~

~~\*(22)~~

~~Industrial uses have developed somewhat randomly at the site of the former Maypole Colliery since the closure of the colliery in 1959. Access is along Park Lane from its junction with Warrington Road. The junction has limited capacity and is substandard for heavy goods vehicles. Industrial operations and traffic have given rise to considerable amenity problems for residential properties on Park Lane and in the surrounding area.~~

~~A food manufacturer has relocated to a site elsewhere in the Borough. The Council's preferred solution is for other businesses on the site to do likewise to enable the site to be comprehensively redeveloped for housing. This is unlikely in its entirety but redevelopment for housing to the west of the access road is a possibility. In such circumstances, there will need to be little or no increase in traffic generation along Park Lane relative to existing and most recent uses, unless agreement can be secured to improve to an appropriate standard the junction of Park Lane with Warrington Road.~~

~~To the east of the access road there are still a number of established industrial uses. The impact of these on existing residential areas is such that any changes proposed for which planning approval is required will be restricted to ensure that additional disturbance and traffic does not arise. In addition, relative to the scale and nature of the changes proposed, measures to improve the amenity of the industrial area will be sought, including the removal of derelict structures and the improvement of the access road. Where this cannot be controlled by a condition of planning permission, the Council will seek to secure the works through a legal agreement with the developer.~~

~~POLICY DELETED~~

**\* EM1G      Mixed Use Development – former Bickershaw Colliery Site**

**This site is allocated for a comprehensive mixed use redevelopment comprising employment uses and housing with potential for canalside and associated leisure and tourism uses.**

**Proposals will be required to:-**

- (a) **secure the comprehensive reclamation and redevelopment of the site, for which a legal agreement will be sought;**
- (b) **accord substantially with a planning brief prepared by the Council and/or a masterplan submitted by the applicant and approved by the Council;**
- (c) **demonstrate the design principles to be employed, with particular regard to the appearance of the site from Plank Lane, the Leeds and Liverpool Canal (Leigh Branch) and the adjoining Green Belt;**
- (d) **undertake a transport assessment and carry out or fund associated highway works or other measures, including traffic management and measures to improve accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;**
- (e) **incorporate measures to prevent surface water run-off increasing the risk of flooding or adversely affecting the water environment; and**
- (f) **allow in the layout for access to be provided to the remaining Bickershaw Colliery area in Green Belt to the north, for potential leisure or other uses appropriate in the Green Belt.**

\*(22, 23)

Bickershaw Colliery closed in 1992 leaving a substantial area of derelict land on either side of Plank Lane, Leigh. A large part is within Green Belt and not subject to this policy. The area that is subject to the policy is largely in public ownership and the policy is in line with an economic appraisal undertaken for the site and the sequential approach to meeting development needs set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy. In particular, it is previously developed land within the urban area that is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

In order to bring about a comprehensive improvement it is essential that the whole site is planned and implemented in its entirety. It has the potential to meet locally generated needs for employment land, provide high quality canalside housing and incorporate a marina and chandlery on the adjacent Leigh Branch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. It is also close to the Pennington Flash Country Park and canal related tourism and leisure features could complement the Country Park.

Employment uses will be restricted to those which will not generate significant additional lorry traffic, because access is through predominantly residential areas of Leigh eastwards and Lowton westwards.

Pennington Flash to the south and Nevison's Flash to the north east are Sites of Biological Importance. Measures will be required to ensure that surface water run-off does not adversely affect these locations or other adjacent areas. An amphibian survey is also needed because there are great crested newts at Pennington Flash.

The site is within the proposed 'Atherleigh' regeneration area identified under Policy **EM1A**. The remaining former colliery land to the north is in Green Belt and has the potential to be reclaimed for outdoor leisure uses. The design should allow for future access to this land.

#### **\* EM1H Mixed Use Development – Wigan Pier Quarter**

**Wigan Pier Quarter is identified for comprehensive mixed use conservation-led regeneration comprising employment, housing, tourism, leisure and other major visitor attractors. Key features against which proposals for development, refurbishment and reuse will be judged are:-**

- (a) the realisation of an appropriate mix and balance of the above uses;**
- (b) the contribution to the heritage value and character of the Quarter;**
- (c) the achievement of a high quality environment;**
- (d) the integration of the canal and river within the built environment;**
- (e) the integration of the existing tourism facilities;**
- (f) the achievement of an accessible environment; and**
- (g) the ability of the proposals to promote the physical, economic and cultural regeneration of the area.**

**A proposal for retailing (other than small-scale kiosks) or other major visitor attractor that would normally be located in a town centre, will only be permitted when it can be demonstrated that it will not harm the vitality and viability of Wigan town centre, or other centres, and is the only means of:**

- i. supporting the complete and comprehensive regeneration of the Pier Quarter;**
- ii. securing an appropriate mix of housing, employment uses and cultural and leisure facilities; and**
- iii. providing long term financial security for the existing Wigan Pier tourism attractions.**

\*(10)

Wigan Pier Quarter acts as a Gateway to Wigan town centre on the busy A49 road. It is also strategically placed between the town centre, close to the two railway stations, and the Robin Park retail and leisure area at Newtown, including the JJB Stadium. The Quarter has a diverse character and range of uses including the Wigan Pier tourism and heritage attractions adjacent to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, older industrial and mill buildings, post war industrial and commercial buildings and small pockets of housing.

A large part of the Quarter is within the Wigan Pier Conservation Area and there are also a number of listed buildings. The investment that has taken place over recent years, notably the tourism and heritage attractions and, to the immediate east of the Quarter, the Wigan Pier Business Park, have been successful. However, the benefits have not rippled out to adjacent commercial and industrial areas. Many of the older buildings continue to suffer from under-use and a lack of investment. The area is also adversely affected by the effects of traffic on the A49.

It is recognised that the transformation of the area is likely to take several years but public space enhancements and building repairs can be undertaken early on. The approach is based upon conservation-led regeneration but allows for new high quality developments that will enhance the character of the area. This will build upon underused heritage assets and promote the special character of the area.

The Quarter has the potential to accommodate employment uses in the target sectors identified in the Regional Economic Strategy i.e. knowledge-based industries and tourism, building on the achievement of Wigan Pier Business Park and Wigan Pier. The Quarter could also be an appropriate location for high quality housing, both conversion and new build.

Retailing may be appropriate to the tourism role of the Pier Quarter but only if it would not harm the vitality and viability of Wigan town centre, or other centres. As such, typical 'high street' type comparison goods would not be permitted unless they are directly related to the long-term theme of the tourism package on offer and, accordingly, the range of goods is narrowly focused. In all

cases, it will have to be demonstrated that retailing is an essential part of the development package, being necessary to achieve the complete and comprehensive regeneration of the Pier Quarter; bring about an appropriate mix of uses; and secure the financial viability of the existing tourism attractions.

A range of other policies will also be relevant to proposals in the Pier Quarter. As noted a large part is within a Conservation Area and many buildings are listed. The canal and adjacent Parson's Meadow are wildlife corridors (Policy **EV2C**). The Council has adopted a Strategy and Masterplan for the Quarter together with more detailed development guidance for the Trencherfield Mill area.

## **EM2 TOURISM**

**PROPOSALS TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE TOURISM POTENTIAL OF THE BOROUGH AND, BY DOING SO, GENERATE WEALTH, IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS AND PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL OR BUILT ENVIRONMENT, WILL BE SUPPORTED IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS. PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO AREAS THAT HAVE EXISTING TOURISM AND LEISURE ATTRACTIONS AND FACILITIES AND/OR WHERE TOURISM CAN CONTRIBUTE TO REGENERATION. THE EMPHASIS WILL BE ON SUSTAINING AND ADDING QUALITY RATHER THAN MERE QUANTITY.**

The potential for tourism is that it can further enhance leisure opportunities for both local people and visitors, in a way that improves the environment and quality of life and generates employment. Accordingly, it can assist substantially in the ongoing economic, social and physical regeneration and related urban renaissance of Wigan Borough.

Tourism is a growth industry in the Borough. In 2001, there were nearly 11 million day visitors and close to 1 million overnight visits. Over £193 million was spent and there are over 800 businesses that are tourism and culture related. 7.6% of jobs are in tourism-related industries, the highest proportion in Greater Manchester. This includes jobs in hotels/other tourist accommodation; restaurants, cafes etc., bars, public houses and night-clubs; travel agencies/tour operators; libraries, museums and other cultural activities; and sport and other recreational activities (Source: NOMIS, 2001).

Existing tourism attractions include Astley Colliery, Haigh Country Park, Pennington Flash Country Park, Three Sisters Recreation Area, the Leeds and Liverpool and Bridgewater Canals, the Wigan Flashes, Wigan Pier, the JJB Stadium and Robin Park.

It is in the Borough's interest to further develop the profile of tourism. However, the emphasis has to be on sustaining and adding value to the quality of our existing tourism assets rather than concentrating on quantity which, in isolation, can undermine the benefits tourism can bring.

### **EM2A Tourism Development**

**Proposals for new or extended tourist attractions, accommodation or visitor support facilities will be permitted provided that:-**

- (a) it can be demonstrated that the location is appropriate considering the attributes of the proposal, its relationship with other tourism activities, the need for economy in the use of buildings and land and its accessibility, including by public transport, with first preference being for town centres;**

- (b) the scale and character of the development will reflect, and not be damaging to, its surroundings, including the infrastructure and environment, and there will be no detrimental impact on amenity; and**
  
- (c) traffic and parking requirements that will be generated will be accommodated without detriment to amenity or highway safety.**

Tourism development can include a wide variety of proposals including the development of tourist attractions and the provision of accommodation and visitor support facilities. Some can only reasonably or most relevantly be developed at the site or location that gives rise to them. Others are less locationally constrained. Economy in the use of buildings and land is required, in line with the core development principles in the Regional Spatial Strategy. The preference is for town centre sites, particularly for uses likely to generate significant numbers of trips.

The potential benefits of the development will be considered against the likely disbenefits, using the criteria above and any other relevant policies in the Plan. The key principle is that there should be sufficient capacity, in terms of infrastructure and environment, to accommodate the proposed development and its impacts, and it should not be damaging to its surroundings. This is particularly important in sensitive locations but in most such cases these will be covered by policies elsewhere in the Plan, for example, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and nature conservation interests.

However, in many instances tourism related development can have a positive impact on a locality, helping to secure its regeneration and safeguard the Borough's heritage. One such location is the Wigan Pier Quarter, covered by Policy **EM1H**. Similar opportunities will be sought elsewhere as part of regeneration programmes, including through the proposed Regional Park (Policy **C1G**).

As sought through the proposed Regional Park, environment-led regeneration can be achieved through enhancement of the natural environment. High quality environments are heavily influential to the attraction of an area for tourists. Through placing environmental quality at the heart of tourism development this potential can be properly harnessed. Tourism attractions can also have a significant bearing on improving the image of the Borough, essential for attracting economic development and new job opportunities.