

1. What is the UDP and what does it do?

Wigan's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is the sole development plan for all of Wigan Borough and provides a framework to encourage and stimulate appropriate new development, control the location and quality of development and safeguard environmental quality.

It is principally concerned with the development and use of land and is used as the basis for fair and consistent decisions on planning applications which the Council, as local planning authority, is required to determine. It covers the period until April 2016.

The previous UDP was adopted in 1996 but is replaced by this Plan which serves the following functions:

- Retaining those existing policies which remain relevant and work well, often with minor amendments to reflect the lessons learnt from their use in practice;
- Reflecting changes in local circumstances as well as changes in national and regional planning policy in order to keep the Plan up-to-date;
- Providing new land allocations for development sites to replace those in the previous plan which have been developed.

2. What are the main changes from the previous UDP?

- Much of the UDP has not changed since the first UDP of 1996. The Green Belt and Green Belt boundaries are substantially unchanged as are the areas of Safeguarded Land (although the name of the latter has been changed from *Protected Open Land*).
- There are changes *within* the Green Belt with the designation of 10 Major Existing Developed Sites. These are substantial developed sites washed over by the Green Belt which often pre-date the Green Belt and follow revised Government guidance. Their designation allows for the limited infilling or redevelopment of such sites under strict criteria which prevent any harm to the openness of the Green Belt whilst allowing for necessary and beneficial development.
- New employment land is provided on a new site at Gibfield, Atherton. Jobs are also to be provided for on sites allocated for a mixture of uses at the former Bickershaw Colliery near Leigh and at Wigan's Pier Quarter.
- The number of new dwellings to be provided throughout the plan period will be roughly half that of recent years with a target of 80% of them to be built on previously-developed (or *brownfield*) land and from the conversion of existing buildings. In fact there are no new housing allocations in the Plan due to the relatively low dwelling numbers required and the existence of a large stock of sites with planning permission for residential development.

- Policies now include provision for the improvement of air quality and the remediation of contaminated land.
- Increased weight is given in policies to the importance of good design which provides benefits in creating an inclusive environment, promoting sustainable development, improving the quality of the existing environment, attracting business and investment and reinforcing civic pride and a sense of place.
- There are new policies dealing with public art and protecting buildings of local interest.
- Policies also reflect the current approach to transport aimed at reducing reliance on the car and promoting more sustainable forms of transport including walking, cycling and public transport.
- The route of the proposed Guided Busway from Leigh to Manchester is safeguarded.
- Sites for shopping development are allocated at Station Road, Wigan and on the site of Leigh East Rugby Ground, Leigh.
- A site for Leigh Sports Village is allocated at Pennington for a major sports-led mixed use scheme including a football/rugby stadium and athletics track along with other sporting, community and education facilities.
- Proposals for a Regional Park are outlined, giving a focus for outdoor recreation which will be accessible from the main centres of population.

3. The Form and Content of the UDP

The UDP comprises a Written Statement of the Plan's policies and proposals and a Proposals Map, on an Ordnance Survey base, on which the site-specific and area-specific policies and proposals are shown.

There are two sorts of policies in the Plan:-

- Part 1 policies are the broad land use policies which provide the strategic framework within which the detailed policies of Part 2 can be framed. Part 1 policies are distinguished in the text by being shown in bold block capitals (e.g **EM1 LAND AND BUILDINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT USES**) and are shown boxed to differentiate them from Part 2 policies, e.g

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 EMPLOYMENT USE, PROVIDED THAT THERE WILL BE NO UNACCEPTABLE IMPACT.**

- Part 2 policies are the detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land which will guide the Council's day-to-day planning decisions. Part 2 policies (other than the policy numbers) are shown in the text in bold lower case letters (e.g. **EM1A Primary Employment Areas**).

All policies are followed by a short paragraph providing a reasoned justification for the policy and an explanation of how it will operate.

Those policies marked with an asterisk (*) are those which relate to a site-specific or area-specific proposal shown on the Proposals Map. The numbers shown in brackets (e.g (10)) with an asterisk following a policy or proposal show which pages of the printed Proposals Map it can be found on.

The policies of the Plan are arranged in topic chapters and listed in the contents table at the front of this document.

The Plan has been prepared in the light of the Government's advice (in PPG 12) that *Plans need to be clear, succinct and easily understood by all who need to know about the planning policies and proposals in the area.* Unnecessary repetition and over-elaborate cross-referencing has been avoided in the writing of the policies. It is therefore important that all those who use the Plan are aware that all the policies of the Plan are interrelated and should be read as a whole. No one policy or part of the Plan should be used in isolation from the other policies of the Plan. The relative weight to be attached to each policy will depend on the circumstances of the case to which it is applied along with any other material considerations.

