Wigan Borough Local Plan

Flood Risk Evidence Assessment

Author: Strategic Planning

Date: November 2026

Contents

1. Background 4

2. National Planning Policy 4

3. Places for Everyone: Greater Manchester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 4

4. Places for Everyone: Greater Manchester Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 5

5. Updates to national flood risk data 11

5.2 National Flood Risk Assessment 2 (NaFRA2) 11

5.3 Flood Map for Planning (FMfP) 11

6. Wigan Borough Local Plan 12

7. Housing Land Supply 12

7.2 North Leigh Park 12

7.3 South Hindley 12

7.4 Remaining land South of Atherton 13

7.5 East of Atherton 14

7.6 Remaining land at Landgate, Ashton-in-Makerfield 14

7.7 Westwood Park, Wigan 15

8. Integrated Assessment 15

Note of changes made since the August 2026 version of this document:

Section	
3.1.1, 4.1.1	Factual updates to reflect Environment Agency comments
4.14-4.16, Table 4.2	To address additional sites within the housing land supply since the GM SFRA was undertaken.

1. Background

1.1.1 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.

1.1.2 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

2.1.1 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.
- 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

3.1.1 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 important part of the evidence base for the Wigan Borough Local Plan. However, given the Level 1 SFRA was completed in 2019 and some of its mapping predates subsequent national datasets and local hydraulic modelling, it should

be read alongside the updated national datasets and any relevant local hydraulic model outputs.

3.1.2 The Level 1 SFRA 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
- Identify 'opportunity areas for further critical drainage management' as a step towards updating the existing locally defined critical drainage areas in Greater Manchester.

3.1.3 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

4.1.1 The GM Level 2 SFRA was completed in October 2020 and remains a relevant part of the evidence base for the Wigan Borough Local Plan. Its site-specific assessments and modelling should, however, be read alongside the latest national flood-risk datasets, relevant subsequent local hydraulic modelling and any updated site-specific flood-risk information. 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.

4.1.2 As mentioned previously, the Level 2 SFRA carried out further appraisals on 4 sites within the borough's identified housing land supply. The summary for these 4 sites is set out in Table 4.1 and includes recommendations for next steps. It should be noted that, as at November 2026, no planning applications have been submitted for these sites, except for the former Gas Depot, York Road, Ashton which is explained in the table.

Table 4:1 Further appraisal of sites carried out in the Level 2 SFRA

Site	Level 2 recommendation on passing the Exception Test	Main barriers to passing Test	Recommended next steps
SHLAA 0023 - 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. **This site has now been removed from the SHLAA based on deliverability concerns such as flood risk and other constraints.**
SHLAA 0240 - 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
SHLAA 0325 - Former Gas Depot, York	This site is unlikely to pass the Exceptions Test	Significant fluvial risk from onsite culverted Main River (Millingford Brook);	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

Site	Level 2 recommendation on passing the Exception Test	Main barriers to passing Test	Recommended next steps
Road, Ashton		residual risk; long term risk from climate change	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. **This site has been removed from the SHLAA as a planning application was approved for a Lidl superstore which has consequently been built.**
SHLAA 0405 - Land adjacent to Premier Inn, Harrogate Street	This site is unlikely to pass the Exceptions Test unless development can be directed to areas within FZ1, reducing developable area	Significant residual existing risk and long-term fluvial risk from River Douglas	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.

Site	Level 2 recommendation on passing the Exception Test	Main barriers to passing Test	Recommended next steps
			The site boundary has been amended within the SHLAA taking the rear area of the site which is within flood zone 3 out. The SHLAA has been updated to make clear that development would only take place on the site frontage which is within flood zone 1.

4.1.3 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.

4.1.4 A number of additional SHLAA sites have been identified since the housing land supply was last reviewed under the GM SFRA. Excluding sites that have subsequently been granted planning permission, or a previous permission has expired, these are set out in Table 4.2.

4.1.5 Two of the 14 sites identified, at Southgate (Ref 600) and the former ambulance station on Pottery Road (Ref: 502) do not have planning permission and are within flood zone 3. However:

- Southgate is considered undeliverable in the plan timetable;
- The former ambulance station site is within an area where Environment Agency mapping identifies flood defences in the vicinity.

4.1.6 Given the presence of flood defences does not guarantee that the site is suitable for development; the former ambulance station site will need to be supported by an appropriate site-specific Flood Risk Assessment which establishes the standard of protection, condition of the defence, residual risk, risk of overtopping or breach, and implications of climate change.

Table 4.2: Sites without planning permission that have been added to the housing land supply since the GM SFRA was undertaken

SHLAA Ref:	Address	Site size (ha)	No. of units	Type	Planning status	Flood Zones
0488	40 Warrington Lane, Wigan	0.04	5	New build	Permission pending: A/25/098758/FULL	FZ1
0495	King Street Masterplan boundary, Wigan	2.44	31	Conversions	Not permissioned	FZ1
0502	Former Ambulance station, Pottery Road, Wigan	0.30	50	New build	Not permissioned	FZ3 – There are flood defences to the south
0510	Bold Street/ Billinge Road, Wigan	0.15	8	New build	Not permissioned	FZ1
0547	Windermere Grove, Leigh	0.33	12	New build	Not permissioned	FZ1
0548	Car Bank Square, Atherton	0.25	9	New build	Not permissioned	FZ1
0549	Leigh Sports Village, Leigh	0.51	18	New build	Not permissioned	FZ1
0553	Oak Avenue, Golborne	0.20	7	New build	Not permissioned	FZ1
0587	West of Gibfield, Atherton	70.62	500	New build	PFE allocation not permissioned	Assessed as part of PfE process
0600	Southgate, Wigan	0.94	0	New build	Not permissioned	FZ3 but no units considered developable over plan period unless flood risk can be addressed

SHLAA Ref:	Address	Site size (ha)	No. of units	Type	Planning status	Flood Zones
0601	Land to west of Westleigh Brook and Parsonage Way, Leigh	3.13	81	New build	Permission pending: A/24/97394/MAJOR	Majority FZ1 but some FZ3 & 2 on eastern boundary of site
0615	Britannia Bridge School Site, Ince	0.30	9	New build	Not permissioned	FZ1
0616	The Bellingham Hotel, Wigan Lane	0.40	13	New build / conversion	Not permissioned	FZ1
0617	Wigan Station Gateway	18.40	200	New build / conversions	Not permissioned	FZ1

5. Updates to national flood risk data

5.1.1 Since completion of the GM SFRA in support of the Places for Everyone plan there have been updates to national assessments and data sets with regards to flood risk.

5.2 National Flood Risk Assessment 2 (NaFRA2)

5.2.1 NaFRA2 (National Flood Risk Assessment version 2) is the Environment Agency's updated tool for assessing flood risk across England. It integrates data on river, sea, surface water flooding and coastal erosion, using high-resolution mapping and climate projections (UKCP18) to model current and future risks.

5.2.2 NaFRA2 replaces older models with more accurate, locally informed data. It includes defended and undefended flood extents, potential flood depths, and updates quarterly. This ensures planners and developers have access to the most current flood risk information.

5.3 Flood Map for Planning (FMfP)

5.3.1 The EA Flood Map for Planning was updated in March 2025. The FMfP now incorporates data from the updated National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA2), offering a more accurate and consistent national picture of flood risk. This includes both local hydraulic models and a new national model, improving coverage in areas previously lacking detailed data.

5.3.2 Flood Zones 2 and 3 have been revised to reflect undefended present-day flood risk from rivers and the sea. While definitions remain unchanged, boundaries have shifted in some areas due to improved modelling. This may result in more properties being classified as at risk.

5.3.3 The map now incorporates UKCP18 climate change scenarios, allowing users to evaluate how future conditions may affect flood extents. This supports long-term resilience in planning decisions. Surface water flood risk is now included, offering a more comprehensive view of flood hazards.

5.3.4 Given the age of the Greater Manchester SFRA and the subsequent updates to national flood-risk information, the latest relevant national datasets should be considered alongside the 2019 Level 1 SFRA, the 2020 Level 2 SFRA, detailed local hydraulic model outputs and any relevant site-specific evidence. Where material differences arise, these should be identified and reconciled using an agreed methodology, in consultation with the Environment Agency where appropriate.

6. Wigan Borough Local Plan

6.1.1 The Wigan Borough Local Plan does not identify any additional employment or housing allocations to be released from the Green Belt.

7. Housing Land Supply

7.1.1 The publication version of the Wigan Borough Local Plan proposes the following six housing-led allocations. These are not new sites and do not involve Green Belt release, all have previously been allocated or designated as broad locations for development in the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy.

7.2 North Leigh Park

7.2.1 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.

7.2.2 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.

7.2.3 The updated FMfP shows areas at high risk of surface water flooding within the proposed allocation boundary. These are largely associated with existing waterbodies within the site and low points along the former railway line in the north of the allocation.

7.2.4 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.

7.2.5 There have been a number of approved planning applications associated with this proposed allocation many of which have included flood risk assessments and approved drainage strategies, these are summarised in the Site Assessment Allocation Report.

7.3 South Hindley

7.3.1 This proposed site allocation which is identified as a broad location for development in the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy 2013. There is an extant outline planning application for the site that has not yet been determined. A refreshed masterplan for the site has been

which includes an up-to-date flood risk assessment as part of a revised environmental impact assessment.

7.3.2 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.

7.3.3 The updated FMfP shows areas at high risk of surface water flooding within the proposed allocation boundary. These are largely associated with existing waterbodies and drainage ditches within the site and low points along the former railway line to the south of the allocation.

7.3.4 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.

7.3.5 The proposed allocation was subject to an outline planning application in 2018 supported by a full Environmental Statement that considered flood risk and drainage and a full flood risk assessment for the proposed allocation. This is summarised in the Site Allocation Assessment Report.

7.4 Remaining land South of Atherton

7.4.1 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.

7.4.2 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.

7.4.3 There are some areas of high surface water flood risk shown on the updated FMfP on the western boundary of the site, adjacent to Millers Lane likely associated with low points within the site.

7.4.4 Surface water 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.

7.4.5 Further summary of the flood risks associated with the site is within the Site Allocation Assessment Report.

7.5 East of Atherton

7.5.1 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.

7.5.2 The updated FMfP shows limited areas at high risk of surface water flooding within the proposed allocation boundary. These are largely associated with the existing waterbody to the eastern boundary of the site and a likely depression in the centre of the site.

7.5.3 Surface water 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.

7.5.4 An outline planning application for this site has recently been submitted which includes an assessment of flood risk as part of the Environmental Statement in support of the application. This is summarised in the Site Allocation Assessment Report.

7.6 Remaining land at Landgate, Ashton-in-Makerfield

7.6.1 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.

7.6.2 There are some areas of high surface water flood risk shown on the updated FMfP, these are mainly associated with existing waterbodies and ditches with one central area likely due to a low point adjacent to the former railway line which runs partially through the site.

7.6.3 Surface water 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.

7.6.4 The site promoter for this allocation has undertaken some flood risk assessment work as part of proposals for the next phase of development which is summarised within the Site Allocation Assessment Report.

7.7 Westwood Park, Wigan

7.7.1 There are some areas of flood zone 2 identified within the site associated with Westwood Flash and existing ditches.

7.7.2 The updated FMfP shows limited surface water flooding within the proposed allocation boundary.

7.7.3 Surface water 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.

7.7.4 The Site Allocation Assessment Report contains a summary of flood risk assessment work that was undertaken for a previously approved hybrid application for the site alongside the development of the A49 link road.

8. Integrated Assessment

8.1.1 The Integrated Assessment of the Wigan Borough Local Plan has not identified any significant concerns with regards to the proposed housing 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 Assessment 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.

8.1.2 Overall, the Integrated Assessment considers our draft policies will provide minor positive effects in terms of water resources across the borough.