



Wigan Borough Local Plan

**Draft Flood Risk
Evidence Assessment**

April 2025

1. Background

- 1.1 Local Plans, informed by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs), must manage flood risk from all sources, avoiding inappropriate development in high-risk areas and ensuring safe development where necessary, while also considering climate change impacts.
- 1.2 Wigan Council is one of the nine authorities in Greater Manchester that has adopted the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan. The preparation of this development plan included a level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the whole of Greater Manchester including Wigan.

2. National Planning Policy

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources supported by an SFRA; and requires local plans to apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of new development to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change, by:
 - Applying the sequential test and then, if necessary, the exception test,
 - Safeguarding land from development that is required, or likely to be required, for current or future flood management,
 - Using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, and
 - Where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to facilitate the relocation of development, including housing, to more sustainable locations.

3. Places for Everyone: Greater Manchester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The Greater Manchester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (GM Level 1 SFRA) was completed in March 2019 as part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF). It continued to be used to support the Places for Everyone Plan and remains an up-to-date evidence base to inform the preparation of the Wigan Borough Local Plan.

3.2 It updated and brought together the evidence base on flood risk in Greater Manchester to:

- Apply the sequential test to the existing land supply sites and the PfE allocations.
- Identify the existing land supply sites and PfE allocations that need to pass the exception test.
- Identify sites that are likely to be at a greater risk of flooding from climate change.
- Update the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) across Greater Manchester; and
- Identity 'opportunity areas for further critical drainage management' as a step towards updating the existing locally defined critical drainage areas in Greater Manchester.

3.3 The Level 1 SFRA identified several sites across Greater Manchester that required further appraisal in a Level 2 SFRA, including four sites identified in the Wigan Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). In addition, one of the strategic allocations within Wigan Borough, JPA35 - North of Mosley Common, was scoped in for further broadscale fluvial modelling to cover existing gaps in the baseline information.

4. Places for Everyone: Greater Manchester Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

4.1 The GM Level 2 SFRA was completed in October 2020 and remains an up-to-date evidence base to inform the preparation of the Wigan Borough Local Plan. The more detailed work comprised of:

- Exception test site reports - an assessment of whether sites within the housing land supply for Greater Manchester and PfE allocations would pass part (b) of the exception test, which had been flagged from the GM Level 1 SFRA.
- New flood risk modelling - 'broadscale' flood modelling was completed on some PfE allocations to fill modelling gaps, which enabled flood risk to be more accurately assessed on the site.
- Opportunity areas for flood storage – This identified potential areas across GM that could be considered, pending more detailed investigation, for further flood storage, including natural flood management techniques.

- 4.2 As mentioned previously, the Level 2 SFRA carried out further appraisal on 4 sites within the borough's identified housing land supply. The summary for these 4 sites is set out in the table below and includes recommendations for next steps. It should be noted that, as at April 2025, no planning applications have been submitted for these sites.

Proposed Site	Level 2 Recommendation on passing the Exception Test	Main barriers to passing Test	Recommended next steps
SHLAA0023 - Leyland Mill	Unlikely to pass Exceptions Test unless the developable area is reduced - direct development to east of Leyland Mill Lane	Fluvial risk from River Douglas with significant depths; residual risk from adjacent culvert	FRA to examine reduction is developable area and refocusing to eastern area in FZ1
SHLAA0240 - Barn Lane, Golborne	Likely to pass Exceptions Test assuming the risk area along Millingford Brook can be included in a blue/green corridor	Millingford Brook flows directly through the site	FRA to carry out 2D modelling of Millingford Brook; surface water risk to also be mitigated within blue/green corridor
SHLAA0325 - Former Gas Depot, York Road, Ashton	This site is unlikely to pass the Exceptions Test	Significant fluvial risk from onsite culverted Main River (Millingford Brook); residual risk; long term risk from climate change	There is currently a pending planning application on this site for residential development, this has been objected to by the EA on issues of flood risk. This Level 2 SFRA should be revisited and updated with the outcomes of the FRA used in the planning application. Based on available information, it is recommended that this site should not be developed and be left as open greenspace with options for culvert removal to be investigated.

SHLAA0405 - Land adjacent to Premier Inn, Harrogate Street	<p>This site is unlikely to pass the Exceptions Test unless development can be directed to areas within FZ1, reducing developable area</p>	<p>Significant residual existing risk and long-term fluvial risk from River Douglas</p>	<p>It is possible that Wigan Council will amend the site boundary to reflect the developable area that avoids flood risk. The council notes that this area could be left for car parking. An FRA should include a drainage strategy to ensure that for any proposed new development, that drainage can successfully be managed for its lifetime. An FRA should also include a detailed emergency plan detailing safe access/egress routes and evacuation procedures during flood events.</p>
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- 4.3 A comprehensive flood risk review was undertaken for strategic allocation JPA35 - North of Mosley Common including new modelling. It should be noted that this allocation has subsequently received outline planning permission with individual phases of development now also being approved and construction commencing.

5. Wigan Borough Local Plan

- 5.1 The initial draft of the Wigan Borough Local Plan identifies 4 allocations that are proposed to be released from the Green Belt for employment-led development.

Land north of M6 Junction 26, Wigan

- 5.2 This site is proposed to be allocated for a substantial, high quality employment development with a link road from M6 Junction 26 to Spring Road at Kitt Green.
- 5.3 There are some ordinary watercourses within the proposed development site and some associated flood risk has been identified within the site promoter's preliminary flood risk assessment. The Environment Agency's new Flood Map for Planning however also identifies some areas of flood zones 2 and 3 but there is a discrepancy between this and the Nafra2 mapping released earlier this year which did not identify any fluvial flood risk within this area.

- 5.4 Despite this, the flood risk areas in question are small in the context of the whole site and have been considered at an early stage by the site promoters as part of their masterplanning for the site. Therefore, flood risk issues within the site can be appropriately dealt with alongside our proposed local plan policies.
- 5.5 United Utilities have identified instances of public sewer flooding in the wider vicinity of the site. However, any risk associated with this can be dealt with through appropriate design and through a holistic drainage strategy in line with our surface water run off policy requirements.

Moss Industrial Estate Extension, Aspull Common, Leigh

- 5.6 Land to the north of Moss Industrial Estate at Aspull Common is proposed to be allocated for the extension of the existing employment area to accommodate additional business uses.
- 5.7 There are no watercourses within the proposed allocation and therefore no significant fluvial flood risks have been identified. A very small area of flood zone 2 extends across the northeastern boundary of this site. Surface water flood risks will need to be managed through a holistic drainage strategy in line with our surface water run off policy requirements.
- 5.8 United Utilities have identified instances of public sewer flooding in the wider vicinity of the site. However, any risk associated with this can be dealt with through appropriate design and through a holistic drainage strategy in line with our surface water run off policy requirements.

Bridgewater West, Astley

- 5.9 This site is allocated for a high-quality business park-led mixed-use development, together with homes and leisure and visitor attractions.
- 5.10 Most of the site is shown within Flood Zone 1 on the EA's Flood Map for Planning. The eastern boundary of the site is formed by Whitehead Brook, which acts as the borough boundary with Salford. Within Salford to the east of the proposed allocation boundary Stirrup Brook meets Whitehead Brook and there is fluvial flood risk associated with this area. Part of this flood risk extends into the site allocation boundary in the forms of Flood Zones 2 and 3 as identified through the EA's Flood Map for Planning and the GM Level 2 SFRA mapping. This is not considered significant in terms of the scale of the site and is within the area required under the proposed allocation policy for 'a substantial green buffer within the site between the development and existing adjacent communities.'
- 5.11 United Utilities have identified risk of sewer flooding within the site and flood incidents from the public sewer in the wider vicinity which are as expected given the site is within an identified critical drainage area. The

site also contains areas of surface water flood risk which will need to be managed through site masterplanning and alongside a holistic drainage strategy for the site taking into account sewer flooding risk in line with our proposed policies.

Land west of Winwick Lane, Lowton

- 5.12 There are no fluvial watercourses within this site and the entirety of the site is shown in Flood Zone 1 on the EA's Flood Map for Planning. The site forms part of the wider Intermodal Logistics Park North development which is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and is currently proceeding through the Development Consent Order (DCO) planning process. Some areas of surface water flood risk are identified within our allocation boundary and across the wider DCO site boundary associated with the network of ditches across the area.
- 5.13 United Utilities have not identified any sewer flooding risk within this site or in the wider vicinity.

Housing Land Supply

- 5.14 The initial draft of the Wigan Borough Local Plan also proposes the following six housing-led allocations, though these do not involve Green Belt release.

North Leigh Park

- 5.15 This site was allocated for housing-led development in the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy and has outline planning permission and detailed permission in part, with the first detailed phase of development having been built out.
- 5.16 There are areas of flood zone 2 and 3 associated with Westleigh Brook which is located on the eastern portion of the site, but this is not proposed for any development and will be enhanced for public open space and ecological uses.
- 5.17 United Utilities have identified risk of sewer flooding within the site and flood incidents from the public sewer in the wider vicinity. The site also contains areas of surface water flood risk which will need to be managed through site masterplanning for the remainder of the site and alongside a holistic drainage strategy for the site taking into account sewer flooding risk in line with our proposed policies.

South Hindley

- 5.18 There is an extant outline planning application for this site allocation which is identified as a broad location for development in the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy 2013, though this has not yet been determined. However, a refreshed masterplan for the site is being prepared and will be submitted in spring 2025. This will include an up-to-date flood risk assessment as part of a revised environmental impact assessment.
- 5.19 There are areas of flood zone 2 and 3 at the western end of the site associated with Borsdane Brook. However, this part of the site is within the Green Belt and is not proposed for any housing development. The proposed link road will pass through area of flood risk and cross the brook.
- 5.20 United Utilities have identified risk of sewer flooding within the site and flood incidents from the public sewer in the wider vicinity. The site also contains areas of surface water flood risk which will need to be managed through site masterplanning.

Remaining land South of Atherton

- 5.21 This site forms a small part of a wider area of land designated as safeguarded land for future development in the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy. The majority of this area has been developed or is in the process of being brought forward for development, with this proposed allocation representing the remaining parcel of land.
- 5.22 Much of the land in the southern area of this parcel, as well as some of the land within the northern parcel directly adjacent to Chanters Brook, is within flood zone 2 and 3, though the proposed policy protects these areas from development
- 5.23 There are some small areas of surface water flood risk identified on the western boundary of the site, adjacent to Millers Lane, which will need to be managed through site masterplanning in line with our proposed policies. United Utilities have not identified any sewer flood risk within the site or the wider area.

East of Atherton

- 5.24 This site is identified as a broad location for new development in the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy 2013. All of the site is identified within Flood zone 1. There is an ordinary watercourse in the form of Hindsford Brook which runs parallel to the eastern boundary of the site. There is a small amount of surface water flood risk associated with this brook. An outline planning application for residential development was submitted for a small section of the site to the east in 2023. This included a flood risk assessment that raised no concerns with flooding on this brook and no objections from the Environment Agency.

- 5.25 There are some areas of surface water flood risk which will need to be managed through site masterplanning in line with our proposed policies. United Utilities have not identified any concerns with regards to sewer flooding risk on the site or in the wider area.

Remaining land at Landgate, Ashton-in-Makerfield

- 5.26 This site is part of a wider site identified as a broad location for new development in the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy 2013. A large part of the wider site has been developed with this proposed allocation representing the remaining parcel of land. It is all within flood zone 1.
- 5.27 There are some areas of surface water flood risk identified associated with existing watercourses within the site which will need to be managed through site masterplanning in line with our proposed policies. United Utilities have identified instances of public sewer flooding in the wider vicinity of the site. However, any risk associated with this can be dealt with through appropriate design and through a holistic drainage strategy in line with our surface water run off policy requirements.

Westwood Park, Wigan

- 5.28 There are some areas of flood zone 2 identified within the site associated with Westwood Flash and existing ditches. There are also some small areas of surface water flood risk, again associated with existing waterbodies within the site, which will need to be managed through site masterplanning in line with our proposed policies. United Utilities have not identified any concerns with regards to sewer flooding risk on the site or in the wider area.

Integrated Appraisal

- 5.29 The Integrated Appraisal of the Initial Draft of the Wigan Borough Local Plan has not identified any significant concerns with regards to the proposed allocations and their impact on water resources. Where there are potential issues, appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are in place, and the likelihood of negative effects arising is low. The Local Plan includes a range of measures that seek to enhance the natural environment, which will have secondary benefits for flood management and water quality. The Integrated Appraisal also considers that there will be direct positive effects likely to arise through a focus on the enhancement of riparian environments, reduction in surface water run off rates and better management of flood risk. Overall, the Integrated Appraisal considers our draft policies will provide minor positive effects in terms of water resources across the borough.