



**Wigan**   
**Council**

Wigan Borough Local Plan Review:  
Initial consultation – Issues and  
Opportunities

Summary Report of Consultation

17 October 2022 - 11 December 2022

September 2023

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Wigan Council commenced the process of preparing a new Local Plan by consulting on issues and opportunities in the borough from 17 October to 11 December 2022.
- 1.2 This report sets out a summary of the representations received as part of this initial consultation.
- 1.3 The ‘Issues and Opportunities’ consultation document presented information in the form of a questionnaire on the following 7 topics which could affect how development takes place across Wigan Borough over the plan period:
  - Homes
  - Jobs
  - Town centres
  - Transport
  - Places
  - Environment
  - People.
- 1.4 The Issues and Options consultation document did not set out proposed policy approaches or potential sites.

## **2 Who / how we consulted**

- 2.1 A wide range of people were consulted on the Issues and Opportunities consultation document, including young people, businesses, community groups, interest groups, town and parish councils, landowners, housebuilders, infrastructure providers, retailers and statutory consultees.
- 2.2 Consultation with these groups was undertaken through a variety of methods including contact by email, online through the Council’s website, on which stakeholders could access and read the consultation documents and respond via an online questionnaire. Paper copies of the questionnaire were available on request and at local libraries.
- 2.3 The consultation was promoted through email to 488 registered individuals and stakeholders, providing details on how to respond. The council also used social media to promote the consultation and the engagement sessions, with ‘bitesize’ information provided about what the consultation involved and how to get involved.

- 2.4 Alongside the online consultation, 16 community-based engagement sessions took place as well as meetings with community groups and the Wigan Borough Youth Cabinet.
- 2.5 In addition, press releases and adverts were prepared and a number of articles ran in local papers including Wigan Today and the Leigh Journal. Regular social media posts also ran throughout the consultation period.

### **3 The response to consultation**

- 3.1 The Council invited comments on 19 questions contained within the Issues and Opportunities questionnaire. A total of 1,413 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation questionnaire, of which 238 were gained through the engagement in the community sessions.
- 3.2 A summary of the representations received, including the issues raised at the consultation workshops, are set out in Appendix 1. These are ordered by theme.

## **Appendix 1: Summary of the key issues raised in response to the Issues and Opportunities questionnaire**

### **Housing**

- Top priorities for housing: homes for first time buyers, social housing to rent, family homes, special accommodation for older people, and more affordable housing.
- Strong support for adaptable homes meeting people’s needs over their lifetime (74% of respondents consider it important or very important).

### **Jobs**

- Priorities for business sectors to focus on: health and social care, green business sectors, manufacturing, advanced manufacturing.
- Priorities to help attract and retain businesses: improve transport links, redevelop older industrial areas, make town centres more attractive for business to locate in.
- Support for targeting jobs and training to people locally, providing better paid jobs and providing a wider range of job types.

### **Town centres**

- Priorities for attracting more visitors to our town centres: more independent retailers, bars, cafes and restaurants, creating a safer environment.
- Over four-fifths of respondents (82%) consider their local shops and services as important or very important for meeting their day to day needs.

### **Transport**

- Priority for encouraging more people to travel less by car: an integrated, affordable and efficient public transport system.
- 60% of people don’t think roads should be designed to give more space to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and less to cars.

### **Places**

- Top priorities for what developments should do to make places that you would like to live, work and spend time: make people feel safe, social and included, good quality greenspace and greenery.

- Four-fifths of respondents (81%) think conserving our historic buildings is important (25%) or very important (56%) in making places you'd like to live, work and spend time in.

## **Environment**

- Priority measures to help reduce carbon emissions: optimising alternative energy sources, improving public transport, more green infrastructure, and retrofitting existing buildings with low carbon / energy efficient measures.
- How to support wildlife to thrive: improve existing wildlife sites, additional planting in urban areas (including green walls, green roofs, street trees), and increase woodland and tree cover.

## **People**

- Top priorities for supporting people's health and wellbeing: better access to nature and the natural environment, access to affordable healthy food, creating safer and more attractive routes for walking and cycling, and spaces for people to meet and interact.
- Top priorities for the provision of better sport and recreation facilities: provision for children and young people, accessible natural greenspace, parks and gardens, and allotments and community gardens.
- New facilities needed to support housing growth in their area: healthcare, primary schools, community hall or centre.

## **Key priorities to shape the future of your area over the next 10-20 years?**

- Too many homes have been built – more homes are not needed, there is insufficient supporting infrastructure and road capacity and impacts on wildlife and loss of open space.
- More affordable housing is needed that is truly affordable.
- Protect the Green Belt.
- Encourage local business growth through lower rents, reduced business rates and the provision of smaller units to facilitate business start-ups.
- Higher paid jobs are needed to retain talented youngsters and graduates.

- Climate change needs to be acted on, including renewable energy sources, sustainable transport and retrofitting existing buildings with low carbon measures.
- Lack of shops in the borough's town centres, notably Wigan and Leigh, and too much anti-social behaviour so feel unsafe.
- More free parking in Wigan town centre, and more parking provision in many other centres, including Standish.
- Opposition to the Galleries redevelopment.
- More provision for children and young people needed, including youth clubs.
- Access for all, including the disabled and the elderly.