Wigan Council

Wigan Borough Local Plan

Topic Paper 6: Town and Local Centres

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

Section	
3.4.12 & 17-19	Factual updates on Ashton town centre
Elsewhere	Grammatical improvements

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 6 on Town and local centres.

1.1.2 The topic papers distil the evidence base that has been collated and, where applicable, commissioned to support the Local Plan, and set out the key messages to help demonstrate that the plan meets the tests of soundness in a proportionate way, specifically that it has been positively prepared, is justified and appropriate, is deliverable and effective, and is consistent with national policy and relevant strategic policies for the area, as set out in paragraphs 35 and 36 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).

1.1.3 It starts with the planning policy context for Town and local centres and identifies the policy requirements for the Local Plan to address, before focusing on more depth of each of those policy requirements.

1.1.4 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 Town and Local Centres

2.1 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 Town and Local Centres 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 Town and Local Centres is set out primarily in section 7 of the NPPF 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres.'

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, these policy requirements and challenges are that Local Plans should:

39. Define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability.

40. Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations.

41. Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones.

42. Allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed, looking at least ten years ahead.

43. Where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available for main town centre uses, allocate appropriate edge of

centre sites that are well connected to the town centre. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, policies should explain how identified needs can be met in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre.

44. Recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.

2.1.5 Town centres are defined in the glossary to the NPPF as 'Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.'

2.2 Legislation

2.2.1 Relevant legislation to the Town and local centres topic area includes the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) order 1987 (as amended) which assigns uses of land and buildings into various categories know as 'Use Classes'. Changes of use can occur within the same use class and between specified use classes. Depending on the change, including building work associated with a proposal, a planning application or an application for prior approval may be required.

2.2.2 In August 2021, the Use Classes Order was amended to introduce a new broad use class E Commercial, Business and Services, that brought together uses previously covered by Use Classes A1 (retail), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (food and drink establishments), B1 (offices and light industry), parts of D1 (clinics, health centres and day nurseries, and part of D2 (indoor sport, recreation or fitness).

2.3 Planning Practice Guidance

2.3.1 Planning Practice Guidance is an online resource that is updated on an ongoing basis as needed. Of relevance to the Town and local centres topic area, guidance on town centre and retail states that:

- Local authorities can take a leading role in promoting a positive vision for their town centres, bringing together stakeholders and supporting sustainable economic and employment growth. They need to consider structural changes in the economy, in particular changes in shopping and leisure patterns and formats, the impact these are likely to have on individual town centres, and how the planning tools available to them can support necessary adaptation and change (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 2b-001-20190722).

- The key way to set out a vision and strategy for town centres is through the development plan and (if needed) supplementary planning documents. Planning policies are expected to define the extent of primary shopping areas (Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 2b-002-20190722).

- Effective and creative leadership by local authorities and other stakeholders is key in bringing forward a vision for town centres that meets wider economic and community needs. Stakeholders with an interest in the success of the town centre should be encouraged to engage in the evolving vision for it (Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 2b-003-20190722).

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, particularly in our town and local centres which will help support sustainable development.

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

The 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 Town and Local Centres in the UDP are as follows, with the intention to replace them with content in the Local Plan as applicable:

- **Policy S1A: Principal Shopping Areas:** this policy identified at ground floor or mall level the Principal Shopping Areas of the borough's town centre in line with the NPPF and the appropriate use and shop front requirements for properties in these locations.
- **Policy S1B: Town Centres:** This sets out the requirements that needed to be met if permission was sought for the changes of use of existing main town centre uses outside of the Principal Shopping areas.
- **Policy S1D-Local Centres:** This sets out the requirements for changes of use in local centres including reference to the scale and character of a centre plus the need to protect amenity and restrict over concentration of uses such as hot food takeaways. Criteria that allow the assessment of the conversion of a premises in a centre to residential use are also included.
- **Policy S1E: Small Shops and Services:** This deals with proposals for shops and services outside of local centres including floorspace limits for new and existing premises and amenity requirements. Where larger shops are proposed requirements on the need to look at vacant properties in nearby centres and to assess the impact on a centre are required.

The Local Plan Core Strategy

2.5.3 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.

- **Policy SP2: Our Town and Local Centres:** This sets out our existing hierarchy of town and local centres and a strategy for enhancing and supporting those town and local centres and sets out requirements for any out of centre proposals.

2.6 Supplementary Planning Documents

2.6.1 There are no Supplementary Planning Documents that directly support policies on town and local centres.

2.7 Neighbourhood plans

2.7.1 There are Neighbourhood Plan for Standish (2019), Golborne and Lowton West (2023) and Abram (2025). There are policies relating to town centres and/or local centres in the Standish and Golborne and Lowton West Neighbourhood Plans:

Standish Neighbourhood Plan

2.7.2 The Standish Neighbourhood Plan refers to its centre as a 'village centre' and has the following policies that apply to proposed developments within its boundary:

- **Policy VE1 - Enhancement of Village Centre Retail and Business Premises Offer:** This supports new development for town centre uses within the Standish village centre provided that, amongst other things, it is of an appropriate scale and character, compatible with surrounding land uses, and does not impact the vitality and viability of the centre.
- **Policy VE2 - Village Centre Improvements - Enhancement to the Public Realm:** This promotes pedestrian priority in the centre and new linkages from existing roads to public spaces.
- **Policy VE3: Village Centre Improvements:** This policy supports the provision of new public conveniences where they have no adverse impacts on residential amenity.
- **Policy VE4: Control of Hot Food Takeaways:** This policy seeks to limit the number of hot food takeaways in the centre and influences their location.

Golborne Neighbourhood Plan

2.7.3 The Golborne and Lowton West Neighbourhood Plan has two policies relating to its town and local centres:

- **Policy GLW-R3: Golborne Town Centre:** This supports retail and other town centre uses (Class E) in ground floor units fronting the High Street, which include entrances and active frontages to the street; and supports residential uses, non-residential institutions and assembly and leisure uses on upper floors and other locations within the town centre.
- **Policy GLW-R4: Local Retail Centre (Slag Lane):** This supports retail and other town centre uses in ground floor units with the retention of active shop frontages.

Abram Neighbourhood Plan

2.7.4 The Abram Neighbourhood Plan contains no specific retail policies, however, there are policies that support sustainable design, the re-use and refurbishment of existing buildings, and sustainable linkages which are complementary to improving the vitality and viability of Platt Bridge town centre.

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. It has two policies on town centres, the key elements of which are set out in turn below.

Policy JP-Strat12: Main Town Centres

2.8.3 This policy recognises the role of main town centres as economic drivers and as the primary location for office, retail, leisure and cultural activity. Housing growth in town is recognised as important together with good public transport both of which support increased catchments for centres. The distinctiveness of the various town across Greater Manchester town centres is recognised and will be supported and enhanced.

Policy JP-P4: New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres

2.8.4 This policy sets out the upper level of hierarchy of centres across Greater Manchester with Wigan at level B main town centres. The policy does not identify any other centres in Wigan, however it does state that the boundaries of the centres and detail of other centres

at lower levels of the hierarchy are defined in district local plans, and need for the expansion of any existing centres, or the provision of new centres, will be identified in district local plans.

2.9 The policy requirements for town and local centres in the Wigan Borough Local Plan

2.9.1 Having considered the national planning policy, legislation and guidance for the Local Plan on planning for town and local centres, the existing local development plan that will be replaced by the Local Plan, planning policy in Neighbourhood Plans, and both the extent that the recently adopted Places for Everyone Plan both meets those requirements and sets new ones for the Local Plan, we have identified a suite of policies on town and local centres for the Wigan Borough Local Plan as follows:

- Town and local centre hierarchy
- Wigan town centre
- Leigh town centre
- Ashton in Makerfield town centre
- Atherton town centre
- Golborne town centre
- Hindley town centre
- Pemberton town centre
- Platt Bridge town centre
- Standish centre
- Tyldesley town centre
- Local centres supporting thriving communities
- Gaps in the provision of local centres
- Convenience shops outside of designated centres.

2.9.2 We have individual policies for each of our ten town centres because we are ambitious for those town centres and all are in need of further action to fulfil their potential. And we also have two policies on local centres, one on our existing 47 local centres and one on filling the gaps in local centre provision due to the importance of such provision for local communities. These policies are right of the heart of the contribution of the Local Plan to achieving the Progress with Unity Missions, to break down the barriers that create financial health, education and environmental inequalities in our borough and to help each town and neighbourhood in the borough celebrate and maintain their identity whilst understanding and helping to achieve what is needed to thrive.

2.9.3 In contrast we are not proposing to have policy content on primary shopping areas. We consider national planning policy on town centres to be out-of-date, being largely unchanged since the original version of the NPPF in 2012. It has not changed to respond to the challenges of decline in retail sectors in traditional 'High Streets', or the need to regenerate town centres. Specifically, the changes to the Use Classes Order to create Class E have made primary shopping areas redundant, as it is not now possible to prevent Class E retail uses from changing to other Class E uses or the conversation of premises in Class E use to residential which is now permitted development subject to prior approval. We also do not propose site allocations for retail or leisure, other than one small neighbourhood site within the policy on convenience shops outside of designated centres.

3. Our town and local centres policies

3.1 Hierarchy of town and local centres

The proposed policy

3.1.1 Policy TC1 covers the hierarchy of town and local centres in the borough.

3.1.2 The policy identifies Wigan Borough's hierarchy of town and local centres. Wigan is the largest town centre and a sub-regional centre, with Leigh identified as the second largest town centre. Other town centres identified are Ashton-in-Makefield, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish and Tyldesley.

3.1.3 The policy also designates 47 local centres.

3.1.4 The policy also identifies core areas for the town centres, as shown on the Policies Map. These are preferential locations for main town centre uses for the purpose of the sequential approach, in line with national planning policy.

3.1.5 The policy also sets a limit for impact assessments for town centre uses in edge of town and out of town locations and for local centres for retail and leisure uses. A tiered approach has been applied to reflect the vulnerability of our centres to out of centre proposals as set out in Table 6.1 below.

Table TP6.1: Thresholds for requiring an impact assessment

Location	Threshold (sqm gross)
Within 800 metres of a Local Centre	200 sqm
Within 800 metres of a town centre (except Wigan or Leigh)	300 sqm
Elsewhere outside of defined centres	500 sqm

The policy context for the proposed policy

3.1.6 Paragraph 90(a) and 90(b) of the NPPF (December 2023) requires Local Plans to 'define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability', and to 'define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations.'

3.1.7 In relation to the hierarchy, the PfE Plan identifies Wigan as one of eight main town centres within its plan area and states that the

boundaries of the centres and detail of other centres at lower levels of the hierarchy are to be defined in district local plans.

3.1.8 The hierarchy is generally consistent with that established through Local Plan Core Strategy policy SP2 and the Unitary Development Plan before that. However, Ashton-in-Makerfield is more akin in terms of its role and function with the third-tier town centres in the borough than is with Leigh, which is clearly the second biggest town centre in the borough and the largest centre in the east of the borough. Platt Bridge and Abram are large communities that do not have a town centre identified in the Core Strategy and UDP hierarchies. Platt Bridge centre serves both these areas and the neighbouring communities of Bickershaw, Bamfurlong, Bryn Gates and Spring View, with a population of around 15,000, and provides a range of town centre uses. The is need, however, to support its further development and improvement, including townscape and environmental improvements and measures to prevent a repeat of flooding.

3.1.9 The remaining local centres designated under policy SP2 of the Core Strategy remain as local centres under the new policy.

Proposed town centre boundaries

3.1.10 Our town centre boundaries have been drawn more widely than traditionally drawn for planning policy reasons, to encompass what people might consider to be the whole of the town centre, and to include adjacent residential areas that benefit from proximity to services and facilities but are likely to be adversely impacted by noise and disruption.

3.1.11 This is in line with paragraph 90 (f) in the NPPF (December 2023) which recognises that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites. Therefore, if new residential is important, so is existing residential within the commercial area, in between or immediately adjacent.

3.1.12 Previously there as a disincentive to do this and to instead draw town centre boundaries quite tightly around commercial and civic uses, because the town centre boundary was used to determine the sequential approach. To overcome this, we propose a Core Area in each of our town centres.

Core areas and sequential tests

3.1.13 Core Areas have been identified for each town centre for sequential test purposes. These are the sequentially preferable locations for

main town centre uses, including retail. This is followed by edge of centre locations to be measured as within 300 metres of the core area. This is a departure from normal policy where the 300 metres is measured from the town centre boundary, which has the unfortunate incentive of needing to draw the town centre boundary tightly, as mentioned.

Primary shopping areas

3.1.14 While primary shopping areas are a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework but their purpose has been undone somewhat by the changes to the Use Classes Order in August 2021, specifically the introduction of a new, wider, Use Class E Commercial, Business and Service, and permitted changes within it. This has removed the ability to retain an area primarily for shops, unless the market is strong enough to dictate that. Councils no longer have any effective control.

3.1.15 Nevertheless, important shopping areas are identified in policies TC1-11 for the respective town centres, as applicable, noting that this is a policy objective rather than anything we can particularly require, unless the Use Classes are changed to again to enable a level of planning control.

Local centres

3.1.16 The 47 local centres identified include centres of a wide range of sizes, from 55 units to 4 units. Local centres are included in the glossary as local centres as far as national policy is concerned but this specifically excludes “small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance”. 11 of our local centres are small parades of neighbourhood significance but are included in our local centre designations as the best that those communities and neighbourhood have locally and are, therefore, important and hopefully something to work from to improve the position.

3.1.17 Local centres are providing, or are capable of providing, essential facilities that can be accessed locally by walking, wheeling and cycling, and, as such, have a key role in supporting thriving communities.

3.1.18 This is right at the heart of the council’s missions for Progress with Unity, to create fair opportunities for all and to make all or towns and neighbourhood flourish. Specific policy for these centres is set out in policy TC12.

The retail position nationally

3.1.19 Retailing has changed dramatically since 2008, with the Centre for Retail Research describing it as a 'permacrisis'.

3.1.20 Changes in consumer activity, a global health crisis and climate and macroeconomic impacts that have affected prices for energy and food have all played a part in transforming the retailing sector and traditional shopping habits, which in turn have affected the role and performance of town and local centres nationally.

3.1.21 These factors include:

- **The changing supermarket sector:** Up to 2012 this sector was dominated by what were know than as the "big four": Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda and Morrisons, and they were undergoing rapid expansion with a preference for large out-of-centre format stores. They were also expanding existing stores with mezzanine floors and expanding their ranges to include clothing and household goods to become almost a one-stop-shop.

  At the same time the German discounter supermarkets Aldi and Lidl had started to increase their share of the market, with more stores and competitive prices, which was becoming a highly attractive option, and even more so in recent years as high inflation has hit food prices.

  Aldi and Lidl continue to expand their small to medium sized supermarkets. Meanwhile, the major retailers have moved to convenience stores with Tesco's now having more convenience stores than supermarkets. 2025 has seen the closure of Morrisons Dailys and the Co-op closing or passing on shop units to B&M and other operators, in total this has affected 19 branches.

- **Growth of internet shopping:** Online retail sales have grown exponentially from 5% in 2008 to 26.7% in 2024, with a peak of 31% at the height of the Covid pandemic in 2021. Department stores and clothing have a higher proportion of online sales than food stores, with the Centre for Retail Research indicating that many UK fashion retailers derive 'a minority of sales from their retail premises.' Many department stores have now closed, including Debenhams nationally who had a store in the Grand Arcade in Wigan town centre.

- **National closures of brand name stores:** There have been year on year closures nationally since 2008, with the highest number of closures taken place in 2009 (over 6,000 stores) and 2020 (over 5,000 stores). The impact of major store closures has been

reflected in increased vacancy rates and empty buildings across the UK's towns and cities. The Centre for Retail Research identifies rapid expansion, high costs and slow growth in spend, a change to online shopping, lack of investment and forward planning and Covid lockdowns to be the key factors. Data from the Local Data Company (LDC) indicates that the rate of vacancies increased nationally from 12.2% in 2020 to 14.5% in 2021. Vacancy rates have since fallen but still remain above pre-pandemic levels, though actual rates vary by location and type of retailing centre, with High Streets having the highest vacancy rates.

- **The impact of the Covid pandemic:** The restriction on non-essential stores during lockdowns caused a major fall in sales with clothing the worst affected. New behaviours also emerged during the pandemic as a result of home working and restricted travel. This has included a trend toward shopping more locally with local stores and smaller centres seeing higher footfall.
- **Challenges to post-Covid recovery:** Recovery for retailing post-Covid has been significantly hampered by the rise in the cost of living with food and energy prices forcing households to economise and thus curtail consumer spend. In the period 2022-24, over 137 major UK retailers went out of business with the closure of 4,175 chain stores, including Carpet Right, The Body Shop and Homebase. 2025 has seen further closures with WH Smith announcing it is shutting 17 stores and potentially selling 500 High Street shops. Internet shopping has also fallen from 30.7% in 2021 to 26.7% of consumer spend in 2024.
- **Online banking:** With a significant shift to banking online over the past decade, over 6,000 branches of banks and building societies have closed nationally since 2015 having a major impact on the High Street. In 2025 closures have continued with Barclays, NatWest, Santander, Lloyds and the Halifax all closing town centre branches.
- **Evolving town centres:** In response to the declining role of town centres as retail hubs, their role evolving with more of a focus on leisure activities including food and drink outlets, gyms, children's soft play, events, and opportunities for tourism wherever possible. To support these activities, investment in the buildings and surrounding infrastructure is needed, this includes improvements to the public realm including better access for walking, wheeling and cycling, and better public transport. National and local funding has been increasingly targeted at

town centres for these types of improvements, including in Wigan, Leigh and Ashton town centres

- **Town centre living:** Residential is now promoted and encouraged in main town centres where there are good transport links and access to facilities. The introduction of Prior Approval to allow for easy change from office use to residential use has promoted this approach especially in areas of high residential demand.

3.1.22 Retailing however remains an important economic driver and component of our towns and local centres, with an annual retail turnover in the UK, excluding fuel sales, of over £461 billion in 2024.

3.1.23 Consultation undertaken as part of the Local Plan review has at all stages shown that residents value their town centres and, local businesses want to see support for the regeneration and rejuvenation of town centres.

The retail position locally

3.1.24 The retail position locally has been assessed through a report produced Nexus Planning: 'Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure use Impact Test (2025)'. The purpose of this study was to:

- Assess the composition, performance, and sensitivity of the Borough's retail centres.
- Evaluate the scale and characteristics of retail and leisure development occurring beyond these centres.
- Consider the implications for town centre vitality and viability.
- Provide a robust, evidence-based recommendation for a locally appropriate impact threshold that can be incorporated into planning policy.

3.1.25 The following information has been compiled and reviewed for each of the town centres in the Borough:

- Total floorspace for the main town centre use categories.
- The size and distribution of individual units by use type.
- Details of main town centre use planning permissions and applications determined within the last five years.
- Available health check indicators and data on centre vitality and viability.
- Any published regeneration or town centre strategies.

- Information on current and planned investment.

3.1.26 Findings are presented as the proportion of units and floorspace in each main town centre use, with comparisons to national averages. The figures presented are from the town centres as a whole instead of the core area as also defined by the new local plan and are business rates-based so exclude residential uses with the categories following the standard Goad classifications. The purpose is to understand each centre's role, diversity and resilience, as well as to highlight any structural vulnerabilities relevant to a locally proportionate impact assessment threshold.

3.1.27 Overall, the analysis confirms a tiered retail structure with sharp contrasts in both total scale and average unit size. Tables for each town centre are presented under the respective policy area throughout this chapter of the topic paper.

Impact assessments

3.1.28 As noted above, one of the main purposes of the Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure use Impact Test study (2025) is to provide a robust, evidence-based recommendation for a locally appropriate impact threshold that can be incorporated into planning policy.

3.1.29 As a result of the analysis a tiered approach is now set out in policy TC1 to reflect the type and vulnerability of centre concerned. Local shops and services support the borough's communities, and it is considered important that their role is not undermined.

3.1.30 The study looked at the retail position of our town centres and their potential vulnerability. The summary table TP6.2 below sets out a profile of the centres in terms of the average size %e of units, occupation of space, percentage size and vacancy rates.

3.1.31 The data shows that Wigan, as the borough's sub-regional town centre, accommodates an average unit size of approximately 254 sqm, with over 10.4% of units over 500 sqm. Retail and leisure use account for 45.4% total occupied units.

3.1.32 By contrast, Leigh is characterised by smaller scale formats with an average unit size of 170 sqm. Retail and leisure uses account for 35.7% and 19% of total space respectively, confirming the centre's continuing function as a secondary but active shopping and service destination where independent operators and smaller chain occupiers dominate.

Table TP6.2: Summary of town centre composition and average unit sizes

Tier	Centre	Average size of unit (sq. m)	% Units in occupied retail use	% Units in occupied leisure use	% of units over 200 sq. m	% of units over 300 sq. m	% of units 500 over sq. m	Vacancy rates %	
		Units						Units	Floorspace
Sub-regional town centre	Wigan	254	27.5	17.9	24.7	18.2	10.4	32.3	31.8
Main town centre	Leigh	170	35.7	19	19.4	9.8	6	19.7	12.5
Town centres	Ashton	115	37.9	25	11.6	6	3	5.6	7.1
	Atherton	121	27.3	25.7	10.4	5.5	2.7	12.6	6.6
	Golborne	133	26.3	22.1	10.5	6.3	2.1	10.5	5.2
	Hindley	190	38.6	28	13.6	7.6	3	4.5	3.6
	Pemberton	120	37.5	35.8	15	8.3	3.3	5.8	2.8
	Platt Bridge	247	46.2	17.3	28.8	19.2	9.6	9.6	28
	Standish	103	32.7	32.7	9.1	4.5	1.8	5.5	3.8
	Tyldesley	100	28.3	28.3	10.5	5.3	1.3	14.5	9

3.1.33 The other town centres (Ashton-in-Makerfield, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish and Tyldesley) are more local in their role and nature, with average unit sizes ranging between 247 sq. m and a 100 sq. m. The majority of units in these centres are under 200 sq. m, except for Platt Bridge where there are some larger units, a very limited proportion exceed 500 sq. m. Retail and leisure uses together account for between 48.4% and 73.3% of occupied floorspace, underlining their role in serving local day-to-day needs and maintaining community-level vitality.

3.1.34 This variation in scale and function reinforces the case for adopting a tiered approach to the application of the retail impact test, rather than a single borough-wide threshold. A uniform threshold would fail to account for the sensitivity of smaller centres to new development. For example, while a proposal of 900 sqm gross floorspace may represent a modest addition in Wigan, it could constitute a step-change relative to the scale and character of existing provision in the town centres, where typical units fall well below 200 sqm.

3.1.35 Through analysis of convenience planning applications over the last 5 years and national planning policy (NPPF paragraph 94 and planning practice guidance (paragraph 16), the study sets out the justification to support the view of Nexus Planning that a lower threshold should be applied across the hierarchy of centres within the authority area.

3.1.36 Where there is genuine potential for an application proposal to divert a material level of expenditure away from a defined centre, or potentially remove a key tenant from that centre, there will likely be a requirement to consider the impacts arising from the proposal in detail.

3.1.37 In this context, the impact threshold of relevance to Wigan and Leigh town centre is recommended to be set at 500 sqm for both retail and leisure proposals. This threshold would effectively be the default to be applied authority wide.

3.1.38 There are relatively few units substantially larger than 300 sqm in any of the other town centres and the level of retail floorspace is considerably less than within Wigan and Leigh. As such, losing an occupier of this magnitude could have a significant adverse impact on the centre as a whole. Accordingly, 300 sqm is the recommended threshold for both retail and leisure proposals of relevance to those centres.

3.1.39 The proposed thresholds at local centre level are considered to reflect the relatively small size of some of the centres at the lower end of the retail hierarchy and their consequent potential susceptibility to alternative 'out-of-centre' provision. In practice, it is envisaged that a proposal of just greater than 200 sq. m adjacent to a local centre would generally require an impact assessment of proportionate length and that is the threshold that is recommended.

3.1.40 These thresholds would be applicable within 800 metres of the boundary of the relevant centre, outside of which the threshold will be 500 sqm.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.1.41 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC1 is broadly positive against the historic environment, landscape / townscape, land and soil, transport and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 9 objectives.

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 replace Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' as far as it sets out the hierarchy of town and local centres, UDP policy S1A 'Principal Shopping Areas' and S1B 'Town Centres', and policy map content related to policy S1A.

Policy map content

3.1.43 The boundary of the town centres, the town centre core area and the local centres are shown on the policies map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.1.45 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres. Our town centre hierarchy remains broadly the same and certainly there are no strategic cross boundary matters arising from the changes, which reflect Ashton-

in-Makerfield town centre's role and function more accurately, promote Platt Bridge to being a town centre to support regeneration of this town centre and town in the heart of the borough, and recognised more local centres for the benefits they provide their neighbourhoods and communities.

Delivering the policy

3.1.46 This policy will be delivered through the other policies in this part of the Local Plan, notably policies TC2-11 on our town centres and policy TC12 on our local centres, and through the development management process for edge-of and out-of-centre retail and leisure development.

Summary and conclusion

3.1.47 This policy is the right policy because it conforms with the NPPF by defining a network and hierarchy of town and local centres and applying a local framework for the sequential and impact assessments. By doing so it effectively replaces policy SP2 in the Local Plan Core Strategy.

3.1.48 In addition, the boundaries of our town centres recognise that residential development can plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres, also aligning with the NPPF. Core Areas have been identified to cover the core commercial and civic areas for the purpose of aligning with the national sequential approach policy.

3.1.49 An appropriate approach has been taken to local centres in support of our Progress with Unity missions.

3.2 Wigan town centre

The proposed policy

3.2.1 Policy TC2 covers Wigan town centre.

3.2.2 The proposed policy supports the regeneration and improvement of Wigan town centre as the main sub-regional town centre in the borough. As the main shopping town in the borough, it has a large stock of retail and leisure uses, but it has suffered with declining footfall like many centres of its size and many centres in northern regeneration areas like Wigan Borough.

3.2.3 The policy covers a small number of active works such as the Fettlers scheme (formerly the Galleries) and the Cotton Works, but it otherwise sets out a direction for the different components of the town centre and the town centre as a whole, and a commitment to work in partnership with businesses, residents, visitors, the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sectors.

3.2.4 Parts of the policy look to support the conservation of historic buildings and assets and their re-purposing for upgraded hospitality, leisure, entertainment, business and residential purposes. This includes the Conservation Area around King Street, Caroline Street/Queen Street/Wallgate, the Pier Quarter, Pagefield Mill and the area around All Saints Church, Hallgate and Market Street.

3.2.5 The town centre is a major hub for public transport with two rail stations, providing services on the West Coast Mainline and between Manchester and Liverpool. There is also a bus interchange providing services throughout the borough and to neighbouring areas in Chorley, West Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Warrington and St Helens. The proposed policy reflects the council's longstanding ambition for the integration of the rail station and the bus interchange with work underway to facilitate its delivery.

3.2.6 Sustainable transport is an important element for the town centre's regeneration. This includes how people negotiate the town centre by walking, wheeling and cycling. Improvements to the public realm and cross centre connections between places is an important element of the policy. The reduction in the impact of traffic and rationalisation of parking provision will help to improve walking and wheeling and cycling and bus access across the town as well as improve the environment for those who live and work in the town centre is part of the approach taken in the policy.

3.2.7 The Wigan-Bolton East-West Strategic Route, between the M6 and the M61 motorways, is material to Wigan town centre as it would divert through traffic past the town centre rather than through it. This would enable vehicle movements to be simplified, including at Wallgate and Darlington Street – policy TP1 and Topic paper 4 refer.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.2.8 The town centre boundary has been extended considerably compared to the town centre boundary on the existing Policies Map.

3.2.9 The boundary largely follows the A49 Riverway / Chapel Lane to the east but includes an area to the east of the Riverway / Darlington Street junction (the Eastern Gateway) and then over the West Coast Mainline to the River Douglas. To the south it then follows the river to include what has become known as Wigan Pier Quarter; then it returns eastwards following the rear boundaries of properties fronting the A49 Wallgate, where it shares a boundary with the Wallgate employment area (policy J2, topic paper 2) until it meets the West Coast Mainline.

3.2.10 The boundary then follows the railway northwards for a good distance (as the western boundary) to Walkden Avenue, which is the northernmost point of the town centre. It then returns southwards the via the rear of properties on Walkden Avenue and the B5376 Kenyon Road and Bridgman Terrace. This part of the town centre incorporates the Deanery High School, Wigan Youth Zone, Mesnes Park, Pagefield Mill and the Pagefield campus of Wigan and Leigh College. It then goes broadly eastwards via Dicconson Street and Dicconson Terrace to include the mixed commercial and residential area to the north of the B5376 Northway / Powell Street, before returning to Riverway.

3.2.11 In addition to bordering the Wallgate employment area the town centre includes Wigan Pier Business Park and part of the Chapel Lane employment area (both policy J2).

3.2.12 There are, therefore, some clear boundary defining features on the ground for much of the proposed town centre boundary including main roads, the river and a railway.

3.2.13 By comparison the town centre boundary on the Polices Map goes no further south than the West Coast Mainline and no further north-west than New Market Street (the rear of The Galleries scheme / Fettlers) and no further north than Northway / Powell Street. It misses so many priority areas in central Wigan that warrant the attention and profile that inclusion in the town centre

will bring and is warranted by their relationships with wider town centre activities and functions including within the existing town centre boundary.

The proposed core area boundary

3.2.14 The Core Area is entirely contained within Riverway (where it shares a boundary with the town centre, the railway stations, Hallgate, New Market Street and Northway / Powell Street. It includes the Grand Arcade, the former site of the Galleries shopping centre, now known as Fettlers, and includes all of the traditional shopping and other commercial streets and the civic uses in the town centre. It is not dissimilar to the town centre boundary in the Unitary Development Plan but it followed the railway from Riverway nearly as far west as New Market Street.

The competition

3.2.15 Sub-regional town centres like Wigan had taken trade from smaller town centres such as Hindley, Ashton-in-Makerfield and Standish over a number of decades, but latterly sub-regional centres such as Wigan have themselves been losing trade to regional town centres like Manchester and Liverpool, as well as large shopping centres such as the Trafford Centre, notably for comparison goods such as clothing.

3.2.16 In addition, out-of-centre retail parks with free surface-level car parking right outside the shop doors have proved more attractive than town centres for many people, especially those with cars. As such Robin Park, which is one mile west of Wigan town centre core area is operating very successfully. It did have a planning condition limiting the range of goods that could be sold, but that condition no longer applies. As a result, stores such as Next, TK Maxx and M&S Simply Food have moved from the town centre to Robin Park and a number for food and drink uses have located there too.

The local policy context for the proposed policy:

Wigan Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework

3.2.17 The Wigan Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework was published in 2019. This responded to the challenges that the town centre faced at the time and set out a Vision for the regeneration of the town through key drivers. Key findings were:

- In 2017 there was over 12 million square metres of retail floorspace across the town centre, supporting 10,000 jobs and servicing a catchment of 270,000 (CBRE).

- The Galleries Shopping Centre was identified as a key asset, but it was noted it had 35% of floorspace vacant.
- The Grand Arcade was identified as a strong shopping centre with good levels of occupancy but challenges.
- Primark which is off centre is a good footfall generator for the bottom end of the town centre.
- There is a lack of quality commercial stock in the town centre and there is demand for smaller workspace and offices.
- There was a limited evening economy centred on cheap drinking around the King Street area.
- Wigan Pier provides significant conference facilities with a centre with over a 1,000 facility.
- There is limited new residential development taking place in the town centre with a perception that there is a lack of quality and lack of parking meaning there is only rental potential.
- The town centre benefits from educational establishments located within it, and in close proximity.

3.2.18 The framework has led to several key projects and initiatives which are reflected in the policy. This has included the redevelopment of the Galleries site (Fettlers), with some Future High Street Fund, including a new market hall, new business workspace at the former Civic Centre (Civic), works at Eckersley Mill (Cotton Works), conservation-led regeneration in King Street (Heritage Action Zone), proposals for the next phases of regeneration at the Pier Quarter. These, or the continuation of these through further funding and other priority projects across the town for the next 10-20 years feature in the policy.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.2.19 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed through the Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test study (2025) produced Nexus Planning and introduced in section 3.1 above.

3.2.20 From the data, 817 commercial units were identified in Wigan town centre providing 207,771 sqm of floorspace. The mix of uses identified reflects the role of Wigan as the major centre in the borough and a sub-regional centre in Greater Manchester, characterised by a strong comparison shopping function but also a

period of transition, with a high vacancy rate and an underrepresented leisure component. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.3 below.

Table TP6.3: Wigan town centre uses by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	188	23	26.3	66,617	32.1	29.2
Convenience retail	37	4.5	9.3	11,831	5.7	15.6
Financial and business services	71	8.7	8.3	16,965	8.2	6.2
Leisure services	146	17.9	25.8	30,613	14.7	26.7
Retail services	111	13.6	16	17,831	8.6	7.4
Vacant	264	32.3	14.1	63,913	30.8	14.3
Total	**817**			**207,771**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

3.2.21 The biggest challenge for Wigan is vacancy rates, with 30.8% of floorspace and 32.3% of units currently unoccupied, more than double the national averages of 14.3% and 14.1% respectively. However, the figures presented are from commercial units across the town centre as a whole, instead of the core area also defined by the new local plan, which is the main location for retail. Therefore, the vacant space will not be all in the town centre core. Some of it does results from the redevelopment of The Galleries complex, now demolished to facilitate a major mixed use regeneration scheme, and the conversion of the former Debenhams unit, but other large units remain unoccupied including the former Marks and Spencer store.

3.2.22 Convenience provision is underrepresented in the town centre with only 5.7% of floorspace and 4.5% of units compared to national averages of 15.6% and 9.3% respectively. A significant proportion of grocery spend is occurring in edge of centre locations, including Tesco Extra at Central Park Way and Asda at Newton, both just outside the town centre, which is limiting Wigan's ability to anchor regular day-to-day trips.

3.2.23 Also, of note is the is the amount of leisure uses, which are well below national benchmarks with only 14,7% of floorspace and 17.9%

of units. The data points to a potential to broaden the leisure mix, particularly for food and drink and family leisure uses that can help strengthen dwell time and support the evening economy. This complements regeneration initiatives such as the Stack Wigan and Fettlers Yard in the redeveloped Galleries.

3.2.24 Retail services comprise 17,831 sq. m (8.6%) across 111 units (13.6%), which is broadly comparable to the national averages of 7.4% floorspace and 16.0% units. These uses, typically including hairdressers, beauty salons and repair services, they enhance the functional mix but tend to generate limited destination footfall.

3.2.25 Financial and business services represent 16,965 sq. m (8.2%) across 71 units (8.7%), both slightly above the national averages of 6.2% floorspace and 8.3% units. This reflects Wigan's administrative, civic and professional role, supporting weekday employment and service activity within the town centre core.

3.2.26 In summary, Wigan town centre continues to perform a strong comparison shopping role but maintains a weaker convenience shopping and leisure offer relative to national norms. Exceptionally high vacancy rates currently constrain short term vitality but are expected to improve as regeneration progresses. The centre remains sensitive to additional trade diversion from large edge of centre or out of centre developments, and future investment should focus on formats that encourage diversification, reoccupation and the delivery of the town's regeneration strategy.

Wigan-Hindley Link Road Major Road Network / Large Local Majors Programme

3.2.27 The Wigan-Hindley Link Road was formally accepted into the Governments Major Road Network / Large Local Majors (MRN/LMM) programme in March 2026 (policy T1.6). The proposed road will extend the A49 Link Road constructed from Goose Green to Westwood Park, as far as the A58 Liverpool Road at Hindley, where it would connect with link roads associated with development at South Hindley (policy H4) and North Leigh Park (policy H3). In doing so it would provide an alternative to the congested A577 and enable gains to be made on that route for walking, wheeling, cycling and bus services.

3.2.28 Entry into the MRN/LMM programme marks an important milestone for the project and allows further technical work to be undertaken as part of the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage, with submission to Government anticipated in February 2027. Subject to approval, construction is expected to commence in March 2029,

with completion targeted for April 2031. The scheme will receive 85% funding through the MRN/LLM programme, with the remaining 15%, along with OBC development costs, to be met locally via the Greater Manchester Good Growth Fund. Overall, the scheme is expected to cost £153m.

3.2.29 This link road scheme is promoted by the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and Delivery Plan (the GM Local Transport Plan), adopted by the Council in 2021. TfGM, in conjunction with the council and the other nine GM Local Authorities are refreshing and updating the Local Transport Plan, with adoption anticipated in late 2026. This scheme will continue to be a focal point of the councils transport ambitions for the borough.

Traffic and transport in the town centre

3.2.30 The link road would divert a large amount of traffic that is funnelled into the town centre to get under the West Coast Mainline, away from the town centre, and enable traffic movements to be simplified and road space reduced for more beneficial uses.

3.2.31 A transport study has been commissioned to explore and develop the opportunities for improved walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and parking in Wigan town centre, both with the proposed link road in place, and without for the shorter term. The reassignment opportunities are much greater with the link road in place.

3.2.32 A key focus of this study is on simplifying traffic movements on Millgate, Rodney Street, Harrogate Street and Darlington Street, and improving walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity improvements. The aim is to make the town centre a more attractive destination and reduce the adverse impacts of motor traffic on the liveability and accessibility of the town centre.

3.2.33 As part of the Wigan Station Gateway project, a package of improvements is being considered to make it work much more effectively, both as a transport interchange and a gateway to Wigan Borough and the town centre. The measures being considered include strengthening transport links from the surrounding areas and reducing the impacts of motor traffic on Queen Street, Caroline Street and Wallgate.

3.2.34 Schemes will be brought forward for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, as applicable.

Residential areas in the town centre

3.2.35 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

3.2.36 In Wigan there are dense residential areas to the north, south and east of the town centre. Within the town centre there are residential areas on Eleanor Street, Waterway Mews, Heritage Way, Swan Meadow Road, Crown Street, Coronation Street, Cygnet Street, Cowling Street, Fourteen Meadows Road, Queen Street, Hartley Terrace, Miry Lane, Fitzadam Street, Spring Gardens, Crook Street, Deanery Court, Parsons Walk, Park Road, Park Crescent, Dicconson Street and Hilton Street, as shown in Figures TP6.1 and TP6.2 below.

3.2.37 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced or apartments including a mill conversion, an office conversion and new build apartments but with some semi-detached and detached homes.

Figure TP6.1: Residential areas in Wigan town centre (north)

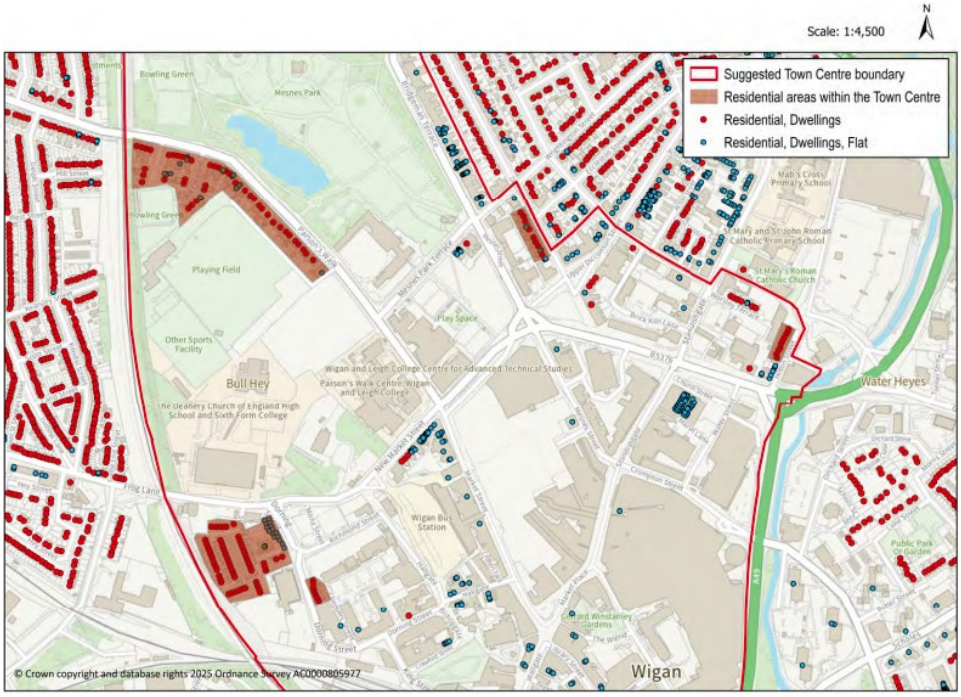
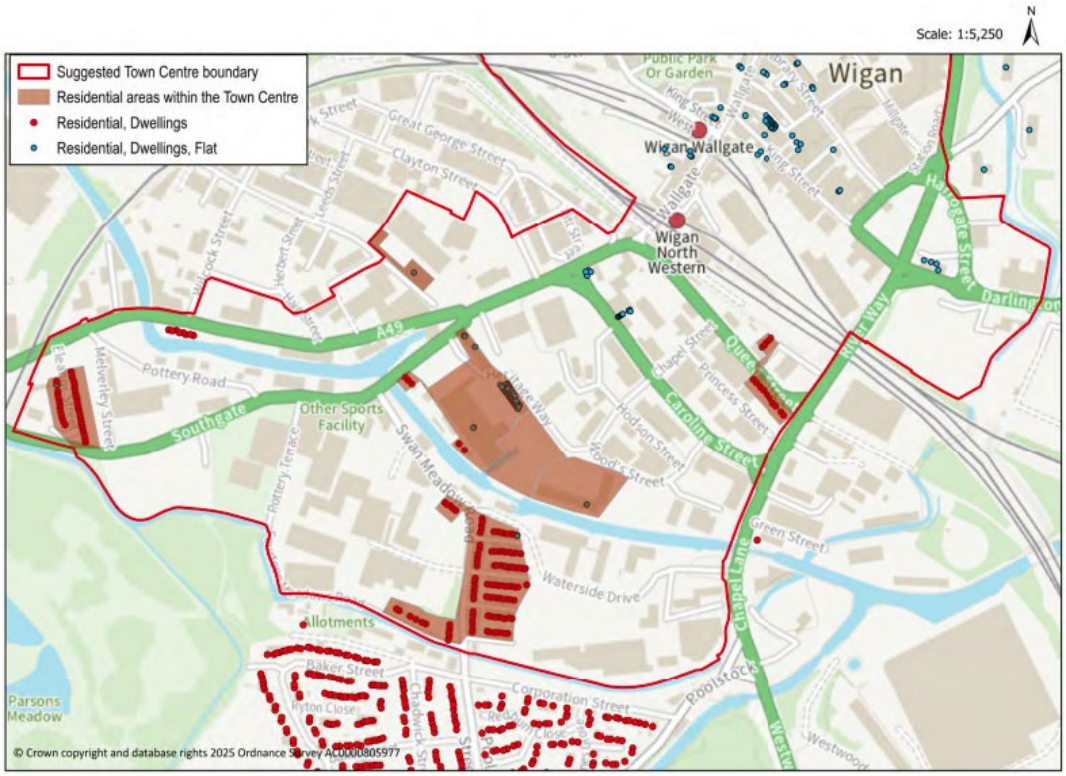


Figure TP6.2: Residential areas in Wigan town centre (south)



3.2.38 Many are in good condition, but many also are in reasonable or poor condition. Most are in relatively quiet locations, but many will experience high levels of local traffic. Generally, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the town centre.

3.2.39 For the most part the policy for Wigan town centre does not have a specific criterion on these existing residential areas. Instead, they are covered by criteria that cover the parts of the town centre they are in, including 11. the area north of Mesnes Street, Northway and Powell Street and along Bridgeman Terrace; 10. on the area north of Bradshawgate; 15. on and off Parsons Walk and Park Road.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.2.40 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC2 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, environmental quality, historic environment, landscape / townscape, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 4 objectives.

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

3.2.41 This policy will replace the part of Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' on Wigan town centre, UDP policies EM1H 'Mixed Use Development – Wigan Pier Quarter', and S1C 'Retail Development – Station Road', and policies map content related to policies EM1H and S1C and on Wigan town centre related to UDP policy S1B 'Town Centres'.

Policy map content

3.2.42 The boundaries of Wigan town centre and its town centre core area are shown on the policies map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.2.44 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on town centres in neighbouring boroughs.

3.2.45 The position of Wigan town centre in the sub-regional hierarchy of centres, as recently re-established through the PfE Plan, is unchanged compared to the existing town centre hierarchy as set out in policy SP2 in the Local Plan Core Strategy. This puts Wigan town centre broadly on a par with Bolton, Warrington, St Helens and Preston town centre, and below Manchester and Liverpool.

3.2.46 Policy TC2 in the Local Plan is not seeking to change that position, it is simply seeking to support the ongoing regeneration of Wigan town centre such that it retains its sub-regional position in the hierarchy of centres. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.2.47 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.2.48 Wigan town centre is in need of ongoing regeneration and while there is a lot of action underway, there is a lot more needed. Policy TC2 is an ambitious policy for Wigan town centre with 21 priorities identified.

3.3 Leigh town centre

The proposed policy

3.3.1 Policy TC3 covers Leigh town centre.

3.3.2 The proposed policy supports the regeneration of Leigh town centre as the is the second largest town centre in the borough, with a catchment that includes Astley, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley Green, Lowton and Tyldesley within Wigan Borough and, to a degree, extends into the Glazebury and Culcheth areas of Warrington and Westhoughton in Bolton. Like many other town centres in the borough and in northern regeneration areas, it has suffered with declining footfall and the loss of some retailers due to national changes.

3.3.3 The policy covers a small number of active works such the civic square, and similarly some prospective proposals that are being worked up as propositions, such as the market improvements, but it otherwise sets out a direction for the different components of the town centre and the town centre as a whole, largely in line with the Strategic Regeneration Framework that was prepared recently.

3.3.4 This includes improving key areas such as Bradshawgate, Spinning Gate Shopping Centre, better integrating The Loom development and securing the conservation-led regeneration of Railway Road. In addition, there is now a priority to secure a new bus interchange.

3.3.5 Critically, the first two criteria of the policy are transformational priorities, to secure significantly improved rapid transit services between Leigh and Manchester, and to introduce new health, education and employment uses, including a higher education presence and new office and co-working spaces, supporting the provision of infrastructure and complementary forms of development that will support these objectives.

3.3.6 The improvement of shop fronts and the public realm is also supported together with opportunities for town centre living and the creation of new business space. Improvements to the amenity of the town centre is considered important with greening of the town centre, improvements to the canal side area and good walking, wheeling and cycling links promoted to surrounding facilities such as Leigh Sports Village and Pennington Flash supported.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.3.7 The town centre boundary has been extended compared to the town centre boundary on the existing Policies Map.

3.3.8 The boundary follows the Bridgewater Canal to the south, to just west of Leigh Bridge where it becomes the Leeds & Liverpool Canal (Leigh Branch) to the west, to include The Loom development. It then turns northwards to include properties on both sides of King Street, with a leg then to the west to include properties on both sides of Railway Road as far as the former college building. It then turns north again to follow Bengal Street and Vicarage Square to include the civic area, Parish Church and supermarket and then further north via Leigh Road to Abbey Street. It then turns south via the rear of properties fronting Leigh Road to Henrietta Street and Union Street.

3.3.9 Church Street then forms much of the northern boundary. The divide between largely commercial and largely residential is gradual to the north of the town centre and this boundary includes most of the residential properties that are within a partly commercial area. The boundary then includes a commercial area at the eastern end of the town close to where the guided busway starts/ends, including part of the Platt Fold Street employment area under policy J2 (topic paper 2). The eastern boundary is then formed primarily by High Street and Mather Lane (including the Mather Lane employment area) but including some additional commercial buildings on the northern side of the A572 Chapel Lane, the main road east from the town centre.

3.3.10 The proposed boundaries are not as clear boundary defining features on the ground as they are for Wigan town centre, which reflects the fine-grained nature of urban Leigh, other than the canal that forms the southern boundary. Otherwise, it is local streets and sometimes the rear of properties facing those streets.

3.3.11 By comparison the town centre boundary on the Polices Map does not include what is now The Loom development to the south of Spinning Jeny Way; it is does not extend as far along Railway Road to the west; does not extend to Church Street to the full extent now proposed; and does not extend further east than Princess Street. It has been extended less substantially than Wigan town centre has but it does now include The Loom, which was developed after 2006, and while it has not been extended as substantially it does now include all of the residential areas that are effectively intertwined with the commercial and civic activity of the town centre.

The proposed core area boundary

3.3.12 The Core Area includes the Spinning Gate Shopping Centre and bus station, Bradshawgate, Market Place and areas off Lord Street to the east and the eastern end of Railway Road. It includes all of the traditional shopping and other commercial streets and the civic uses in the town centre.

The competition

3.3.13 Being a smaller town centre than Wigan, Leigh has lost trade to larger centres such as Bolton and Manchester for decades and more recently to the Trafford Centre, but it too has taken trade from smaller town centres such as Atherton and Tyldesley.

3.3.14 In addition of out-of-centre retail parks with free surface-level car parking right outside the shop doors have proved more attractive than town centres for many people, especially those with cars. As such Parsonage Retail Park, which is less than half a mile west of Leigh town centre is operating very successfully. National retailers looking for bigger units with servicing and car parking that the town centre cannot offer have located there instead, including Next, JD Sports, Sports Direct and Argus, some having moved from the town centre.

The local policy context for the proposed policy

Leigh Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework

3.3.15 The Leigh Strategic Framework was published in 2021. This responded to the challenges that the town centre faced at the time and set out a vision for the regeneration of the town centre through objectives, urban design principles and key actions. Key findings were:

- The economy of Leigh is dominated by retail, and the majority of employees within the town work in either the retail or health sectors.
- The town centre is stretched but still has a strong retail and commercial element along Spinning Gate, the Market and Bradshawgate.
- Terraced property dominates in the town centre where prices of property are also lowest.
- There are potential residential sites coming forward in the town centre led by the conversion of Mather Mill (which is immediately adjoining but outside the new town centre boundary).

- The Turnpike Centre which includes the library, an art gallery and meeting spaces, and the refurbished Town Hall that host the Wigan and Leigh Archives, are important landmark buildings and cultural resources in the town centre.
- Traffic through the town centre is detrimental to the amenity of the centre and the coherence of the town centre areas.
- There is little or no public amenity space in the town centre that can used for outside events.
- The landscape of the town centre is very hard with little soft landscaping and associated green areas.

3.3.16 The Strategic Framework has been a key component in the award of funding to date to help the town centre's regeneration.

Regeneration activity

3.3.17 There are a number of schemes on site now, or moving towards the delivery stage that are funded through the Local Regeneration Fund (formerly the Levelling Up Fund), City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement funds or other funding streams. These include:

- Market Place improvements - this includes place-making improvements such as widened and improved footways and improved crossings to better connect the Civic Square with Bradshawgate for walking and wheeling.
- Civic Square improvements – this has been completely redesigned with a focus on creating an events space with improved planting, quality paving materials and enhancement of the setting and relationship with the surrounding buildings.
- Leigh Market refurbishment – developing proposals to improve the fabric of the building, make it function better including how it relates to the wider town centre, and broaden the offer, in close liaison with the existing traders.
- Leigh Shop Front and Building Improvement Scheme – a grant scheme with applications invited from a core zone in the Conservation Area against which 22 schemes have been approved and 17 are underway, which should be completed by August 2026.
- High Street Rental Auctions (HSRA) – this is a new power given to councils to bring back vacant properties into use. Leigh town centre has been designated as a HSRA and a number of

properties have been identified. Work is underway to bring two persistently vacant properties back into use.

Pride in Place

3.3.18 Leigh has been awarded £20 million over 10 years through the Pride in Place (PIP) programme. The programme aims to build stronger communities, create thriving places and help communities to take back control.

3.3.19 There are nine themes for Pride in Place and, following consultation locally and the establishment of an independent Board, the four themes of Regeneration, Safety and security, Work and skills and Cohesion have been chosen as the primary themes for the Leigh PIP.

3.3.20 The PIP Board has 21 Members from across the private, public and voluntary sectors with a strong interest in Leigh. It is chaired by a local businessperson. All decision are made by the independent board. Wigan Council is the accountable body.

3.3.21 A regeneration plan has been submitted to Government and funding awarded for the first 4 years. There has been a call for projects, and they are currently working through the bids. Some successful schemes will start in the Autumn, but most will start in April 2027.

Leigh Town Centre Management

3.3.22 The Town Centre Manager is the eyes and ears on the ground in Leigh town centre and has a key role in the delivery of cleaner and greener projects and community safety initiatives. They also have an important role in delivering events, which are important for raising the image and profile of the town centre and driving footfall, not just on event days but throughout the year.

Mayoral Development Zone

3.3.23 A Greater Manchester Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) is now proposed for Leigh town centre and the surrounding area. Establishment of the Leigh MDZ is seen as representing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape Leigh's role in the Greater Manchester economy, with coordinated investment and planning aimed at economic growth and infrastructure improvements.

3.3.24 The emerging plans include a new interchange to replace the existing bus station, which is the oldest in Greater Manchester, alongside developing the case for Metrolink connectivity to Leigh; town centre regeneration; improvements to Leigh Sports Village

and Pennington Flash with better connections between them and the town centre; and a new University Health and Social Care Campus in the town centre.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.3.25 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed through the Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test study (2025) produced by Nexus Planning and introduced in section 3.1 above.

3.3.26 From the data, 563 commercial units were identified in Leigh town centre providing 85,684 sqm of floorspace. The centre performs a strong secondary role within the borough, sitting immediately below Wigan in the retail hierarchy. It supports a broad mix of national multiples and independent traders and functions as Wigan's principal secondary comparison destination. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.3 below.

3.3.27 Comparison goods retailing accounts for 35,139 sq. m (40.9%) across 156 units (27.7%). Both measures are above national averages of 29.2% and 26.3% respectively, confirming the strong comparison function of Leigh town centre. The offer comprises a mix of mid-market multiples and independent stores that attract customers from a wide catchment area, reinforcing the town's role as a key comparison destination.

Table TP6.3: Leigh town centre uses by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	156	27.7	26.3	35,139	36.7	29.2
Convenience retail	45	8	9.3	18,039	18.9	15.6
Financial and business services	54	9.6	8.3	9,953	10.4	6.2
Leisure services	107	19	25.8	12,777	13.4	26.7
Retail services	90	16	16	7,831	8.2	7.4
Vacant	111	19.7	14.1	11,946	12.5	14.3
Total	**563**			**95,684**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

3.3.28 Convenience provision totals 18,039 sqm (18.9%) across 45 units (8.0%). The convenience offer is anchored by a large Tesco and a

small number of larger stores at the edge of the centre, these are supported by smaller independent convenience and specialist food retailers. There remains scope to enhance this element to encourage regular shopping trips and to strengthen the centre's role in meeting day-to-day shopping needs.

3.3.29 Again, as with Wigan town centre, leisure uses are lower than national averages at of 12,777sq. m of floorspace (13.4%) and 107 units (19%). The current mix is dominated by cafés, pubs and takeaways, with limited representation from larger leisure or entertainment operators. This indicates potential to expand the evening economy through food, drink and family leisure uses that would improve dwell time and diversify the visitor experience.

3.3.30 Other uses are broadly in line with national averages however, the vacancy rates for units is higher 111 units (19.7%) than the national average which is 14.1% whereas floorspace at 11,946 sq. m (12.5%) is lower than the national average which is 14.3%. This suggests that smaller units are vacant while mid-sized units are still occupied.

3.3.31 Overall, Leigh town centre was found to perform strongly as a secondary comparison centre with a diverse retail base and a stable service function. Although the leisure and convenience sectors are underrepresented, the overall mix continues to support vitality and viability. The centre's resilience is moderate to strong, though larger edge of centre or out of centre proposals that replicate its core formats could gradually erode market share if not subject to appropriate impact assessment.

Northwest Metrolink Study

3.3.32 It is widely recognised that Leigh is one of the largest towns without a railway station. In response to this, the council and TfGM have long-standing ambitions to improve rapid transit services in Leigh. This work began with the delivery of the guided busway and services commencing in 2016 between Leigh and Manchester and Atherton and Manchester.

3.3.33 In 2023, the Council requested that GMCA and TfGM bring forward an option and business case for the inclusion of Leigh as a Metrolink terminus. Within the Draft Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy (2024), an initial sifting has been undertaken, and the Northwest of Greater Manchester (Leigh, Wigan, Bolton) was prioritised for further investigation.

3.3.34 TfGM have now appointed WSP to undertake a strategic assessment of rapid transit options in North West Greater Manchester. This will be finalised in early 2026.

3.3.35 A further related study is also underway looking at the issues and opportunities between Salford Crescent and Manchester city centre. This is essential to whatever happens in Leigh and elsewhere in the borough as there is a need to unlock capacity, either on the heavy rail network, the Metrolink network or both, to reduce congestion on those networks in the city centre.

3.3.36 As a minimum, and in the shorter term, there are opportunities to improve journey times on busway services, to enable it to run as a rapid transit service in Salford. This is being explored through bus network review.

Traffic and transport in the town centre

3.3.37 Leigh benefits from the Leigh–Salford–Manchester Guided Busway, providing ease of access into Salford and Manchester. Busway services have now been incorporated into the wider Bee Network services and benefit from the capped fares. Frequencies have also been increased, particularly in the morning peak, as well an earlier service and later service each day and night bus services on Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings.

3.3.38 Further opportunities to improve services are being explored, notably shorter journey times through express running on the highway in Salford. A new bus interchange in Leigh is also proposed.

3.3.39 There are, however, firm objectives to secure Metrolink to Leigh and options for this are being explored by TfGM.

3.3.40 The highway network within the town centre includes a network of one-way systems which restrict vehicle movements and generates additional vehicle miles as motorists circulate to find parking. There are proposals to review the situation to ensure that sufficient parking exists to meet residents' and visitors' needs.

3.3.41 A transport study has been completed to explore and develop opportunities for improved walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and parking in Leigh town centre.

3.3.42 There are aspirations to upgrade the existing Spinning Jenny Way crossing to a super-crossing to make it wider and give greater green time for pedestrians when crossing. There is also an opportunity to pedestrianise the eastern section of Bradshawgate, removing unnecessary traffic circulation and on-street parking to enhance the area's function and quality as a place.

3.3.43 Schemes will be brought forward for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan and, before that through remaining City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement funding.

Residential areas in the town centre

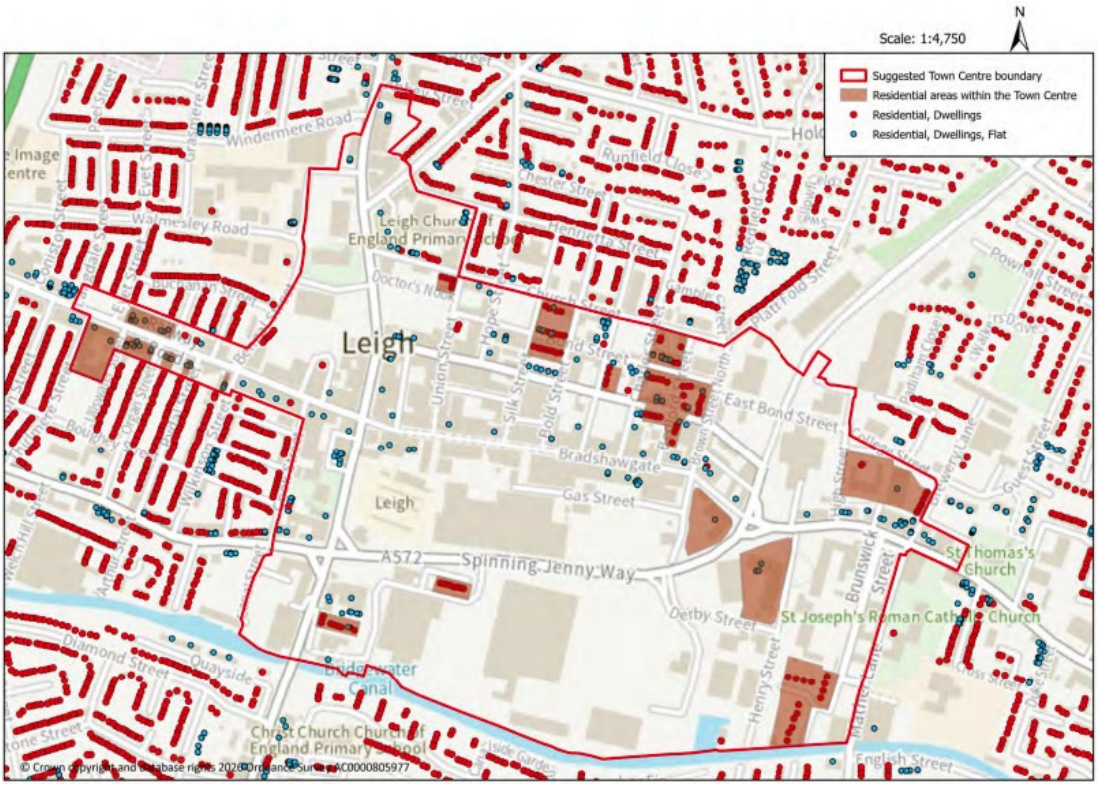
3.3.44 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

3.3.45 In Leigh there are dense residential areas to the north and west of the town centre, and the town centre boundary isn't hard and fast between commercial and residential uses, particularly to the north and on Railway Road to the west.

3.3.46 Within the town centre there are residential areas on Railway Road, Wild's Passage, Cawdor Street, Wharfdale, Derby Street, Brunswick Street, College Street, Lord Street, Brown Street North, Bond Street (east), Bond Street (west), Bedford Street, Vernon Street, Church Street (east), Church St (centre) and Church St (west), as shown in Figure TP6.3 below.

3.3.47 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced but there are some new build flats or apartments at Derby Street and Brown Street to the east of the town centre. Many of the terraced properties are in reasonable condition but some are in poorer condition. It is a feature of central Leigh that there are large numbers of terraced housing, much on the pavement edge, particularly to the north and west. It is also a feature that there are quite large levels of local traffic and on street parking in many of these locations. Generally, however, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the town centre.

Figure TP6.3: Residential areas in Leigh town centre



3.3.48 The policy for Leigh town centre does not have a specific criterion on these existing residential areas. Instead, they are covered by criteria that cover the parts of the town centre they are in, including 8. on Railway Road; 10. on the area north of Bradshawgate; 11. on Ellesmere Street; and 12. on Chapel Street (west) and East Bond Street.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.3.49 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC3 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, climate change, environmental quality, historic environment, landscape / townscape, biodiversity and geodiversity, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 2 objectives.

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

3.3.50 This policy will replace the part of Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' on Leigh town centre and policies map content on Leigh town centre related to UDP policy S1B 'Town Centres'.

Policy map content

3.3.51 The boundary of Leigh town centre and its town centre core area are shown on the policies map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.3.53 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.3.54 The position of Leigh town centre as the main town centre in the east of the borough is unchanged compared to the existing town centre hierarchy as set out in policy SP2 in the Local Plan Core Strategy.

3.3.55 Policy TC3 in the Local Plan is not seeking to change that position, it is simply seeking to support the ongoing regeneration of Leigh town centre such that it retains its position in the hierarchy of centres. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.3.56 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.3.57 Leigh town centre is in need of ongoing regeneration and while there is a lot of action underway, a lot more is needed. Policy TC3 is an ambitious policy for Leigh town centre with 17 priorities identified.

3.4 Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre

The proposed policy

3.4.1 Policy TC4 covers Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre.

3.4.2 The proposed policy supports the regeneration and improvement of Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre as the main town centre in the south-west of the borough, with a catchment that includes Bamfurlong, Bryn Gates, Bryn and North Ashton within Wigan Borough and extends to Downham Green and Garswood, and possibly Haydock, in St Helens. Like many other town centres in the borough and in northern regeneration areas, it has suffered with declining footfall and the loss of some retailers due to national changes.

3.4.3 The focus of the policy is to improve the environment of the town centre by softening the impact of traffic through the centre and eventually diverting it, greening the town centre, re-inventing the market and its space and supporting the improvement of existing retail premises through frontage improvements and locational improvements. Gap sites, vacant buildings and how car parking operates across the town centre are all addressed together with the need to improve the environs of existing residential property in the town centre and links to key assets such as Jubilee Park, Bryn railway station and King George's Field.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.4.4 The town centre boundary has been extended compared to the town centre boundary on the existing Policies Map.

3.4.5 The boundary follows Ladysmith Avenue and York Road to the east of the town centre and then Health Road to the south but also includes St Thomas's Church. To the west it then follows the boundary of the greenspace, sports facilities and school to the rear and west of Warrington Road and Bryn Street as far as to Millingford Grove, and then a footpath across the brook to Old Road. From there is crossing over and beyond Wigan Road via alleyways to Armoury Bank employment area (policy J2 and topic paper 2). The boundary then goes round Kind George's Field to Albert Street and then Bolton Road to Hilton Street, and back to Ladysmith Avenue.

3.4.6 It is a relatively square town centre with the addition of the employment area and King George's Field to the north. The town centre has residential areas immediately adjacent to commercial properties at most points around the edge, so the boundary follows

streets and alleyways between rows of houses to incorporate those properties in close proximity to town centre activity.

3.4.7 By comparison the town centre boundary on the Polices Map does not extend as far as Ladysmith Avenue or Heath Stret and does not include most of Bryn Street, which is quite heavily residential, takes a lot of town centre traffic and through traffic, and has designated town centre at each end. It is more appropriately in the town centre as a whole street. It also does not include the library between Old Road and Wigan Road, nor the residential properties opposite on Wigan Road, or the employment area behind or King George's Field, the inclusion of which in the town centre came from local feedback.

3.4.8 The additions are not extensive but do make a lot of sense in embracing all of the town centre and it does now include all of the residential areas that are effectively intertwined with the commercial and civic activity of the town centre.

The proposed core area boundary

3.4.9 The proposed core area boundary includes Gerard Street, the Gerard Centre, both discount supermarkets on Princess Street, Wigan Road as far as Armoury Bank to the north and Bryn Street to the south, and Garswood Street. It includes all of the traditional shopping and other commercial streets areas in the town centre.

Changing the hierarchy of centres

3.4.10 The position of Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre in the hierarchy of centres is being changed. In the Local Plan Core Strategy under policy SP2, Ashton town centre is a main town centre alongside Leigh. That does not accurately reflect its catchment, which is local to itself and smaller settlements nearby. It was a response to issues instead. Those issues remain, notably through-traffic given the proximity of the town centre to two motorway junctions and changing Ashton from a 'main town centre' to a 'town centre' will not affect that. Indeed, the proposed policy focuses in on that more so than was done previously. It is a far more appropriate position in the hierarchy alongside equivalent centres including Atherton, Hindley and Tyldesley, and more accurately reflects the role and function of the town centre.

The competition

3.4.11 As a smaller town centre than Wigan, Ashton has lost trade to larger centres such as Wigan for decades, and more recently to regional centres: Liverpool, Manchester and the Trafford Centre.

3.4.12 It also loses a large share of its supermarket spend although less than it did as it hosts Lidl in the town centre.

The local policy context for the proposed policy:

High Street Task Force, 2022

3.4.13 In February 2022 the High Street Task Force visited Ashton to undertake an 'Unlocking Your Potential Place' diagnostic visit, followed by an in-person workshop with attendees representing Ashton groups, including councillors, businesses, residents, youth representatives and volunteering groups. Several issues and opportunities were identified, including:

- A need to improve the attractiveness of the town centre including improving the market site and providing a space for events etc.
- Safety improvements for pedestrians.
- Improvements to the public realm. Including a better street scene and more greenery.

3.4.14 Further consultation with youth groups and the public confirmed these priorities and work has been carried out to develop projects.

Our Future Ashton

3.4.15 In 2023, the Council secured £6.6 million of Capital Regeneration Projects (CRP) funding from the Government to deliver a major programme of investment that will enhance the offer and environment within the town centre, support existing and new businesses, improve connectivity and create vital community space.

3.4.16 The funding will support the delivery of the following projects, which we anticipate will make the town centre more attractive, increase visitor numbers, support existing and new businesses and drive growth:

- Improvements to the historic market site which will bring it back into use for a range of uses including events, small businesses and space for the community
- A grant fund to contribute towards improvements to business premises and shop fronts, helping to reduce vacant and under-used space and creating a welcoming atmosphere
- Arts trails and improved lighting around the town centre
- Making streets more attractive, greener and safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

3.4.17 The first projects of the Our Future Ashton regeneration programme, have now started on site. Twelve properties have had grant support for shop front and signage improvements with two remaining to be completed in 2026.

3.4.18 A striking set of public artworks have also been unveiled in the town centre. This includes a mosaic called 'Forged-Together' based on the town's industrial past and a mural of Ashton's former swimming baths.

3.4.19 Public realm works continue in the town centre and the Ashton Square works are due to start on site in autumn/winter 2026/27. The final proposals for the Ashton Square and Public Realm projects will be shared soon and the tender process to procure a contractor to carry out the work is now underway.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.4.20 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed through Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test study (2025) produced by Nexus Planning introduced in section 3.1 above.

Table TP6.4: Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre uses composition by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	75	32.3	26.3	8,429	31.9	29.2
Convenience retail	13	5.6	9.3	3,865	14.6	15.6
Financial and business services	22	9.5	8.3	2,104	8	6.2
Leisure services	58	25	25.8	6,476	24.5	26.7
Retail services	51	22	16	3,652	13.8	7.4
Vacant	13	5.6	14.1	1,872	7.1	14.3
Total	**232**			**26,399**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

3.4.21 From the data, 232 commercial units were identified in Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre providing 26,399 sqm of floorspace. The centre plays an important role within the borough's network of town centres, serving a predominantly local catchment with a broad mix of independent traders, service operators and day-to-day

retail provision. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.4 above.

3.4.22 Comparison goods retailing in Ashton town centre accounts for 8,429 sq. m (31.9%) across 75 units (32.3%), both slightly above the national averages. This reflects its traditional high street function, with a range of independent retailers, charity shops and smaller multiple operators providing for regular and occasional shopping trips.

3.4.23 Convenience retailing provision totals of 3,865 sqm floorspace (14.6%) across 13 units (5.6%). While the share of units is below the national average of 9.3%, the floorspace proportion is broadly comparable to the national benchmark of 15.6%, reflecting the presence of a small number of larger-format supermarkets and food stores that anchor the centre. These stores play a critical role in supporting linked trips and maintaining footfall throughout the week.

3.4.24 Leisure services occupy 6,476 sqm (24.5%) across 58 units (25.0%), this closely aligns with national averages of 26.7% floorspace and 25.8% units. The mix comprises cafés, pubs, takeaways and small gyms, which contribute to the centre's sociable and community-oriented character and provide a balanced offer between daytime and evening uses.

3.4.25 Retail services total 3,652 sq. m (13.8%) across 51 units (22.0%), above the national averages. These uses, including hairdressers, beauty salons, nail bars and repair services, form a substantial component of Ashton's high street activity and support its convenience-led, service-oriented role.

3.4.26 Financial and business services comprise 2,104 sq. m (8.0%) across 22 units (9.5%), marginally above the national averages. The sector contributes to the centre's functional mix and supporting weekday activity.

3.4.27 Vacancy levels remain low in the town centre, with 1,872 sqm (7.1%) of vacant floorspace across 13 units (5.6%), both well below the national averages of 14.3% and 14.1%. This indicates a stable and resilient centre with high occupancy levels and steady demand for premises, supported by a loyal local customer base.

3.4.28 Overall, Ashton town centre performs well as a service-anchored, community-focused centre with a balanced retail and leisure offer and low vacancy. The mix of independent traders and small-scale national operators provides a sustainable base for ongoing vitality. However, the town centre remains vulnerable to out of centre

competition, so continued investment such as through improvements to shop frontages, the public realm and the introduction of a multi-functional market space will be important to retain competitiveness and support long-term resilience.

Traffic and transport in the town centre

3.4.29 The highway network in Ashton town centre is impacted by traffic, including heavy goods vehicles, accessing the M6 via Junctions 23 and 24. Opportunities to remove through-traffic and otherwise soften the impact of traffic will therefore continue to be investigated as part of ongoing work in Ashton

3.4.30 A transport study has been undertaken to look at options for the town centre. A series of smaller-scale improvements such as widening footpaths and providing additional or better crossing facilities is being implemented now using Government town centre regeneration funding.

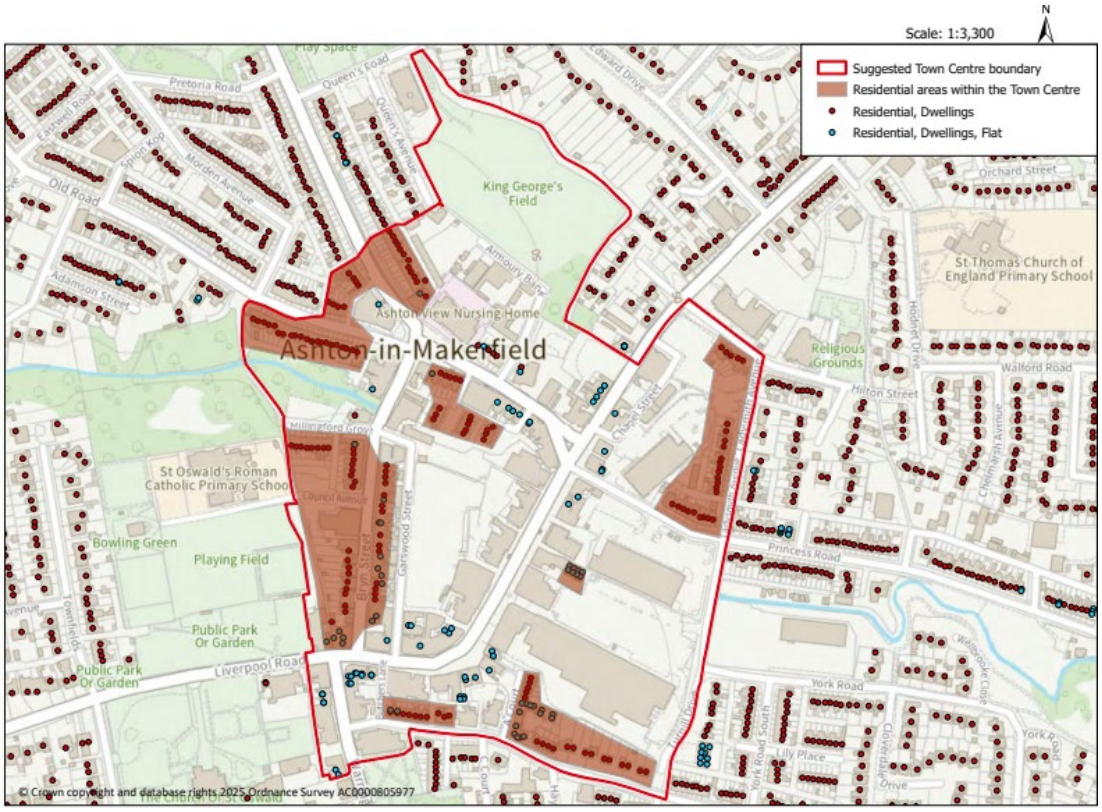
3.4.31 Future schemes will be brought forward for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, as applicable.

Residential areas in the town centre

3.4.32 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

3.4.33 In Ashton-in-Makerfield there are residential areas at Wigan Road, Old Road, Bryn Street, Foy Street / Ivy Street, Gerard Court, Princess Road, Ladysmith Avenue, Hilton Street, A Court and Heath Road, as shown in Figure TP6.4 below.

Figure TP6.4: Residential areas in Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre



3.4.34 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced but there are a small number of semi-detached properties and apartments. Many are in good condition, particularly to the south of the centre. Most are in relatively quiet locations, the exceptions being the properties on Wigan Road and Bryn Street which will experience the adverse impacts of significant levels of traffic, and in locations to the east of the town centre close to the supermarket and the car park for the shopping centre. Generally, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the town centre.

3.4.35 The policy for Ashton town centre does have a specific criterion to sustain and, where applicable, enhance these residential locations.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.4.36 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC4 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, environmental quality, landscape

/ townscape, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 5 objectives.

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

3.4.37 This policy will replace the part of Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' on Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre and policies map content on Ashton town centre related to UDP policy S1B 'Town Centres'.

Policy map content

3.4.38 The boundary of Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre and its town centre core area are shown on the policies map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.4.40 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.4.41 The position of Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre close to the boundary in the south-west of the borough means that it does have cross boundary implications, although these are local and long established.

3.4.42 Policy TC4 in the Local Plan is not seeking to change that position, it is simply seeking to support the ongoing regeneration and improvement of Ashton town centre such that it retains its position in the hierarchy of centres. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.4.43 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.4.44 Ashton-in-Makefield town centre is in need of ongoing regeneration and while there is a lot of action underway, more is needed. Policy TC4 is an ambitious policy for Ashton town centre with 13 priorities identified.

3.5 Atherton town centre

The proposed policy

3.5.1 Policy TC5 covers Atherton town centre.

3.5.2 The proposed policy supports the regeneration and improvement of Atherton town centre as a key town centre in the north-east of the borough, with a catchment that covers the town and immediately adjoining areas off Newbrook Road in Middle Hulton, Bolton. Like many other town centres in the borough and in northern regeneration areas more widely, it has suffered with declining footfall and the loss of some businesses.

3.5.3 The policy for Atherton looks to develop and support the independent sector in the town centre by improving Market Street which has many independent cafes, bars restaurants, shops and professional services. This includes greening the environment, shop front improvements and bringing upper floors into use. The improvement of this area can also create space for occasional markets. V2 services connecting to the Leigh Guided Busway are a key asset for the town, however car parking associated with the busway and provision in the town centre requires coordination to ensure that users of the town centre are not disadvantaged. Improvements to accessibility across the town centre are supported as are improvements to existing residential areas and community facilities.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.5.4 The town centre boundary has been extended compared to the town centre boundary on the existing Policies Map.

3.5.5 The northern boundary follows Mealhouse Lane for its full length, then turns south at its eastern end via properties fronting Church Street, and then Tyldesley Road to Lee Street, and then south again to Hamilton Street where it turns back westwards and is at its southernmost point as far as Crab Tree Lane.

3.5.6 At Crab Tree Lane it turns north to the rear of properties on its west side, and it then turns westwards again to Mayfield Street to include St Richards Roman Catholic Church. At Stanley Street it again turns westwards and forms the remainder of the southern boundary as far as Naylor Street, where it turns northwards to include a small number of properties on the west side of Wigan Road, before following Wigan Road to Mealhouse Lane.

3.5.7 It is a relatively long town centre east-west along Market Street with Mealhouse Lane forming a strong boundary in parallel to the north. Mealhouse Lane takes all traffic eastwards to avoid Market Street and all general traffic westwards during the daytime.

3.5.8 Stanley Street provides a similarly strong boundary for a large part to the south, although it is a residential street. The north side of that street is included because properties back on to commercial properties on the south side of Market Street.

3.5.9 To the west Naylor Street and Wigan Road form the boundary for the most part. The exception is to the east where there are commercial properties grouped around the Parish Church on Church Street, and to the south-east where there is a small supermarket, business uses and civic uses.

3.5.10 By comparison the town centre boundary on the Polices Map is tightly drawn around properties fronting Market Street for two-thirds of its length and it does not extend out as far around the supermarket.

3.5.11 The additions are not extensive but do make a lot of sense in embracing all of the town centre uses in the area and it does now include all of the residential areas that are impacted by town centre activity, including all of the homes in between Market Street and Mealhouse Lane.

The proposed core area boundary

3.5.12 The proposed core area boundary is effectively what is the town centre now along Market Street and Tyldesley Road as far as Church Street and extending up to Mealhouse Lane at the eastern end. It does not include the supermarket but does includes all of the traditional shopping and other commercial streets in the town centre.

The competition

3.5.13 As a smaller town centre, Atherton has lost trade to larger centres such as Bolton, Manchester and Leigh for decades, and more recently to other regional centres: Liverpool and the Trafford Centre.

3.5.14 It is also close to Tyldesley, so it is in competition with that town centre, particularly for people in the areas in between the two town centres.

The local policy context for the proposed policy:

The Plan Volume 4 Atherton, 2019

3.5.15 The Plan Volume 4 Atherton was produced in 2019 to look at the development and regeneration of the whole of Atherton, including the town centre. It highlights a number of key issues and priorities for the town centre:

- Strengthening the business offer to encourage diversity in the town centre offer.
- Introducing pop up stalls in a rejuvenated town hall.
- Rejuvenate gateway sites such as Atherton parish church.
- Bringing empty shops back into use
- Improving the streetscape including building frontages, roads, footways, street furniture, lights and trees.
- Providing a high-quality canopy to shelter shoppers and visitors from the elements.
- Supporting more town centre housing.
- Creating quality public spaces along market street.
- Improving signage.

3.5.16 These elements have been incorporated into the policy where applicable to support the regeneration of the town centre and delivery of projects on the ground.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.5.17 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed through Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test (2025) produced by Nexus Planning introduced in section 3.1 above.

3.5.18 From the data, 183 commercial units were identified in Atherton town centre providing 23,325 sqm of floorspace. The centre has a predominantly convenience and service-led role, meeting the day-to-day needs of the local community and displaying generally healthy occupancy levels. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.5 below.

3.5.19 Comparison goods retailing accounts for 2,551 sqm of floorspace (10.9%) across 33 units (18.0%), both below national averages 28.7% and 26.3% respectively. This indicates a modest comparison role, reflecting a limited presence of non-food retailers and a focus on small independent shops serving local needs.

3.5.20 Convenience provision is a key strength, comprising 6,588 sqm (28.1%) across 17 units (9.3%), compared with national averages of 15.6% and 9.3%. The centre benefits from a strong grocery anchor and several smaller food stores, which support frequent shopping trips and sustain overall vitality.

Table TP6.5: Atherton town centre uses composition by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	33	18	26.3	2,551	11	29.2
Convenience retail	17	9.3	9.3	6,558	28	15.6
Financial and business services	15	8.2	8.3	1,633	7	6.2
Leisure services	47	26	25.8	5,642	24	26.7
Retail services	48	26	16	5,404	23	7.4
Vacant	23	13	14.1	1,538	6.6	14.3
Total	**183**			**23,325**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

3.5.21 Leisure uses account for 5,642 sqm (24.2%) and 47 units (25.7%), broadly in line with national averages (27.7% and 26.5%). The mix includes cafés, pubs, restaurants and takeaways, creating a balanced food and beverage offer that supports both daytime and early evening activity.

3.5.22 Retail services occupy 5,404 sq. m (23.2%) across 48 units (26.2%), significantly above national averages. This strong representation underlines the centre's focus on personal and household services.

3.5.23 Financial and business services are consistent with national averages and add to the local service function and contribute to daytime activity.

3.5.24 Vacant premises account for 1,538 sqm (6.6%) and 23 units (12.6%), both below national averages (14.5% and 14.1%). The low level of vacant floorspace indicates stable occupancy and positive overall health.

3.5.25 In summary, Atherton is a convenience and service-led centre anchored by a strong grocery presence and a broad range of personal service uses. It performs well in occupancy and maintains a clear local function. The centre is, however, likely to be sensitive to

new out of centre convenience formats that could draw trade away from existing stores.

3.5.26 Broadening of the leisure uses will help the centre build resilience, improvement in buildings and the public realm will be part of this as footfall and associated dwell time will be encouraged by a more welcoming environment.

Atherton Building Communities Single Regeneration Fund 3

3.5.27 Atherton town centre was awarded funding under round 3 of the former Single Regeneration Fund in the early noughties. Amongst the projects were works to Market Street to reduce the carriageway for motor vehicles, create laybys for servicing and improve the pedestrian environment with new surfacing. General traffic was banned from Market Street in the daytime.

Traffic and transport in the town centre

3.5.28 Traffic restrictions are in place along Market Street which restrict vehicular access along this route during the daytime. Opportunities to create a safer and more people-friendly environment should be investigated to make the town centre more attractive, with improved walking, wheeling and cycling connections.

3.5.29 However, there are calls from some traders to lift the restrictions to allow cars through at all times. A study will therefore be undertaken to review both options, to assess their impact on accessibility (by all modes of transport), servicing, public realm and businesses.

3.5.30 There is an ambition to provide additional service frequency and capacity on the Atherton Rail Line, which would improve rapid transport connections into Manchester. The minimum requirement is to return as soon as possible to pre-December 2022 service levels. Improving walking, wheeling and cycling connections with the Atherton rail station is also a priority.

3.5.31 In the longer terms the aspiration is to secure tram type services and service frequency on the Atherton line but this is dependent on additional capacity being delivered in Manchester and Salford city centres.

3.5.32 Work is underway to consider these options, with the aim of making the town centre a more attractive place to live and operate businesses. Schemes will be brought forward for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan.

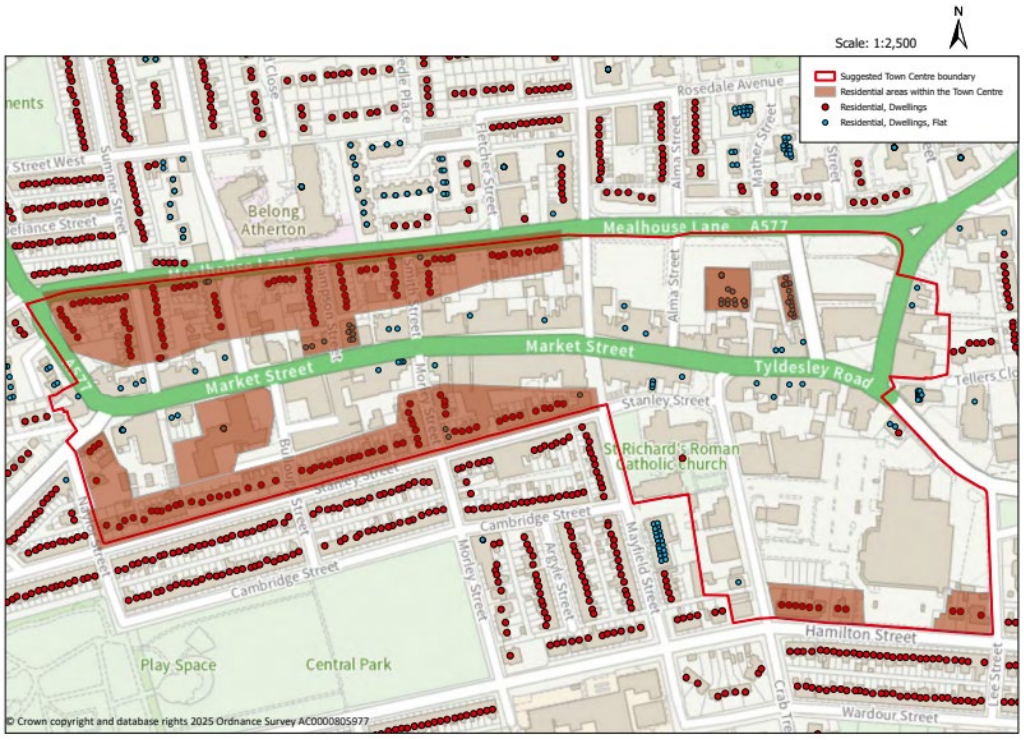
Residential areas in the town centre

3.5.33 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

3.5.34 In Atherton there are residential areas at Wigan Road, Mealhouse Lane, Summer Street, Bag Lane, Hampson Street, Smith Street, Eckersley Precinct, St John Street, Hamilton Street, Stanley Street, Morley Street and Market Street, as shown on the map below.

3.5.35 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced but there are some semi-detached properties and apartments. Most are in reasonable condition. Many are in relatively quiet locations, the exceptions being the properties on the A577 Mealhouse Lane and Wigan Road, which will experience the adverse impacts of significant levels of traffic. Generally, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the town centre.

Figure TP6.5: Residential areas in Atherton town centre



3.5.36 The policy for Atherton town centre does have a specific criterion to sustain and, where applicable, enhance these residential locations.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.5.37 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC5 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, environmental quality, historic environment, landscape / townscape, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 4 objectives.

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

3.5.38 This policy will replace the reference to Atherton town centre in Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' and policies map content on Atherton town centre related to UDP policy S1B 'Town Centres'.

Policy map content

3.5.39 The boundaries of Atherton town centre and its town centre core area are shown on the policies map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.5.41 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.5.42 The position of Atherton town centre close to the boundary in the north-east of the borough means that it does have cross boundary implications, although these are local and long established.

3.5.43 Policy TC5 in the Local Plan is not seeking to change that position, it is simply seeking to support the ongoing regeneration and improvement of Atherton town centre such that it retains its position in the hierarchy of centres. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.5.44 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.5.45 Atherton town centre is in need of ongoing regeneration and while there is a lot of action underway, a lot more is needed. Policy TC5 is an ambitious policy for Atheron town centre with 8 priorities identified.

3.6 Golborne town centre

The proposed policy

3.6.1 Policy TC6 covers Golborne town centre.

3.6.2 The proposed policy supports the regeneration and improvement of Golborne town centre as a key town centre in the south of the borough, with a catchment that covers Golborne and Lowton. Like many other town centres in the borough and in northern regeneration areas more widely, it has suffered with declining footfall and the loss of some businesses.

3.6.3 The policy for Golborne town centre sets out to secure the strengthening of its role by improving the quality and range of services, in particular the leisure and associated food and drink offer.

3.6.4 A key opportunity for the town centre is the new railway station, which should be open and operational by early 2028. The policy seeks to maximise the potential of the new station by ensuring that it is effectively integrated into the town centre, providing additional footfall and the opportunity for new commercial and leisure uses.

3.6.5 The policy otherwise seeks to support the existing shopping streets and their role, improve linkages across the town centre and adjacent areas, enhancing the environment and resolve existing vehicular traffic issues.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.6.6 The town centre boundary has been extended compared to the town centre boundary on the existing Policies Map.

3.6.7 The eastern boundary is formed by the railway, from the overbridge on High Street to Mill Street, which forms the southern boundary from the railway to High Street. High Street then form the boundary northwards to Stirrups Filed where to cuts westwards to Worsley Street which is follows until the rear of properties on Heath Street, which it follows further westward until just beyond Turton Stret, where it cuts across Health Street to the rear of properties on the other side.

3.6.8 At Lowe Street it turns north and across to the rear of properties on Salisbury Street until it turns east again to the rear of properties on the opposite side of Charles Street. It then turns north to follow the rear of properties on High Street but excluding Golborne Enterprise park (employment area under policy J2), including the church and health centre until it meets the overbridge.

3.6.9 It is a broadly triangular town centre based around the junction of High Street with Health Street and the railway. To the east of High Street either side of Heath Street it includes residential properties where they are close to commercial properties or are impacting by town centre traffic movements.

3.6.10 By comparison the town centre boundary on the Polices Map is a far more constrained version of what is proposed. It barely extends south of properties on Heath Street other than around the junctions of High Street with Heath Street and with Tanners Lane. It also doesn't extend north to include the health centre of the residential properties that will be close the station when it opens. The additions make a lot of sense in terms of how the town centre operates, and how it will and should operate when it performs more effectively for its catchment.

The proposed core area boundary

3.6.11 The proposed core area boundary is limited to most of Heath Street and two thirds of High Street north of Health Street within the town centre boundary.

The competition

3.6.12 As a smaller town centre, Golborne has lost trade to larger centres such as Warrington, Wigan, St Helens and Leigh for decades, and more recently to the regional centres: Liverpool, Manchester and the Trafford Centre.

3.6.13 There is an early generation Asda store in the north-west of the town, approximately two-thirds of a mile from the town centre and a Lidl around a quarter of a mile to the south on Bridge Street.

The local policy context for the proposed policy:

The Golborne and Lowton West Neighbourhood Plan

3.6.14 Made in 2023 the Golborne and Lowton West Neighbourhood Plan contains policy GLWR3 Golborne Town Centre which, as set out in paragraph 2.6.3 supports retailing in the main High Street, use of upper floors and other areas of the town centre for leisure and other uses. This reflects the value the community hold the town centre in and their desire to see it improve.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.6.15 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed through Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test study (2025) produced by Nexus Planning introduced in section 3.1 above.

3.6.16 From the data, 95 commercial units were identified in Golborne town centre providing 12,700 sqm of floorspace. The centre performs a localised role, with a strong convenience and service focus that supports day-to-day shopping and service needs for nearby residents. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.6 below.

Table TP6.6: Golborne town centre uses composition by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	17	18	26.3	2,656	21	29.2
Convenience retail	8	8.4	9.3	3,170	25	15.6
Financial and business services	12	13	8.3	1,379	11	6.2
Leisure services	21	22	25.8	2,562	20	26.7
Retail services	27	28	16	2,268	18	7.4
Vacant	10	11	14.1	666	5.2	14.3
Total	**95**			**12,700**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

3.6.17 Comparison goods retailing accounts for 2,656 sqm of floorspace (20.9%) across 17 units (17.9%), both below the national averages 28.7% and 26.1% respectively. This reflects a modest comparison function characterised by small independent non-food retailers offering household goods, gifts and clothing.

3.6.18 Convenience retailing forms an important component of the centre, comprising 3,170 sq. m (25.0%) across 8 units (8.4%). The floor space is above the national averages (15.6%) however the number of units is slightly below (9.3%), overall this indicates a strong grocery and top-up shopping role. The offer is anchored by a supermarket supported by smaller convenience and specialist food stores, helping to attract regular local trips.

3.6.19 Leisure uses account for 2,562 sqm (20.2%) and 21 units (22.1%), slightly below national averages (27.7% and 26.5%). The offer is focused on cafés, pubs, and takeaways, contributing to the town's social and evening economy, albeit at a modest scale. The expansion of the leisure offer is an opportunity for the centre when the railway station is built.

3.6.20 Retail services total 2,268 sq. m (17.9%) across 27 units (28.4%), above the national averages of 7.4% and 16% respectively. This high representation demonstrates Golborne's strong service-led role and contributes to consistent local activity.

3.6.21 Financial and business services account for 1,379 sq. m (10.9%) across 12 units (12.6%), above the national benchmarks. This provision supports local economic activity and daytime use.

3.6.22 Vacant premises total 666 sqm (5.2%) across 10 units (10.5%), both below national averages (14.5% and 14.1%). The low vacancy levels indicate a stable and well-occupied centre with good overall vitality.

3.6.23 However, the town centre is very small. To lift the centre and ensure that footfall is captured, the criteria in policy TC6 focuses on the need to improve sustainable connections across the town including walking, wheeling and cycling, plus improving the amenity of the town centre to encourage dwell time.

Golborne Station

3.6.24 The re-opening and investment in Golborne Station is a major transformation project for Golborne. With the investment of circa £40 million into the station's development the policy seeks to ensure that the whole of the town centre benefits from the investment.

3.6.25 TfGM, as the lead organisation, in conjunction with the council, is committed to delivering a new rail station on the West Coast Mainline at Golborne, which will be one of the first new rail stations to be opened in Greater Manchester since 1999.

3.6.26 Golborne had a station until 1967 and with no direct bus, train or tram services to Manchester from this part of the borough, the new rail connection has the potential to unlock significant benefits for sustainable travel and regeneration of the town centre.

3.6.27 The outline business case was approved by the Government in January 2025, and planning permission was granted at the end of April 2025. The full business case was approved in early 2026 with an opening expected in 2028.

Traffic and transport in the town centre

3.6.28 Proposals for the new Golborne rail station are well advanced and will deliver optimum facilities and services for a station of its size. It is intended that the station will be open by or before 2028.

3.6.29 The station will link the town and surrounding area with direct public transport services into the city centre, which they don't have

at present. It will also improve connections with Wigan town centre and regional and national rail services there.

3.6.30 It is also essential that the station is easily accessed by walking, wheeling, cycling, bus and taxi services as well as the car, with a range of measures being firmed up as part of plans. The barrier of the West Coast Mainline is being reduced by the incorporation of a new walking and wheeling bridge connecting east and west of the line with the station platforms. The scheme is also being carefully integrated with the adjacent town centre to maximise the regeneration benefits it can bring.

3.6.31 As part of the wider town centre transport work, opportunities to improve walking, wheeling and cycling connections, increase car parking provision, address traffic levels and reduce traffic issues on Heath Street will be investigated.

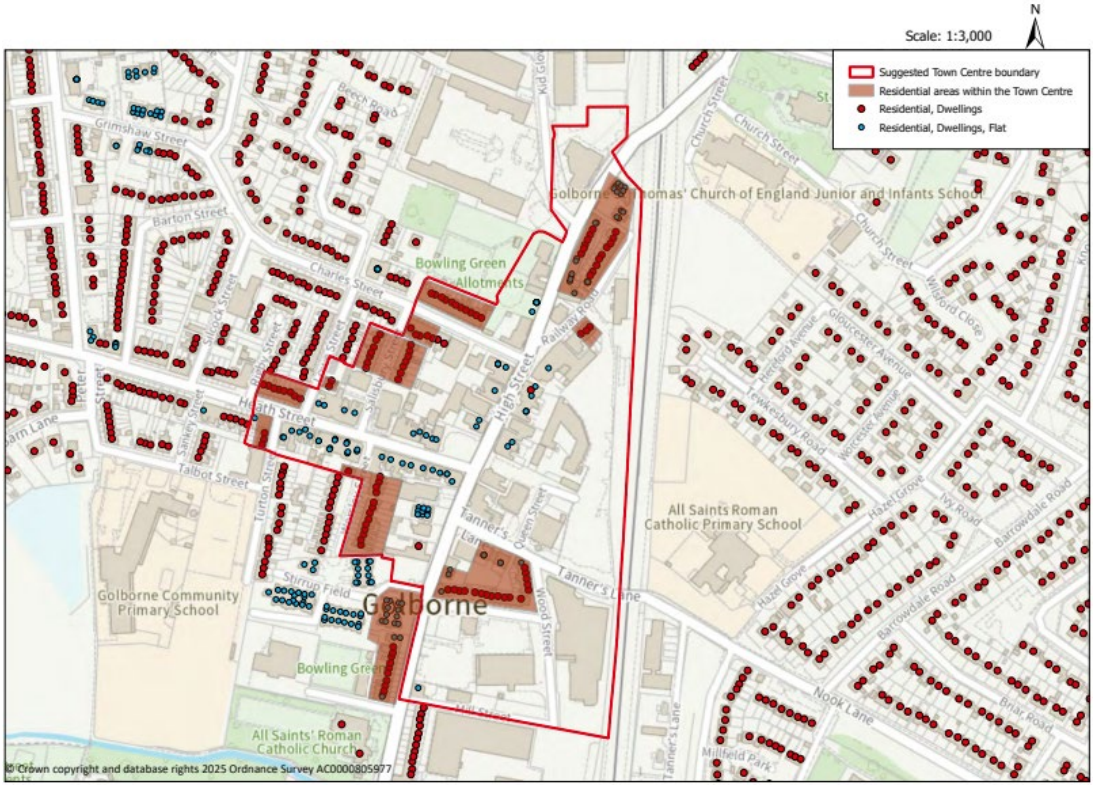
3.6.32 Schemes are being brought forward initially for City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement funding and will subsequently be brought forward for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, as applicable.

Residential areas in the town centre

3.6.33 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

3.6.34 In Golborne there are residential areas at High Street, John Street, Wood Street, Worsley Street, Turton Street, Heath Street, Love Street, Salisbury Street, Charles Street and Railway Road, as shown in Figure TP6.6.

Figure TP6.6: Residential areas in Golborne town centre



3.6.35 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced but with a small number of apartments. Most are in good condition. Many are in relatively quiet locations but many others experience high levels of local traffic. Generally, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the town centre.

3.6.36 The policy for Golborne town centre does have a specific criterion to sustain and, where applicable, enhance these residential locations.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.6.37 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC6 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, climate change, environmental quality, historic environment, landscape / townscape, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 3 objectives.

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

3.6.39 This policy will replace the reference to Golborne town centre in Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' and policies map content on Golborne town centre related to UDP policy S1B 'Town Centres'.

Policy map content

3.6.40 The boundary of Golborne town centre and its town centre core area are shown on the policies map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.6.42 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.6.43 The position of Golborne town centre close to the boundary in the south of the borough means that it could have cross boundary implications, but we are not aware of any.

3.6.44 Policy TC6 in the Local Plan is seeking to change the performance of Golborne town centre for the benefit of its catchment, which is Golborne and Lowton, such that it performs at a level befitting its position in the hierarchy of centres. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.6.45 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

3.6.46 The infrastructure delivery plan includes content on Golborne Station.

Summary and conclusion

3.6.47 Golborne town centre is in need of regeneration and improvement. Policy TC6 is an ambitious policy for Golborne town centre with 10 priorities identified.

3.7 Hindley town centre

The proposed policy

3.7.1 Policy TC7 covers Hindley town centre.

3.7.2 The proposed policy supports the regeneration and improvement of Hindley town centre as the key town centre in the north and centre of the borough, with a catchment that covers the town and the adjoining area of Hindley Green. Like many other town centres in the borough and in northern regeneration areas more widely, it has suffered with declining footfall and the loss of some businesses.

3.7.3 The policy for Hindley looks to support the improvement of the traditional shopping streets in Hindley, including Market Street, and the junction between Cross Street and Ladies Lane. A large supermarket currently occupies a part of the town centre, linkages for walking, wheeling and cycling between the supermarket and the town centre are considered important in maximising the supermarket's location for the benefit of the town centre. Reviving a regular market and occasional specialist markets is also considered important to support in order to diversify the town centre offer. Dealing with flood risk from Borsdane Brook and supporting environmental improvements to the brook are supported as are improvements to the environs of residential areas in the town centre.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.7.4 The town centre boundary has been extended compared to the town centre boundary on the existing Policies Map.

3.7.5 The eastern boundary follows Borsdane Brook from the A58 Bridge Street to the south of the A577 Atherton Road. Turning north-westwards to includes the Monaco Ballroom, St Peters Church and the Bird In The Hand public house. It then follows Wigan Road to Cross Street where it turns north and follows the boundary of the supermarket access, car park and service station to Darby Street. Here it follows a footpath to and then goes around the small supermarket to and down Ladies Lane to Jacob Street where it takes a route across to the A58 Bridge Street.

3.7.6 It is a broadly rectangular town centre based around Market Street (part of the A58) but broadened by the presence of the supermarket as well as Cross Street to its west, and the fact that the centre has been extended eastwards to the brook.

3.7.7 By comparison the town centre boundary on the Polices Map is tightly drawn around properties fronting Market Street on its eastern side and to the north and west north of the large supermarket. It also does not extend south of the A577 Wigan Road/ Atherton Road. It therefore does not include the small supermarket on Ladies Lane, the town hall building at the junction of Wigan Road with Cross Street or St Peter Church. It also doesn't include residential and other properties between Market Street and the brook. These residential areas are immediately adjacent town centre uses and/or on pedestrian routes between the town centre and communities to the east.

The proposed core area boundary

3.7.8 The proposed core area boundary is effectively what is the town centre now along Market Street and Tyldesley Road as far as Church Street and extending up to Mealhouse Lane at the eastern end. It does not include the supermarket but does includes all of the traditional shopping and other commercial streets in the town centre. There is a similar position with a small residential area on the other side of Market Street, in between the two supermarkets.

The competition

3.7.9 As a smaller town centre, Hindley has lost trade to larger centres such as Wigan, Bolton and Leigh for decades, and more recently to regional centres: Manchester, Liverpool and the Trafford Centre.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.7.10 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed through Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test study (2025) produced by Nexus Planning introduced in section 3.1 above.

3.7.11 From the data, 132 commercial units were identified in Hindley town centre providing 25,096 sqm of floorspace. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.7 below.

3.7.12 Comparison goods retailing accounts for 5,197 sqm of floorspace (20.7%) across 38 units (28.8%), the unit share being broadly in line with the national average but floorspace being lower (28.7% nationally). This reflects a modest comparison function dominated by small independent shops offering clothing, gifts, and household items.

3.7.13 Convenience provision is particularly strong, comprising 10,456 sqm (41.7%) across 13 units (9.8%), compared with national averages of

15.6% and 9.3%. This reflects the significance of the large Tesco store in the heart of the town centre, supported by smaller convenience outlets that attract regular shopping trips and underpin overall vitality.

Table TP6.7: Hindley town centre uses by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	38	28.8	26.3	5,197	20.7	29.2
Convenience retail	13	9.8	9.3	10,456	41.7	15.6
Financial and business services	8	6.1	8.3	1,119	4.5	6.2
Leisure services	37	28	25.8	5,267	21	26.7
Retail services	30	22.7	16	2,164	8.6	7.4
Vacant	6	4.5	14.1	892	3.6	14.3
Total	**132**			**25,096**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

3.7.14 Leisure uses account for 5,267 sq. m (21.0%) and 37 units (28.0%). The offer is largely food and beverage-led, comprising cafés, pubs, takeaways and restaurants. There are a few independent restaurants and cafes that give a better-quality offer for residents and are indicative of a potential day and night-time visitor economy for sit down food.

3.7.15 Retail services occupy 2,164 sq. m (8.6%) across 30 units (22.7%), above the national averages. This strong representation reinforces Hindley's role as a convenient and service-oriented centre.

3.7.16 Financial and business services total 1,119 sq. m (4.5%) across 8 units (6.1%), slightly below the national averages. These uses contribute to local employment and daytime vitality but represent a small component of the overall mix.

3.7.17 Vacancy levels are very low, with just 892 sq. m (3.6%) of vacant floorspace across 6 units (4.5%), well below the national averages. This indicates strong occupancy, a stable retail base, and limited short-term structural pressure.

3.7.18 In summary, Hindley town centre is a well-occupied, convenience-anchored centre with a balanced mix of service and leisure uses. However, its strong reliance on food retailing means it would be acutely sensitive to new off-centre food store competition that

could divert regular shopping trips and impact the core retail function.

Hindley Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

3.7.19 Hindley town centre was awarded £340,000 in late 2004 for the Hindley Town Centre Renaissance. The funding was used through to 2008 to restore some of the buildings in the worst condition in the town centre, including the building since occupied by Summat to Ate.

Wigan Hindley Link Road Large Local Majors Programme

3.7.20 Hindley town centre sits at the junction of the A577, which is the main east-west road in the borough north of the A580 East Lancashire Road, and the A58 between Ashton-in-Makerfield and Bolton, which is part of the Key Route Network.

3.7.21 The Wigan-Hindley Link Road was formally accepted into the Governments Major Road Network / Large Local Majors (MRN/LMM) programme in March 2026 (policy T1.6). The proposed road will extend the A49 Link Road constructed from Goose Green to Westwood Park, as far as the A58 Liverpool Road at Hindley, where it would connect with link roads associated with development at South Hindley (policy H4) and North Leigh Park (policy H3). In doing so it would provide an alternative to the congested A577 and enable gains to be made on that route for walking, wheeling, cycling and bus services.

3.7.22 Entry into the MRN/LMM programme marks an important milestone for the project and allows further technical work to be undertaken as part of the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage, with submission to Government anticipated in February 2027. Subject to approval, construction is expected to commence in March 2029, with completion targeted for April 2031. The scheme will receive 85% funding through the MRN/LLM programme, with the remaining 15%, along with OBC development costs, to be met locally via the Greater Manchester Good Growth Fund. Overall, the scheme is expected to cost £153m.

3.7.23 The link road scheme is promoted by the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and Delivery Plan (the GM Local Transport Plan), adopted by the Council in 2021. TfGM, in conjunction with the council and the other nine GM Local Authorities are refreshing and updating the Local Transport Plan, with adoption anticipated in late 2026. This scheme will continue to be a focal point of the council's transport ambitions for the borough.

Traffic and Transport in the Town Centre

3.7.24 As a result of the Wigan-Hindley Link Road Large Local Majors programme and the South Hindley and North Leigh Park Link Road schemes, Hindley town centre will benefit from a reduction in through-traffic. There will therefore be a significant place-making opportunity to enhance conditions for walking, wheeling, cycling and bus services to, from and within the town centre, which will help reduce traffic levels by providing genuinely attractive alternatives, and make the town centre and communities along those roads better and safer places to spend time in and to live in. It could be as quick, convenient and cost effective to get a bus as part of the Bee Network from Hindley to Wigan than it is to drive.

3.7.25 This will be explored and developed with local communities over the next few years ahead of the link road opening, when the opportunities will need to be taken to maximise the benefits of the link road. The alternative is that both the new road and the existing A577 will fill up with traffic until we have congestion on both routes, with no ability to address it.

3.7.26 Schemes will be brought forward for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, as applicable.

Residential areas in the town centre

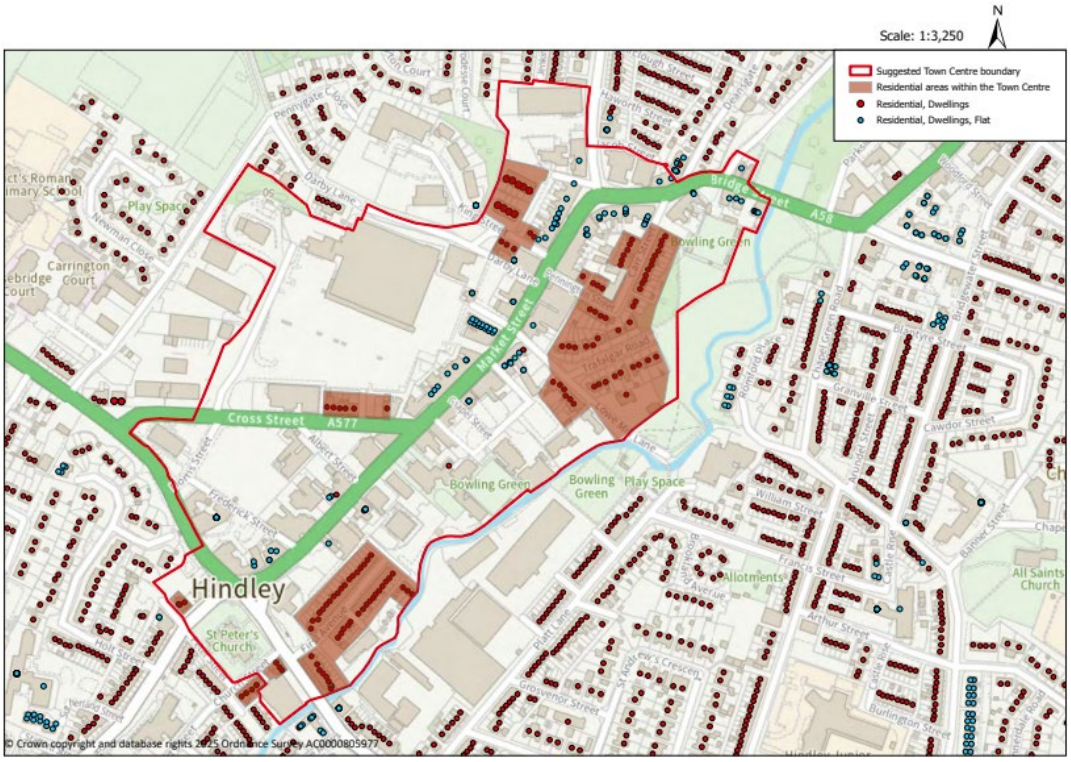
3.7.27 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

3.7.28 In Hindley there are residential areas at Presbyterian Fold, King Street, Carr Street, Pennington Street, Trafalgar Road, Lowe Mill Lane, Cross Street, First Avenue, Atherton Road, Church Street and Emlyn Street, as shown on the map below.

3.7.29 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced and in relatively good condition and most are in relatively quiet locations, the exceptions being the properties on Cross Street and close the junction of the A577 with the A58 main roads which will experience

the adverse impacts of significant levels of traffic on adjacent roads. Generally, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the town centre.

Figure TP6.7: Residential areas in Hindley town centre



3.7.30 The policy for Hindley town centre does have a specific criterion to sustain and, where applicable, enhance these residential locations, and it is noted in that policy that the new east-west link road will enable general traffic to be diverted off the A577 and A58, with resultant benefits able then to be achieved for the amenity of the town centre and residents, through traffic reduction measures on the A577 and A58 road, as well as the connecting Cross Street.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.7.31 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC7 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, water, environmental quality, historic environment, landscape / townscape, biodiversity and geodiversity, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 2 objectives.

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

3.7.32 This policy will replace the reference to Hindley town centre in Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' and policies map content on Hindley town centre related to UDP policy S1B 'Town Centres'.

Policy map content

3.7.33 The boundary of Hindley town centre and its town centre core area are shown on the policies map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.7.35 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.7.36 The position of Hindley town centre close to the boundary in the north centre of the borough means that it could have cross boundary implications, but we are not aware of any.

3.7.37 Policy TC7 in the Local Plan is not seeking to change that position, it is simply seeking to support the ongoing regeneration and improvement of Hindley town centre. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.7.38 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.7.39 Hindley town centre is in need of ongoing regeneration and while there is a lot of action underway, a lot more is needed. Policy TC7 is an ambitious policy for Hindley town centre with 8 priorities identified.

3.8 Pemberton town centre

The proposed policy

3.8.1 Policy TC8 covers Pemberton town centre.

3.8.2 The proposed policy supports the maintenance and improvement of Pemberton town centre as a key town centre in the west of the borough, with a catchment that covers the west of Wigan.

3.8.3 Pemberton is a small linear town centre that is concentrated on the A577 Ormskirk Road. Though there is a large amount of through-traffic, vacancies are low in the centre and it remains popular. To help strengthen and maintain the existing shopping and food and drink offer improving the environment by reducing the through traffic and carrying out street scene improvements is considered important. Additionally, better management of car parking will increase footfall as will improved walking, wheeling and cycling linkages between the town centre and surrounding residential areas.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.8.4 The town centre boundary has been extended compared to the town centre boundary on the existing Policies Map.

3.8.5 The northern boundary follows a series of property boundaries from near Grosvenor Court in the west via Queen Street, Trinity Methodist Church, Church Stret, St John's Church, a car park, the rear of properties on Short Street, the boundary of the Richmond Hill Industrial Estate (employment area, policy J2) to Major Street to cross Ormskirk Road.

3.8.6 From there it goes around the large commercial unit opposite, along Normanby Street and Cross Street to Woodland Street and between properties to Old Fold. From there it goes part way along Brook Lane and across to Baldwin Street and then down to and along Park Road before it turns back to Ormskirk Road.

3.8.7 It is a linear town centre based around Ormskirk Road (part of the A577), but instead of just including properties fronting Ormskirk Road, it goes one property further back and a bit further where roads connect into the Ormskirk Road. In doing so it includes more civic and commercial uses and residential properties that are adjacent. By comparison the town centre boundary on the Polices Map is generally drawn tightly around properties fronting Market Street.

The proposed core area boundary

3.8.8 The proposed core area boundary is effectively what is the town centre except it doesn't continue so far east along Ormskirk Road.

The competition

3.8.9 As a smaller town centre, Pemberton will have lost trade to Wigan town centre for decades and more recently to Robin Park.

The local policy context for the proposed policy:

3.8.10 There are no specific local policies providing context for this proposed policy.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.8.11 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed through Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test study (2025) produced by Nexus Planning introduced in section 3.1 above.

3.8.12 From the data, 120 commercial units were identified in Pemberton town centre providing 14,372 sqm of floorspace. The centre has a distinctive profile characterised by a strong leisure and comparison offer and very low vacancy levels, indicating good vitality and a stable local role. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.8 below.

Table TP6.8: Pemberton town centre uses composition by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	34	28.3	26.3	4,901	34.1	29.2
Convenience retail	11	9.2	9.3	1,328	9.2	15.6
Financial and business services	12	10	8.3	1,071	7.4	6.2
Leisure services	43	35.8	25.8	4,684	32.6	26.7
Retail services	13	10.8	16	2,020	14.1	7.4
Vacant	7	5.8	14.1	368	2.6	14.3
Total	**120**			**14,372**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

3.8.13 Comparison goods retailing accounts for 4,901 sq. m of floorspace (34.1%) across 34 units (28.3%), both above the national averages (29.2% and 26.3% respectively). This highlights a comparatively strong non-food retail function for a centre of Pemberton's scale, with a mix of independent and small multiple retailers offering clothing, gifts and homeware.

3.8.14 Convenience provision is modest, comprising 1,328 sq. m (9.2%) across 11 units (9.2%), below the national floorspace benchmark (15.6%), the offer is limited to small food stores and convenience shops, meaning most main food shopping trips are likely to occur elsewhere.

3.8.15 Leisure uses account for 4,684 sq. m (32.6%) and 43 units (35.8%), both above the national averages (26.7% and 25.8%). This confirms a particularly strong food and beverage focus, with cafés, pubs, takeaways and restaurants contributing to an active daytime and evening economy. The concentration of leisure outlets forms a key part of Pemberton's identity and supports consistent local footfall.

3.8.16 Retail services total 2,020 sq. m (14.1%) across 13 units (10.8%), broadly in line with national averages. These small-scale personal and household service businesses add to the diversity of the offer and support regular local trips.

3.8.17 Financial and business services occupy 1,071 sq. m (7.4%) across 12 units (10.0%), close to the national floorspace benchmark but slightly above the national share by units. This indicates a healthy representation of local professional and business functions within the centre.

3.8.18 Vacancy rates are very low 5.8% for units and 2.6% for floorspace indicating a healthy centre with good footfall.

3.8.19 In summary, Pemberton has a vibrant and distinctive mix dominated by leisure and comparison uses and benefits from very low vacancy levels. The centre performs well in meeting local needs and supporting a lively social environment, though its strong leisure orientation means it may face competition from larger destinations offering similar food, drink and entertainment experiences.

3.8.20 Accordingly. the focus in policy TC8 is on supporting the existing offer and improving quality of the offer, this includes improving the street scene and encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling to the centre. The provision of the M58 Link Road is an important factor as the reduction of traffic on the A577 will significantly improve the environment of the centre and enhance other means of accessing the town centre, and the dwell time once there.

M58 Link Road

3.8.21 Pemberton town centre sits on the A577 Ormskirk Road is the main east-west road in the borough north of the A580 East Lancashire Road.

3.8.22 The M58 Link Road (policy T1.5) would provide an alternative to the congested A577 and enable gains to be made on that route for walking, wheeling, cycling and bus services (policy T1.10). It has planning permission and part of that permission has been implemented.

3.8.23 At present there is no funding for the scheme but we are undertaking transport modelling and we will be refreshing the business case in order to seek funding. It is possible that the M58 Link Road cold be beneficial to removing traffic from Ashton town centre and Standish centre, as well as Pemberton, and the modelling will confirm that or otherwise.

3.8.24 The link road scheme is promoted by the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and Delivery Plan (the GM Local Transport Plan), adopted by the Council in 2021. TfGM, in conjunction with the council and the other nine GM Local Authorities are refreshing and updating the Local Transport Plan, with adoption anticipated in late 2026. This scheme will continue to be a focal point of the councils transport ambitions for the borough.

Traffic and Transport in the Town Centre

3.8.25 The M58 Link Road scheme would remove through traffic from Pemberton town centre. There will therefore be a significant place-making opportunity to enhance conditions for walking, wheeling, cycling and bus services to and from the town centre, which will help reduce traffic levels by providing genuinely attractive alternatives, and help make the town centre and communities along the A577 better and safer places to spend time in and to live in. It could be as quick, convenient and cost-effective to get a bus as part of the Bee Network from Orrell Post to Wigan, than it is to drive.

3.8.26 This will be explored and developed with local communities over the next few years ahead of the link road opening, when the opportunities will need to be taken. The alternative is that both the new road and the existing A577 will fill up with traffic until we have congestion on both routes, with no ability to address it.

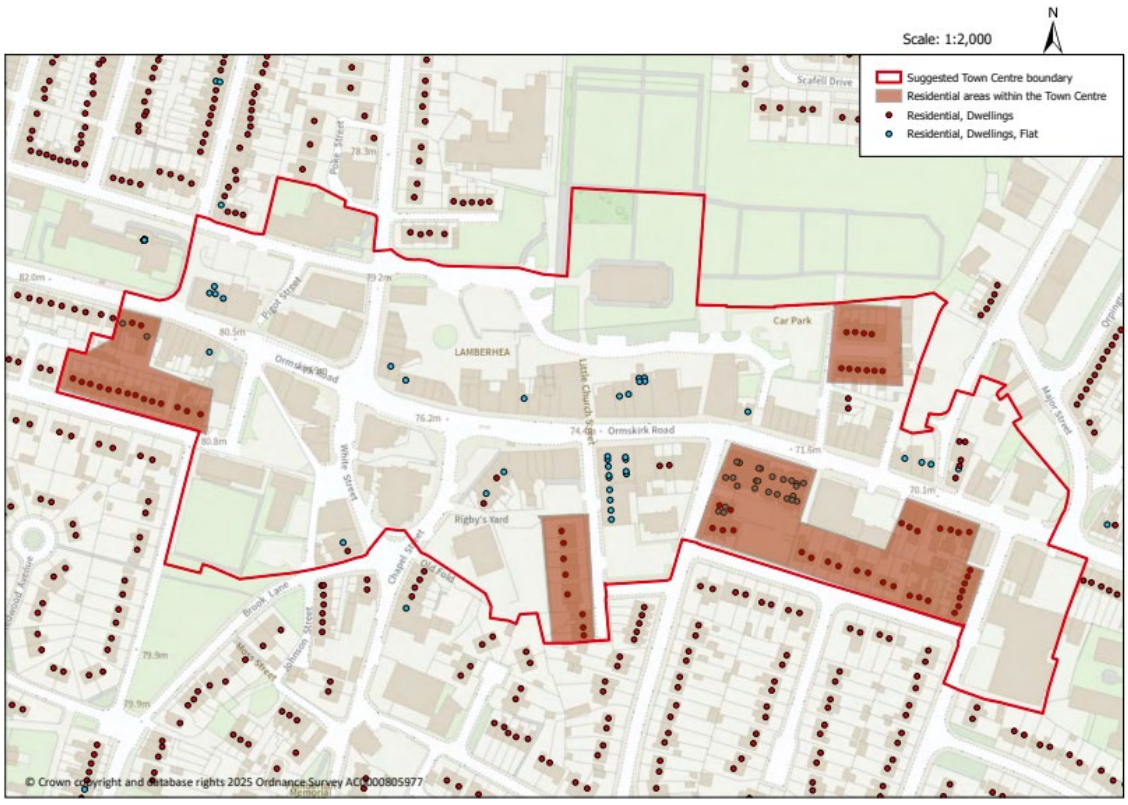
3.8.27 Schemes will be brought forward for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, as applicable.

Residential areas in the town centre

3.8.28 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

3.8.29 In Pemberton there are residential areas at Ormskirk Road, Park Road, Woodford Street, Normanby Street and Short Street, as shown on the map below.

Figure TP6.8: Residential areas in Pemberton town centre



3.8.30 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced but with some semi-detached homes and apartments. They are generally in reasonable condition or better. Many are in relatively quiet locations

but some do front the A577 Ormskirk Road and will experience the adverse impacts of significant levels of traffic. Generally, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the town centre.

3.8.31 The policy for Pemberton town centre does have a specific criterion to sustain and, where applicable, enhance these residential locations.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.8.32 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC8 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, environmental quality, landscape / townscape, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 5 objectives.

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

3.8.33 This policy will replace the reference to Pemberton town centre in Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' and policies map content on Pemberton town centre related to UDP policy S1B 'Town Centres'.

Policy map content

3.8.34 The boundary of Pemberton town centre and its town centre core area are shown on the policies map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.8.36 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.8.37 The position and size of Pemberton town centre means that it is unlikely to have material cross boundary implications, and we are not aware of any.

3.8.38 Policy TC8 in the Local Plan is not seeking to change the position of the town centre in the hierarchy of centre, it is simply seeking to

support the ongoing maintenance and improvement of Pemberton town centre. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.8.39 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.8.40 Pemberton town centre is in need of ongoing regeneration and while there is a lot of action underway, a lot more is needed. Policy TC8 is an ambitious policy for Pemberton town centre with 5 priorities identified

3.9 Platt Bridge town centre

The proposed policy

3.9.1 Policy TC9 covers Platt Bridge town centre.

3.9.2 The proposed policy supports the regeneration and improvement of Platt Bridge town centre as a key town centre in the centre of the borough. It is a small town centre that serves the communities of Platt Bridge, Abram, Bamfurlong, Bryn Gates, Bickershaw and Spring View.

3.9.3 Located at the junctions of the A58 and A573, the town centre accommodate a lot of through traffic. It is somewhat of a discordant place so to improve the integration of the town centre areas and access by walking, wheeling and cycling, attention needs to be given to traffic calming and breaking down the barriers that the main roads create. To achieve this and other improvements a masterplan to determine the best overall options is an essential part of the policy approach.

3.9.4 Platt Bridge has also suffered from recent flooding incidents and the policy recognises the need to address this.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.9.5 The town centre boundary has been extended compared to the local centre boundary on the existing Policies Map.

3.9.6 The boundary follows Hey Brook to the southern across the A58 Lily Lane to include the Holy Family Roman Catholic Church, then along Tram Street, Wigan Street and Car Street before cutting across to New Street and Victoria Road. It then cuts along to the rear of properties fronting the A58 Platt Street, then across Sherwood Way to include the recreation areas and community centre to Peel Street at the northern end of the town centre.

3.9.7 The boundary then returns south for a short distance on the A573 Walthew Lane and then Davies Street, Chapel Street, Woodcock Drive, Gas Street, the rear of properties on Templeton Road, the rear of car parking at the Iceland supermarket and around the site opposite to meet Hey Brook

3.9.8 It is a relatively linear town centre around the A58 but includes properties back from the main road, including the closest residential properties.

3.9.9 By comparison the local centre, it only includes properties facing the A58 to the south of Miller's Lane and only between the A58 Platt Street and Walthew Lane to the north.

3.9.10 The additions are not extensive but do make a lot of sense in embracing all of the town centre and it does now include all of the residential areas that are effectively intertwined with the commercial activity in the town centre.

The proposed core area boundary

3.9.11 The proposed core area boundary includes the whole of the town centre east of the A58 Platt Street and A573 Walthew Lane north of Templeton Road, but also includes retails uses on the west side of Platt Street either side of Millers lane and Car Street.

Changing the hierarchy of centres

3.9.12 The position of Platt Bridge centre in the hierarchy of centres is being changed. In the Local Plan Core Strategy under policy SP2, Platt Bridge is a local centre. That does not accurately reflect its catchment, which covers the town itself, the adjoining village of Abram, and the nearby villages of Bamfurlong and Bryn Gates, Bickershaw and Spring View, with a population of around 15,000.

3.9.13 It is a discordant town centre dominated by the busy A58/A573. The communities it serves are amongst the most disadvantaged in the borough, with most being within the 0-30% most deprived communities in England, and large areas of those being within the 0-10% and 11-20% (IMD 2019).

3.9.14 The nearest alternative town centre is Hindley which is about a mile and a half away. Wigan is over two miles to the north-west. Ashton-in-Makerfield and Golborne are further than that, to the south-west to the south respectively.

3.9.15 Therefore, while it performs poorly as a town centre at present, there is a regeneration need to see it improve and perform better for the residents it serves.

The competition

3.9.16 Platt Bridge has lost trade to larger centres, notably Wigan for decades, as well as to other smaller town centres in the towns that surround it.

The local policy context for the proposed policy:

3.9.17 There is no local policy content providing specific context for Pemberton town centre.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.9.18 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test study (2025) produced by Nexus Planning introduced in section 3.1 above.

3.9.19 From the data, 52 commercial units were identified in Platt Bridge town centre providing 12,832 sqm of floorspace. The centre serves a localised role, offering a balanced mix of retail and service uses but is affected by a small number of large vacant premises that influence overall floorspace vacancy levels. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.9 below.

Table TP6.9: Platt Bridge town centre uses by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	17	32.7	26.3	3,941	30.7	29.2
Convenience retail	7	13.5	9.3	1,630	12.7	15.6
Financial and business services	2	3.8	8.3	635	4.9	6.2
Leisure services	9	17.3	25.8	876	6.8	26.7
Retail services	12	23.1	16	2,160	16.8	7.4
Vacant	5	9.6	14.1	3,591	28	14.3
Total	**52**			**12,832**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025

3.9.20 Comparison goods retailing accounts for 3,941 sq. m of floorspace (30.7%) across 17 units (32.7%), both above the national averages. This indicates a comparatively strong non-food presence for a centre of its scale, comprising a mix of independent shops providing clothing, household goods and gifts.

3.9.21 Convenience retailing provision totals 1,630 sq. m (12.7%) across 7 units (13.5%), close to national averages for floorspace (15.6%) but higher in unit terms (9.3%). This suggests a good range of smaller grocery and top-up food stores that support frequent shopping trips and underpin the centre's day-to-day role.

3.9.22 Leisure uses account for 876 sq. m (6.8%) and 9 units (17.3%), below the national averages. While there is a reasonable number of leisure operators, floorspace provision is limited, indicating smaller

café and takeaway premises rather than larger food and beverage venues.

3.9.23 Retail services comprise 2,160 sq. m (16.8%) across 12 units (23.1%), above national benchmarks. This strong representation of personal and household services supports the local catchment and contributes to consistent day-time footfall.

3.9.24 Financial and business services occupy 635 sq. m (4.9%) across 2 units (3.8%), indicating a limited professional services offer.

3.9.25 Vacant premises account for 3,591 sq. m (28.0%) across 5 units (9.6%), with the unit share below national averages (14.1%) but the floorspace share significantly above it (28%). This disparity reflects the presence of a small number of large vacant units which distort the overall vacancy level.

3.9.26 In summary, Platt Bridge is a small town centre with a balanced retail and service mix and a solid convenience base. However, its small overall stock and the influence of large vacant premises make it sensitive to additional edge or out of centre retail development that could further weaken its role.

3.9.27 The policy for the town centre supports the improvement and further development of the town centre through master planning to reimagine how the town centre functions for the benefit of residents.

Pride in Place Programme

3.9.28 The Government's Pride in Place programme has allocated £20m to Platt Bridge, Abram, Bickershaw, Bamfurlong, Bryn Gates and Spring View over the next 10 years. This will be centred on lived experience and harnessing the aspirations, commitment, skills and know-how of local people, and it sits really well with our Progress with Unity missions and ways of working. As such, local communities will decide how the funds are spent, with the aim of reviving high streets and public spaces.

Traffic and Transport in the Town Centre

3.9.29 Identifying and supporting improvements to walking, wheeling, cycling and bus services and reducing the adverse impacts of traffic are important considerations for the future of Platt Bridge town centre, and will be considered as part of masterplanning work.

3.9.30 Schemes will be brought forward for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, as applicable.

Residential areas in the town centre

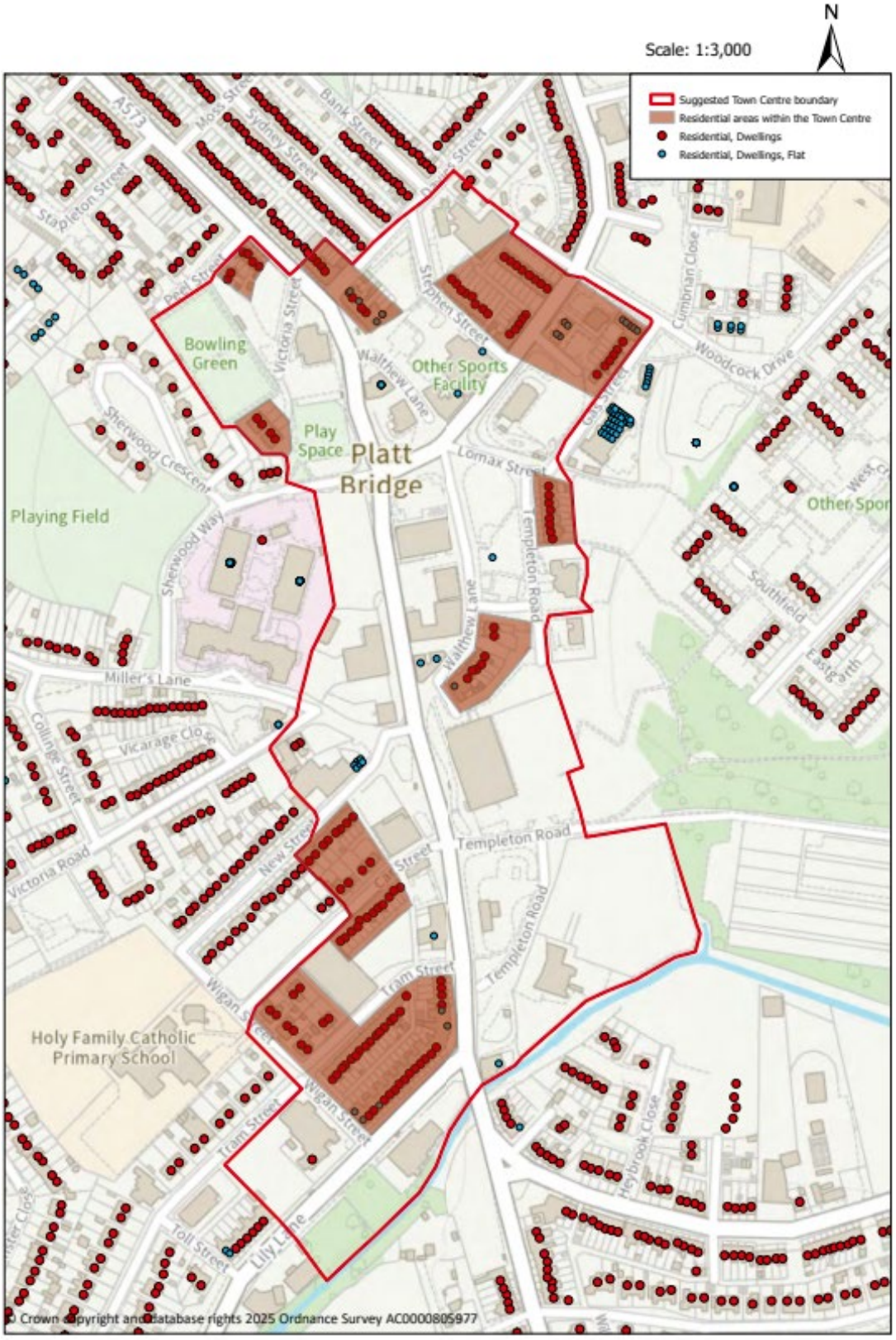
3.9.1 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

3.9.2 In Platt Bridge there are residential areas at Walthew Lane, Stephen Street, Chapel Street, Liverpool Road, Gas Street, Woodcock Drive, Templeton Road, Sherwood Court, New Street, Car Street, Wigan Street, Tram Street, Warrington Road and Lily Lane, as shown on the map above.

3.9.3 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced and range from very good through to poor condition. Many are in relatively quiet locations but a number do front main roads and will experience the adverse impacts of significant levels of traffic. Overall, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the town centre.

3.9.4 The policy for Platt Bridge town centre does have a specific criterion to sustain and, where applicable, enhance these residential locations.

Figure TP6.9: Residential areas in Platt Bridge town centre



The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.9.5 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC9 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, climate change, water, environmental quality, landscape / townscape, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 3 objectives.

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

3.9.6 This policy will replace the reference to Platt Bridge as a local centre in Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' and policies map content on Platt Bridge local centre related to UDP policy S1D 'Local Centres'.

Policy map content

3.9.7 The boundary of Platt Bridge town centre and its town centre core area are shown on the Policies Map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.9.9 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.9.10 The position and size of Platt Bridge town centre means that it is unlikely to have material cross boundary implications, and we are not aware of any.

3.9.11 Policy TC9 in the Local Plan is seeking to change the position of the town centre in the hierarchy of centres, but only to support it better serving its local catchment. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.9.12 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors,

the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.9.13 Platt Bridge town centre is in significant need of regeneration and improvement. Policy TC9 is an ambitious policy for Platt Bridge town centre with 8 priorities identified

3.10 Standish centre

The proposed policy

3.10.1 Policy TC10 covers Standish centre.

3.10.2 The proposed policy supports the further improvement of Standish centre, as a key centre in the north-west of the borough. It is a small centre that serves the town and the nearby villages of Shevington and Appley Bridge, with likely some trade from outside the borough from Wrightington in West Lancashire and Coppull in Chorley.

3.10.3 It is a thriving centre grouped around the crossroads of the A49 with School Lane, which leads to M6 Junction 27 and Market Street / Rectory Lane which is a route towards Aspull and the M61 Junction 6. The centre therefore experiences a lot of traffic.

3.10.4 The policy therefore sets out action is required to help sustain its current vitality and viability. This includes the need to improve the street scene and making it more accessible for walking, wheeling and cycling from surrounding residential areas. Better management of car parking will help turn over of spaces and thus footfall. The historic buildings and setting of the centre contribute to Standish's identity ensuring and promoting improvements to these assets is seen as essential.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.10.5 The town centre boundary has been extended substantially compared to the town centre boundary from the Unitary development Plan on the existing Policies Map. It is similar, however, to the village centre boundary designated by the Standish Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, it includes the small town centre car park at Quakers Place, small areas of housing and the new apartments off High Street and Church Street.

3.10.6 It is grouped around the crossroads with the boundary extending furthest towards the south on High Street. It also extends northwards on Preston Road and eastwards on Rectory Lane to St Wilfrid's Church. It only extends westwards to Quackers Place.

3.10.7 The additions are not extensive compared to the neighbourhood plan designation and are consistent with those made elsewhere. Significantly, Church Stret is included because it does include some commercial uses, and it accommodates both traffic and parking associated with the town centre.

The proposed core area boundary

3.10.8 The proposed core area boundary is similar to the town centre boundary designated through the Unitary Development Plan, but is actually extends further than it on High Street to the south to ensure is includes most of the commercial uses.

The competition

3.10.9 As a small town centre, Standish has lost trade to larger centres such as Wigan for decades, and more recently to regional centres: Liverpool, Manchester and the Trafford Centre. It has also lost trade to out of centre retail parks including Robin Park in Wigan and Middlebrook in Horwich (Bolton). Chorley town centre attracts trade from the Standish areas too as it is performing well

The local policy context for the proposed policy:

Standish Neighbourhood Plan

3.10.10 The Standish Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2019 and contains four policies that are concerned with enhancement of the town centre, as set out at paragraph 2.6.2:

- Policy VE1 Enhancement of Village Centre Retail and Business Premises
- Policy VE2 Village Centre Improvements - Enhancement to the Public Realm
- Policy VE3 Village Centre Improvements
- Policy VE4 Control of Hot Food Takeaways.

3.10.11 Policy TC10 accords with policies VE1-3. Policy VE4 is proposed to be replaced by Local Plan policy PE2, which follows the same approach and applies more locationally specific guidance.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.10.12 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed through the Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test study (2025) produced by Nexus Planning introduced in section 3.1 above.

3.10.13 From the data, 110 commercial units were identified in Standish centre providing 11.381 sqm of floorspace. The centre performs a healthy local role, with a balanced mix of retail, services and leisure uses, strong representation from independent operators and very

low vacancy levels. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.10 below.

Table TP6.10: Standish centre uses by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	30	27.3	26.3	2,385	21	29.2
Convenience retail	6	5.5	9.3	3,048	26.8	15.6
Financial and business services	16	14.5	8.3	943	8.3	6.2
Leisure services	36	32.7	25.8	3,169	27.8	26.7
Retail services	16	14.5	16	1,399	12.3	7.4
Vacant	6	5.5	14.1	436	3.8	14.3
Total	**110**			**11.38**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

3.10.14 Comparison goods retailing accounts for 2,385 sq. m of floorspace (21.0%) across 30 units (27.3%), indicating a modest but stable non-food retail function serving local day-to-day needs.

3.10.15 Convenience provision is a key component of the centre's offer, comprising 3,048 sq. m (26.8%) across 6 units (5.5%). While the number of food units is limited, they occupy significant floorspace, underlining the importance of a small number of anchor stores in driving local footfall and sustaining linked trips.

3.10.16 Leisure uses account for 3,169 sq. m (27.8%) and 36 units (32.7%), floorspace is close to national averages whilst units numbers are above (27.7% and 26.5%) this indicative of a strong and vibrant food and beverage presence. Cafés, pubs, restaurants and takeaways contribute to Standish's lively atmosphere and support both daytime and evening activity.

3.10.17 Retail services total 1,399 sq. m (12.3%) across 16 units (14.5%), broadly consistent with national averages. These include personal care, repair and household services that meet local needs and add to the centre's functional diversity.

3.10.18 Financial and business services occupy 943 sq. m (8.3%) across 16 units (14.5%), above national averages reflecting a relatively strong professional and business services presence for a centre of this size.

3.10.19 Vacant premises account for just 432 sq. m (3.8%) across 6 units (5.5%), both well below national averages (14.3% and 14.1%). This

demonstrates strong occupancy levels and positive perceptions of vitality and viability.

3.10.20 In summary, Standish is a healthy and mixed centre with strong leisure and service representation, anchored by a small number of significant convenience stores and supported by a low level of vacancy. While it performs well overall, its reliance on a limited number of large food retailers means it remains vulnerable to out of centre food store competition that could divert key convenience spending and weaken linked trips within the centre.

Traffic and transport in the town centre

3.10.21 There have been improvements to the walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure in and around Standish town centre over recent years, initially with the improvement of The Line and then with connections into the Line and latterly with an off road route between Standish and northern Wigan, but there is more work to do to improve links from surrounding residential areas and to improve the quality of the street scene. There are plans emerging for improvements to the Market Place next to the church.

3.10.22 The car park at Quaker Place has also been improved and expanded with better surfacing and market bays.

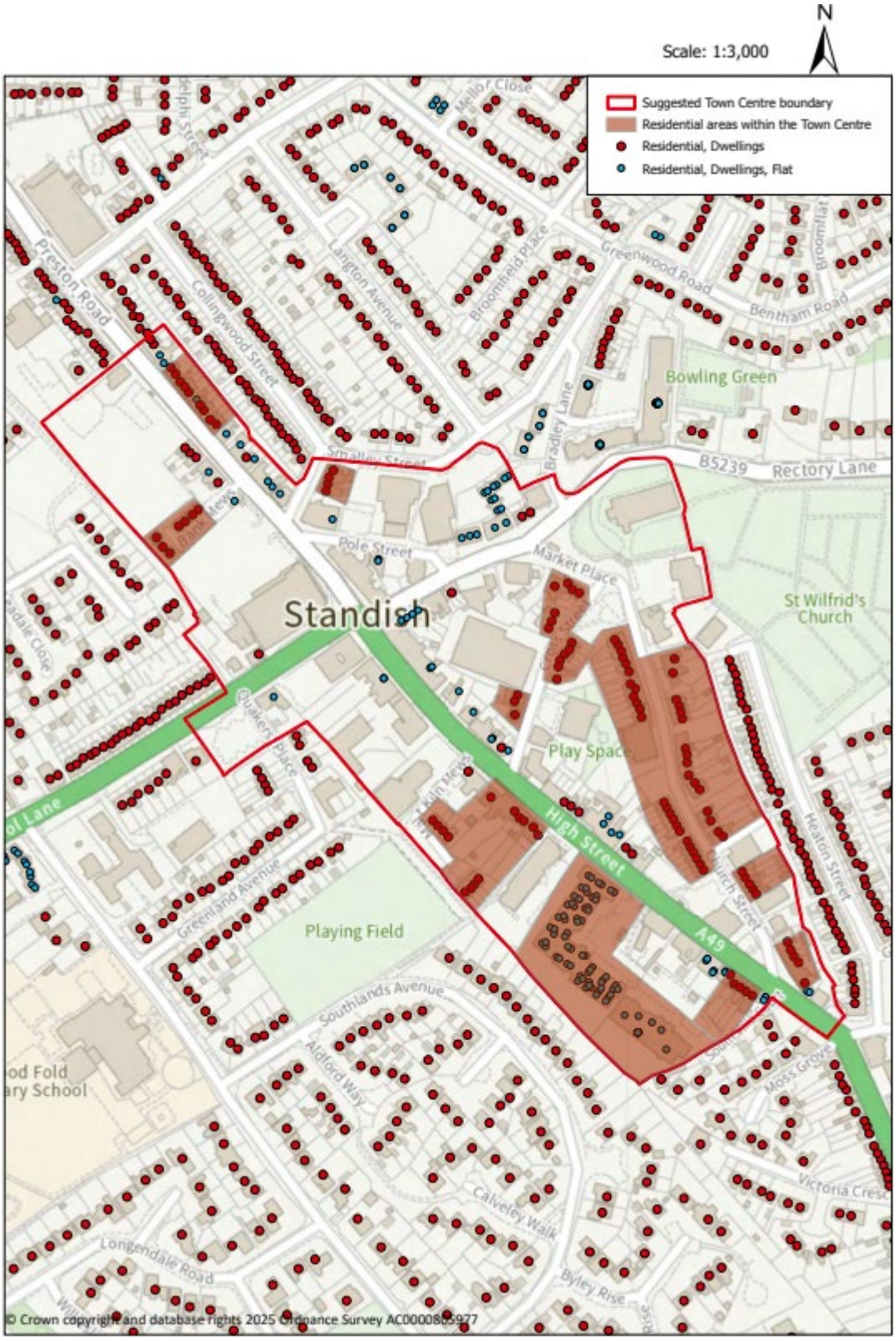
3.10.23 Schemes will be brought forward through section 106 funding arising from housing development within Standish, and for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, as applicable.

Residential areas in the town centre

3.10.24 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

3.10.25 In Standish there are residential areas at Preston Road, Bank Mews, Collingwood Street, Market Street, Church Street, Wellington Place, Malt Kiln Mews and High Street, as shown in Figure TP6.10 below.

Figure TP6.10: Residential areas in Standish centre



3.10.26 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced but with some semi-detached homes and a recent development of apartments. Most are in good condition. Many are in relatively

quiet locations but some do front the A49 High Street or Preston Road and will experience the adverse impacts of significant levels of traffic. Generally, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the centre.

3.10.27 The policy for Standish centre does have a specific criterion to sustain and, where applicable, enhance these residential locations.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.10.28 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC10 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, environmental quality, historic environment, landscape / townscape, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 4 objectives.

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

3.10.29 This policy will replace the reference to Standish town centre in Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' and policies map content on Standish town centre related to UDP policy S1B 'Town Centres'.

Policy map content

3.10.30 The boundary of Standish centre and its core area are shown on the Policies Map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.10.32 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.10.33 The position of Standish town centre close to the boundary in the north-west of the borough means that it does have a cross boundary relationship with nearby communities.

3.10.34 Policy TC10 in the Local Plan is not seeking to change that position, it is simply seeking to support the further improvement of Standish

town centre such that it retains its position in the hierarchy of centres. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.10.35 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.10.36 Standish town centre is in significant need of regeneration and improvement. Policy TC10 is an ambitious policy for Standish town centre with 7 priorities identified.

3.11 Tyldesley town centre

The proposed policy

3.11.1 Policy TC11 covers Tyldesley town centre.

3.11.2 The proposed policy supports the further regeneration and improvement of Tyldesley town centre, as a key centre in the north-east of the borough, with a catchment that covers the town and Astley and Mosley Common adjoining to the south and south-east, which may extend into neighbouring Boothstown in Salford. Like many other town centres in the borough and in northern regeneration areas more widely, it had suffered with declining footfall and the loss of some businesses, although the recent highly successful community-led Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) has secured the regeneration of a number of key buildings in the town centre and new uses.

3.11.3 The policy for Tyldesley town centre looks to continue the work secured through the HAZ to further enhance the historic core including Elliot Street and surrounding areas, where many independent shops, bars and restaurants are located. The enhancement of the public realm in this area will complement building works and encourage dwell time by shoppers and visitors. Traffic calming, better management of car parking and other accessibility improvements will also help people get around the town centre better. There are a number of residential areas within and adjacent to the town centre, it is considered important to help sustain these areas by improving access and the environment.

The proposed town centre boundary

3.11.4 The town centre boundary has been extended compared to the town centre boundary on the existing Policies Map.

3.11.5 The northern boundary follows the A577 Shuttle Street for most of its length, following Common Lane round to Elliott Street at the eastern end, where it returns via the rear of properties and then goes southward down Well Street to the Guided Busway.

3.11.6 The Guided Busway forms the southern boundary as far as the new park and ride site before the boundary returns northwards via Wareing Street and then further west via Saint George's Street to include St George's Church where it turns north to form the western boundary which it completes via a residential area close to the busy A577 Castle Street and then including the Pelican Centre and the shops opposite back to Shuttle Street.

3.11.7 It is a relatively long town centre east-west along Elliott Street with Shuttle Street forming a strong boundary in parallel to the north. Shuttle Street takes all the A577 traffic eastbound, Elliot Street does the same westbound. However, the town centre has been extended southwards to another parallel route, the Leigh Guided Busway. This includes a large number of residential properties but also some commercial and civic uses, and includes pedestrian, bus and general traffic access from Astley to the south and from the busway stop, including the V2 service that leaves/joins the busway at Tyldesley to connect with Atherton.

3.11.8 By comparison the town centre boundary on the Policies Map is tightly drawn around properties fronting Elliott Street for all but a short section at the western end which does extend to Shuttle Street and Castle Street, but does not extend out as far around the supermarket. Neither boundary includes the supermarket located to the north of Shuttle Street which is clearly an edge of centre site.

The proposed core area boundary

3.11.9 The proposed core area includes all of the properties fronting Elliot Street along its full length.

The competition

3.11.10 As a smaller town centre, Tyldesley has lost trade to larger centres such as Bolton, Manchester and Leigh for decades, and more recently to other regional centres: Liverpool and the Trafford Centre.

3.11.11 It is also close to Atherton so it is in competition with that town centre, particularly for people in the areas in between the two town centres.

The local policy context for the proposed policy:

Tyldesley Heritage Action Zone

3.11.12 Tyldesley Heritage Action Zone ran from 2020 to 2024 and brought in over £6 million of investment into Tyldesley for its heritage buildings and cultural activities in the town centre. Run by a Community Interest Company (CIC) the delivery of the project has been important restoring shop frontages and repairs along Elliot Street and other main town centre streets. Work on shop frontages has supported the food and drink offer in the town, helping to increase both the night and daytime economy and the diversity of that offer. The continuation of this work and associated improvements to the public realm, including access improvements for walking, wheeling and cycling are considered key to increasing footfall and dwell time in the town centre.

3.11.13 The CIC is continuing, and they have now acquired a building on Elliott Street to use as an office base with flats above that they will rent out to help fund their work. They are working closely with other organisations to further the improvement of the town centre. They hold regular maker's markets, and the town centre continues to prosper.

The local evidence for the proposed policy:

The retail function of the town centre

3.11.14 The retail function of the town centre has been assessed through the Threshold Policy for Retail and Leisure Use Impact Test study (2025) produced by Nexus Planning introduced in section 3.1 above.

3.11.15 From the data, 152 commercial units were identified in Tyldesley town centre providing 15,211 sqm of floorspace. The centre performs a strong local service and leisure role, serving nearby residential neighbourhoods with a balanced mix of shops, food and drink outlets, and community services. The breakdown of uses and vacancy rates are set out in the Table TP6.11 below.

Table TP6.11: Tyldesley town centre uses by units and floorspace

Category	Units			Floorspace		
	No.	%	UK %	sqm	%	UK %
Comparison retail	27	17.8	26.3	2,936	19.3	29.2
Convenience retail	16	10.5	9.3	1,706	11.2	15.6
Financial and business services	16	10.5	8.3	1,434	9.4	6.2
Leisure services	43	28.3	25.8	4,906	32.3	26.7
Retail services	28	18.4	16	2,859	18.8	7.4
Vacant	22	14.5	14.1	1,370	9	14.3
Total	**152**			**15,211**		

Source: Town centre composition based on town centre boundary as defined by Destin Data, April 2025 and UK Average from Experian Goad Report of May 2025.

3.11.16 Comparison goods retailing accounts for 2,936 sq. m (19.3%) across 27 units (17.8%), both below the national averages. The offer is primarily small independent stores and local traders providing everyday goods, reflecting the centre's localised catchment and modest comparison function.

3.11.17 Convenience provision totals 1,706 sq. m (11.2%) across 16 units (10.5%), close to the national averages. This includes a mix of small supermarkets, local food stores, and independent grocers that

anchor regular shopping trips and underpin consistent footfall throughout the week.

3.11.18 Leisure services represent the largest share of floorspace, totalling 4,906 sq. m (32.3%) across 43 units (28.3%), both above national averages of 26.7% floorspace and 25.8% units. The offer is focused on cafés, pubs, restaurants and takeaways, which create an active and sociable high street environment and contribute significantly to the centre's evening economy.

3.11.19 Retail services comprise 2,859 sq. m (18.8%) across 28 units (18.4%), exceeding the national averages. These include hairdressers, nail salons, repair services and barbers, reflecting Tyldesley's role as a convenient and community-focused centre providing regular service-based trips.

3.11.20 Financial and business services occupy 1,434 sq. m (9.4%) across 16 units (10.5%), slightly above the national average. The offer includes small professional practices which add to the diversity of the daytime economy.

3.11.21 Vacant premises total 1,370 sq. m (9%) across 22 units (14.5%), both close to the national averages of 14.3% floorspace and 14.1% units. This reflects a relatively stable centre with ongoing occupation and turnover consistent with national trends.

3.11.22 Tyldesley town centre is performing well, the approach embedded by the CIC through the HAZ is proving to be very much the right course for the town. This focuses on the quality of the historical building stock and on a public realm that is both functional and attractive. This will broaden social and retail activity and thus dwell time giving Tyldesley an enhanced and transformed role for its community.

Traffic and transport in the town centre

3.11.23 Improvements to the key highways through Tyldesley, including Shuttle Street, Elliott Street and Castle Street, will be investigated to reduce the impact of traffic and improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport connections within the town centre.

3.11.24 This includes improvements to the guided busway connections with Manchester, such as providing additional capacity on the busway and the time journeys take between Tyldesley and Manchester, and improving walking, wheeling and cycling links to the busway stops.

3.11.25 Car parking within the town centre is a challenge, and opportunities for better management of parking will be investigated. A new park

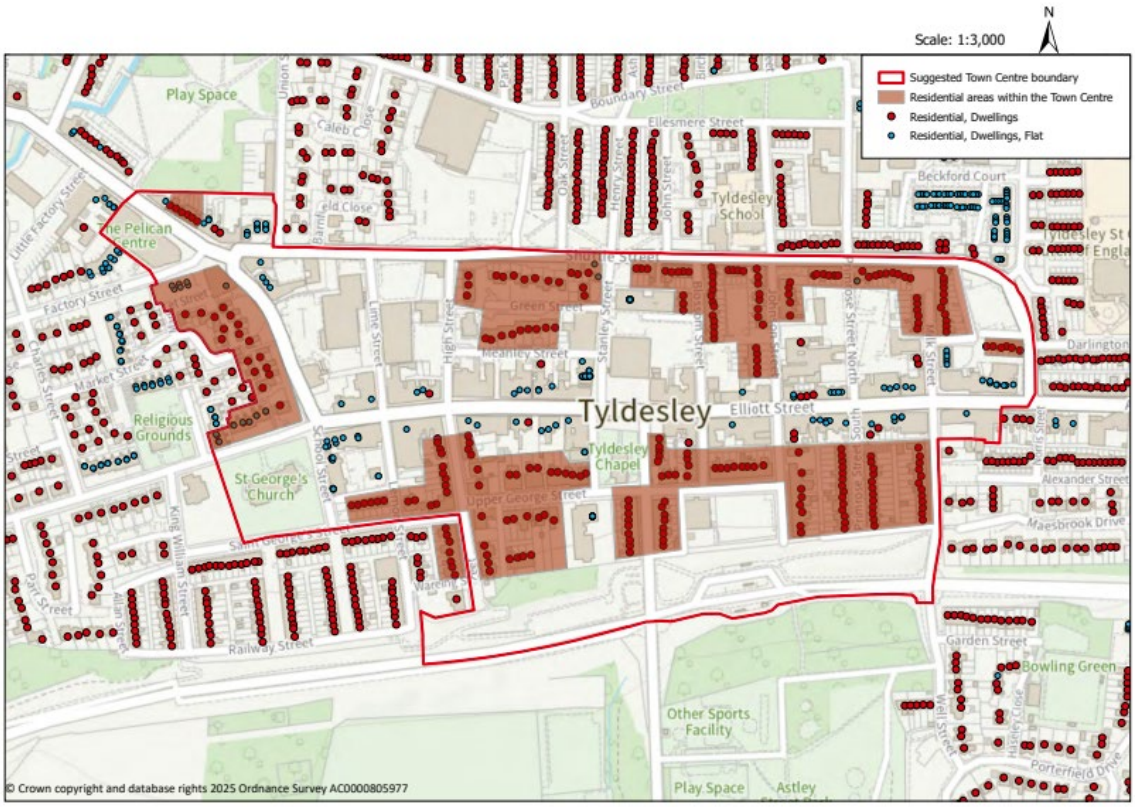
and ride facility is being provided at the busway stop, which should release parking for visitors to the town centre.

3.11.26 Schemes will be brought forward for Transport for City Regions funding through the new Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, as applicable.

Residential areas in the town centre

3.11.27 By extending our town centre boundaries, we have included a number of residential areas in our town centres. As new residential is a key part of town centre development, it is appropriate to incorporate, and recognise, existing residential areas. Town centre residential areas benefit from the range of service and facilities that are nearby, however they can also experience detrimental impacts on their amenity, such as from noise, traffic, parking, safety or nearby buildings or sites that are in need of regeneration. The priority is to ensure that residential areas are maintained in town centres and that, wherever possible, improvements are made to the amenity of these areas.

Figure TP6.11: Residential areas in Tyldesley centre



3.11.28 In Tyldesley there are residential areas at Castle Street, Kings Court, Castleton Court, Green Street, Shuttle Street, Blossom Street, Johnson Street, Milk Street, Robinson Street, Well Street, Primrose Street South, Johnson Street South, Upper George Street, Mary

Street, Astley Street, Wareing Street, Poplar Grove and St Georges Street, as shown on the map above.

3.11.29 The homes in these areas are predominantly terraced but with some semi-detached and detached homes particularly to the south-west. Generally, the homes to the south of the town centre were in better condition. Many are in relatively quiet locations but some do front or a very close to the A577 Shuttle Street or Castle Street and will experience the adverse impacts of significant levels of traffic. Generally, they appear to provide good housing options close to the facilities and amenities in the town centre.

3.11.30 The policy for Tyldesley town centre does have a specific criterion to sustain and, where applicable, enhance these residential locations.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.11.31 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC11 is broadly positive against the housing, health and community, equality and diversity, environmental quality, historic environment, landscape / townscape, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 4 objectives.

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

3.11.33 This policy will replace the reference to Tyldesley town centre in Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres' and policies map content on Tyldesley town centre related to UDP policy S1B 'Town Centres'.

Policy map content

3.11.34 The boundary of Tyldesley centre and its core area are shown on the Policies Map.

Evidence map content

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

The duty to cooperate

3.11.36 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to this policy that has been identified through the duty to cooperate on the Local

Plan, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.11.37 The position of Tyldesley town centre close to the boundary in the north-east of the borough means that it will have a cross boundary relationship with Boothstown, but this is unlikely to be significant in terms of loss of trade from Salford.

3.11.38 Policy TC11 in the Local Plan is not seeking to change that position, it is simply seeking to support the further improvement of Tyldesley town centre such that it retains its position in the hierarchy of centres. As such we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from the policy.

Delivering the policy

3.11.39 This policy will be delivered through regeneration, development and business activity, working in partnership with residents, visitors, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and our strategic partner organisations, and through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.11.40 Tyldesley town centre is in significant need of regeneration and improvement. Policy TC11 is an ambitious policy for Tyldesley town centre with 9 priorities identified.

3.12 Local centres supporting thriving communities

The proposed policy

3.12.1 Policy TC12 covers Local centres supporting thriving communities.

3.12.2 The policy supports the 47 local centres of 4 or more shops and services that are identified in policy TC1 'Hierarchy of town and local centres', and on the policies map.

3.12.3 These centres are designated because they provide a valuable community resource for people close to where they live, and this resource could be strengthened in most instances for the benefit of those communities.

3.12.4 It is recognised also that these centres are not only important in providing services but also help support community interaction and cohesion.

3.12.5 The policy sets out to focus main town centre uses of a scale to serve a local catchment, together with corresponding community services, in our local centres as community hubs, as far as is possible and practicable, so that those services and facilities that provide for people's day-to-day requirements are available collectively, in single combined trips, close to where they live.

3.12.6 It establishes a standard for a strong local centre including convenience food shopping and a balance of other functions including other shops and community services and facilities.

3.12.7 In addition, it supports measures to make local centres safe and convenient to access by walking, wheeling and cycling, which in many respects is council function, to better manage the provision of car parking and servicing, which sometimes could be a council function, and to improve the environmental quality of centres, which again sometimes could be a council function. It also pledges to target underperforming local centres for these improvements.

3.12.8 The Local Centres identified in policy TC1 are set out in Table TP6.12 below:

Table TP6.12: Local Centres in Wigan Borough

Area	Local centre
Appley Bridge	Woodnook Road
Ashton	Stubshaw Cross
Aspull	Aspull, Scot Lane Aspull

Area	Local centre
Atherton	Bolton Road, Derby Street, Hag Fold
Bryn	Bryn
Hindley	Borsdane, Atherton Road (Hindley Green)
Ince	Higher Ince, Lower Ince
Leigh	Higher Folds, Warrington Road, Wigan Road
Lowton	Church Lane, Oaklands Road, Slag Lane
Orrell	Orrell, Orrell Post
Shevington	Shevington
Tyldesley and Astley	Blackmoor, Stour Road, Mosley Common, Parr Bridge, Sale Lane, Shakerley
Wigan	Ashbourne Avenue, Beech Hill Avenue, Gidlow Lane, Goose Green (Clap Gate), Goose Green (St Pauls Avenue), Hawkley, Kitt Green, Marsh Green, Mesnes Road, Newtown, Norley Hall, Ormskirk Road, Poolstock, Scholes, Springfield, Swinley, Whelley, Winstanley, Woodhouse Lane Worsley Hall.

Review of Local Centres in Wigan Borough, April 2025

3.12.9 A substantial amount work has been undertaken to assess and identify the 47 local centres that are included in policy TC1 and to which policy TC12 applies. This is set out in our report: 'Review of Local Centres in Wigan Borough' (April 2025), that was published alongside the Initial Draft Local Plan and is part of our evidence base. The report sets out the process undertaken, including the types of uses counted and the threshold for the number of uses arrived at.

3.12.10 The strength of each potential local centre was assessed by a number of factors including number of units; types of use; competition from other local centres or supermarkets; the presence of employment areas nearby; barriers to access including railway lines; accessibility by walking, wheeling and cycling; bus and car access; condition of properties and the environment; and the socio-economic make-up of the catchment population.

3.12.11 The strengths and weaknesses of the local centres were set out together with a summary of improvements that would be

beneficial. The centres were also scored against a number of weighted elements to give an overall ranking. In summary, 10 local centres were found to be good, 25 were rated as reasonable and 12 local centres were ranked as poor. Details of the scores and ranking are set out in the table below:

Table TP6.13: The score and internal ranking of each local centre

Local centre	Rating	Score	Position	Units
Shevington	Good	12	1	33
Orrell	Good	12	1	12
Winstanley	Good	11	1	16
Parr Bridge	Good	11	4	5
Aspull	Good	10.5	5	19
Borsdane	Good	10	6	5
Goose Green (Clapgate Lane)	Good	10	6	11
Stour Road (Astley)	Good	9	8	8
Marsh Green	Good	9	8	7
Higher Ince	Good	9	8	35
Church Lane (Lowton)	Reasonable	8.5	11	19
Mesnes Road	Reasonable	8	12	6
Norley Hall	Reasonable	8	12	8
Woodhouse Lane (Beech Hill)	Reasonable	7.5	14	10
Goose Green (St Paul's Avenue)	Reasonable	7.5	14	7
Hawkley	Reasonable	7	16	11
Whelley	Reasonable	6.5	17	6
Oaklands Road (Lowton)	Reasonable	6	18	9
Slag Lane (Lowton)	Reasonable	6	18	7
Springfield	Reasonable	6	18	27
Swinley	Reasonable	6	18	55
Newtown	Reasonable	6	18	24
Appley Bridge	Reasonable	5	23	5
Poolstock	Reasonable	5	23	4
Sale Lane (Tyldesley)	Reasonable	5	23	28
Blackmoor Road (Astley)	Reasonable	5	23	12
Worsley Hall	Reasonable	4.5	27	7
Higher Folds	Reasonable	4.5	28	10
Orrell Post	Reasonable	4	28	12
Gidlow Lane (Beech Hill)	Reasonable	3	30	14
Mosley Common	Reasonable	3	30	10
Atherton Road (Hindley Green)	Reasonable	3	30	4
Scholes	Reasonable	3	30	19
Bolton Road (Atherton)	Reasonable	2	34	5
Bryn	Reasonable	2	34	30
Ashbourne Avenue (Whelley)	Poor	1.5	36	4
Beech Hill Avenue	Poor	1	37	9

Local centre	Rating	Score	Position	Units
Aspull Scot Lane	Poor	0	38	8
Warrington Road (Leigh)	Poor	-0.5	39	5
Ormskirk Road	Poor	-0.5	39	10
Conway Road, Stubshaw Cross	Poor	-1.5	41	4
Kitt Green	Poor	-1	42	7
Derby Street	Poor	-2	43	6
Hag Fold	Poor	-3	44	4
Shakerley	Poor	-3	44	4
Wigan Road (Leigh)	Poor	-3	44	6
Lower Ince	Poor	-3.5	47	9

3.12.12 The threshold arrived at was only 4 units, which is below the definition of a local centre in the glossary to the National planning Policy Framework as set out in paragraph 3.1.16 above. 11 of our local centres are small parades of neighbourhood significance but are included in our local centre designations as the best that those communities and neighbourhood have locally and are therefore important and hopefully something to work from to improve the position.

3.12.13 All these centres have an important role in providing services and facilities for local people**.** The centres vary considerably in what they provide, their condition and performance, for the future however it is recognised that supporting and developing these centres for their community, social and health care services will be important for the well-being of the local communities they serve. In addition, improving active travel accessibility will strengthen their use and ultimately their viability, vitality and identity

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.12.14 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC12 is broadly positive against the health and community, equality and diversity, environmental quality, biodiversity and geodiversity, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 7 objectives.

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

3.12.15 This policy will replace the reference to 'Local and neighbourhood centres' in Core Strategy policy SP2 'Our town and local centres', UPD policy S1D 'Local Centres' and policies map content on local centres related to UDP policy S1D.

Policy map content

3.12.16 The boundaries of the 47 local centres are shown on the Policies Map.

Evidence map content

3.12.17 The 600 metres catchment areas for the 47 local centres together with 800 metres catchment areas for the ten town centres are shown on the evidence map.

The duty to cooperate

3.12.18 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to centres but it relates to town centres, namely the impact of Local Plan town centre policies on town centres in neighbouring boroughs and districts.

3.12.19 The size and function of our local centres are such that we do not believe that there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from this policy.

Delivering the policy

3.12.20 This policy will be delivered by the council, public services partners, property owners, businesses, community organisations and groups and the local community through project work and the development management process as applicable.

Summary and conclusion

3.12.21 The Local centres policy is significant to the contribution that the Local Plan can make to delivering on the missions for Progress with Unity, namely creating fair opportunities for all and making all of our towns and neighbourhoods flourish. Local centres are important to both. Policy TC12 is a suitably ambitious policy in that respect.

3.13 Gaps in the provision of local centres

The proposed policy

3.13.1 Policy TC13 covers Gaps in the provision of local centres.

3.13.2 The policy identifies gaps in local provision of services where a new local centre could potentially be located and sets out specifications for the size of shops to be provided and identifies some strategic sites where such facilities could be provided, including the West of Gibfield site allocated in the PfE Plan and three sites allocated in this plan in accordance the policies concerned.

Gap area evidence

3.13.3 As part of the assessment and identification of the 47 local centres under policy TC12, 600 metres catchment areas were identified around each to help identify their strengths and weaknesses. As part of that the local centre function of our town centres was also considered and 800 metres catchment areas were identified for the town centres.

3.13.4 600 metres radius from a centre point within each centre is considered to be a reasonable walking, wheeling and cycling distance to/from a destination. This is comparable to 400 metres as an established reasonable walking distance to/from a bus stop with a frequent bus service, as unlike a local centre, a bus service is not itself a destination. Most households within the catchment area would be closer to the local centre than 600 metres and a longer distance would typically be reasonable for someone wheeling or cycling.

3.13.5 An 800 metres catchment was identified for the local centre role of our town centres as this is reflective of their larger offer and potential for multi-purpose trips, and their greater accessibility by bus services compared to most local centres.

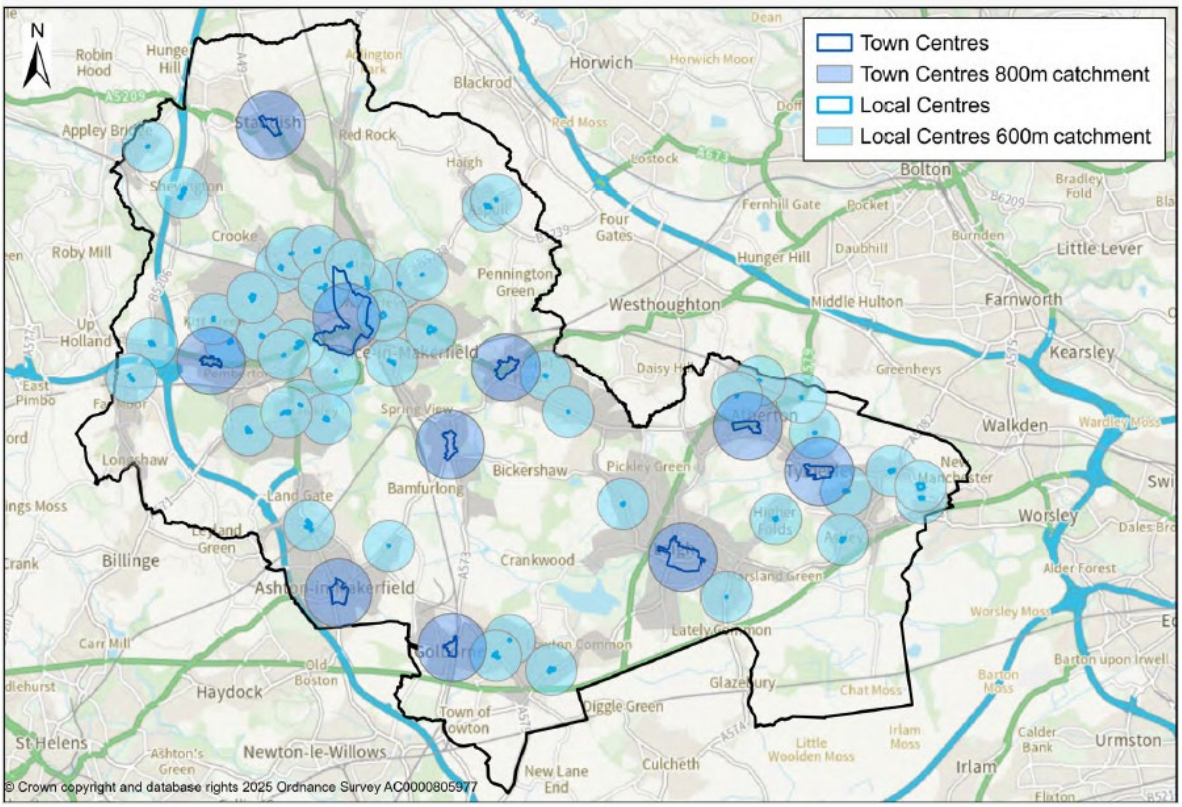
3.13.6 Further information is set out in our report: 'Review of Local Centres in Wigan Borough' (April 2025), that was published alongside the Initial Draft Local Plan and is part of our evidence base.

3.13.7 Using these catchment areas, catchment gaps were identified in built up areas across the borough and these are listed in the policy. The map below shows the catchment areas and the gaps in provision against the base plan. They can also be viewed on our evidence map.

3.13.8 A key consideration of the identification of gap areas was the number of households needed to support a local centre. For a new

local centre of 4 units it was identified that circa 1,000 households was a benchmark reflective of the smaller local centres across the borough. However, some had smaller catchments of under 1,000 households this tended to be where residential catchments were isolated or where they were separated from local centres by physical barriers such as major highways.

Figure TP6.12: Town and local centres and their catchment areas



The thresholds

3.13.9 The floorspace thresholds are included because we do not want to greenlight large scale retail development in out of centre locations. The development must be primarily aimed at local residents, within 600 metres radius, and be located such that is addresses a gap in provision as identified on the evidence map. If it is also located on a main road and will benefit from passing trade, that is a benefit to trading that is enjoyed by a number of our existing local centres.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.13.10 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC13 is broadly positive against the health and

community, equality and diversity, environmental quality, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 8 objectives.

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

3.13.11 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

3.13.12 The boundaries of the ten town centres designated by policies TC2-11, their Core Areas designated by policy TC1 'Hierarchy of town and local centres', and the 47 local centres identified in policy T1 are shown on the Policies Map.

Evidence map content

3.13.13 The 600 metres catchment areas for the 47 local centres together with 800 metres catchment areas for the ten town centres are shown on the evidence map.

The duty to cooperate

3.13.14 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to centres but it relates to town centres, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.13.15 This policy is only seeking to fill catchment gaps in local centre provision. The size and function of our local centres are such that we do not believe there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from this policy.

Delivering the policy

3.13.16 This policy will be delivered by developers with specific proposals or through wider site development, and by the council as local planning authority through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.13.17 The Gaps in the provision of local centres policy provide significant support to policy TC13 on Local centres, with the principle of ensuring that all communities within built up areas of the borough should have access to local services and facilities locally. Policy TC13 sets out to achieve that is a suitably ambitious policy in that respect.

3.14 Convenience shops outside of designated centres

The proposed policy

3.14.1 Policy TC14 covers Convenience shops outside of designated centres.

3.14.2 The policy permits small convenience shops with a gross internal floorspace of less than 150 sqm, subject to criteria. It also permits convenience shops with a gross internal floorspace of between 150-600 sqm, subject to additional criteria. It defers larger stores back to policy TC1. Finally, it allocates land at the former petrol station site at the junction of the A49 Wigan Lane with Walter Scott Avenue, Wigan is allocated for a food-led convenience shop, or shops of less than 600 sqm gross internal floorspace, subject to satisfactory provision being made for design, access and amenity.

The evidence base

3.14.3 The policy fills a gap that would otherwise exist concerning the development of convenience shops outside of designated centres, when they don't accord with the details under policy TC13. In doing so it is a direct replacement for policy S1E Small Shops and Services in the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan, 2006.

3.14.4 It provides clear guidance for when small shops will be acceptable, and the thresholds align with those in policy TC13. They relate to single small shops rising to a larger local convenience store typically open long hours 7 days a week.

3.14.5 The former petrol station at the junction of Wigan Lane is identified in a gap area in north Wigan/ South Standish and would help to improve convenience provision in the location which has a limited convenience offer at a constrained petrol station site nearby to the north.

The integrated assessment of the Local Plan

3.14.6 The broad implications of the policy for sustainable development are set out in the matrix at appendix B of the integrated assessment (IA) of the Local Plan, against the 14 sustainability objectives established in Table 3.1 of the IA. It sets out that, as an individual policy, policy TC14 is broadly positive against the health and community, equality and diversity, land and soil, transport, economy and town centres objectives and broadly neutral against the other 8 objectives.

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

3.14.7 This policy will replace UPD policy S1E 'Small Shops and Services'.

Policy map content

3.14.8 The site at the junction of the A49 Wigan Lane with Walter Scott Avenue, Wigan is shown on the Policies Map, are our town and local centres for information.

Evidence map content

3.14.9 The 600 metres catchment areas for the local centres and the 800 metres catchment areas for the town centres are shown on the evidence map.

The duty to cooperate

3.14.10 There is one strategic cross-boundary matter related to centres but it relates to town centres, namely the impact of Local Plan Town Centre policies on neighbouring town centres.

3.14.11 This policy is only seeking to fills a gap that would otherwise exist concerning the development of convenience shops outside of designated centres. The size of these stores is such that we do not believe there are any strategic cross boundary matters of concern arising from this policy.

Delivering the policy

3.14.12 This policy will be delivered by developers and retail businesses and the council as local planning authority through the development management process.

Summary and conclusion

3.14.13 This policy is a direct replacement for policy S1E Small Shops and Services in the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan, 2006. In doing so it fills a gap in policies that would otherwise exist concerning the development of convenience shops outside of designated centres, when they don't accord with the details under policy TC13.