

The background of the slide is a photograph. On the left side, there is a large, close-up profile of a stone sculpture of a human face, made of many small, rectangular blocks. To the right of the sculpture is a modern building with a large glass facade and a grid-like metal frame. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Economic Framework



www.thisiswigan.com



Foreword

Perceptions of Wigan have been dominated by Orwell's depiction of a cold, dark, industrial landscape. Today Wigan is writing a new story, one based on a desire to achieve a prosperous and sustainable economic future.



Cllr Molyneux
Deputy Leader



Martin Ainscough
Chair of Wigan
Forward Board



Joyce Redfearn
Chief Executive

Wigan's Economic Framework builds on our strengths, on the characteristics that make Wigan unique. This is an approach developed through strong partnership including local businesses taking a leading role with Wigan's new Forward Board working closely with the council, and working together to make it happen.

As part of Greater Manchester, Wigan benefits from links to that wider regional economy, which is playing an important role in rebalancing the UK economy.

We are building on solid foundations.

"Our industrial past is one of innovation, and Wigan continues to demonstrate resilience and flourish in a challenging economic climate. Wigan people and businesses have a deserved reputation for hard-work and loyalty, and are resourceful and determined in creating and finding new employment.

We have an excellent location at the heart of the North West, a rich and attractive natural environment and access to high quality

culture and leisure opportunities. We have available employment sites and unrivalled connectivity to the motorway network, the west coast mainline and international airports.

Wigan is home to many successful global companies, and we have a strong economy based on a high number of flourishing SMEs. We have a strong food and drink manufacturing sector, and are showing high growth in new environmental technologies."

David Molyneux

Our town centres and local markets are providing variety and choice for local residents and visitors to the borough.

"We will continue to support entrepreneurship, helping the development of new sustainable business ideas. A continued focus on our high growth and high volume sectors will encourage supply chain efficiencies, support skills development and innovation.

We will help our businesses to achieve a strong competitive edge in an increasingly

global economy through the transition to low carbon, and the significant economic opportunities this presents.

I am committed to ensure that we supply the tools required to raise aspirations, inspire, nurture and retain local talent that will unlock the full economic potential of the borough."

Joyce Redfearn

We will improve digital connectivity and improve transport links within the borough and beyond. High quality development sites, good quality housing and providing an excellent living environment are priorities for the future.

"Wigan has an exciting future ahead, and this Economic Framework will turn potential into reality, I am looking forward to helping deliver Wigan's vision of Confident Place, Confident People."

Martin Ainscough



This is a Wigan that is more confident, a Wigan that is proud of its history and will use that legacy to create an exciting tomorrow.



Wigan's Economic Framework

Wigan has an exciting future ahead...

Our vision is to create a confident place for confident people. We have a unique geography that places us strategically at the heart of two major cities, and between the regional economies of Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire. We will maximise this geographical advantage and our enviable environmental landscape, making Wigan the location of choice for investment.

This framework is a statement of intent about our vision for the future economic prosperity of the borough and the actions that the council and its partners need to take to deliver our shared vision.

It sets out our ambitions for the Wigan Borough, provides clarity on the "offer" of the borough as a place and defines the opportunities that exist and what we need to do in order to make our communities successful.

Whilst the physical projects associated with the creation of quality places and communities are defined, we have also set out our plans for improving skills, creating an environment for business growth and giving our communities the opportunity to access jobs.

Our vision is focussed around the strategic connectivity of the borough but also the quality of its environment and extensive networks of high quality landscapes, open spaces and attractive countryside. The central core of the borough forms the Greenheart Countryside Park which offers an inspiring and diverse natural environment within 5 minutes access to our communities.

The quality of the borough's environment and its connectivity are catalysts for our economic prosperity and support the future growth and regeneration of the borough as a place to live, work and do business.

This is a Wigan that is more confident and looking to its future. A place that is proud of its history with the chance to make use of that legacy to create an exciting tomorrow. A town that can celebrate its many special features yet is determined to look outwards as it makes its way forward. We are aspiring to be the best. All places have their time and this is ours...

Wigan Borough is the
urban green location

Why Wigan

Wigan Borough is one of ten metropolitan districts in Greater Manchester uniquely located between the major conurbations of Manchester and Liverpool. It is ideally placed to access the UK's transport network and be the location of choice for new development that can capitalise on our locational position, availability of development land and the quality of our environment with over 70% of the Borough being green open spaces.

Wigan has unique connectivity to transport routes with the M6 on its western boundary, the M61 to the east, the M58 forming direct access into the heart of Liverpool Docks and the A580 East Lancs Road giving direct access to Liverpool and Manchester.

The west coast mainline stops in Wigan giving access to London and Glasgow within 2 hours. Manchester and Liverpool airports are within 35 minutes drive and further strategic transport improvements are planned in the next 3 years with the construction of the Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway and electrification of the Manchester and Liverpool railway line.

As well as our connectivity we have an attractive environment with the Greenheart Countryside Park extending throughout the central part of our borough, making Wigan a location of choice to live, work and invest in new opportunities.

We have an availability of strategic employment sites that can meet the needs of existing businesses and attract new ones, with further improvement to be achieved in our infrastructure. The Wigan offer is unique and we hope our vision is inspirational in encouraging business growth, expansion and relocation to Wigan.





Access to London and
Glasgow within 2 hours

Proud of our past, excited by our future

Wigan prospered for many years as an industrial centre of mining, engineering, textiles and clothing. Over the last 25 years, however, the economy has changed dramatically with the decline in traditional industries, particularly mining, having a severe impact on local communities. Our workforce is resilient, reliable and flexible. We are proud of our past which helps to shape our future.

The product of our illustrious and successful past is an important factor in the Wigan of tomorrow and we want as many people as possible to know what's special and attractive about the town.

Whilst our ambition for Wigan is unbounded we know we have to be realistic about our aspirations. For people to choose us as a place to live, put down roots, set up a business or visit we have to make the experience of being here enjoyable and of good quality. That means thinking differently about what we do, raising our game to deliver what we promise and working together to ensure we succeed. We have every opportunity to be successful in the future based on our strong businesses, outstanding entrepreneurs, winning attitude, quality of life offer, community ethic and wonderfully connected location.

However, this is a journey we want everyone in the borough to travel as everyone has a stake in making Wigan the best it can possibly be.

We are recognised internationally for our top flight sport.

Our existing employers are proud to be associated with the sporting excellence which inspires us to replicate the success in our economic growth.

WiganLife[♥]



- **Healthy Living Centre**
 Wigan Life Reception
 People Directorate
 Places Directorate
 Leisure Reception
 1st Flr
- **Museum of Wigan Life**
 Wigan Town Hall
 North Western & Midgate Railway Station
 Bus Station
- **Wigan Life Information & Learning Centre**
 One Stop Shop
 Housing Options / Property Shop
 Citizens Advice Bureau
 Victim Support
 Skills Shop
 Library





The fortunes of places run in cycles and for Wigan this is its opportunity to 'seize the moment'. There has been considerable investment in the area and more is planned. The town has readily available land for business and housing, improved transport links are on the horizon, the Wigan Life Centre for health and well-being is open. There is considerable investment in education and young people and road infrastructure along with public transport is being improved.

We now boast over 12,680 businesses ranging from social enterprises through to international companies and in particular we are the North West's major food manufacturing centre. We have a strong manufacturing engineering base and our emerging environmental technologies sector is the fastest growing in Greater Manchester. Wigan town centre has low shop vacancy rates compared to similar sized towns and Colliers International ranks Wigan as one of the top 100 town centre retail destinations nationally. The number of businesses in Wigan is increasing at a faster rate than the Greater Manchester average and the borough has seen the biggest reduction in unemployment in Greater Manchester, but we cannot be complacent.

We are proud of our past tradition and achievements but more excited about the borough's potential for the future. The growth of the knowledge economy, including creative and digital industries, low carbon and environmental industries and food technology and manufacturing are likely to be the key components of a successful 21st century local economy.

This will be marked by rising levels of innovation, technology, creativity and entrepreneurship, and have a more skilled and educated workforce. Our connectivity enables people to enjoy the attractiveness of our environment as a place to live and enjoy recreation whilst the quality of our towns for retail, leisure and culture are an integral part of our future agenda.

This Economic Framework will support a more sustainable local economy by seeking to:

- Identify the challenges and opportunities facing the borough
- Develop a shared economic vision for the borough to 2026
- Articulate a set of priorities for future action
- Guide the Council and its partners to deliver an economically viable and sustainable future for the borough
- Influencing and shaping the agenda's of partner agencies and funding providers to benefit our local economy

Vision and priorities

By 2026 we will have created a dynamic local economy and infrastructure to support local growth, improve skills, revitalise our local centres and connect our communities to opportunities to become a location of choice for investment. Our vision will be delivered through the following priorities and themes...

Confident Places

Business and Employment
Great Places

Confident People

Skills and Learning
Better Life Chances



Confident Places

Business and Employment

- Enable and support business start up, business growth, entrepreneurship and innovation
- Strengthen public private partnerships to drive growth, including creative use of assets
- Provide a range of new sites and facilities to attract inward investment
- Support sector development e.g. creative industries, low carbon, environmental technology and food manufacturing
- Maximise take up of new financial investment opportunities

Great Places

- Develop landmark Wigan and Leigh Town Centre Regeneration Projects
- Enhance, promote and improve accessibility to the borough's green infrastructure as a quality place to live, work and attract new business
- Improve our infrastructure to provide efficient connectivity to access job opportunities within the region, improve the quality of public transport provision and facilities, and improve the transport network within the borough to facilitate ease of movement
- Transform the local housing offer to provide wider choice

Confident People

Skills and Learning

- Raising skill levels
- Widening labour market participation
- Raising attainment
- Improve Education and Business Links
- Attract the skills needed to create competitive businesses

Better Life Chances

- Reduce the levels of worklessness and benefits dependency by developing skills and better employment opportunities in the local economy
- Increase the proportion of higher skilled, higher paid jobs in the local economy and raise skill levels
- Increase the engagement with the voluntary and community sector in regeneration and increase levels of social enterprise
- Improve opportunities for under represented groups to raise their participation in the workforce

Delivering the Vision

We propose a pragmatic and results driven approach to economic growth which:

- Focuses on the hidden potential of Wigan's people, up skilling them in work and bringing a greater proportion of them into the labour market
- Raises educational attainment and aspirations
- Encourages entrepreneurs
- Enables and encourages existing businesses to grow
- Encourages new economic sectors
- Regenerates town centres and makes the best use of 'brownfield' land
- Opens up access to and promotes our green infrastructure to create a place of choice to live, work and attract new businesses
- Raises average incomes
- Improves connectivity to jobs within the borough and in the sub region

Each of the following sections provides key priorities together with a framework which sets out the objectives, actions and outcomes which underpin the vision for the economic regeneration of the borough.

Business and Employment

In recent years the Borough has undergone a major restructuring of its economy and can now boast over 12,680 businesses ranging from social enterprises through to international companies. We have a strong manufacturing and engineering base (including food manufacturing), and our emerging environmental technologies sector is the fastest growing sector across Greater Manchester.

Vision: So that by 2026 Confident Place

The Borough has developed an entrepreneurial culture and we have created a dynamic and sustainable economy with a vibrant, diverse and innovative business community that has increased in number to at least the regional average. We have quality sites, buildings and places that attract and stimulate a high image, knowledge based economy



The Way Forward

To achieve the vision we need to address the following objectives as priorities for action:

- Develop an enterprise culture and increase local aspiration
- Increase business formation and survival rates including support for entrepreneurs by creating opportunities for the start up and growth of new businesses and develop a business incubation strategy
- Improve the borough's competitiveness and innovation and develop supply chain and cluster/sector initiatives, promote resource efficiency, low carbon and high growth
- Improve business infrastructure, quality sites and premises, business support services and public sector involvement
- Work more closely with key partners in developing marketing and inward investment initiatives for the borough
- Utilise the value in public sector assets to achieve maximum benefit for the borough

Whilst there is considerably more to do, we can celebrate some successes:

- The number of businesses in the borough is increasing at a faster rate than the Greater Manchester average
- Wigan town centre has the lowest shop vacancy rates in the north west
- Job Centre Plus are achieving record numbers of advertised jobs
- Wigan is one of the top 100 town centre retail destinations nationally

However, we have some key challenges

- Increasing our productivity – we have a Gross Value Added (GVA) gap in Wigan of £1.7 billion. This accounts for 13% of the Regional GVA gap and in the medium term, output growth is expected to be modest.
- Encouraging new businesses – key barriers to employment remain.

- Image – the borough suffers from an outdated image and lack of profile despite our heritage assets and green environment.
- Accessing finance – Wigan businesses as with all businesses across the UK face a lack of available credit.
- Moving to a low carbon economy – Wigan businesses face the challenge of rising energy costs and the need to adapt to the unavoidable consequences of climate change

Innovation is a key factor in helping businesses and organisations to grow. The borough needs to play a strong role to diversify its economic base and create and embed a culture of enterprise, using business incubation to help sustain innovation activity. Stronger links with Wigan and Leigh College, regional universities and education and skills providers need to be more robustly developed.

“Wigan has made significant efforts to increase entrepreneurial activity over the last 3 years with a specific focus on creating and supporting new businesses. This focus is now starting to pay off with new business start rates in Wigan amongst the highest in the North West. This bodes well for the future as these new businesses start to expand and create employment.”

There will be a more detailed Business and Employment Action Plan developed, below is an overview of the headline actions:

Objective	Action	Outcome
Develop an enterprise culture and increase local aspiration	Actively promote an enterprise culture amongst all age groups	Self employment is a realistic option of choice for local residents
Increase business formation and survival rates including support for entrepreneurs by creating opportunities for the start up and growth of new businesses and develop a business incubation strategy	Create new businesses together with enterprise and incubation support and support enterprise among under represented groups	New businesses are being created and supported into long-term sustainability
Improve the borough's competitiveness and innovation and develop supply chain and cluster/sector initiatives, promote resource efficiency, low carbon and high growth	Support growth and innovation within exiting businesses. Support supply chain and cluster initiatives e.g. environmental and creative industry sector	Proportion of high-growth businesses is increased and major employers are encouraged and supported to grow within the borough
Improve business infrastructure, quality sites and premises, business support services and public sector involvement e.g. on procurement and support for social enterprise	Develop quality sites and premises Improve business support services	Strategic sites in the borough have been developed
Work more closely with key partners in developing marketing and inward investment initiatives for the Borough	Work with the Association of Greater Manchester (AGMA) partners in developing a Borough marketing and inward investment strategy	Solid economic growth and development is evident across the borough including the introduction of businesses new to Wigan
Utilise the value in public sector assets to achieve maximum benefit for the borough	Complete the review of capital assets and establish a shortlist of assets with greatest opportunity to lever in external investment	Joint ventures with the private sector are created to deliver development priorities




Great Places

The boroughs success depends on having well connected and attractive urban areas, quality and diverse new and existing housing and accessible and high quality countryside. Through key developments and interventions we can improve the quality of our towns, provide the right sites for development and improve connectivity between communities and destinations outside the borough.

Vision: So that by 2026 Confident Place

We will offer an attractive and thriving environment to live and work in, with excellent physical and digital connectivity, sustainable neighbourhoods and high quality housing. Our town centres are thriving with distinctive and varied retail and service provision and are attractive places to live, work, and invest in. Our residents are able to benefit from the opportunities to secure good quality jobs both within the borough and in the region with improved public transport and improved digital access. We have a range of development sites available to suit new businesses and support the growth of existing business and we have a quality environment which enhances the lifestyle of our residents and accurately promotes a positive image of the borough.





“Past perceptions of Wigan have been dominated by Orwell’s depiction of a cold, dark, industrial landscape. Today Wigan is writing a new story, one based on a natural environment. With over 70% of the borough open green space, Wigan’s ‘green heart’ delivers exceptional countryside on the doorstep of local communities.”

Will Ainscough, Managing Director, HIMOR Group

The Way Forward

To achieve the vision we have set we need to address the following objectives and priorities for action:

- Increase the vitality and viability of our town centres
- Improve accessibility and achieve major transport improvements and allow people to move within the borough and the region to access employment and skills opportunities and grow the boroughs businesses
- Ensure sufficient employment and housing land to meet demands, in sustainable locations
- Develop our attractions, countryside and improve the quality of our public realm
- Develop sustainable communities and make our places and overall environment attractive for local residents and businesses
- Improve the quality and energy performance of existing homes
- Deliver a range of new homes in the right locations to meet the needs and aspirations of residents and become a location of choice

Wigan Town Centre

The Wigan Central Area Action Plan of the Local Development Framework (LDF) sets out the vision for key physical projects to enhance Wigan's role as a sub regional centre. Key deliverable projects by 2026 include:



Eastern Gateway

A high profile site comprising the Old Town Hall, the former Police Station, the former 'Grand Tower' site of the Grand Arcade Development and the Darlington Street Area. This is an area of private and Council ownership either side of Riverway which provides an opportunity to deliver a transformational project on this important town centre gateway. The site can accommodate activities complementary to the existing town centre by including leisure art 'non retail' recreational activity with improved access linkages across Riverway.

Knowledge Quarter

Encompasses the area around Wigan and Leigh College, the Council owned Civic Buildings, the development of Wigan Youth Zone and the Bus Station site. This locality presents an opportunity to expand educational activity and offer with potential expansion space for the College, a University Technical College and improved public realm.

Wigan Pier Quarter

This is an internationally recognised destination area and includes Eckersley and Trencherfield Mills together with the Leeds Liverpool Canal basin. An opportunity exists to create a mixed use development comprising new build and refurbishment, new homes, hotel, cultural and commercial opportunities focussed on the canal waterfront and provide a unique environment promoting the quality of Wigan heritage buildings.



Leigh Town Centre

Leigh has the potential to be a vibrant town centre but requires interventions to improve the quality of its public realm, achieve urban renaissance and provide improved linkages to the Leigh Sports Village, Parsonage Site and the Bridgewater Site. The delivery of the Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway will enhance connectivity with Salford and Manchester and the opportunity of employment associated with Salford Media City.



Transport Hub

The aim is to create an integrated public transport interchange by providing improved linkage between the North Western and Wallgate Rail Station and the potential relocation of the Bus Station to provide public transport connectivity and revitalising the Wallgate area of the town.

Improving Accessibility and Tackling Congestion

Wigan's strategic location within the motorway network, its rail links and proximity to Manchester and Liverpool make it particularly accessible within the North West. In order to maximise its locational advantage further investment is required in infrastructure and intervention to address congestion. The emerging Borough Transport Strategy, developed in co-operation with sub-regional partners, sets our key investment themes for highway, rail, bus and complementary solutions.

Key interventions include:

- Delivery of the Wigan Transport Hub
- Delivery of the A49 Link
- Completion of the Saddle Gateway Improvement
- Seeking opportunities to move freight by rail and improved rail passenger opportunities
- Delivery of the Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway
- Maximising the opportunities of the West Coast Mainline franchise, the High Speed 2 rail link and electrification of the Manchester and Liverpool line
- Amberswood Link

Housing and Employment Land

Creating a good residential offer in the borough is an important strand of the Economic Framework. We need to ensure an adequate supply of good quality housing in the right places to promote economic growth capable of meeting the aspirations of wealth creators and the needs of

people on low incomes. Our residential areas create an impression of the borough and we need to use housing investment to deal with the problems of less successful areas and make them more attractive places for economically active households.

Our aim is to tackle the often poor housing standards and the lack of choice in the central core of the borough and provide a range of accessible sites in the vicinity of the East Lancs Road to create strong cohesive housing markets which will be some of the most attractive residential offers in the Region.

Through the Local Development Framework we aim to ensure an adequate allocation and range of employment sites in quality settings to meet anticipated employment growth and offer opportunity for the expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new inward investment. In addition to assisting in the delivery of private sector sites, the development of the Westwood Park sites form an important part of our economic development opportunity.

Westwood Park

This 17.6 ha site in a sustainable location close to the town centre and Wigan Flashes provides an opportunity for a mixed use development with improved connectivity to the M6 by the construction of the A49 Link Road which is a 2.5km road linking the town centre through to Junction 25 of the M6.

We have quality sites, buildings and places that can attract and stimulate growth of high image, knowledge local business that can capitalise on the borough's locational advantages. To maximise this opportunity we do need to address the issues of internal connectivity and work more closely with our partners in Marketing Manchester and MIDAS to promote a more positive image of Wigan and attract new employers to sites within the borough.

- Connectivity – perceived major connection to the strategic road network and congestion on the local road network are a barrier to the attraction of inward investment despite the availability of employment land.

“As a social entrepreneur, I had to choose where to locate my business, and where to invest my money. I chose Wigan, not only because the community is strong and the town is at the heart of the North West transport network but the people of Wigan have a true grit and will to win – a characteristic that I simply haven't come across anywhere else!”

There will be a more detailed Great Places Action Plan developed, below is an overview of the headline actions:

Objective	Action	Outcome
Increase the vitality and viability of our town centres	Deliver urban strategic regeneration schemes and urban renaissance programmes in Wigan and Leigh and other town centres. Major projects include: Eastern Gateway – integrated mixed use focussed development linked to Wigan Town Centre; Wigan Pier Quarter - mixed use canal focussed development; Knowledge Quarter - educational expansion space and public realm improvements; Leigh Town Centre - urban renaissance initiatives	Wigan, Leigh and other major towns in the borough are attractive locations and growth hubs that contribute to the borough's economic and employment activity
Improve accessibility and achieve major transport improvements and allow people to move within the Borough and the Region to access employment and skills opportunities and grow the Borough's businesses	Deliver strategic transport improvements. Major projects include: Transport Hub – enhanced connectivity between North Western and Wallgate Rail Stations and Wigan Bus Station; A49 Link- a more direct access from the M6 (J25) through to Wigan town centre; Rail Freight – evaluate opportunity for rail freight; Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway – linking Wigan and Leigh through to Salford and Manchester; Amberswood Link - provide a connection from A56 Liverpool Road with A577 Wigan Road at Hindley	The connectivity and accessibility of the borough is maximised through a robust infrastructure network

“The economic recession has affected everybody in recent years with job losses across all sizes of company and all sectors. However, Wigan continues to demonstrate resilience and will be in a strong position to take advantage of any long term economic recovery.”

Miranda Barker, President of Wigan Borough Chamber of Commerce

There will be a more detailed Great Places Action Plan developed, below is an overview of the headline actions:

Objective	Action	Outcome
Ensure sufficient employment and housing land to meet demands in sustainable locations	Allocation of appropriate locations in the Local Development Framework. Major projects include: Westwood Park – 17.6 ha mixed use development site. Supporting the proposal to identify a high quality employment site in the M6 corridor through the LDF Development of public sector led projects	Wigan has a vibrant public and private portfolio of sites with development opportunities
Develop our attractions, countryside and improve the quality of our public realm	Transform and improve the quality of the environment providing better connectivity through green openspace to growth areas	A unique resource 'Greenheart Countryside Park' providing the countryside on our doorstep.
Develop sustainable communities and make our places and overall environment attractive for local residents and businesses	Develop and deliver appropriate initiatives to improve the environment with our communities	Wigan has an attractive environment and the potential of its green open space is maximised
Improve the neighbourhood offer and the quality and energy performance of existing homes in the core of the borough	Improve the decency and energy efficient of existing homes	Quality of the local street scene is improved and household energy performance is improved
Increase the range and supply of new homes, including affordable and specialist housing in key locations	Improve design and sustainability standards of new homes. Bring forward key housing sites Deliver investment in affordable homes with Homes and Communities Agency and other sources	Good quality, affordable housing with the right mix to meet the needs of Wigan residents and those choosing to relocate

Skills and Learning

The knowledge, skills and motivation of the boroughs population are amongst our greatest assets. While attainment at school level continues to improve, further action to improve post16 participation rates, enhancing provision and raising aspirations is vital. Working with employers and employees to raise workforce skill levels and graduate retention rates are key issues.

Vision: So that by 2026 Confident People

Our people are highly trained and qualified and are encouraged to stay in the district by well paid, higher skilled and more satisfying jobs. We have access to the education and training institutions, providers and resources that are responsive to the needs of the business community.





The Way Forward

To achieve the vision we need to address the following objectives for action:

- Build aspiration, participation rates and achievements among young people to create a learning culture
- Improve basic skills for employability, giving priority to hard to reach groups where additional barriers and a lack of skills limits their ability to enter the workforce or where a lack of skills constrains their ability to realise their potential
- Raise aspirations and qualification levels in the workforce and engage with existing and new businesses to develop a higher skilled workforce
- Review and develop the infrastructure and provision for education post 16 in the workforce, including apprenticeships
- Work with businesses to identify skill needs for the future and liaise with providers to meet these needs
- Create effective partnerships between education and business
- Provide quality housing, vibrant town centres and accessibility to Wigan's Greenheart environment to attract and retain higher skilled employees with the Borough
- Increase the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to independently support the delivery of services

“Local people represent one of the borough’s greatest assets. We must supply the tools required to raise aspirations, inspire, and nurture local talent. Only then will the economic potential of the borough be unlocked.”

Ian Lenegan, Owner and Chairman, Wigan Warriors RLFC

Whilst there is considerably more to do, we can celebrate some successes:

The borough has made significant improvement in GCSE qualifications over the period 2006 to 2010 compared to the national average. In 2006 the percentage of 15 year old students achieving 5+ A* - C (and equivalent) GCSE's was 41.7% rising to 56.0% by 2010. This compares to an England average of 45.6% in 2006 and 53.4% in 2010.

Wigan's rate of improvement is substantially higher than the national average and have resulted in a continued improvement in the rate of level 2 attainment by the age of 19 increasing to 76.9% by 2010. Level 3 attainment by the age of 19 has also increased to 46.2% in 2010 from 42.9% in the previous year. Over the past 3 years our rate of level 3 attainment in Wigan has increased at a rate faster than the regional and national averages but the borough still remains 6% below national rate.

Between 2006 and 2010 the Borough had the second largest increase in 16-18 year olds apprenticeships starts in Greater Manchester. Within the same period the 19-24 year old apprenticeships increased by 45.3% compared to a national increase of 34.3%. These strong foundations will stand the borough in good stead for its economic future by assisting in making the area a more attractive place for companies to invest and export.

Despite the success above we have some challenges:

- Workplace earnings are low in the Borough compared to the rest of Greater Manchester
- 31% of our employees are employed in low skilled occupations
- Low qualifications are a concern in our deprived communities
- We have lower than national average people living in the borough with level 4/5 (degree level) qualifications.

To address these issues it is important that we pioneer new ways to improve opportunities for young people; reduce the gap between the most affluent and deprived communities; continue to address worklessness; continue to develop programmes that provide opportunities for young people and engage in the labour market; develop key employment rates and improve accessibility to jobs; engage with businesses and identify future skills needs; develop the University Technology College other education initiatives, and support skills in manufacturing and construction.

Addressing these opportunities and attracting graduates to employment in the borough and retaining them in the local economy is a key task.



There will be a more detailed Skills and Learning Action Plan developed, below is an overview of the headline actions:

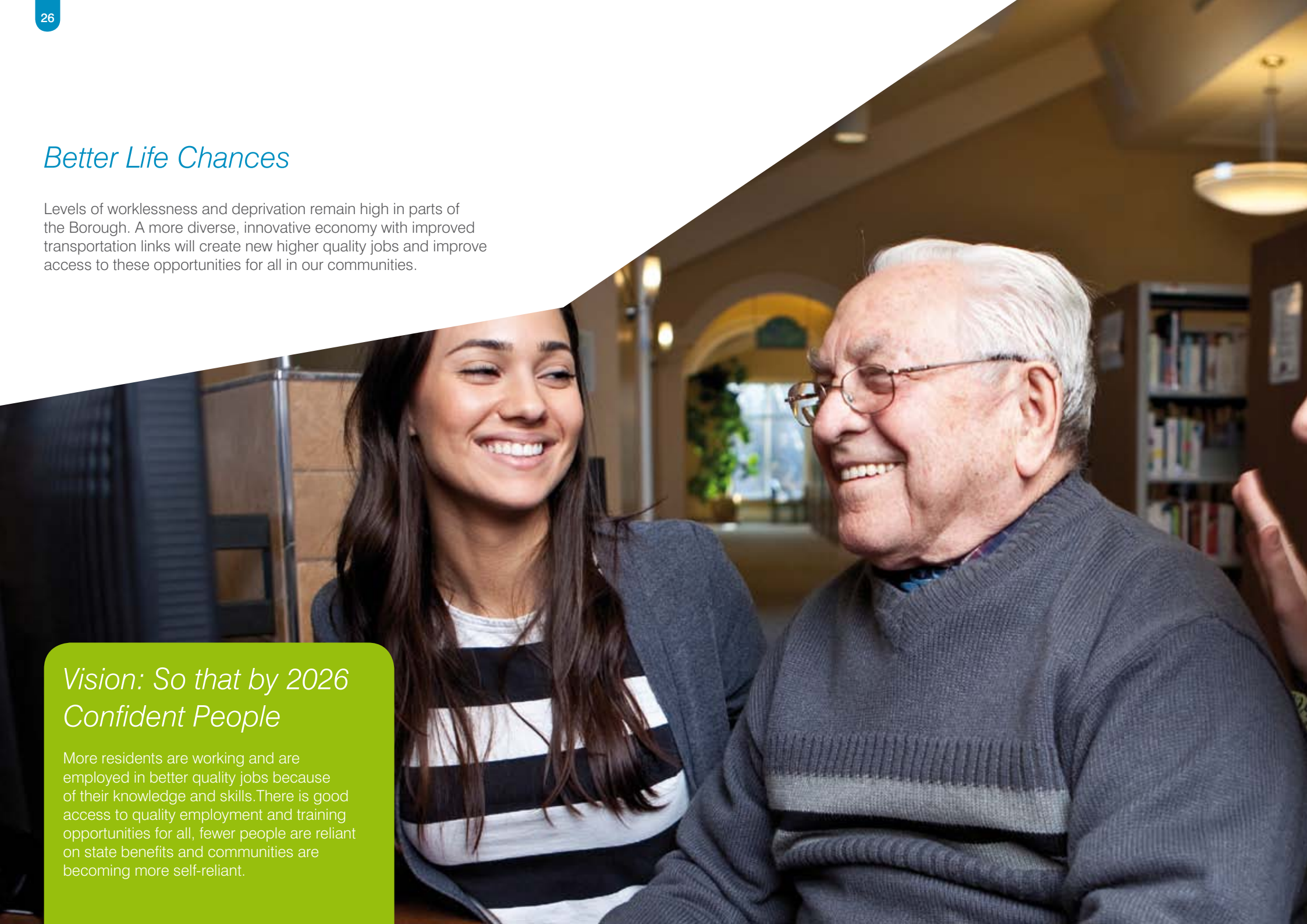
Objective	Action	Outcome
Build aspiration, participation rates and achievements among young people to create a learning culture	Implementation of the Pathway for 0-19	Wigan residents have the skills and ambitions to take advantage of opportunities as and when they emerge
Improve basic skills for employability, giving priority to hard to reach groups where additional barriers and a lack of skills limits their ability to realise their potential	Action an adult basic skills audit and skills for employability especially in identified deprived areas with hard to reach groups	Reduce proportion of residents with no qualifications, particularly in priority areas
Raise aspirations and qualification levels in the workforce and engage with existing and new businesses to develop a higher skilled workforce	Develop a database of employers skills needs and assist in the delivery of work related training Promote the benefits of 'staying local' to study	People have the right skills to meet the needs of existing and future employers
Review and develop the infrastructure and provision for education post 16 in the workforce, including apprenticeships	Engage further and higher education institutes to influence course provision to meet the skill needs of the future Raise awareness and take up with the business community of apprenticeship programmes	Young people are able to successfully access further education and training to suit their career aspirations
Create effective partnerships between education and business	Inspire and engage with primary and secondary school to increase enterprise awareness Gain commitment from our business community to work with schools	Sustainable partnerships between businesses and schools across the borough are in place
Provide quality housing, vibrant town centres and accessibility to Wigan's Greenheart environment to attract and retain higher skilled employees within the Borough	Provide new housing development to support the local economy and offer a wider range of homes to meet the needs of the borough	New homes built to high sustainability standards employing new technologies and skills
Increase the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to independently support the delivery of services	Support for public sector spin-outs Deliver the borough's updated social enterprise strategy	The range and number of social enterprises has risen and the capacity of the third sector has been developed, including capability to deliver public sector contracts

Better Life Chances

Levels of worklessness and deprivation remain high in parts of the Borough. A more diverse, innovative economy with improved transportation links will create new higher quality jobs and improve access to these opportunities for all in our communities.

Vision: So that by 2026 Confident People

More residents are working and are employed in better quality jobs because of their knowledge and skills. There is good access to quality employment and training opportunities for all, fewer people are reliant on state benefits and communities are becoming more self-reliant.





The Way Forward

To achieve the vision we need to address the following objectives for action:

- Reduce the levels of worklessness and benefits dependency by developing skills and better employment opportunities in the local economy
- Increase the proportion of higher skilled, higher paid jobs in the local economy and raise skill levels
- Increase the engagement with the voluntary and community sector in regeneration and increase levels of social enterprise
- Improve opportunities for under represented groups to raise their participation in the workforce
- Create effective partnerships between education and business

There are stark differences in life chances between more deprived and affluent communities across Wigan. Our focus will be to improve the ability of local people to access quality jobs and close the economic gap between affluent and deprived areas. We need to continue to address worklessness including partnership working with health and other providers which is necessary to reduce the contribution that ill health makes to worklessness.

Changes to the benefit system will have an impact on many of the Borough's residents. This will effect whole families accessing complex packages of service support. There is also a disconnect between the needs of employers and the skills and abilities of our young people entering the world of work.

There will be a more detailed Better Life Chances Action Plan developed, below is an overview of the headline actions:

Objective	Action	Outcome
Reduce the levels of worklessness and benefits dependency by developing skills and better employment opportunities in the local economy	Target areas with high levels of worklessness Develop specific measures around youth unemployment	The people of Wigan are confident that they can make the right choices and decisions for themselves and their families
Increase the proportion of higher skilled, higher paid jobs in the local economy and raise skill levels	Encourage enterprise, innovation and growth clusters	People are developing skills, accessing sustainable quality jobs and earning more
Increase the engagement with the voluntary and community sector in regeneration and increase levels of social enterprise	Build capacity in the voluntary sector and social enterprises Engage local communities through neighbourhood management, parish plans etc	The range and number of social enterprises has risen and the capacity of the third sector has been developed, including capability to deliver public sector contracts
Improve opportunities for under represented groups to raise their participation in the workforce	Develop programmes of action for women, BME groups, migrant workers, disabled and other disadvantaged groups	Businesses are implementing the principles of Wigan's Local Enterprise Charter.
Create effective partnerships between education and business	Promote and gain commitment from employers to support working with education establishments	We have a better understanding of business needs and their skill requirements

“Wigan people have a long and proud record of being hard working and loyal. Unfortunately, many of the industries that shaped our heritage and provided employment have long since disappeared, victims of changing times and economic recession. Despite these setbacks, Wigan people have shown remarkable determination to retrain and travel to find work. It is this determination, loyalty and appetite for hard work that sets Wigan apart. As chair of the Wigan Forward Board we are working alongside Wigan Council to turn the vision and objectives of this Economic Framework into reality”

Martin Ainscough, Chair of Wigan Forward Board



SKILLS FOR LIFE

WiganLife







Our Future Plans

Delivering this framework requires long term commitment from all partners and co-ordinated action across the borough. Action plans are already in existence or being developed by partners and the objectives set out in this framework will require incorporating into the plans produced. This framework forms the basis of more detailed strategies up to 2026 to ensure that the Borough is a great place to live, work and do business, these include:

- Wigan Housing Strategy: Vision 2026
- Wigan Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework
- Wigan Social Enterprise Strategy
- Worklessness Strategy for Wigan
- Wigan Transport Strategy
- Wigan's Sustainable Communities Plan: Vision 2026
- Wigan's Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Our vision is clear that by 2026, the borough will have a skilled workforce, have vibrant and attractive towns and local centres, have a well connected infrastructure and its location and quality of its environment will make it a great place to live work and do business.

Our success will be determined by choices people make regarding Wigan and we need to encourage them to view us in a positive light by getting across why we are special, how we are improving, what we offer and our plans for the future.

*All places have their time
and this is ours...*

Wigan Council
Economic Development
Places Directorate
PO Box 100
WIGAN
WN1 3DS

Telephone: 01942 489175
Email: ero@wigan.gov.uk
wigan.gov.uk

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