Wigan Council

Wigan Borough Local Plan

Topic Paper 3: Jobs

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

Section	
3.1.40	Factual update
3.1.47	The two paragraphs after this have been deleted to reflect non-material amendments made to the Submission version

1. Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of 7 Topic Papers each one relating directly to one of the 7 policy chapters in the Draft Wigan Borough Local Plan. This is Topic Paper 3 on Jobs.

1.1.2 The topic papers distil the evidence base that has been collated and, where applicable, commissioned to support the Local Plan. They also set out the key messages to help demonstrate that the plan meets the tests of soundness in a proportionate way.

1.1.3 Specifically, the papers show that the policies in the Jobs chapter have been positively prepared, is justified and appropriate, is deliverable and effective, and is consistent with national policy and relevant strategic policies for the area. These requirements are set out in paragraphs 35 and 36 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).

1.1.4 It starts with the planning policy context for Jobs and identifies the policy requirements for the Local Plan to address, before focusing on more depth for each of those policy requirements. This includes reference to proposed site allocations for Jobs in the Local Plan, but they are primarily covered in separate Site Allocation Assessment Reports for each site.

1.1.5 The 7 Topic Papers need to be read alongside the 6 Site Allocation Assessment Reports and the self-assessment toolkit reports. For more detailed information reference should be made to the source reports and studies.

2. The planning policy context for Jobs

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework

2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in August 2026. However, the Local Plan is being reviewed against the NPPF December 2023 version due to a criterion within the transitional arrangements surrounding the Places for Everyone plan.

2.1.2 Where relevant, material consideration has been given to the December 2024 version of the NPPF when preparing the Jobs policies outlined in Section 3, particularly where the changes made relate primarily to development management. The August 2026 version was published too late to be considered in our topic papers, or to inform content in the Local Plan.

2.1.3 National planning policy on Jobs is set out primarily in section 6, of the NPPF: 'Building a strong, competitive economy', and also, section 10: 'Supporting high quality communications' and section 14: 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change'.

2.1.4 The NPPF raises a number of policy requirements and challenges for Local Plans as set out in the Local Plan Route Mapper Toolkit Part 2: Local Plan Form and Content Checklist from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) (May 2025). As the PAS Toolkit is based on the December 2024 version of the NPPF, the Council has revised it to align with the December 2023 version against which the Local Plan will be examined. With numbering from the revised toolkit, the key policy requirements and challenges are that Local Plans should:

27. Create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

28. Set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration.

29. Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period.

30. Seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment.

31. Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

32. Recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries.

33. Make provision for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.

34. Enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

35. Enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

36. Enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.

37. Enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

38. Recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.

68. Support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections, setting out how high-quality digital infrastructure is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time.

88. Take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply,

biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures.

90. Increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat by providing a positive strategy for energy from these sources, identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and identifying opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.

2.1.5 We are publishing the Local Plan Route Mapper Toolkit Part 2: Local Plan Form and Content Checklist with our response to each of these requirements separately. The remainder of this section in this Topic Paper sets out what the policy requirements are for Jobs in the Wigan Borough Local Plan. This includes the extent that, given it will sit alongside the Places for Everyone Plan, it needs to meet the requirements in the NPPF.

2.1.6 Also, of specific relevance is DfT Circular 01/2022 at Paragraph 43, which states that: for residential-led developments, due consideration should be given to broadband infrastructure, amongst other matters.

2.2 Legislation

2.2.1 There is specific legislation for planning policy in this topic area, including:

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (2015)

2.2.2 Permitted development rights (PDRs) allow certain building and development works to be carried out without the need of the normal planning process. PDRs have been introduced in the last decade to facilitate housing growth to meet targets across England. PDRs make it easier for people to extend their home, create new homes in existing buildings such as offices, shops and warehouses, or demolish vacant buildings previously classified B1(a), B1(b), B1(c) or C3 space and rebuild as residential.

2.2.3 The current Use Classes were last updated on 1 September 2020. Class B now comprises B2 General Industrial and B8 Storage and Distribution, while previously classified B1(a), B1(b) and B1(c) uses are now classified as:

- E(g)(i): Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions;
- E(g)(ii): Research and development of products or processes; and
- E(g)(iii): Industrial processes.

2.2.4 The Order was amended in 2020 to consider PDRs for demolition and rebuilding as residential. A new use class for buildings was introduced, dealing with demolition of buildings and construction of new dwellinghouses in their place. The PDR states that the building to be demolished must have been built before 1 January 1990, be vacant, redundant and free-standing and fall within certain use classes. The building must also have been vacant for at least six months prior to the date of the application for prior approval.

2.3 Planning Practice Guidance

2.3.1 Planning Practice Guidance is an online resource that is updated on an ongoing basis as needed. There is specific guidance on the job's topic area in planning practice guidance, including:

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (November 2025)

2.3.2 This planning practice guidance states that the assessment of land availability is an important step in the preparation of the Local Plan. The assessment should identify and assess sites with potential for development including their suitability, availability and achievability. All land should be assessed together as part of plan preparation to identify which sites that are the most suitable and deliverable for a particular use.

Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (February 2025)

2.3.3 This planning practice guidance outlines what evidence may be needed as part of Local Plan evidence base. In planning for businesses, it says that plan-making authorities need to assess:

- the best fit functional economic market area.
- the existing stock of land for employment uses within the area.
- the recent pattern of employment land supply and loss, for example based on extant planning permissions and planning applications (or losses to permitted development).

- evidence of market demand, including the locational and premises requirements of particular types of business, sourced from local data and market intelligence, such as recent surveys of business needs, discussions with developers and property agents and engagement with business and economic forums.
- wider market signals relating to economic growth, diversification and innovation.
- any evidence of market failure, such as physical or ownership constraints that prevent the employment site being used effectively.

(Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 2a-026-20190220)

2.3.4 It goes on to say that policy making authorities will need to develop an idea of future needs based on a range of data which is current and robust, such as:

- sectoral and employment forecasts and projections which take account of likely changes in skills needed (labour demand).
- demographically derived assessments of current and future local labour supply (labour supply techniques).
- analysis based on the past take-up of employment land and property and/or future property market requirements.
- consultation with relevant organisations, studies of business trends, an understanding of innovative and changing business models, particularly those which make use of online platforms to respond to consumer demand and monitoring of business, economic and employment statistics.

(Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 2a-027-20190220)

2.3.5 It further explains how market demand can be analysed, employment land requirement established, and the need for logistics assessed. Analysing supply and demand will allow policy makers to identify whether there is a mismatch between quantitative and qualitative supply of, and demand for, employment sites (Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 2a-02920190220 & Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 2a-031-20190722).

2.3.6 We recently published the Wigan Economic Market and Economic Land Assessment (EMELA) in June 2024 (see section 3 for further details) which is consistent with the approach set out in PPG:

Housing and economic land availability assessment and PPG: Housing and economic needs assessment.

Climate Change Planning Practice Guidance (March 2019)

2.3.7 This planning practice guidance states that Local Planning Authorities are not restricted or limited in setting energy performance standards above the building regulations for non-housing developments (Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 6-012-20190315, revision date: 15 03 2019).

2.4 Land Use Framework for England

2.4.1 In March 2026, the Government published England's first Land Use Framework, which provides an evidence-led national context for more consistent and joined-up decisions about land to support housing and infrastructure delivery, maintain food production, restore nature and build climate resilience.

2.4.2 The framework is not intended to prescribe land uses in specific locations or form part of planning policy; instead, it sets a national vision, principles and actions that reinforce the approach to our Local Plan Policies in supporting multifunctional land use, nature recovery, energy supply and nature-based solutions.

2.4.3 The Land Use Framework concludes that England has enough land to meet key national needs - housing, domestic food production, nature recovery and clean power - and that these should not be treated as "competing demands." This is, however, conditional on using land more strategically and efficiently (including multifunctional use) supported by better data and strategic planning.

2.5 Development plan documents that will be replaced by the Local Plan, on adoption

Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006)

2.5.1 The Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in 2006 but many policies within it were replaced by policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy when it was adopted in September 2013 – see Appendix A of the Core Strategy for details. Those policies are shown crossed out in the contents list in the version of the UDP on the council's website.

2.5.2 Remaining policies relating to Jobs in the UDP are as follows, with the intention to replace them with content in the Local Plan as applicable:

EM1A: Primary Employment Areas

2.5.3 This policy relates to 35 Primary Employment Areas and permits employment development provided that there will be no unacceptable environmental, amenity, highway, road safety or other adverse impact. Other uses will only be permitted when they are either small scale and complementary; or on the fringe of the Primary Employment Area and it can be demonstrated that it will improve the physical relationship between the employment uses and adjacent uses, and not result in any greater constraint on the development and use of the remaining Employment Area for employment uses.

EM1B: Re-use of Employment Land and Buildings for Other Uses

2.5.4 This policy applies to employment land and buildings outside of the Primary Employment Areas covered by Policy EM1A. The development or change of use of employment land or premises to other uses will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no current or likely future demand for the site;
- There are significant environmental problems associated with the site that will be mitigated;
- It is the only viable means of retaining a building of architectural or historical significance;
- It is for part of the site or premises as the most appropriate means by which upgrading, modernisation or redevelopment of the majority of the site or premises will be achieved;
- It is an important component of a wider regeneration proposal;
- It will meet an established need, and it can be demonstrated that there is no alternative site available and the benefits outweigh the loss of the employment land; or
- It is a small site that is physically isolated from other employment sites.

EM1C: Employment Development Outside Primary Employment Areas

2.5.5 This addresses employment development outside of the Primary Employment Areas, including extensions to existing premises.

EM1E: Motor Vehicle Servicing, Repairs, Hire and Sales

2.5.6 This addresses motor vehicle servicing, repairs, hire and/or sales uses, including extensions, within areas of predominantly employment and commercial uses, including Primary Employment Areas.

EM1G: Mixed Use Development-Former Bickershaw Colliery Site

2.5.7 This policy designated the former Bickershaw Colliery site for mixed use development. It has been redeveloped for housing.

EM1H: Mixed Use Development- Wigan Pier Quarter

2.5.8 This policy designated Wigan Pier Quarter for missed use conservation-led regeneration. It has been delivered in part, again mostly for housing and it remains a live area for conservation-led regeneration and is proposed for inclusion in the policy for Wigan Town Centre in the Wigan Borough Local Plan.

Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy (2013)

2.5.9 The Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in 2013. Some policies, and a part of one policy, within it were replaced by policies in the Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan when it was adopted in March 2024 – see Appendix A of the Places for Everyone Plan for details. Those policies are shown crossed out in the version of the Core Strategy on the council's website.

2.5.10 Policy CP5 Economy and Employment in the Local Plan Core Strategy was replaced by PfE Plan policies JP-J1 and JP-J2 and, therefore, it no longer forms part of the development plan.

2.6 Supplementary Planning Documents

2.6.1 There are two Supplementary Planning Documents that support policies on Jobs.

Re-use of employment land and buildings for non-employment uses (2006)

2.6.2 This Supplementary Planning Document relates to the UDP policy EM1B on the re-use of employment land and buildings for non-employment uses outside of primary employment areas. The SPD gives additional guidance on each criterion in the policy. It will need to be updated or removed, as applicable, on adoption of the Local Plan.

Telecommunications development (2006)

2.6.3 The document sets out Supplementary Planning Guidance for telecommunications development in Wigan Borough. It recognises that modern telecommunications are essential and provides guidance taking account of health effects and the public perception of danger; the geographical rationale for the adopted approach; assessment of the visual impact of telecommunication masts; and mast design, mast sharing, fencing, equipment cabins, planting and landscaping.

2.6.4 This SPD was based on policies in the Wigan UDP (January 1996), particularly policy EN7J, but this was not included in the Wigan UDP (2006). It continues to be used for guidance, however, including design related issues.

2.7 Neighbourhood plans

2.7.1 There are Neighbourhood Plans for Standish (2019), Golborne and Lowton West (2023) and Abram (2025).

Standish Neighbourhood Plan

2.7.2 The Standish Neighbourhood Plan has the following three policies relating to Jobs:

Policy VE6: Development that would result in loss of Business Space in Employment Areas

2.7.3 Proposals that result in loss of business space to a non-employment use in Employment Areas will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the site is not viable, or is for better-quality business space, or meets a clear need for community facilities, or environmental considerations make it unsuitable to continue as a business use.

Policy VE7: Non-Employment Uses in Employment Areas

2.7.4 Development or change of use will only be supported when it would not detract from the employment use of the remaining sites in the Employment Area, subject to the existing amount of floorspace remaining in employment use, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that retaining employment floorspace would prejudice the ability to satisfy criteria detailed in the policy, with at least one to be met.

Policy VE8: Improved business accommodation and sites within the Employment Areas

2.7.5 Proposals to upgrade, extend or improve existing employment sites and buildings within the Employment Areas will be supported, particularly the development of managed "incubator" or "start-up" units if there will be no unacceptable environmental, amenity, highway, road safety or other adverse impact on the local community.

Golborne and Lowton West Neighbourhood Plan

2.7.6 The Golborne Neighbourhood Plan has the following three policies relating to Jobs:

Policy GLW-R1: Employment and Enterprise

2.7.7 New employment and enterprise space (Use Class E), including accommodation to support skilled and semi-skilled employment, creative industries, knowledge-based employment and professional services will be supported within the defined Town Centre and Slag Lane Local Centre.

2.7.8 Brownfield sites outside of the existing centres for business and light industry uses will be supported where change of use to other Use Class E activities is controlled, where such uses would have the ability to harm the Town Centre and the Slag Lane Local Centre.

2.7.9 New business, employment and enterprise uses will be supported where there will be no significant adverse impact on the amenities of any nearby residential properties.

Policy GLW-R2: Industry, Storage and Distribution

2.7.10 Development involving floorspace for industry, storage or distribution (Use Class B2 and B8) will be supported in Stone Cross Park. Such development should have regard to: the capacity of the highway network to adequately and safely accommodate traffic generated, including heavy goods vehicles; avoiding significant adverse impacts on the amenities of the residential properties and green spaces, from traffic generated, including heavy goods vehicle movements; impact on the amenity, quality of the environment, viability of the Town Centre, including through generation of traffic movements through the Town Centre by heavy goods vehicles; opportunities for active and sustainable travel.

Policy GLW-R5: Millingford Industrial Estate

2.7.11 Allocated for mixed-use based on the following uses including: apartments or other residential developments, including for older people; employment (Class E) uses; live/work units; and community facilities.

Abram Neighbourhood Plan

2.7.12 The Abram Neighbourhood Plan contains the following policy on Jobs:

Policy BEC1: Business, Enterprise and Community Facilities

2.7.13 Within urban areas new business and community uses (Use Class E, F1 and F2) will be supported. Outside of urban areas, development supporting the expansion of existing businesses and the development and/or diversification of agricultural and land-based businesses will be supported, subject to such development not being inappropriate in the Green Belt.

2.7.14 Development resulting in the loss of existing business uses or community facilities (Use Class E, F1 and F2) will not be supported unless such uses are replaced by equivalent or better facilities in an alternative accessible and sustainable location; or that the existing use is no longer required or viable.

2.8 The Places for Everyone Plan

2.8.1 The Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan was adopted in March 2024. It is the strategic plan for Greater Manchester, not including Stockport but including the other nine districts, of which Wigan Borough is one. On adoption, the Wigan Borough Local Plan will sit alongside the PfE Plan, as part of the wider development plan for the borough, and should be consistent with it, in line with the December 2023 version of the NPPF (paragraph 36).

2.8.2 The PfE Plan has a mix of strategic and detailed policies. The spatial strategy centres around inclusive growth. To the north of the city region this is around creating more favourable conditions for growth by providing high-quality investment opportunities across the plan area that helps to reduce disparities. These include:

- **Policy JP-Strat6: Northern Areas** states that a significant increase in the competitiveness of the northern areas will be sought. There will be a strong focus on making as much use as possible of suitable previously developed (brownfield) land through urban regeneration, enhancing the role of the town centres and

diversifying the residential offer. This will be complemented by the allocation of sites for development identified in Chapter 11 of the Plan, that will help to boost economic opportunities and diversify housing provision.

- **Policy JP-Strat8: Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor** proposes to deliver a regionally significant area of economic and residential development, with new highway infrastructure intended to connect Junction 26 of the M6 and Junction 5 of the M61 including public transport provision.

2.8.3 There are 9 specific policies relevant to the Jobs chapter, the key elements of which are set out in turn below.

Policy JP-S2: Carbon and Energy

2.8.4 This policy seeks to support the aim of delivering a carbon neutral Greater Manchester no later than 2038, with a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by achieving a reduction of energy use and carbon emissions, including by promoting the retrofitting existing buildings and for new development to be net-zero carbon.

Policy JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth

2.8.5 This policy states that a thriving, inclusive and productive economy will be sought in all our boroughs with an emphasis on:

- Maintaining a very high level of economic diversity across our boroughs.
- Facilitating the development of high value clusters in key economic sectors.
- Making the most of major assets of the sub-region.
- Grasping the economic opportunities from the global transition to a low carbon economy.
- Providing the high-quality, sustainable living environments that will help to attract and retain skilled workers.
- Supporting local job growth, by seeking agreement with employers and developers, including housebuilders, to enter into local labour and training agreements through planning obligations and other mechanisms where appropriate.
- Maximising the potential of the key growth locations set out in JP-Strat1 to JP-Strat12 to deliver inclusive growth across the sub-region by ensuring that employment growth opportunities are well connected and accessible to all residents.

Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises

2.8.6 This policy J2 states that a diverse range of employment sites and accessible premises, both new and second-hand, will be made available across the Plan area in terms of location, scale, type and cost. This will offer opportunities for all kinds and sizes of businesses, including start-ups, firms seeking to expand, and large-scale inward investment which will help to tackle inequalities. It also states that, existing employment areas are important to maintaining a strong and diverse supply of sites and premises in our borough's will be protected from redevelopment to other uses, nurtured to ensure they remain competitive, and their improved where necessary. It states that this will include local employment areas as well as key growth locations.

Policies JP-J3: Office Development and JP-J4: Industry and Warehousing Development

2.8.7 These policies outline, as a minimum, the amount of office, industry and warehousing floorspace that will be provided across the Plan area over the period 2022-2039.

Policy JP-P1: Sustainable Places

2.8.8 This policy encourages all development to be resource-efficient with: a low carbon footprint; efficient use of land; minimised use of new materials; and high levels of recycling.

Policy JP-P3: Cultural Facilities

2.8.9 This policy seeks to proactively develop and support cultural businesses and attractions in our cities and towns through a range of measures, including by protecting existing heritage, cultural and community venues, facilities and uses; supporting the development of new cultural venues in town centres and places with good public transport connectivity; and by considering the use of vacant properties and land for pop-ups or meanwhile uses for cultural and creative activities during the day and at night-time to stimulate vibrancy and viability and promote diversity in town centres.

Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge

2.8.10 This policy seeks significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents, including by: enabling the delivery of new and improved accessible facilities for all ages, such as early years, schools, further and higher education, and adult training to ensure our workforce is ready to benefit from new employment opportunities; ensuring the delivery of sufficient school

places to respond to the demands from new housing; and, by supporting the continued growth and success of the university sector.

Policy JP-C2: Digital Connectivity

2.8.11 This policy seeks to improve digital infrastructure and ensure that new development is connected to it as a high priority.

Policies JPA31: M6 Junction 25; JPA33: Pocket Nook, Lowton; and JPA34: West of Gibfield.

2.8.12 There are 4 site allocation policies set out in the PfE Plan, of which 3 are for employment land in whole (JPA31) or in part, which contribute to the employment land supply for the Local Plan. In total 75.76 hectares of employment land or 200,500 sqm of floorspace is set out in these three sites.

2.9 The policy requirements for Jobs in the Local Plan

2.9.1 In preparing the Local Plan, consideration has been given to national planning policy and guidance and, where relevant, legislation relating to planning for jobs. Consideration has also been given to the existing development plan that will be replaced by the Local Plan, together with relevant local planning policy and guidance, including Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

2.9.2 The extent to which the recently adopted Places for Everyone Plan both meets these requirements and introduces new ones for the Local Plan has also been considered. Having regard to these matters, there is a strong case for the Wigan Borough Local Plan to include policies on the following matters:

- Supporting economic growth
- Employment Areas
- The green economy
- The visitor economy
- Digital and telecommunications infrastructure.

2.9.3 It is not proposed to take forward policies on the following matters in the Local Plan:

- Affordable business accommodation
- Office uses.

2.9.4 The reason for not taking forward policy on affordable business accommodation is that given the range of property available within

our existing stock and within our Employment Areas, there is no need for a specific affordable workspace accommodation policy.

2.9.5 A policy on office uses is not being taken forward as this is sufficiently addressed by other proposed policies J2, TC2 and TC3 and by PfE Plan policy JP-J3.

3. Our Job Policies

3.1 Supporting economic growth

The proposed policy

3.1.1 Policy J1 covers Supporting economic growth.

3.1.2 The policy is a clear statement of intent to facilitate the growth and diversification of our economy, notably within our foundational and frontier sectors, to support jobs growth.

3.1.3 New development will be focussed on key spatial locations including the M6 corridor, and the Wigan-Bolton Growth Corridor (NorthFold, PfE Plan policy JP-Strat8), as well within our Employment Areas (policy J2) and our town centres (policies TC2-TC11).

3.1.4 To support the borough's economic growth ambition, the Places for Everyone Plan has identified the need for 482,326 sqm of new employment floorspace over the period 2022–2039.

3.1.5 The policy also includes a clear commitment to collaborate with businesses, education providers and other relevant partners to further develop an environment where local residents are equipped to access local job and training opportunities that align with the borough's foundational and frontier sectors.

Employment Land Supply

3.1.6 Over the plan period, the borough's employment land supply includes contributions from the following sources:

- Completed sites (2022/23 to 2025/26)
- Sites allocated in the Places for Everyone Plan (3 sites)
- Land available within our Employment Areas (policy J2).
- Committed employment development outside of designated Employment Areas.
- Sites allocated in this Plan, including 2 housing-led mixed use allocations (policies H6 and H8).

3.1.7 A breakdown of the employment land supply in the borough (as at 1 April 2026) is set out in Table 7.1 in the Publication version of the Local Plan and detailed further in Appendix 1 below. As set out in Figure TP3.1 below, the total supply has a capacity to deliver 486,978 sqm of employment floorspace, including employment floorspace delivered on completed sites since April 2022.

Figure TP3.1: Summary of Employment Land Supply, 2022-2039

	Area (Ha)	Floorspace (sqm)
Completed sites 2022/23-2025/26	17.53	41,689.7
PfE Allocation	75.76	200,500
Housing Mixed use allocations	6.10	22,300
Sites with planning permission in Employment Areas	49.25	163,085
Other Employment Land within Employment Areas	19.42	51,290
Committed employment development outside of Employment Areas	4.73	8,113
Total Supply	**173.08**	**486,978**

3.1.8 As set out in Figure TP3.2 below, the level of completed employment floorspace in the borough since 2022 is very low, averaging around 10,400 sqm per year. This is below the annual average of around 28,370 sqm per annum over the plan period needed to fulfil the requirement set in Policy J1. This low completion rate is broadly consistent with the borough's completion rate since 2001, as detailed below, and is a reflection of the lack of quality or location of sites within the borough's existing employment land supply.

Figure TP3.2: Summary of Annual Employment Completions, 2022/23-2025/26

Completions to date	Floorspace (sqm)
Completions 2022/23	4,200
Completions 2023/24	6,416
Completions 2024/25	16,596
Completions 2025/26	14,478
Completions 2022-2026	**41,690**

3.1.9 As identified in Table 7.1 of Policy J1, the majority of the employment land supply on remaining land within designated Employment Areas is on two sites, at South Lancashire Industrial Estate and Chaddock Lane. Both of these sites were designated for employment in the Wigan Unitary Development Plan in 2006 but have only recently become under construction. The site at Chaddock Lane has seen significant progress to the extent that it was technically completed in July 2026. This will contribute as a completed site in the 2027 update of the employment land supply.

3.1.10 The committed employment development outside of designated Employment Areas (8,113 sqm) is primarily the development of a new head office, workshops and open storage at the Murphy's site on land off Wigan Road, Golborne which is situated in the Green Belt. This site is under construction and expected to be completed in 2026/2027. The other committed site outside of a designated Employment Area is a smaller development located off Newton Road, Lowton.

The policy context for the proposed policy

3.1.11 The policy context for the policy is largely set out in paragraphs 85-87 of the NPPF (December 2023). The policy accords with the NPPF in that it sets out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, including by identifying strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period.

3.1.12 The NPPF also states that policies should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including by making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.

3.1.13 PfE Policy JP-J1 'Supporting Long-term Economic Growth' states that a thriving, inclusive and productive economy will be sought in all our boroughs; while policies JP-J3 'Office Development' and JP-J4 'Industry and Warehousing Development' set out for each borough, as a minimum, the amount of office, industry and warehousing floorspace that will be provided across the plan area over the period 2022-2039. The detail is set out in paragraph 3.1.20 below.

Key evidence

3.1.14 Key evidence supporting the content in the supporting economic growth policy includes the Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment (EMELA); the Places for Everyone Plan Strategic Transport Model; Progress with Unity; our economic ambition; and past trends in take-up and loss of employment land. The key messages from our work on the Local Plan, including consultation and engagement, and the integrated assessment also contribute to the evidence base.

Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment (EMELA) June 2024

3.1.15 The EMELA (2024) was commissioned to give a better understanding about how our economy performs and about how our employment areas and land supply can help to deliver our growth ambitions for the borough. It forecasts increased demand for office and industrial floorspace within the borough over the Local Plan period, primarily for industrial floorspace.

3.1.16 The EMELA concludes that the current supply of land is not suitable to meet the aspirations of the council to improve the performance of the local economy. Therefore, an improvement in the offer of land available is needed to attract optimal occupiers, support higher value activities and movers up the value chain in the industrial market, across both foundation and frontier sectors.

3.1.17 The EMELA further concludes that the council should adopt a balanced approach such that all business sizes, from start-ups to large headquarters, be supported and encouraged, along with the demand which will vary by type of space and geographical location.

The Places for Everyone Plan Strategic Transport Model

3.1.18 The purpose of the PfE Plan Strategic Transport Model was to assess whether the proposed distribution of the land supply for homes, jobs and other uses across the nine Greater Manchester council areas could be accommodated on the transport network, and to identify the mitigation required to support sustainable growth.

3.1.19 The model drew upon the Greater Manchester transport modelling framework used by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and was aligned with the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. This transport evidence base evaluated highway and public transport networks up to 2037, to ensure strategic site allocations integrate cleanly with regional infrastructure, including the Bee Network integration.

3.1.20 Systra led the assessment and mitigation of transport impacts arising from development proposals within the PfE Plan. The review considered the proposed homes and employment land supply for each borough to consider the necessary and supporting multi-modal interventions required to mitigate the impact to a position of nil detriment.

3.1.21 Systra was commissioned by Wigan Council to undertake a review of its Local Plan and compliance with the PfE Plan transport model through the preparation of a Strategic Technical Note. This review considered changes to the employment land supply since the PfE Plan was adopted. This included consideration of the completions which have occurred since adoption and new sites that have emerged since that time.

3.1.22 This review concluded that while there have been minor changes to the quantum of the PfE Plan land supply as they have progressed through the development process, these are unlikely to give rise to significant changes to the forecast traffic impacts across the wider Wigan Borough, necessitating additional mitigation.

3.1.23 The assessment confirmed that the scale and distribution of development proposed within the borough had been appropriately represented within the PfE Plan evidence base, and that the identified strategic transport interventions provide an appropriate framework for accommodating forecast growth.

3.1.24 This review also found no material transport-related issues that would undermine the soundness of the Local Plan, subject to the continued delivery of the committed transport infrastructure, sustainable travel measures, and site-specific mitigation identified through the PfE Locality Assessments, and subsequent transport evidence.

3.1.25 The 2026 Transport Evidence Review Note has been published online alongside this topic paper.

Progress with Unity

3.1.26 Progress with Unity (PwU) is our movement for change in the borough, with two key missions: create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses, and make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish for those who live and work in them.

3.1.27 These underpin everything the council does and goes way beyond the council. The Local Plan sits within PwU as a key vehicle for change in shaping the place and is suitably ambitious for our borough. Policy J1 is a key component of that ambition.

Delivering our economic ambitions

3.1.28 In line with Progress with Unity, our Community Wealth and Health Building priorities include good employment for local people and the right education, training and skills so that people have the best possible chance of getting a good job in Wigan Borough. Action is taking place across the borough including a huge amount of physical regeneration, with some £5bn investment in the economy coming into the borough over the next decade, largely because of our strategic partnerships with private sector colleagues, the GMCA and the Government. Wigan is also one of the best located boroughs for business in the North West, half-way between Manchester and Liverpool, along the A580 corridor and on both the M6 corridor and the West Coast Mainline, we are connected, outward looking, proactive and business orientated.

Past evidence of employment take-up and loss of supply

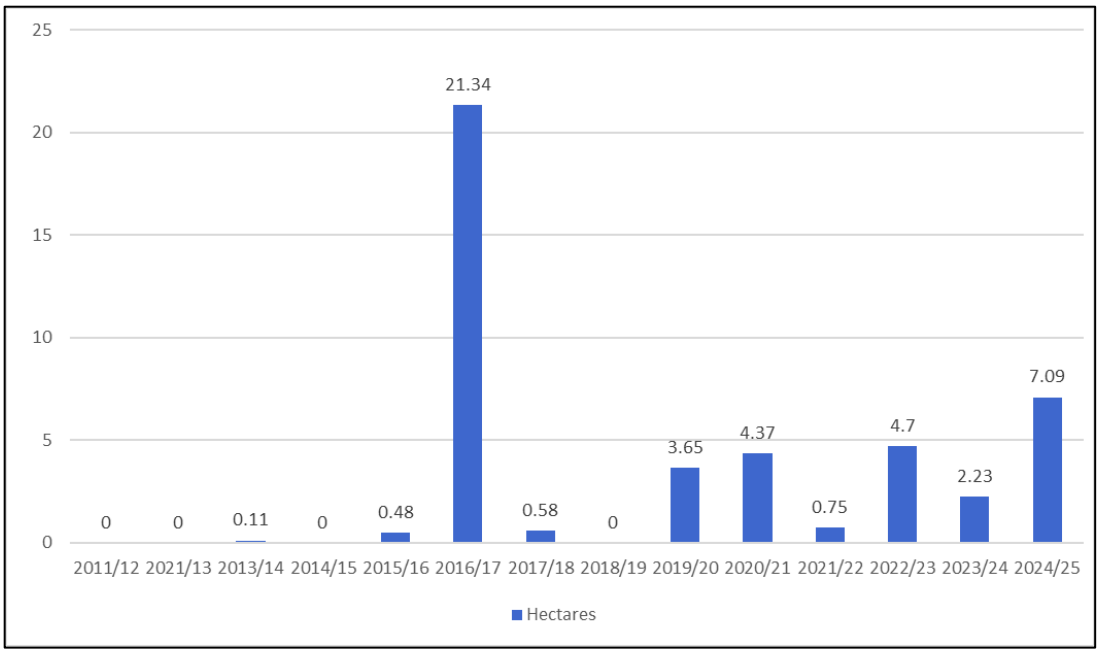
3.1.29 From the late 1980s into the early 2000s, there was considerable employment development in Wigan Borough, supported by regeneration funding at that time, to try to counter the effects of the collapse of coal and industry.

3.1.30 Large industrial estates including Martland Park in Wigan, Stone Cross Park in Golborne and Leigh Commerce Park were developed during this time. In the 18-year period between 1989 and 2007, an average of 15.3 hectares of employment land was developed annually. However, employment land take-up has been much lower since then, with an annual average of only 3.24 hectares being delivered between 2011 and 2025, as shown in Figure TP3.2.

3.1.31 Meanwhile, almost 95 hectares of older employment land / accommodation, not suitable or viable for modern businesses, was lost, predominantly for housing, between 2011 and 2025.

3.1.32 Both of these measures, employment development take-up and loss of employment land, clearly demonstrate a lack of appetite for some of the existing employment land supply across the borough.

Figure TP3.2: Employment land completions, 2011-2025 (in hectares)



Source: Wigan Council

Other key evidence

3.1.33 Analysis of the Workforce Jobs by Industry and Region (ONS 2023) has identified a 30% growth in logistics jobs over the last 10 years (compared to 15% growth across the economy as a whole).

3.1.34 Recent data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE, 2023) finds that UK jobs in logistics and manufacturing tend to pay over £4,000 and £3,700 more, respectively, than the average job.

3.1.35 Furthermore, according to evidence from Frontier Economics in 2022 (The Impact of the logistics industry in the UK), the annual pay for entry-level jobs in logistics is 47% higher than across jobs within the same occupational category.

Key messages from consultation and engagements

3.1.36 Responses have been received from a range of individuals and organisations as part of the 'Initial Draft Wigan Local Plan' and have been summarised in our 'Report of Consultation – Initial Draft Local Plan. This includes:

- Prioritise local delivery of training, apprenticeships, and adult re-skilling programmes in proportion to the lack of direct employment site allocations.

- The use of brownfield land and existing underutilised industrial units should be prioritised over Green Belt, as this will damage the wildlife and the environment.
- Redesignating a large area of Green Belt land for commercial development does not contribute towards achieving a greener sustainable economy, in an area already heavily congested.
- A piecemeal Green Belt Review that only assesses land for employment uses is not effective or a suitable method of plan making. In this instance, there is an identified need for both employment and residential allocations, therefore a comprehensive Green Belt Review is required.
- Identification of around 647,000 sqm of new high-quality employment floorspace is welcomed, yet there is not an associated uplift of housing delivery to support this.
- It is considered crucial that Wigan manages its economic ambitions and job creation whilst ensuring that there is sufficient high quality housing stock in the Borough.
- The inclusion of new allocations and the publication of a draft Policies Map ensures the emerging Plan is strategic in nature and therefore supports the argument for the extension of the plan period to 2042.
- The council is heavily reliant on a limited number of sites to meet identified needs, yet land ownership issues may be a constraint to the delivery of (some of this) employment land, as specific landowners have different aspirations for their land that do not fully align with their proposed allocations for development.

3.1.37 Supporting feedback includes:

- Support for the strong commitment to supporting economic growth and diversification, including within town centres.
- Policy J1 is considered to be an appropriate response to the evidence base of the plan and the Council's economic strategy for the borough.
- Reference in Policy J1 to the NorthFold growth corridor is supported.

The integrated assessment

3.1.38 Following consultation on the Initial Draft Plan, changes were made to policies, including Policy J1. The integrated assessment was updated to take account of the changes made to all policies,

including further consideration of mitigation and enhancement measures.

3.1.39 The broad implications of Policy J1 were assessed as part of the Integrated Assessment (IA) process. Overall, the policy was considered to have broadly positive implications in relation to health and community, equality and diversity, economy and town centres. The implications in terms of housing, climate change, water, environment quality, historic environment landscape / townscape, biodiversity / geodiversity, resource efficiency, land and soil and transport were considered to be broadly neutral.

3.1.40 However, there were no implications identified as having broadly negative implications. Further details can be viewed in the Integrated Assessment. However, it is worth noting that policy J1 is directly impacted by other policy measures and developments supported by the plan. The proposed Local Plan policies, particularly in the Environment chapter, include requirements to appropriately mitigate these.

Good practice from other Local Plans

3.1.41 Proposed policy J1: Supporting economic growth reflects the style and approach taken by policy CP10 in the adopted Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2024) and the approach to the PfE Plan in policy E1 in the Publication version of the Oldham Local Plan.

Replacing policies currently remaining in the Local Plan Core Strategy, the Replacement Unitary Development Plan and the Policies Map

3.1.42 This policy will not replace any policy content in the Core Strategy or the UDP, or any content on the Policies Map.

Policy map content

3.1.43 There is no new policy map content in relation to this policy.

Evidence map content

3.1.44 There is no evidence map content in relation to this policy.

The duty to cooperate

3.1.45 As the Council is no longer proceeding with the release Green Belt land to address employment need and intend to meet our employment requirement within the borough, we do not require adjacent authorities to contribute to meeting our need. The borough is also unable to accommodate any unmet employment need from adjacent local authorities.

Delivering the policy

3.1.46 Policy J1 will be delivered through business and property investment, through economic development by the council and the GMCA and by property owners, businesses, developers and the council as local planning authority through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.1.47 In line with NPPF paragraphs 85-87 and PfE Plan policies JP-J1, JP-J3 and JP-J4, this policy provides a positive strategy for supporting economic growth across the borough.

3.2 Employment areas

The proposed policy

3.2.1 Policy J2 covers Employment Areas.

3.2.2 The policy safeguards the borough's 77 existing employment areas for employment purposes, as defined in the policy.

3.2.3 It also introduces a new approach to facilitate the improvement, renewal and intensification of our Employment Areas, where necessary. This includes the establishment of an economic development fund. Contributions to the fund will be required where development is permitted that results in the loss of employment land or floorspace within an Employment Area.

The policy context for the proposed policy

3.2.4 NPPF paragraphs 85-87 states that policy should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt while supporting economic growth across the borough.

3.2.5 PfE Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises identifies existing employment areas as being important to maintaining a strong and diverse supply of sites and premises.

3.2.6 Policy J2 is an updated amalgamation of existing UDP policies EM1A and EM1B and would replace them both. In reality, from shortly after adoption of the UDP in 2006 for much of the next decade, the council came under a lot of pressure to release employment land and buildings within Primary Employment Areas (PEAs) for alternative development, usually housing, and the policy criteria in policy EM1B effectively became a policy criteria for PEAs too.

3.2.7 Things have changed and work on our EMELA showed that the occupation rate amongst our employment areas is very high, (typically 85-100% occupied). The consequence of merging the two existing policies into policy J2 is that we needed to identify all employment areas on the policies map. This is because the policies that did previously apply to those areas both within and outside of the Primary Employment Areas has been updated and now applies to all of the Employment Areas. Therefore, all employment areas must be clearly designated in the Plan. The related change is that they are now 'Employment Areas' rather than 'Primary Employment Areas'. UDP policies EM1C and EM1E are also replaced by policy J2 as a result of these changes.

Key evidence

3.2.8 Key evidence supporting the content in the Employment Areas policy includes EMELA (2024); existing Remaining UDP policies; the development of proforma for the 77 Employment Areas; and key messages from our work on the Local Plan including consultation and engagement and the integrated assessment.

Wigan Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment (2024)

3.2.9 The EMELA considered a total of 57 existing employment areas, as the basis of its assessment. These comprised of the 35 primary employment areas and 22 other undesignated employment areas and sites that had been identified across the borough. Since the EMELA was published though, in line with paragraph 3.2.7 above, further in-house assessments have identified a further 20 employment areas.

3.2.10 The assessment of each employment area and vacant site focused on a range of criteria. These included building age and condition (where applicable); the quality of the public realm, environment and surroundings; access to the primary road network/motorway and proximity to public transport. The assessment also considered the compatibility of surrounding land uses; the amount of vacant floorspace; current and future market attractiveness; and the site's suitability for meeting the needs of Wigan Borough's core/cross-cutting sectors.

3.2.11 The larger and higher performing employment areas in industrial use tend to be located with direct or indirect access to the strategic road network or other main arterial routes (such as the M6, A580 and A49), with employment areas less well connected to the road network often being smaller, offering older/poorer quality buildings and limited formal public realm.

3.2.12 Outside of the main town centres, office space tends to be provided alongside other industrial uses in business park settings and industrial estates, mainly comprising spaces ancillary to industrial uses with small amounts of standalone commercial office space.

3.2.13 Within the existing employment areas, there is evidence of stock with stronger alignment with the requirements of Wigan Borough's core and cross-cutting sectors. These include:

- Hope Carr/Leigh Commerce Park (J2.42) and Gibfield (J2.16) in the Atherton, Leigh and Tyldesley area.

- Stone Cross Park (J2.22), Golborne Enterprise Park (J2.20), Newton Road (J2.50), Moss Industrial Estate (J2.49), Land Gate (J2.04) and South Lancashire Industrial Estate (J2.07), in the Hindley, Abram, Golborne and Ashton-in-Makerfield area.
- Seaman Way (J2.36), Westwood Park (J2.74), Wigan Pier Business Park (J2.76), Martland Park and Heinz (J2.63), Lamberhead Industrial Estate (J2.61), Smithy Court and Beecham Court (J2.67) and Warrington Road Hawkley (J2.72), in the Wigan, Ince, Standish and Orrell area.

3.2.14 In relation to the vacant sites in Wigan Borough, the analysis highlighted that, despite some higher quality sites that demonstrate relatively strong marketability, such as Westwood Park, Warrington Road, Hawkley and Land at M6 Junction 25, few of the vacant sites score strongly across multiple domains. Taken with evidence of barriers to development and limited site activity or developer interest, the analysis of vacant sites highlights that the available employment land in Wigan Borough currently lacks the quality profile to align with occupants' likely requirements across the borough's core and cross-cutting sectors or is subject to constraints that could limit its potential for development (EMELA, paragraphs 8.4.8, 8.5.7 and 10.4.2).

Facilitating the Economic Development Fund

3.2.15 Policy J2 will require that when development results in the loss of employment land or floorspace within an Employment Area, a contribution will be sought to address the impact of this by facilitating economic development opportunity elsewhere either in the same employment area or in an appropriate alternative Employment Area.

3.2.16 We have worked with partners within the Council, including in Economic Development, Property and Assets; Regeneration and Development Management to understand how this policy can be delivered and to establish a process for its implementation. This is set out in the Case for an Economic Development Fund.

Key messages from consultation and engagement

3.2.17 Responses have been received from a range of individuals and organisations as part of the 'Initial Draft Wigan Local Plan' and have been summarised in our 'Report of Consultation – Initial Draft Local Plan. This includes:

- Chanters and Ena Mill/Collier Brook should be identified as strategic regeneration priorities, particularly for creative industries, light manufacturing, and community-based enterprise.
- The economic development fund referenced in paragraph 6.46 should explicitly prioritise reinvestment into employment sites in towns like Atherton that are underserved by new employment land allocations but have viable regeneration sites.
- Include an action plan or monitoring framework within the Local Plan to proactively assess and intervene in stalled or deteriorating employment sites e.g. J2.16 Gibfield, including options for environmental improvement or interim creative/business uses.
- Ensure Policy J2 explicitly promotes low-carbon, sustainable employment uses in Employment Areas adjacent to urban communities like Atherton, supporting both economic and environmental goals.
- Welcome the Mayflower area of Bradley Lane being designated as an employment area in line with a policy in Standish Neighbourhood Plan.
- Standish's two employment areas (Bradley Lane and Mayflower) should be retained exclusively for this use and protected from speculative developers.
- The policy for designated employment areas should robustly protect the existing industrial operations so that industrial operations on a 24-hour basis (including distributions by HGVs, plant and other activities) are not prejudiced by the introduction of noise sensitive uses in close proximity, i.e. Jury Street and Briggs Street area should not be identified as a potential housing site in the SHLAA.
- The boundary of the existing Kiribati Way and Kirkhall Lane Employment Area has been amended to remove the undeveloped greenfield area to the west of Westleigh Brook, potentially curtailing the existing operations and preventing investment in the economic regeneration, intensification and growth of the existing and future businesses.
- The boundary to the north of the Employment Area (J2.43) should be extended by around 4.89ha to include land in the same ownership, as there is a limited potential growth within the Employment Area and there is no other site viable for ABWF in the borough.

- The residual 0.59 hectare element within parcel J2.72 Warrington Road, Hawkley Employment Area should be de-allocated. The site is highly constrained and has failed to come forward despite prior employment consents and marketing aligned to current policy ambitions.
- All Class E uses should be explicitly supported on employment sites within Strategic Employment Areas as they are widely acknowledged to be employment-generating.
- The minimum requirement for a 24 month active marketing period is excessive in comparison to the other Councils across England. This should be 6 months. This would be proportionate whilst also protecting the function and viability of employment land, ensuring that sites do not sit stagnant and economically inactive for substantial periods of time.
- Any requirement for marketing evidence should be removed where the proposed use contributes positively to economic development.
- The financial contribution is considered to fiscally impede the delivery of sites within a Use Class which can generate significant employment value. The removal of this contribution would increase the deliverability of sites which bring economic benefits.

The integrated assessment

3.2.18 Following consultation on the Initial Draft Plan, changes were made to policies, including Policy J2. The integrated assessment was updated to take account of the changes made to all policies, including further consideration of mitigation and enhancement measures.

3.2.19 The broad implications of Policy J2 were assessed as part of the Integrated Assessment (IA) process. Overall, the policy was considered to have broadly positive implications in relation to health and community, land and soil and economy. The implications in terms of housing, equality and diversity, climate change, water environment quality, historic environment, landscape / townscape, biodiversity / geodiversity, resource efficiency, transport and town centres were considered to be broadly neutral. There were no negative implications identified for this policy.

Replacing policies currently remaining in the Local Plan Core Strategy, the Replacement Unitary Development Plan and the Policies Map

3.2.20 This policy will replace policies EM1A 'Primary Employment Areas', EM1B 'Re-use of Employment Land and Buildings for other uses', EM1C 'Employment Development Outside Primary Employment Areas' and EM1E 'Motor Vehicle Servicing, Repairs, Hire and Sales' in the UDP, including content on the policies map related to policy EM1A.

Evidence map content

3.2.21 There is no evidence map content in relation to this policy.

The duty to cooperate

3.2.22 As this policy covers existing employment areas and employment land, there are no strategic cross-boundary matters related to this policy that have been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan.

Delivering the policy

3.2.23 This policy will be delivered by the developer, businesses, infrastructure and service providers and the council as local planning authority through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.2.24 This policy is a continuation and update of existing policies in the development plan. In line with NPPF paragraphs 85-87 and PfE Plan policy JP-J2, the policy will replace UDP policies EM1A, EM1B, EM1C and EM1E, and safeguard existing employment areas and help create the conditions within these areas in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt while supporting economic growth across the borough.

3.3 The green economy

The proposed policy

3.3.1 Policy J3 covers the green economy.

3.3.2 The policy is in three parts:

- Encouraging existing and new businesses and their supply chains to become greener in what they do.
- Requiring development proposals for existing and new businesses to go beyond PfE Plan policy JP-S2 to achieve EPC rating B or better, subject to viability, and
- Supporting businesses in the renewal and refurbishment of their existing premises to meet carbon emissions and energy performance requirements.

The policy context for the proposed policy

3.3.3 The policy is in line with NPPF paras 157-160 in that it supports the transition to a low carbon future, seeks to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, encourages the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings and supports renewable and low carbon energy.

3.3.4 Planning practice guidance on Climate Change also states that Local Planning Authorities are not restricted or limited in setting energy performance standards above the building regulations for non-housing developments.
(Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 6-012-20190315, revision date: 15 03 2019)

3.3.5 In recognition of this, the policy is largely consistent with PfE Plan policy JP- S2 or goes beyond it to achieve EPC rating B or better.

Key evidence

3.3.6 Key evidence supporting the content in the green economy policy includes locally commissioned evidence, key reputable evidence published nationally and internationally; and key messages from our work on the Local Plan including consultation and engagement and the integrated assessment.

Wigan Employment Market and Employment Land Assessment (EMELA 2024)

3.3.7 EMELA recognised that in 2021, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy engaged in consultation on implementation of the EPC B target by 2030. This was not implemented by the

government at the time, but a statement is expected from the current government. However, it is recognised nationally that the proportion of non-domestic rented stock within the scope of the regulations would increase from approximately 10% to 85% (1m buildings across England and Wales). For Wigan Borough, the building stock which falls within the scope of tightening regulations to 2030 is greater than the national average, at around 93% of buildings.

Local green jobs

3.3.8 Research and analysis from the Local Government Association looked into the jobs required for a net zero economy and where these will be located in the coming years. This research indicated that:

- Wigan Borough will have an estimated 3,838 direct jobs in the low-carbon and renewable energy sector by 2050.
- The majority of jobs will be within the low carbon, heat and energy efficient product sub-sector, which will make up to 60% of all the low-carbon and renewable energy sector in Wigan Borough.
- Jobs in low-emission vehicles and infrastructure will make up a further 20% in the sector.

3.3.9 The UK Government defines the low-carbon and renewable energy economy as consisting of the following industry sectors:

- Low-carbon electricity
- Low-carbon heat
- Alternative fuels
- Energy efficient products
- Low-carbon services
- Low-emission vehicles and infrastructure.

3.3.10 Evidence suggests that there is an opportunity to focus efforts on upskilling individuals into these sectors so that residents can benefit from the economic opportunities that come from the governments drive to net zero.

Key messages from consultation and engagement

3.3.11 Responses have been received from a range of individuals and organisations as part of the 'Initial Draft Wigan Local Plan' and have been summarised in our 'Report of Consultation – Initial Draft Local Plan. This includes:

- Acknowledge ambition to promote a green economy by requiring all new and existing business developments to achieve an EPC rating of B or better, subject to viability. However, need to consider further the practicality of this requirement.
- Support the inclusion of eco-tourism and farm diversification, as part of this would be the move towards wetter farming and foodstuffs that are grown in a more sustainable way.
- The ambition that existing and new businesses premises should, in addition to the requirements of PfE Policy JP-S2, achieve EPC ratings of B or better is supported, subject to viability testing. This will be essential in seeking to stimulate investment in sectors that are not currently well-represented in Wigan.
- Should also encourage the use of local materials ahead of importing from beyond the borough.

The integrated assessment

3.3.12 Following consultation on the Initial Draft Plan, changes were made to policies, including Policy J3. The integrated assessment was updated to take account of the changes made to all policies, including further consideration of mitigation and enhancement measures.

3.3.13 The broad implications of Policy J3 were assessed as part of the Integrated Assessment (IA) process. Overall, the policy was considered to have broadly positive implications in relation to health and community, equality and diversity, climate change, environment quality, resource efficiency and economy. The implications in terms of housing, water, historic environment, landscape / townscape, biodiversity / geodiversity, land and soil, transport and town centres were considered to be broadly neutral.

3.3.14 There were no negative implications identified for this policy.

Replacing policies currently remaining in the Local Plan Core Strategy, the Replacement Unitary Development Plan and the Policies Map

3.3.15 This policy will not replace any policy content in the Core Strategy or the UDP, or any content on the policies map.

Policy map content

3.3.16 There is no policy map content in relation to this policy.

Evidence map content

3.3.17 There is no evidence map content in relation to this policy.

The duty to cooperate

3.3.18 There are no strategic cross-boundary matters related to this policy that have been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan.

Delivering the policy

3.3.19 This policy will be delivered by developers, the council, strategic and local partners and local businesses through the development management processes and through project work.

Summary and conclusion

3.3.20 Policy J3 is in line with NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance and aligned with PfE Policy JP-S2 in seeking to support growth in the green economy and in addressing measures to achieve a low-carbon and renewable energy economy in Wigan Borough.

3.4 The visitor economy

The Proposed Policy

3.4.1 Policy J4 covers the visitor economy.

3.4.2 The policy is based on protecting and enhancing the historic and natural environments and the sporting and cultural assets of the borough, along with our historic town centres, and supporting new opportunities where appropriate.

The policy context for the proposed policy

3.4.3 There is very little policy context for the proposed policy in the NPPF or Planning Practice Guidance, other than a reference to enabling sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside in paragraph 36 of the NPPF. The PfE Plan policy JP-P3 on cultural facilities is also relevant.

3.4.4 However, the proposed policy does specifically address policy gaps in the PfE JP-Strat policies as well as PfE Plan policies JP-P3 Cultural Facilities and JP-P4 Retail and Leisure, including a focus on tourist facilities and accommodation as well cultural assets and through promoting opportunities for new complementary tourist attractions in the historic and natural environment in sustainable and appropriate locations.

Key evidence

3.4.5 Key evidence supporting the content in the visitor economy policy includes key reputable evidence published nationally and internationally, and within the borough or sub-regionally; key messages from our work on the Local Plan including consultation and engagement and the integrated assessment; and where it applies, good practice gleaned from other Local Plans.

VisitBritain data

3.4.6 Recent statistics published by VisitBritain (January 2025) indicated that British residents accounted for 108 million overnight trips in Great Britain in the year ending 2024 Q3, generating a total expenditure of £31.4 billion. (VisitBritain (2024) 'GB Domestic Overnight Tourism: Latest Results' [Online]. Available at: https://www.visitbritain.org/gb-domestic-overnight-tourism-latest-results

3.4.7 The VisitBritain data further shows the value of tourism to the North West as:

- The North West continued to be among the top regions visited for domestic tourists with 16% of total visits in 2024. The region benefitted from the third highest regional expenditure in England, behind just London and the South West.
- There were 13.1 million domestic visitors to the North West in 2024 with spending surpassing 2023 by 7.8% (and 2019 by 40.7%).
- Overall domestic overnight trips in England in 2024 were 9.9% below that of 2023, however the North West region saw a smaller 5.8% decline.
- The North West was the third most visited region by international tourists accounting for 10% of total visitors. The region saw the fourth highest expenditure by overseas visitors to the UK behind London, the South East and Scotland.

Historic England – the visitor economy

3.4.8 The recent Heritage Counts report was published by Historic England in November 2023. The report shows that, through the visitor economy, the heritage sector (direct, indirect and induced GVA) makes a 7% contribution to the GVA of North West England and 8% of jobs (CEBR).

Key messages from consultation and engagement

3.4.9 Responses have been received from a range of individuals and organisations as part of the 'Initial Draft Wigan Local Plan' and have been summarised in our 'Report of Consultation – Initial Draft Local Plan.

3.4.10 The overall approach to Policy J4 is supported and welcomed with specific asks, including in the night-time economy and in social and cultural activities that places in individual locations (both within and out of borough), in specific town centres and neighbourhoods are recognised and endorsed through the policy. However, it is considered that the balance is about right, and enabled by the signposting of other policies, specifically PL2, EN1 and TC2-11.

Good practice from other Local Plans

3.4.11 Our proposed policy reflects broadly the approach set out in:

- Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 (adopted 2017) - Policy EG 4: Tourism – criterion 2 & 3
- Salford Development Management Local Plan Policies (adopted 2023) - Policy CT1: Tourism Development and CT2: Art and Culture – criterion 4.

The integrated assessment

3.4.12 Following consultation on the Initial Draft Plan, changes were made to policies, including Policy J4. The integrated assessment was updated to take account of the changes made to all policies, including further consideration of mitigation and enhancement measures.

3.4.13 The broad implications of Policy J4 were assessed as part of the Integrated Assessment (IA) process. Overall, the policy was considered to have broadly positive implications in relation to health and community, equality and diversity, historic environment, landscape / townscape, biodiversity / geodiversity, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres. The implications in terms of housing, climate change, environment quality and resource efficiency were considered to be broadly neutral.

3.4.14 However, the implications in terms of water were identified as being broadly negative. Further details can be viewed in the Integrated Assessment. The proposed Local Plan policies in the Environment chapter include requirements to appropriately mitigate these.

Replacing policies currently remaining in the Local Plan Core Strategy, the Replacement Unitary Development Plan and the Policies Map

3.4.15 This policy will not replace any policy content in the Core Strategy or the UDP, or any content on the policies map.

Policy map content

3.4.16 There is no policy map content in relation to this policy.

Evidence map content

3.4.17 There is no evidence map content in relation to this policy

The duty to cooperate

3.4.18 There is potential for cross boundary coordination: with Salford and Warrington regarding the mossland; with Chorley, West Lancashire, Lancashire County and Salford regarding the Leeds and Liverpool and Bridgewater Canals, and with Chorley and West Lancashire regarding the valley of the River Douglas. There is also potential for neighbouring districts regarding key rights of way connections if more visitors are attracted to the borough. However, no strategic cross-boundary matters related to this policy that have been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan.

Delivering the policy

3.4.19 This policy will be delivered by developers, the council, strategic and local partners and local businesses through the development management processes and through project work.

Summary and conclusion

3.4.20 With little or no direct relevant policy context from the NPPF or Planning Practice Guidance on the visitor economy, the proposed policy seeks to support the growth of our visitor economy by promoting opportunities for new complementary cultural and tourist attractions across the borough.

3.5 Digital and telecommunication infrastructure

The proposed policy

3.5.1 Policy J5 covers digital and telecommunications infrastructure.

3.5.2 The policy supports the ongoing rollout and improvement of affordable, high speed, high-capacity digital infrastructure to serve all parts of the borough, setting out criteria to support its implementation, in terms of siting, layout and design.

The policy context for the proposed policy

3.5.3 The policy is in line with the NPPF paras. 118-119 and policies JP-C2 and JP-D1 of the Places for Everyone Plan and draws on the design and layout related guidance of the Supplementary Planning Guidance for telecommunications development, January 2006.

Key evidence

3.5.4 Key evidence supporting the content in the digital and telecommunications infrastructure policy includes key messages from our work on the Local Plan including consultation and engagement and the integrated assessment; and where it applies, good practice gleaned from other Local Plans.

Key messages from consultation and engagement

3.5.5 Responses have been received from a range of individuals and organisations as part of the 'Initial Draft Wigan Local Plan' and have been summarised in our 'Report of Consultation – Initial Draft Local Plan. This includes:

- Support for commitment to full fibre broadband and 5G rollout across Wigan Borough but concern that there isn't a clear framework to address inequalities in digital infrastructure, particularly in areas like Atherton.
- Connectivity needs addressing in places like Standish before any more homes are considered
- Commit to targeted rollout in areas with low full fibre availability, including parts of Atherton, Hindley, and Leigh, where commercial fibre providers have not prioritised deployment.
- Explicitly prioritising digital inclusion in deprived areas.
- Requiring digital infrastructure assessments as part of major development proposals, particularly in regeneration areas, to guarantee residents and businesses are not left behind in the shift to digital services

- Using developer contributions to fund local digital improvements, such as Wi-Fi hubs, digital literacy programmes or public-use digital infrastructure in town centres and local centres like Atherton.

Good practice from other Local Plans

3.5.6 Our proposed policy reflects the approach taken by the following Local Plans:

- Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (adopted January 2024) - DM Policy 25: Telecommunications– criterion 2 and 3.
- Warrington Local Plan (adopted December 2023) - Policy INF3: Utilities, Telecommunications and Broadband - criterion 1 (part).
- Oldham Draft Local Plan (December 2023) - Policy IN1 Digital Infrastructure and Telecommunications – criterion 1 (part), 2, 4 and 5.

The integrated assessment

3.5.7 Following consultation on the Initial Draft Plan, changes were made to policies, including Policy J5. The integrated assessment was updated to take account of the changes made to all policies, including further consideration of mitigation and enhancement measures.

3.5.8 The broad implications of Policy J5 were assessed as part of the Integrated Assessment (IA) process. Overall, the policy was considered to have broadly positive implications in relation to health and community, environment quality, landscape / townscape, resource efficiency, transport, economy and town centres. The implications in terms of housing, equality and diversity, climate change, water, historic environment, biodiversity / geodiversity and land and soil were considered to be broadly neutral.

3.5.9 There were no negative implications identified for this policy.

Replacing policies currently remaining in the Local Plan Core Strategy, the Replacement Unitary Development Plan and the Policies Map

3.5.10 This policy will not replace any policy content in the Core Strategy or the UDP, or any content on the policies map.

Policy map content

3.5.11 There is no policy map content in relation to this policy.

Evidence map content

3.5.12 There is no evidence map content in relation to this policy.

The duty to cooperate

3.5.13 There are no strategic cross-boundary matters related to this policy that have been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan.

Delivering the policy

3.5.14 This policy will be delivered by developers, the council, strategic and local partners and local businesses through the development management processes and through project work.

Summary and conclusion

3.5.15 Policy J5 is in line with the NPPF paras. 118-119 and policies JP-C2 and JP-D1 of the Places for Everyone Plan in supporting the ongoing rollout and improvement of affordable, high speed, high-capacity digital infrastructure to serve all parts of the borough.

Appendix 1: Employment land supply, April 2026

PfE Site Allocations

LP Ref:	PfE Ref:	Site address	Brownfield / Greenfield	Site area (Ha)	Gross floorspace (sqm)	Planning Permission	Employment type
_	JPA 31	M6 J25	Greenfield	6.2	6,035	No	Industrial / warehousing
_	JPA 31	M6 J25	Greenfield	54.41	133,965	Yes	Industrial / warehousing
_	JPA 33	Pocket Nook	Greenfield	3.75	15,000	No	Industrial / warehousing
_	JPA 34	West of Gibfield	Greenfield	11.4	45,500	No	Industrial / warehousing
				75.76	**200,500**		

Housing-led allocations with Employment Supply

LP Ref:	Ref:	Site address	Brownfield / Greenfield	Site area (Ha)	Gross floorspace (sqm)	Planning Permission	Employment type
H6	SP4	East of Atherton	Greenfield	1.3	5,500	No	Industrial / warehousing
H8	EM1A 20	Westwood	Brownfield	4.8	16,800	No	Industrial / warehousing
				6.1	**22,300**		

Sites with Planning Permission in Employment Areas

LP Ref:	UDP Ref:	Site address	Brownfield / Greenfield	Site area (Ha)	Gross floorspace (sqm)	Planning Permission	Employment type
J2.07	EM1A 36	South Lancashire Industrial Estate extension, Ashton	Greenfield	23.83	91,505	Yes	Industrial / warehousing
J2.09	EM1A 9	Land at Chaddock Lane, Astley	Greenfield	12.71	32,826	Yes	Industrial / warehousing
J2.09	EM1A 9	Land off Kennedy Lane, Tyldesley	Brownfield	1.16	1,436	Yes	Industrial / warehousing
J2.29	EM1A 14	Hindley Green Business Park, West of Leigh Road	Brownfield	2.38	5,444	Yes	Industrial / warehousing
J2.29	EM1A 14	Hindley Green Business Park, part of Electrium Sales Ltd, Leigh Road	Brownfield	0.44	1,588	Yes	Warehousing

LP Ref:	UDP Ref:	Site address	Brownfield / Greenfield	Site area (Ha)	Gross floorspace (sqm)	Planning Permission	Employment type
J2.29	EM1A 14	Hindley Green Business Park, West of Electrium Sales Ltd, Leigh Road	Brownfield	2.16	8,600	Yes	Warehousing
J2.33	EM1C 18	Land East of Moat House Street, Ince	Brownfield	0.1	192	Yes	Industry
J2.49	EM1A 5	Moss Industrial Estate (Unit D3A) Walter Leigh Way, Lowton	Brownfield	0.36	1,100	Yes	Industry/ ancillary office
J2.61	EM1A.29	Lamberhead Industrial Estate, Kilshaw Street, Pemberton	Brownfield	1.92	9,100	Yes	Warehousing
J2.71	New	Warrington Lane	Brownfield	0.29	804	Yes	Industrial / warehousing
J2.72	EM1A 32	Plots 2 & 3 Warrington Road, Hawkley	Mixed	3.9	10,490	Yes	Industrial / warehousing
				49.25	**163,085**		

Sites within Employment Areas

LP Ref:	Ref:	Site address	Brownfield / Greenfield	Site area (Ha)	Gross floorspace (sqm)	Planning Permission	Employment type
J2.16	EM1A 12	Plot 2 Gibfield Atherton	Greenfield	0.81	2,055	No	Offices
J2.28	EM1A 15	Plot 3 Swan Lane, Hindley Green	Brownfield	0.83	2,750	No	Industrial / warehousing
J2.32	EM1A 16	Plot 3 Makerfield Way, Ince	Brownfield	1.06	4,600	No	Industrial / warehousing
J2.32	EM1A 16	Plot 2 Makerfield Way, Ince	Brownfield	0.63	2,300	No	Industrial / warehousing
J2.63	EM1A 25	Plots 1 & 3 Martland Park and Heinz	Brownfield	3.73	10,000	No	Industrial / warehousing
J2.72	EM1A 32	Plot 1 Warrington Road, Hawkley	Brownfield	0.59	2,090	No	Industrial / warehousing
J2.07	EM1A 36	South Lancashire Industrial Estate extension, Ashton	Greenfield	11.77	27,495	No	Industrial / warehousing
				19.42	**51,290**		

Committed employment development outside of designated Employment Areas

LP Ref:	Ref:	Site address	Brownfield / Greenfield	Site area (Ha)	Gross floorspace (sqm)	Planning Permission	Employment type
NA	NA	Land South of Wigan Road Farm, Wigan Road, Golborne	Greenfield	4.5	7,491	Yes	Office / workshops / open storage
NA	NA	206 Newton Road, Lowton	Brownfield	0.23	622	Yes	Industrial / warehousing