

## Request

Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in September 2013. As part of this strategy it states in section 10.1, that the strategy will be monitored on a yearly basis against the measurable indicators stated and will make each yearly report available on the Wigan website.

Can you tell me what these reports are called and send me a link to where they all are on the Wigan website, in theory there should be at least 9 or 10 reports, the latest report would be the most helpful.

## Response

The measurable indicators set out in Section 10 of the Local Plan Core Strategy have been monitored in Authority Monitoring Reports (AMRs) produced by the Council.

The latest AMR which monitors each of the policies in the Core Strategy in line with chapter 10 is the attached 2020-21 AMR.

The 2021-22 Authority Monitoring Report, which is available on the Wigan Council website at [Authority Monitoring Report \(wigan.gov.uk\)](http://wigan.gov.uk) has been restructured in line with national planning guidance and legislation and is more succinct, better focused on key indicators and more aligned with the council's corporate objectives.

It monitors relevant indicators across a range of key planning themes, including housing, jobs, town and local centres, transport and the environment, but some of the measurable indicators set in Chapter 10 of the Core Strategy are no longer monitored due to either:

- (a) Data being or becoming unavailable;
- (b) Planning not having a direct influence on their performance; or
- (c) The need to make efficiencies in the collection of data.

The Council only publishes its latest AMR online, on the basis that it provides historical monitoring data, with many indicators including annual trend data back to 2011.



**Wigan  
Authority Monitoring  
Report  
2020/21**

**December 2021**

## Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Local Plan Preparation](#)

### Policies:

3. [SP1: Spatial Strategy for Wigan Borough](#)
4. [SP2: Our town and local centres](#)
5. [SP3: North Leigh](#)
6. [SP4: Broad locations for new development](#)
7. [SP5: Greenheart](#)
8. [CP1: Health and wellbeing](#)
9. [CP2: Open space, sport and recreation](#)
10. [CP3: Community facilities](#)
11. [CP4: Education and learning](#)
12. [CP5: Economy and employment](#)
13. [CP6: Housing](#)
14. [CP7: Accessibility](#)
15. [CP8: Green Belt and safeguarded land](#)
16. [CP9: Strategic landscape and green infrastructure](#)
17. [CP10: Design](#)
18. [CP11: Historic environment](#)
19. [CP12: Wildlife habitats and species](#)
20. [CP13: Low-carbon development](#)
21. [CP14: Waste](#)
22. [CP15: Minerals](#)
23. [CP16: Flooding](#)
24. [CP17: Environmental protection](#)
25. [CP18: Developer contributions](#)

### Appendices:

26. [Appendix 1: Indicators no longer being monitored](#)

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the Authority Monitoring Report is to monitor progress with local plan preparation and the performance of policies within the adopted development plan. The borough's development plan currently consists of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy, which was adopted in September 2013, together with several saved Unitary Development Plan policies (adopted 2006), the Joint Greater Manchester Minerals Plan (2012), the Joint Greater Manchester Waste Plan (2013) and the Standish Neighbourhood Plan (2019).
- 1.2 The Local Plan Core Strategy (2011-26) includes 5 spatial policies and 18 core policies. These cover a range of planning topics including housing, employment, health and the environment. It also includes a monitoring framework in Section 10 to assess policy performance, which is being followed generally in this Authority Monitoring Report, although there have been updates to it as set out in Appendix 1 to this report. For each policy this includes a series of measurable indicators and a target generally seeking improvements on the 2011 baseline position.
- 1.3 Regular monitoring of these policies enables us to assess the effectiveness and continuing relevance of these policies, which will be used as evidence for the council's Local Plan review.
- 1.4 The contents of this report meet the requirements set out in Section 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## **2 Local plan preparation**

- 2.1 National planning policy guidance requires councils to publish information at least annually that shows progress with local plan preparation. The council's programme for plan preparation is set out in the Local Plan Development Scheme, the latest version of which was published in July 2021. The local plan that the council is involved in preparing is the Places for Everyone Plan.

### **Places for Everyone Plan**

- 2.2 Public consultation on the Publication version of the Places for Everyone Plan took place for 8 weeks from August – October 2021. As set out in the Local Development Scheme, submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination is scheduled for January 2022. It is anticipated that the independent examination will commence around April 2022, with adoption in 2023 but these dates will be determined by the Planning Inspectorate. Details of the Places for Everyone Plan, including site specific information on the four proposed site allocations in the borough, can be viewed at <http://www.wigan.gov.uk/placesforeveryone>.

### **3 Policy SP1: Spatial Strategy for Wigan Borough**

- 3.1 Policy SP1 sets out the spatial strategy for the borough for the period 2011-2026. It directs development primarily to the east-west core of the borough in order to achieve transformational regeneration and create attractive places for people to live and businesses to locate and thrive. It also identifies a limited amount of new housing to be developed outside the east-west core at Golborne and Lowton and Standish, to expand the range and choice of sites available for new housing whilst bringing flexibility in the supply of land to meet the borough's housing needs.
- 3.2 The performance of this policy is monitored through the other spatial and core policies, notably:
- SP3: Northleigh
  - SP4: Broad locations for new development
  - CP5: Economy and employment
  - CP6: Housing
  - CP8: Green Belt and safeguarded land

## **4 Policy SP2: Our Town and Local Centres**

- 4.1 A strategic objective of the Local Plan Core Strategy is to ensure continued investment in our town centres, improving their attractiveness, convenience, and accessibility.
- 4.2 Policy SP2 of the Local Plan Core Strategy states that our town centres will be enhanced as thriving, attractive and locally distinctive places, which can support a broad range of activities. Proposals to improve their prosperity will be supported and new retail development and other main town centre uses will be directed to the town and local centres.
- 4.3 The performance of part of this policy is monitored against indicators where planning can have a direct influence, relating to the proportion of retail floorspace within principal shopping areas, and the amount of office floorspace and residential units within town centres. The policy is also monitored against town centre vacancy rates which is a contextual indicator.

### **Use classification changes**

- 4.4 Since the publication of the 2018/19 AMR in August 2020, central government has changed the use classification system in England. As from 1 September 2020, former use classes A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes) and B1 (offices) are now within the new Class E – Commercial, Business and Services. In light of this, and to enable comparison, when the text refers to retail and office development, it relates to uses previously classified as A1 and B1 respectively.

### **Retail floorspace in principal shopping areas**

- 4.5 The target for this indicator is to maintain the percentage of retail floorspace (shop uses that fell within the former Class A1) within the principal shopping areas, as defined on the Local Plan Policies Map. Principal shopping areas are designated in the three main town centres – Wigan, Leigh, and Ashton. As shown in Figure 4.1, since 2014 the percentage of retail floorspace within these areas has decreased in Wigan but increased marginally in both Leigh and Ashton.
- 4.6 A major factor for the reduced proportion of retail floorspace within Wigan's principal shopping area is due to the shift in activity eastwards within the town centre as a result of:
- The opening of the Grand Arcade Shopping Centre in 2007, which is located outside the designated principal shopping area.
  - Units in the Galleries Shopping Centre remaining unoccupied and the closure of the Marketgate Centre, both located within the principal shopping area, which are both awaiting redevelopment.

- 4.7 The proportion of active shopping floorspace in Wigan’s principal shopping areas has declined since 2019, with the greatest of these being in Wigan Town Centre which experienced a reduction of -9.4% in 2019/20. This is due to a combination of the impact of COVID-19 and also the closure of the Marks and Spencer store on Standishgate which remains vacant.

**Figure 4.1:** Percentage of retail floorspace within the principal shopping areas

Centre	2014	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change 2014-21
Ashton	66.6%	65.2%	66.9%	68.1%	62.5%	-4.1%
Leigh	65.1%	68.6%	67.8%	67.2%	66.4%	1.3%
Wigan	60.7%	51.2%	54.1%	44.7%	43.7%	-15.9%

Source: Wigan Council

### Office floorspace in town centres

- 4.8 The target is to increase the proportion of floorspace in town centres that are occupied by offices and professional services. Traditionally these office uses have been referred to as Class B1 and Class A2 uses, however following changes by the government to the Use Classes Order in September 2020 these office uses now fall within Class E. For the purposes of the annual town centre survey and for the AMR we will simply refer to the former Class A2/B1 uses as “office and professional services”.
- 4.9 Figure 4.2 indicates that the percentage of floorspace occupied by offices and professional services within the borough’s three main town centres is low and has remained low over the last six years.
- 4.10 A caveat in the figures is that the town centre surveys, from which this data is sourced, only records ground floor uses in town centres. Consequently, office floorspace on upper floors is not recorded. Therefore, the amount and percentage of office floorspace in the town centres is likely to be greater than reported below. The process for collecting town centre data is being reviewed so that data collated on total floorspace, including upper floors, can be reported on in future Authority Monitoring Reports.

**Figure 4.2:** % of floorspace occupied by offices and professional services.

Centre	2014	2016	2018	2020	2021	% Change 2014-2021
Ashton	11.17%	11.76%	11.07%	9.05%	9.23%	-1.94%
Leigh	13.45%	13.56%	10.86%	7.82%	8.72%	-4.73%
Wigan	16.74%	16.88%	16.45%	17.18%	19.47%	2.73%

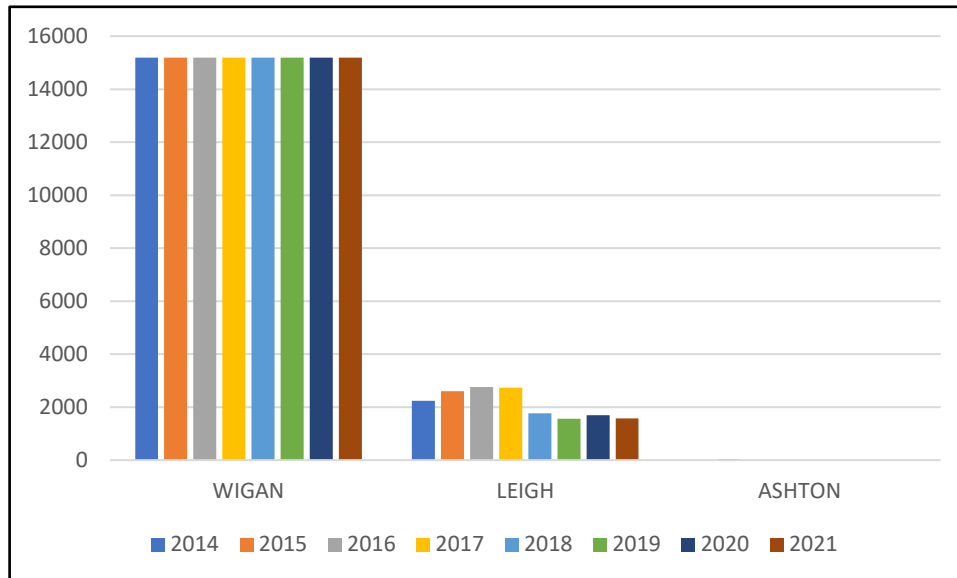
Source: Wigan Council

- 4.11 Figure 4.3 shows the amount of office floorspace (former Class B1 only and excluding former Class A2 uses) in Wigan, Leigh and Ashton town centres between 2014 and 2021. This confirms that Wigan town centre has most office floorspace, which has remained constant at around 15,000 sq. m over



the past seven years. A significant proportion of this is occupied by Wigan Council and the NHS. The amount of office floorspace in Leigh town centre is significantly less and the data shows that there has been no ground floor office floorspace in Ashton town centre over the past seven years.

**Figure 4.3:** Ground Floor office floorspace (square metres)



Source: Wigan Council

### Residential units

4.12 Figure 4.4 identifies the number of residential units in the three main town centres annually since April 2019, reflecting the town centre boundaries designated in the Unitary Development Plan (2006). It shows modest increases in the centres collectively. Figures are unavailable for previous years, however this indicator will continue to be monitored to form a new baseline to measure future change. This matter is particularly important and sensitive following the Covid Pandemic and the government’s changes to the Land Use Classification regulations and Permitted Development Rights in 2020, which now grant additional rights to change commercial properties to residential use without planning permission.

**Figure 4.4:** Number of residential units in town centres, 2019-2021

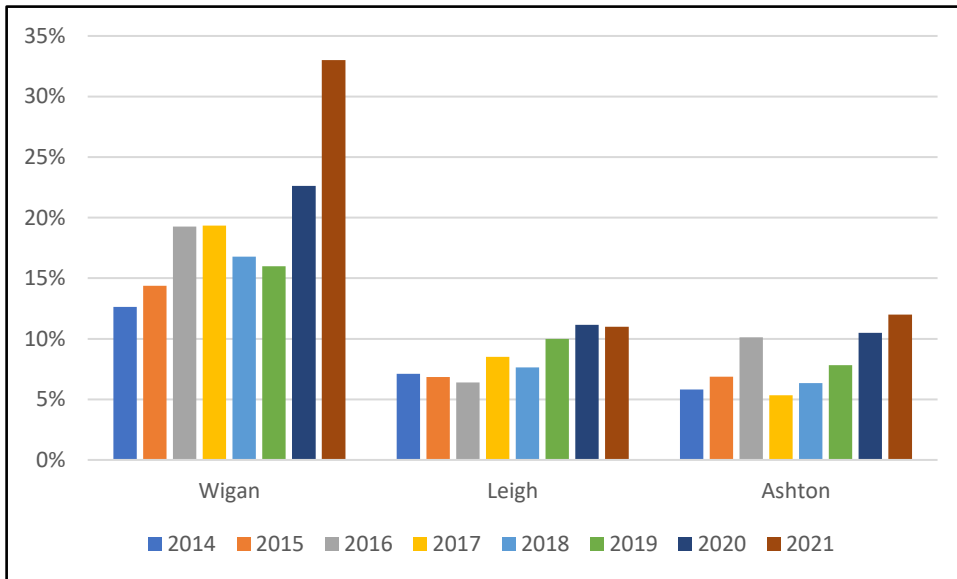
Centre	2019	2020	2021
Wigan	173	189	192
Leigh	119	130	141
Ashton	76	85	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>418</b>

Source: Wigan Council, Local Land and Property Gazetteer

## Town centre vacancy rates

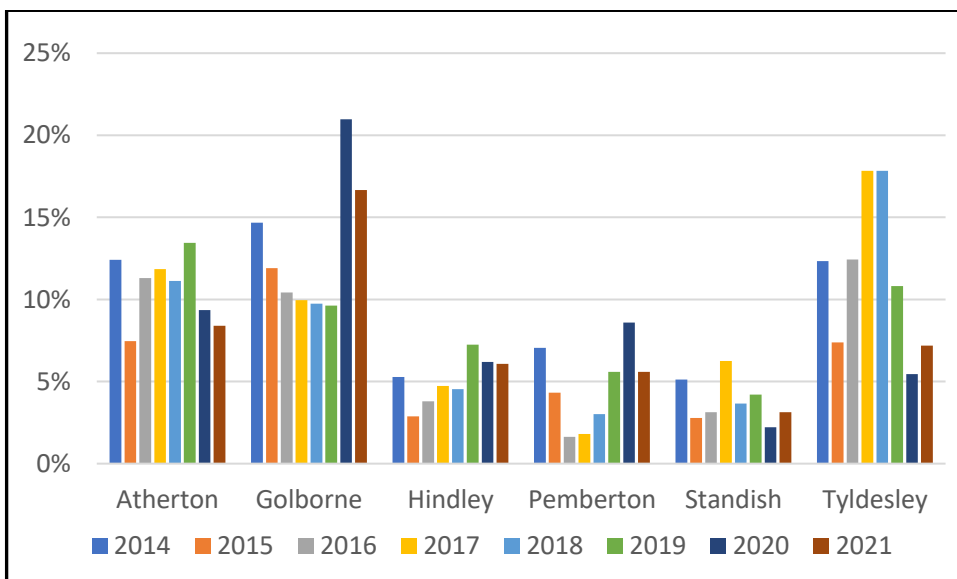
4.13 The plan target is to reduce the percentage of vacant floorspace within our town centres. The vacancy rates for each of the borough's town centres for the period 2014-20 are shown in Figures 4.5 and 4.6. It should be noted that the 2020 town centre survey was undertaken in Autumn 2020 prior to the second national lockdown.

**Figure 4.5:** Percentage of vacant floorspace in the borough's main town centres



Source: Wigan Council

**Figure 4.6:** % vacant floorspace in other town centres



Source: Wigan Council

- 4.14 These illustrate that in 2021, vacancy rates increased most notably in Wigan, Ashton (12%), Tyldesley (7%) and Standish (3%), with vacancy rates reducing in all other centres relative to 2020 rates.
- 4.15 Wigan town centre has consistently had the highest vacancy rate of all centres in the borough from 2014 to 2021, but its vacancy rate is currently skewed by particularly high levels of vacancy at The Galleries and Marketgate shopping centres. The Galleries is approximately 46% vacant and Marketgate is now 100% vacant. The redevelopment of both these centres is at the heart of regeneration proposals for Wigan town centre which will consolidate retail space and diversify town centre uses to other sectors.
- 4.16 In 2020 the most notable increase in vacancy levels were in Golborne town centre, which increased from 10% to 21%. Since then, vacancies have fallen to 17% but they still remain high with 16 vacant units and almost 1,500 sqm of vacant floorspace. Vacancies in Golborne are located primarily on Heath Street and High Street.
- 4.17 Changes in the retail sector and consumer behaviour, notably the rise of online shopping, has reduced demand for high street retail space nationally. This trend was present prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but has inevitably grown exponentially during these unprecedented times of public lockdown. Online shopping is now at an all-time high with many households choosing to do both their food and non-food shopping online.
- 4.18 As demonstrated by the findings of Figures 4.5 and 4.6, COVID-19 and the national lockdown has had a significant impact on the borough's town centres, particularly Wigan and Golborne. The last town centres survey was undertaken in Autumn 2020 and since that time the UK has undergone a second period of national lockdown (January 2020) and it has yet to be seen how this period of economic restrictions will further impact town centres.
- 4.19 The long term impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on town centre retail is a particular concern both nationally and locally. It is unlikely that the notable change in consumer behaviour, with the dramatic increase in online spending, will ever be reversed to pre-pandemic levels, so it is important that our town centres evolve accordingly, including a wider offer of uses where appropriate, in order to attract customers.

## **5 Policy SP3: North Leigh**

- 5.1 Land between Leigh Road, Hindley Green, Westleigh Lane and Nel Pan Lane, Leigh, known as North Leigh Park, is the Local Plan Core Strategy's only designated key strategic site. Covering an area of around 70 hectares of land despoiled by coal mining, quarrying and sewage treatment works, development provides a major opportunity to uplift a degraded environment and a deprived part of the borough, with new housing, employment, and green infrastructure.
- 5.2 The whole site was granted outline planning permission in February 2013 for a mixed-use development including up to 1,800 homes. However, construction was delayed after the owner, North Leigh Park Group, went into administration.
- 5.3 In 2018 the site was purchased by Countryside Properties. A reserved matters application for 199 homes (A/19/86980) was approved in September 2019, and housing development is under construction. Bellway Homes are also constructing 99 dwellings on the northern part of the site (application A/17/83509).
- 5.4 A hybrid planning application was submitted in March 2020 (A/20/88849) for:
- Full planning permission for 250 dwellings and a link road from Leigh Road to Atherleigh Way
  - Outline planning permission for a local centre
- 5.5 In January 2021 Planning Committee resolved to approve this application subject to the signing of a deed of variation to the S106 agreement, the application was subsequently approved in April 2021. In addition, application (A/20/88859) for 250 dwellings was approved in January 2021.
- 5.6 The performance of the policy is monitored against the level of residential, employment and green infrastructure delivered on the site by set target dates, plus the delivery of key road infrastructure.

### **Provision of residential development**

- 5.7 The targets for the level of residential development are for 125 homes to be completed by April 2016, 725 homes by April 2022 and 1,100 homes by April 2026.
- 5.8 As stated above, construction on the site has been delayed due to the previous site owner going into administration. As of 1 April 2021, 76 homes had been completed on the site. The 2021 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) estimates that 99 homes will be built by April 2022 and 298 homes by April 2026.

### **Provision of employment development**

- 5.9 The target is for 8 hectares of employment development to be completed by 2026. However, this is no longer expected to come forward. Application A/20/88849, which was approved in April 2021, does not include employment provision due to viability issues.

### **Provision of strategic green infrastructure**

- 5.10 The target is for 9 hectares of strategic green infrastructure to be delivered by 2022, and a total of 18 hectares by 2026. Strategic green infrastructure is open space between development and includes improved habitats for wildlife and recreational opportunities. A total of 14 hectares of green infrastructure is proposed in the Countryside Properties scheme. However, no green infrastructure has been provided to date as this is dependent on the site coming forward as a whole.

### **Link road from Westleigh Lane to Leigh Road and link road from A579 Atherleigh Way to Westleigh Lane**

- 5.11 A new link road is necessary to provide access arrangements for the whole site. The link between Westleigh Lane to Leigh Road was targeted for completion by 2018 and the link road from Atherleigh Way to Westleigh Lane by 2022.
- 5.12 However, the ability to meet these target dates has been impacted by the delays associated with the former site owner going into administration, which has affected the overall scheme. The link road from Leigh Road to Atherleigh Way now has planning permission (A/20/88849), which was approved as part of the wider scheme in April 2021.

## **6 Policy SP4: Broad Locations for New Development**

- 6.1 Policy SP4 identifies six large areas of safeguarded land as broad locations for new housing and employment development, covered in turn below. These broad locations form an important element of the borough's overall housing supply and play a significant role in maintaining a deliverable supply of homes in line with plan requirements. The monitoring indicators assess the performance of this policy in terms of the level of housing delivery achieved on these broad locations at 2016, 2021 and 2026.

### **South of Hindley**

- 6.2 The target is for 50 homes to be completed by 2016, 500 by 2021 and 1,000 by 2026. As of 1 April 2021, no houses had been built on the site. An outline application (A/18/85784) for up to 2,000 homes was submitted in 2018 and is pending determination. The 2021 SHLAA estimates no completions by 2026.
- 6.3 12.4 hectares of employment land by 2026 are also targeted. The employment land element of the site is dependent on the site coming forward as a whole, including ground remediation and major highway connections. There is, therefore, no certainty about the extent of provision, or the timing.

### **East of Atherton**

- 6.4 The target is for 100 homes at this site by 2021 and 450 by 2026, with 9 hectares of employment by 2026. As of 1 April 2021, no houses had been built on the site, which does not yet have permission for housing. The 2021 SHLAA predicts no completions by 2026.
- 6.5 Permission (A/17/83795) was granted for a waste recycling centre for 3 hectares of the 9 hectares that is available for employment use in May 2019. Conditions are being discharged in relation to this application.

### **Garrett Hall, Astley**

- 6.6 The target is for 75 homes to be built by 2016, 450 homes by 2021 and 600 homes by 2026.
- 6.7 As of April 2021, a total of 292 homes had been built. Based on current delivery rates the 2021 SHLAA estimates that 548 homes will be completed by April 2026, which is slightly below the plan target.

### Landgate, Bryn

- 6.8 The target is for 25 homes by 2016, 275 homes by 2021 and 300 homes by 2026, as well as 5.51 hectares of employment development by 2026. Part of the site has detailed permission for 157 homes (A/17/84450/MAJOR) and is under construction, with 50 dwellings completed as of April 2021. The 2021 SHLAA estimates 157 completions in total by 2026, based on the detailed permission, below the plan target.

### Golborne and Lowton

- 6.9 The target is for 200 homes by 2016, 950 homes by 2021 and 1,000 homes by 2026. As of 1 April 2021, permission had been granted for 1,377 dwellings and 733 of these had been completed. The 2021 SHLAA estimates a total of 1,307 completions by 2026, above the plan target.

### Standish

- 6.10 The target is for 200 homes by 2016, 950 homes by 2021 and 1,000 homes by 2026. As of 1 April 2021, detailed permission had been granted for 1,547 dwellings and 797 of these had been completed. The 2021 SHLAA estimates a total of 1,503 completions by 2026, significantly above the plan target.

### Net annual completions on broad locations for new development

- 6.11 Figure 6.1 shows annual net completions (1 April – 31 March) on each of the broad locations identified in the Local Plan Core Strategy. As can be seen, completions have occurred earlier in Standish and Golborne and Lowton, reflecting the strong housing markets in these areas. Larger and more complex sites, such as South of Hindley, have been slower or have not yet come forward.

**Figure 6.1:** Annual net completions on broad locations for new development

	2011-15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
South of Hindley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East of Atherton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Garrett Hall, Astley	0	0	0	33	106	58	95	292
Landgate	0	0	0	0	0	21	29	50
Golborne and Lowton	0	0	0	46	214	269	204	733
Standish	0	9	74	145	220	184	165	797
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>1,872</b>

Source: Wigan Council

## **7 Policy SP5: Greenheart**

- 7.1 Greenheart is a key component of the spatial strategy. It covers 57 square kilometres in the heart of the borough, of which two-fifths is in public ownership. It is predominantly in Green Belt but is bordered by the settlements of Wigan, Ince, Aspull, Hindley, Leigh, Lowton, Golborne and Ashton-in-Makerfield, and includes Abram, Platt Bridge and Bickershaw.
- 7.2 The Core Strategy identifies developing Greenheart as a countryside park as part of its spatial vision and sets strategic objectives to increase its value as 'green infrastructure', create a stronger local identity and sense of place, and to strengthen and support wildlife habitats and species by protecting and enhancing key habitats and facilitating opportunities to appreciate wildlife.
- 7.3 In order to achieve this, policy SP5 seeks to promote and support wildlife habitats; provide attractive and accessible recreational and leisure facilities; continue the regeneration of derelict and despoiled land; enhance and develop key gateway locations into Greenheart; and link local communities to a wide network of sites through good quality paths and trails, signage, public art, including routes for cyclists and horse-riders.
- 7.4 The performance of part of this policy is monitored against indicators where planning can have a direct influence, relating to the development of a visitor centre at Wigan Flashes; achieving Local Nature Reserve status at Pennington Flash; the creation of new and improved cycle paths linking into Greenheart; and the restoration of the colliery spoil tip at Bickershaw North. It is also monitored against a contextual indicator relating to visitor numbers at key Greenheart locations in the borough. Whilst planning cannot directly influence visitor numbers it can help safeguard and enhance the recreational and ecological value of these attractions.

### **Visitor centre at Wigan Flashes**

- 7.5 The council in partnership with Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT) has been progressing the development of a visitor centre for Wigan Flashes, as part of the proposed housing and employment scheme at Westwood Park. The visitor centre is identified within the Westwood Park Planning Framework (January 2021).
- 7.6 The proposals are being driven by the council in recognition that the Wigan Flashes are of national wildlife significance (partly designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest), and that currently the landscape is very much a hidden gem, with no formal access from the western side of the borough. The visitor centre would address this and raise the profile of this fantastic Wigan asset.

### **Achieving Local Nature Reserve status at Pennington Flash**

- 7.7 Pennington Flash was designated as a Local Nature Reserve on 21 November 2014, ahead of the 2016 target set in the Local Plan Core Strategy.



## Cycle paths created / improved linking into Greenheart

- 7.8 As set out in Figure 7.1, 14.3 kilometres of new cycle paths have been created in the borough since 2011, with an additional 2.2 kilometres committed, and a further 18.5 kilometres committed subject to final funding confirmation. All of the schemes identified are anticipated to be completed by 2022 in line with funding requirements, with a number of schemes to be delivered through the Mayor’s Challenge Fund.
- 7.9 These cycling schemes will create safer travel conditions for cyclists and encourage modal shift across the borough, including into Greenheart.

**Figure 7.1:** Completed and committed cycle paths in the borough

Scheme name	Length (km)	Date of completion
<b>Completed schemes</b>		
Ormskirk Road to Wallgate	2	July 2013
Leigh Guided Busway	6	March 2016
Robin Park Road	1	August 2018
Saddle Junction	0.5	December 2018
Bridgewater Way	1	July 2019
Standish Mineral Line	1.5	September 2019
A49 Link Rd Cycle & Walking route	2.3	June 2020
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.3</b>	
<b>Committed schemes</b>		
Poolstock, Wigan	1	June 2021
Smithy Brook Road Junction	0.2	September 2021
Eastern Gateway (Riverway)	0.5	December 2021
Central Boulevard	0.5	December 2021
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.2</b>	
<b>Committed (subject to final funding confirmation)</b>		
Victoria St improvements	0.1	2021
Leeds-Liverpool Canal Towpath	8.1	2022
Standish to Wigan Western off Road route	2.6	2022
Leigh to Pennington Flash route	1.8	2022
Gidlow Lane walking & cycling crossings	1	2022
Standish Mineral Line Extension	2.6	2022
M58 Link Rd Cycle & Walking route	2.3	2024
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.5</b>	

Source: Wigan Council

## Restoration of colliery spoil tip at Bickershaw North

- 7.10 The target is for the colliery spoil tip at Bickershaw North to be fully restored by 2026. This is an expensive undertaking and the council to date has been unable to identify any funding opportunities or alternative restoration options for the site. However, the council will continue to explore a range of potential

sources of funding and assess the opportunity for Lottery, charitable and private sector investment solutions.

### **Visitor Numbers**

- 7.11 It has been difficult to acquire visitor numbers during 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is likely that visitor numbers have increased during the pandemic, in many places significantly, as people had to stay closer to home. More accurate visitor numbers should be expected in the next Authority Monitoring Report.

## **8 Policy CP1: Health and wellbeing**

- 8.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for health is to improve health and life-expectancy, particularly in our most deprived neighbourhoods, reduce health inequalities and improve accessibility to quality health care.
- 8.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP1 seeks to support the provision of new and improved accommodation for community-based healthcare where needed; support the enhancement of acute healthcare provision in Wigan and Leigh and improved accessibility to key acute healthcare locations outside of the borough; and requires a Health Impact Assessment to be submitted in support of all development proposals for which an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.
- 8.3 In addition, a Planning for Health Supplementary Planning Document is being prepared which will provide guidance to developers on the interpretation and application of Policy CP1, which will meet a commitment made in the Local Plan Core Strategy. It will set out clear requirements for undertaking a Health Impact Assessment and draw out the key links between planning and health.
- 8.4 The performance of part of this policy is measured by the percentage of relevant planning applications accompanied by a satisfactory health impact assessment. The policy is also monitored against a series of contextual indicators relating to life expectancy; levels of childhood obesity; the prevalence of overweight or obese adults; the proportion of the population with limiting long-term illness and incidents of cardiovascular disease. Planning does not directly influence the borough's performance against these indicators but can help establish environments that provide opportunities for people to live healthier lives.

### **Health impact assessments**

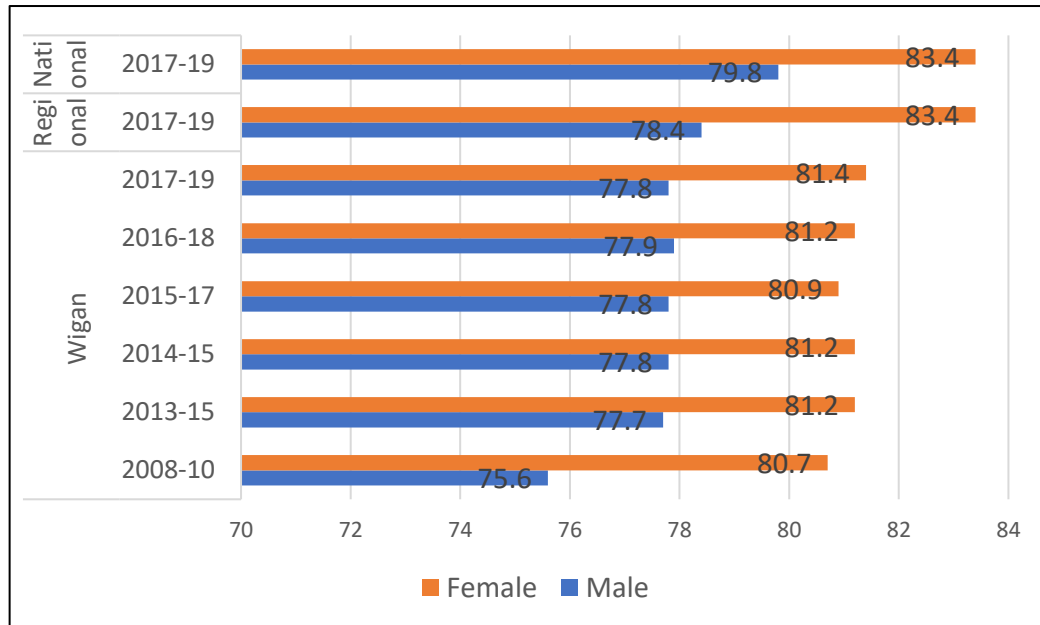
- 8.5 Policy CP1 requires a Health Impact Assessment to be submitted in support of all development proposals for which an Environmental Impact Assessment is required, or other proposals where the council considers that a Health Impact Assessment is needed, showing, as far as is reasonable, how the proposals will impact positively on health and wellbeing. The means of ensuring this is implemented more effectively are being fully explored through the preparation of the Planning for Health Supplementary Planning Document, which is scheduled to be adopted in early 2022. This document will provide clear and consistent guidance on how Health Impact Assessments should be undertaken in support of development proposal in Wigan Borough.

### **Life Expectancy**

- 8.6 The target is to increase life expectancy overall by 2016, 2021 and 2026. As shown in Figure 8.1, data from Public Health England confirms that this is being achieved with life expectancy at 2019 being 2.2 years higher for men and 0.7 years higher for women than in 2010. More recent data is not

currently available. Life expectancy in the borough however remains below national and regional levels. Notably the gap between men and women in the borough since 2010 to 2019 has narrowed from 5.1 years to 3.6 years.

**Figure 8.1: Life expectancy in Wigan**



Source: Public Health England

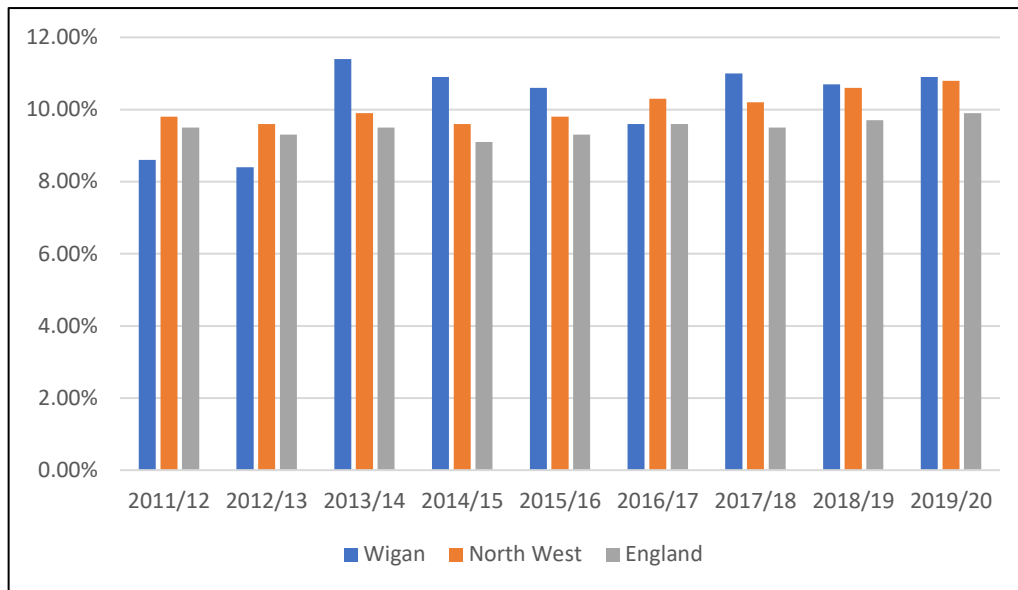
8.7 Healthy life expectancy at birth in the borough for the period 2017-19 was 61.5 years for males and 62.0 for females, consistent with the regional average, but slightly below the national averages of 63.2 and 63.5 years. Healthy life expectancy of birth is defined by Public Health England as the average number of years that an individual is expected to live in a state of self-assessed good or very good health, based on current mortality rates and prevalence of good or very good health.

**Levels of childhood obesity**

8.8 The target is to reduce overall levels of childhood obesity through to 2026. However, this is not being achieved. As shown in Figure 8.2, childhood obesity in Reception children (aged 4-5) has increased from 8.6% in 2011/12 to 10.9% in 2019/20 and has generally been above 10% since 2013/14. Regionally the data from Public Health England shows a steady increase to a similar level to Wigan in 2019/20, whilst nationally the data has remained generally consistent at around 9.5%-9.9% over the period.

8.9 It is considered likely that the pandemic and national lockdowns have led to more transient lifestyles, with a shift toward working from home and periods of home schooling, however the implications of this will not be known for a number of years.

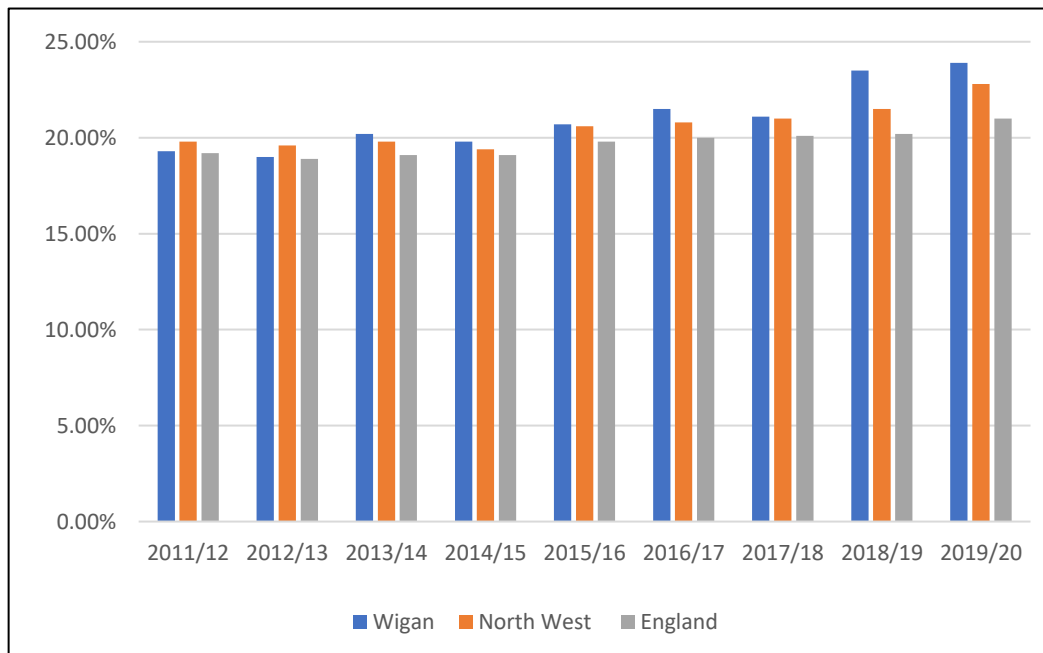
**Figure 8.2:** Percentage of children in Reception (Aged 4-5) classified as obese or severely obese



Source: Public Health England

8.10 As shown in Figure 8.3 childhood obesity in Year 6 children is more than double that of Reception children and has increased from 19.3% in 2011/12 to 23.9% in 2019/20. Within this timeframe, the national and regional averages have increased from 19.2% to 21% nationally and 19.8% to 22.8% regionally.

8.11 **Figure 8.3:** Percentage of children in Year 6 classified as obese or severely obese



Source: Public Health England

## Prevalence of overweight or obese adults

This is a new indicator in the Authority Monitoring Report. Figure 8.4 shows that for the period 2017-19, nearly three in four adults (73%) in the borough were either overweight or obese, above the national average.

**Figure 8.4:** Percentage of adults who are overweight or obese

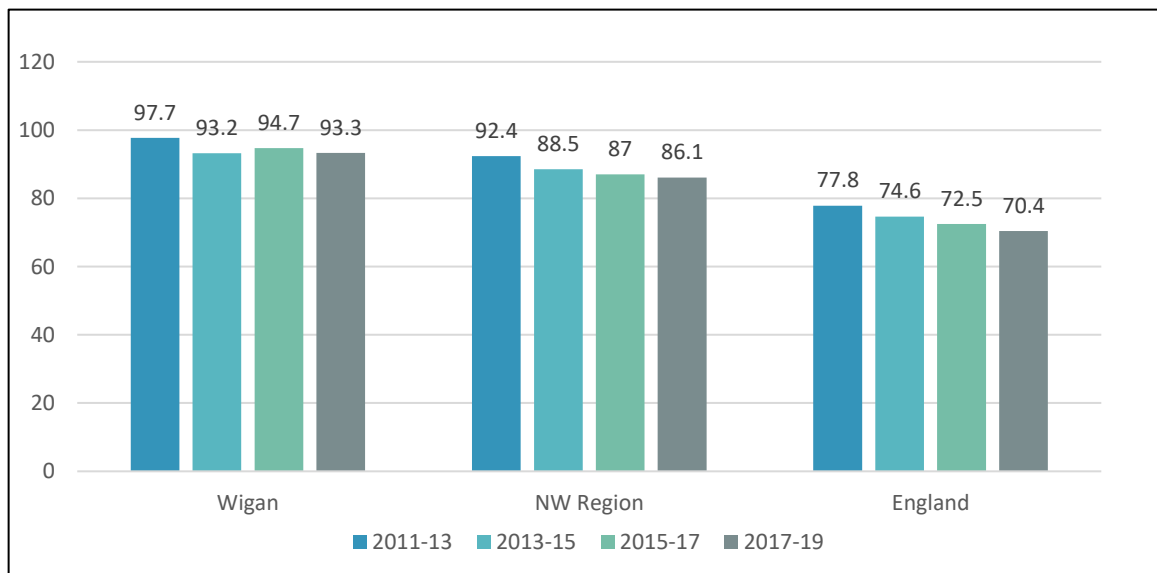
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Wigan	64.9%	71.2%	68.7%	70.5%	73%
England	61.3%	61.3%	62%	62.3%	62.8%

Source: Public Health England

## Cardiovascular mortality

- 8.12 The target is to continually decrease mortality rates from cardiovascular disease of people aged 75 and under. As set out in Figure 8.6, statistics from Public Health England show that mortality rates fell from 97.7 per 100,000 people to 93.3 in the period 2011-15, but then increased to 94.7 by 2017 before dropping again to 93.3 by 2019. Whilst decreasing by 4.4 per 100,000 people since 2011, this is a much higher rate than both the national (70.4) and regional (86.1) averages and has also decreased at a lower rate.

**Figure 8.6:** Mortality rate of people under 75 for all cardiovascular diseases (per 100,000 people)



Source: Public Health England

## **9 Policy CP2: Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

- 9.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for open space, sport and recreation is to protect and enhance valuable open spaces, and sporting and recreational facilities to maximise opportunities for people to participate in sport and physical recreation throughout the borough.
- 9.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP2 seeks to maintain and enhance the borough's 3 principal parks (Mesnes Park, Haigh Hall Woodland Park and Pennington Flash Country Park) and 15 township parks as the focus for play, recreation and sports activities; enhance allotment provision in terms of their quantity, quality and accessibility; maintain and enhance Local Nature Reserves, natural and semi-natural greenspace and large areas of amenity green space; manage and minimise the loss of valuable open space; maintain and enhance walking and cycling routes through parks and open spaces; and ensure that all residents have access to quality play space.
- 9.3 The performance of part of this policy is monitored against indicators where planning can have a direct influence, relating to the loss of valued open space to other land uses; the development of more detailed local standards; allotment provision and Local Nature Reserves.
- 9.4 The policy is also monitored against contextual indicators relating to the enhancement of principal and township parks and participation in sport and active recreation. Whilst planning does not directly influence the borough's performance against these indicators, it can help establish and protect environments that encourage people to use open spaces and participate in sport and recreation

### **Loss of open space to other land uses**

- 9.5 The Local Plan Core Strategy sets a target of no net loss of sport, recreation and informal open space to other uses, except where compliant with policy details.
- 9.6 The council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment (2015) assesses the value and quality of open space within the borough across various typologies.
- 9.7 A total of 23.13 hectares of open space has been approved for other land uses throughout the borough since April 2013 at a total of 40 sites. This does not include open spaces that will be replaced with equal or better provision elsewhere in the borough in accordance with Policy CP2.
- 9.8 Around half of open space lost or committed for development since 2013 is natural / semi natural greenspace. These losses are generally small and on the edge of much larger areas. The borough has an abundance of natural / semi-natural greenspace largely as a legacy of the borough's mining and industrial past. Consequently, this is of varying quality and value, with the loss of some low value areas to other uses deemed appropriate, as set out in

Policy CP2, where there is comparable or better quality open space provision in the vicinity.

- 9.9 Figure 9.1 below includes only schemes with full planning permission or reserved matters approval during the monitoring year. It shows that there is a loss of open space to residential development (4.21ha) from 4 applications. Previous monitoring reports also recorded outline permissions, but these are no longer included as it can result in double counting.

**Figure 9.1:** Amount of open space approved for other uses since April 2013

Planning Ref:	Address	Open Space Type	Area lost (ha)	Proposed new use
<b>2020/21</b>				
A/21/90945	Open land northeast of 73 Samuel Street, Atherton	Natural / semi natural	0.03	Residential
A/18/86438	Open land east of 26 Sovereign Fold Road, Leigh	Natural / semi natural	2.82	Residential
A/19/86516	Newton and Central Conservative Club, 359 Ormskirk Road, Wigan	Outdoor sports facility	0.11	Residential
A/19/88274	Site of former St Gabriel's Catholic School and Club, Richmond Drive, Leigh	Outdoor sports facility	1.25	Residential
			4.21	

Source: Wigan Council

### **Developing more detailed local standards**

- 9.10 The Local Plan Core Strategy set a target for the development of more detailed local standards for open space, sport and recreation by 2016. It is anticipated that detailed standards will be proposed as part of a future Local Plan for the borough.

### **Allotment provision**

- 9.11 The Local Plan Core Strategy sets a target to increase the number of allotments to 9.4 plots per 1,000 households by 2026. This requires more than double the number of allotments in the borough as at April 2011 (4.3 plots per 1,000 households).
- 9.12 Since 2011, 52 additional allotment plots have been created at Balcarres, Wigan (10 plots), Guest Fold, Atherton (16 plots) and Edna Road, Bickershaw (26 plots), and no losses, increasing the number of plots in the borough to 625 on council land.



- 9.13 A further 18 plots are committed off Rectory Lane in Standish, as part of the residential planning permission on the former golf course site.
- 9.14 Despite the increase in allotments since 2011 to 4.58 plots per 1,000 household, this is still below the Core Strategy target. However, the quality of allotments has improved through the delivery of the council's Allotment Strategy, which was updated in 2018. This strategy sets out new aims and objectives which seek to drive up the quality of allotment provision by applying quality standards for new provision and promoting community asset transfers, in which the community manage and maintain the sites under a long-term lease arrangement. This enables the groups to secure funding to develop and improve the sites. To date, 5 sites have been asset transferred in the borough, at Fir Tree, Lowton (2015), Amberswood (2017), Balcarres (2018), Worsley Hall (2018) and Pennington Hall Park (2021).

### **Local Nature Reserves**

- 9.15 Local Nature Reserves are areas of special local interest for their biodiversity, geology or landscape features, and have been legally designated as Local Nature Reserves under the 1948 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.
- 9.16 At April 2011, there was 260.34 hectares of land across 5 designated Local Nature Reserves in the borough – Wigan Flashes; Borsdane Wood, Hindley; Greenslate Water Meadows, Orrell; Low Hall Park, Platt Bridge; and Three Sisters, Ashton. The Local Plan Core Strategy target was to increase this to 305 hectares by 2026, which equated at that time to 1 hectare per 1,000 population, in line with Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard.
- 9.17 Since 2011, two additional Local Nature Reserves have been designated at Pennington Flash (90.63 hectares) and Kirkless (28.11 hectares), in December 2014. These have increased the extent of Local Nature Reserves in the borough to 379.08 hectares, well above the target.
- 9.18 Maps and information on the borough's seven Local Nature Reserves are available on the council's [website](#).

### **Enhancement of Principal and Township Parks**

- 9.19 The target set in the Local Plan Core Strategy is to maintain or increase the number of parks in the borough with Green Flag Awards. The Green Flag Award is the benchmark national standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom. More details can be viewed at [www.greenflagaward.org.uk](http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk).
- 9.20 At November 2021, the borough has 4 parks with Green Flag Awards at:
- Alexandra Park, Wigan (awarded in 2008)
  - Pennington Hall Park, Leigh (awarded in 2008)

- Jubilee Park, Ashton-in-Makerfield (awarded in 2010)
- Mesnes Park, Wigan (awarded in 2015)

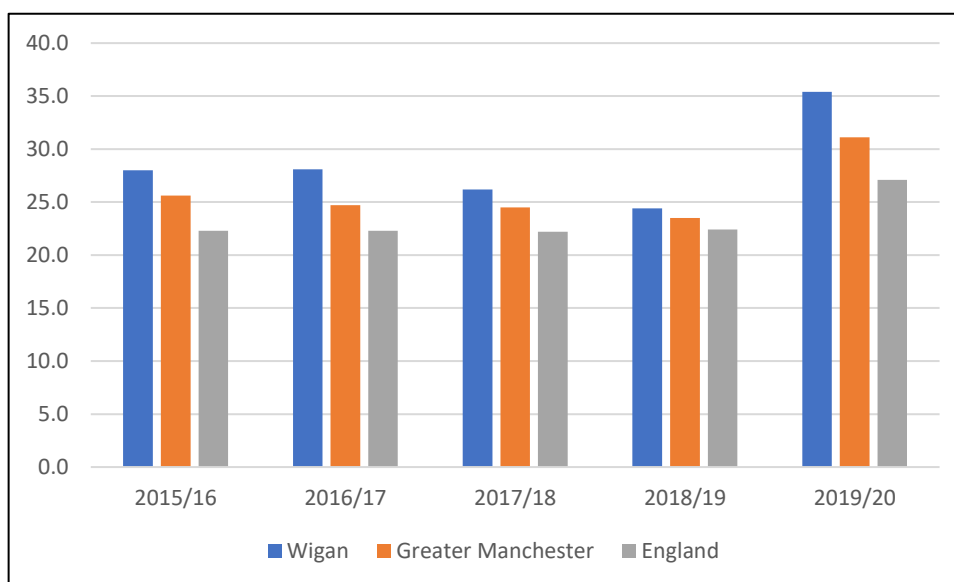
9.21 With the awarding of Mesnes Park in 2015, this is an increase of one since 2011. Details of the borough’s 4 Green Flag parks can be viewed on the council’s [website](#).

### Participation in sport and active recreation

9.22 Data from Public Health England confirms that the rate of adults in the borough (aged 19 and over) who do at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week has increased slightly, from 63.4% in 2016/17 to 64.3% in 2018/19. However, this is below the national rate (67.2%), but similar to the Greater Manchester rate (64.8%). Wigan Borough had the sixth highest rate of all 10 Greater Manchester districts.

9.23 As set out in Figure 9.2, Public Health England and Sport England data had also confirmed that the proportion of adults who were inactive (do fewer than 30 minutes of activity per week) in the borough had reduced, closing the gap slightly on national and regional averages. However, the impact of national lockdowns throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has had a vast impact on activity levels across the country, increasing inactivity levels as a whole but also increasing the gap between local, regional and national averages.

**Figure 9.2:** Percentage of adults who are inactive (do fewer than 30 minutes activity per week)

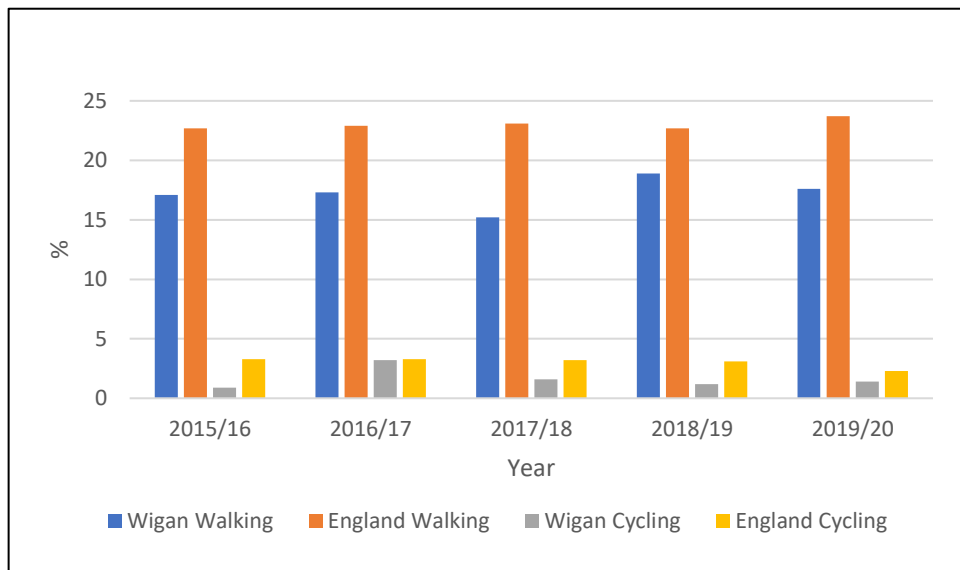


Source: Public Health England and Sport England, Active Lives Survey

9.24 As set out in Figure 9.3, the number of adults in the borough who walked for travel at least 3 days per week had increased from 17.1% in 2015/16 to 18.9% in 2018/19. Despite this increase, this remains below the national average of 22.7%.

- 9.25 The percentage of adults in the borough cycling for travel at least 3 days per week in 2018/19 at just 1.2% has unfortunately almost returned to the low levels recorded in 2015/16. This is despite a relative surge in 2016/17, when levels reached the national average (3.2%).
- 9.26 The impact of national lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic is reflected in the figures recorded for 2019/20 as many people across the country worked from home resulting in fewer people travelling for work, this is especially the case for cycling. Nationally, there was a slight increase in people walking for travel due to a reduction in public transport use.

**Figure 9.3:** Percentage of adults walking and cycling for travel at least 3 days per week



Source: Public Health England

## 10 Policy CP3: Community Facilities

- 10.1 There is no direct strategic objective in the Local Plan Core Strategy for community facilities. However, there is one for community development and involvement, including tackling prevailing issues within communities and meeting the needs of an ageing and increasingly diverse population.
- 10.2 Policy CP3 seeks to extend and enhance opportunities for people to participate in community activities. In order to achieve this, the policy seeks to enable the provision of new and improved community facilities; expects new community facilities to be accessible to the communities that they are intended to serve; requires the provision of appropriate community facilities in or as part of new large scale housing developments; and only allows development that would result in the loss of a community facility when there is no longer a need for the facility; or where an alternative facility of equivalent or better standard can be provided.
- 10.3 The performance of this policy is monitored against measurable indicators relating to the provision of new and improved facilities; the loss of community facilities and crime statistics.

### New and improved community facilities

- 10.4 In response to financial challenges facing local government over recent years, the council has transferred a number of community buildings (plus land and other assets) into the ownership of the community, through Community Asset Transfers, as part of [The Deal](#). Under lease, this gives community groups the responsibility for running, managing and maintaining community assets, including all the associated costs.
- 10.5 Under community control many vital facilities have gained a new lease of life, with community groups able to access funding and resources not available to the council, allowing them to invest and improve what they are able to offer to local people. Without this involvement the council would simply not be able to afford to keep all of these assets running.
- 10.6 There have been 26 successful transfers to community ownership since 2013 including 19 community buildings, 5 playing pitches, 2 allotments, a bowling green and an office/stores. A further 13 licenced community assets in the borough are currently in the process of being transferred.
- 10.7 In 2020/21, Bedford Park Bowling Green was transferred into the ownership of Butts Park Bowling Club through Community Asset Transfer, as shown in Figure 10.1.

**Figure 10.1:** Community Asset Transfers 2020/21

Asset	Tenant/Licensee/Operator	Asset type
Bedford Park Bowling Green, Sanderson's Croft, Leigh	Butts Park Bowling Club	Bowling green

Source: Wigan Council

## Loss of community facilities

- 10.8 The plan target is for no net loss of community facilities in the borough unless they are replaced or proven to be demonstrably not needed. However, despite the use of Community Asset Transfers, which have enabled the retention and enhancement of a number of community facilities in the borough. 8 council owned assets have been lost to non-community uses since 2013. These sites have all been developed, or have planning permission, for residential development.
- 10.9 There have been no losses of community facilities to other uses since 2015.

## Overall crime statistics

- 10.10 Whilst planning policy only has a limited and indirect influence on crime rates, the effective design of sites and buildings and the availability of accessible, relevant and good quality community facilities in areas can play a role in reducing incidences of crime.
- 10.11 The plan target is for the number of crimes to reduce over time. However, Figure 10.3 shows that the number of recorded crimes in 2018/19 was over 9% above levels in 2011/12. The statistics also show a significant increase in violent crime but a notable reduction in antisocial behaviour.
- 10.12 Comparable data against this indicator has not been readily available from Greater Manchester Police since 2019, since the introduction of a new integrated monitoring system. More recent data will be presented in future Authority Monitoring Reports subject to availability.

**Figure 10.3:** Crime statistics in the borough, 2011-19

	Antisocial behaviour	Burglary	Robbery	Vehicle	Violent	Other	Total
2011/12	15,189	2,715	169	2,187	2,921	10,018	33,199
2012/13	12,898	2,340	133	2,020	2,715	8,605	28,711
2013/14	14,753	2,638	166	2,172	3,039	8,481	31,249
2014/15	13,803	2,649	169	2,052	4,364	9,898	32,935
2015/16	12,412	2,729	213	2,204	5,873	10,976	34,407
2016/17	11,988	3,221	284	2,727	7,165	12,023	37,408
2017/18	8,161	3,210	295	2,695	9,460	13,755	37,576
2018/19	7,040	2,995	321	2,476	9,834	13,561	36,227
2011-19	96,244	22,497	1,750	18,533	45,371	87,317	271,712

Source: Greater Manchester Police / UKcrimestats.com

## **11 Policy CP4: Education and Learning**

11.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for education and learning is to improve the educational achievement of school leavers and raise the level of qualifications and skills in the adult population, particularly in our most deprived neighbourhoods, matching skills to opportunities for work and fulfilment.

11.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP4 supports:

- Proposals for new and improved schools and school buildings.
- Provision of appropriate facilities to provide specialist and vocational training and support.
- The modernisation and expansion of Further Education provision, particularly in central Wigan and central Leigh.
- Improving accessibility to existing college sites within the borough and to/from colleges and universities in neighbouring districts that serve the borough.
- Facilitating the use of the built and natural environment of the borough as an education resource, including in Greenheart.
- The enhancement of sporting and recreational facilities as part of education provision.

11.3 The performance of part of this policy is monitored against indicators where planning can have a direct influence, relating to the provision of new and improved school buildings; the provision of facilities for specialist and vocational training; and enhanced sporting and recreational facilities as part of education provision.

11.4 The policy is also monitored against contextual indicators relating to qualifications and attainment levels in the borough; and the number of primary and secondary student applicants being admitted to their first school of choice. Whilst planning does not directly influence the borough's performance against these indicators, it can help establish positive environments and appropriate located facilities for education and learning in the borough.

### **New and improved school buildings**

11.5 Policy CP4 supports proposals for new and improved schools and school buildings, either on their existing site or on a suitable alternative site. Figure 11.1 sets out the improvements to the school estate undertaken in the period 2020/21 with expansions at both Oakfield High and Golborne High taking place in 2021.

11.6 There have been 11 larger improvements made to schools since 2013 including the addition of new classrooms and extra forms of entry, a number other schools have had smaller improvements or work to address the condition of buildings since 2011.

**Figure 11.1:** New and improved school buildings in the borough since 2011

Year	School	Project
2020	St Wilfrid's Primary, Standish	Expansion from 2 to 2.5 forms of entry
2020	Oakfield High School and College	Classroom enlargement and replacement office space
2021	Oakfield High School and College	Enlargement of four additional classrooms
2021	Golborne High School	6 classrooms and new hall space extension

Source: Wigan Council

### **Provision of facilities to provide specialist and vocational training**

- 11.7 In line with plan targets, a vocational training centre, Central Park at Pemberton, opened during 2012/13, and the Wigan University Technical College opened in late 2013, both providing education for students aged 14-19.
- 11.8 Central Park operated as the Wigan Warriors Training Academy, providing students with a mix of academic education alongside progressing a career in sport. This has been relocated to Robin Park Arena as part of a multimillion-pound redevelopment in 2019/20.
- 11.9 Unfortunately, the Wigan University Technical College closed in August 2019 after failing to recruit enough students to become financially viable. As the closure was related to a lack of demand this has not resulted in a gap in provision in the borough. As part of its employment and skills strategy, the council is working across the Further Education sector to review the curriculum and ensure links to the local economy so that all courses have links to productivity. The council has also now established an agreement with Edge Hill University for some partnership work which will support the creation of new career pathways for young people in the borough.

### **Enhanced sporting and recreational facilities as part of education provision**

- 11.10 Policy CP4 supports the enhancement of sporting and recreational facilities as part of education provision and sets a target to improve facilities overall by 2016, 2021 and 2026. However, with the prevalence of schools becoming academies, the council now has little influence over the quantity and quality of sporting and recreational facilities within school provision. As a result, this indicator is not being actively monitored.

### Achievement of 5+ A\*-C GCSE grades (or grades 4-9 post 2018) (including English and Maths)

- 11.11 The target is for grades to better or equal national or regional averages, and for year-on-year improvements.
- 11.12 From 2016/17 the Department for Education changed its measurable figures and now uses Average Attainment 8 scores, and Average Progress 8 scores in place of the previous measure of pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs A\*-C / Grade 9-4.
- 11.13 The Attainment 8 score measures the achievement of a pupil across eight different subjects. The Progress 8 score shows how they have improved during secondary school compared to other pupils who were at the same level when they finished primary school. Progress 8 scores are centred around 0, with most schools within the range of -1 to +1. A score of 0 means pupils in the school on average do about as well at Key Stage 4 as those with similar prior attainment nationally.
- 11.14 Wigan has been consistently above the North West and England average for % of pupils achieving 5+ A-C grades by approximately 5% each year between 2011-2016.
- 11.15 Figure 11.2 compares educational achievement in Wigan with national and regional averages.

**Figure 11.2:** Average Attainment 8 and Average Progress 8 scores, 2016-21

Academic Year	Average Attainment 8 Score			Average Progress 8 Score		
	Wigan	North West	England	Wigan	North West	England
2016/17	46.2	45.6	46.4	-0.20	-0.10	0.00
2017/18	45.3	45.7	46.6	-0.33	-0.16	-0.02
2018/19	45.4	45.5	46.8	-0.31	-0.18	-0.03
2019/20	49.3	49	50.2	*	*	*
2020/21	*	*	*	*	*	*

\*Results not available

Source: NOMIS

- 11.16 Figure 11.2 shows that whilst results declined in the period 2011-16, achievement in the borough was consistently better than both regional and national averages.
- 11.17 However, Figure 11.3 shows that attainment in Wigan declined in the period 2016-19, falling below both national and regional levels for the first time since the 2011 baseline. Attainment has however improved markedly in 2019/20, and now exceeds regional levels. The Average Progress 8 score in the borough in 2017/18 of -0.31 is significantly below national and regional averages and represents a notable reduction from the Wigan score in 2016/17.



11.18 The figures confirm that the plan targets have not been met given achievement levels declined year-on-year from 2011 to 2018, though an upturn in 2019/20 is encouraging.

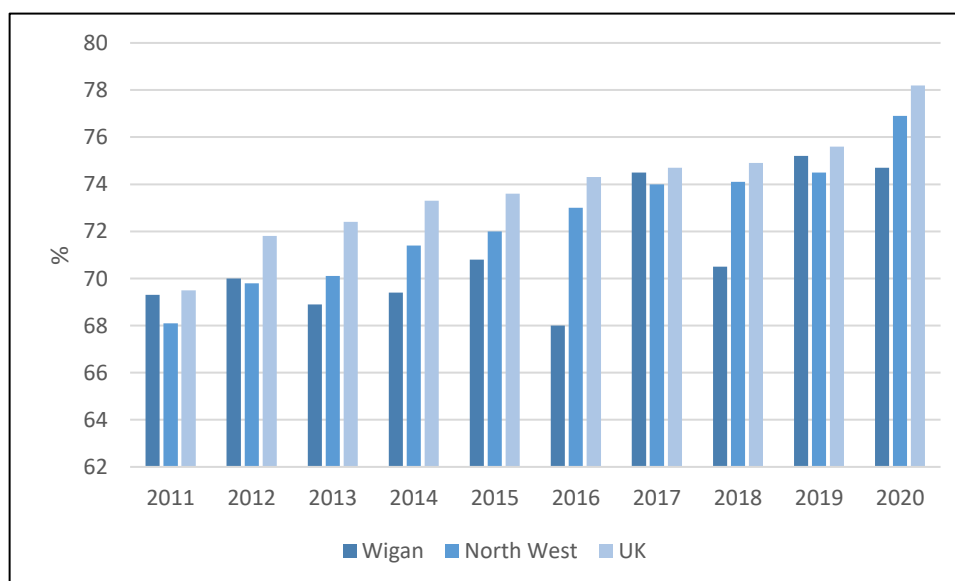
11.19 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, examinations and assessments due to take place in 2020 and 2021 were cancelled. It has been announced that the Government will not publish any results or statistics for these years and that alternate arrangements will be made for final results. These will not be made available, nor will they be used for monitoring or accountability purposes.

### Skill levels in the borough

11.20 The target is for the level of working age people qualified to Level 2 or above and Level 4 or above to better or equal national or regional averages, and for year-on-year improvements. Level 2 qualifications include GCSE's (at grade A\*-C or 4-9), CSE grade 1; and O Levels grade A-C. Level 4 qualifications include Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE); Higher Apprenticeships and Higher National Certificates (HNC). Levels 5 to 8 include Degrees, Master's Degrees and Doctorates. A full list is available [here](#).

11.21 As illustrated in Figure 11.3, the level of working age people qualified to Level 2 or above in the borough has increased from 69.3% in 2011 to 74.7% in 2020. This includes a notable increase from 70.5% in 2018. In 2019, the Wigan rate exceeded the North West average (74.5%) but remained below, albeit closer to, the national average of 75.6%. In 2020 there was a rise in averages for the North West (76.9%) and nationally (78.2%), however the rate in Wigan saw a reduction, dropping to 74.7%. Fluctuations from one year to the next do though suggest that a degree of caution needs to be applied to the precise levels.

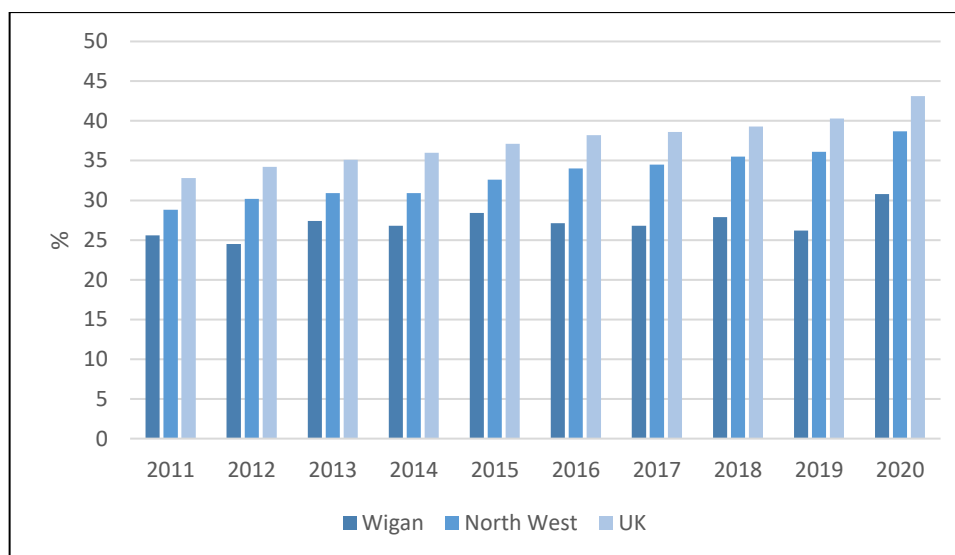
**Figure 11.3:** Percentage of people qualified to Level 2 or above, 2011-2020



Source: NOMIS

11.22 As illustrated in Figure 11.4, people qualified to Level 4 and above has been consistently below national and regional averages since 2011, with an increase of 5.2% from 25.6% in 2011 to 30.8% in 2020. This compares to increases of 9.9% and 10.3% at the regional and national levels respectively. However, fluctuations again suggest a need for caution around precise figures.

**Figure 11.4:** Percentage of people qualified to Level 4 or above



Source: NOMIS

11.23 Feedback from stakeholder consultation on the council’s Employment and Skills Review in 2019 suggests that the borough’s relatively low skill levels are influenced by a low level of jobs in the borough that require higher level skills. In addition, a high proportion of young people from the borough are achieving higher level qualifications outside the borough and taking employment opportunities elsewhere.

11.24 In response to this, ‘skills driving productivity’ and ‘learning for life’ are two key priorities within the council’s new skills framework and an action plan is being prepared to address these issues.

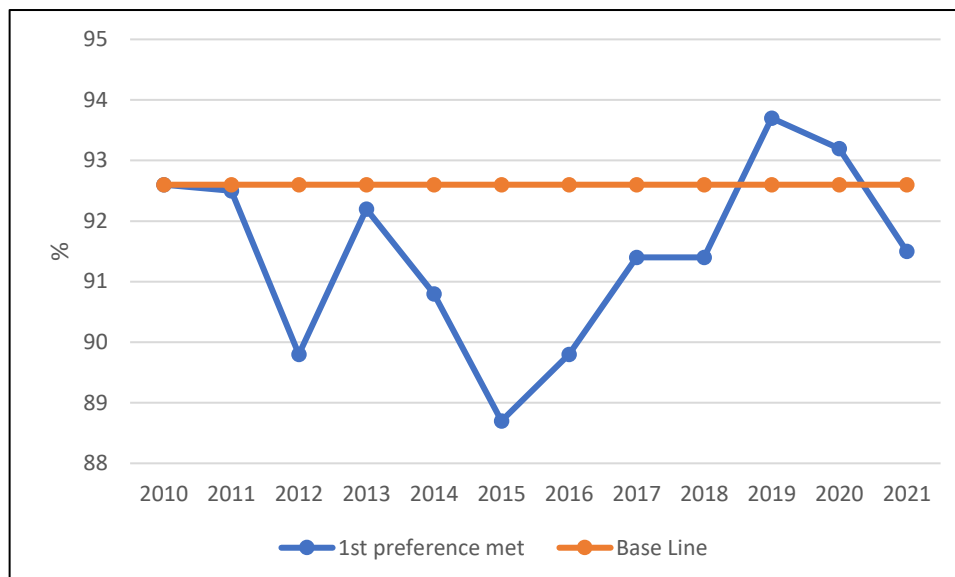
**Student applicants being admitted to first school of choice**

11.25 In 2010, 92.6% of primary school applicants and 95% of secondary school applicants obtained a school place in the borough at their first choice school. The target is to improve on this baseline.

11.26 The admission rate to first choice primary schools has been consistently below the baseline figure, with a low of 88% in 2015, until 2019 when it was exceeded for the first time, at 93.7%. This was influenced by a relatively low birth rate in 2014/15, which was the year the 2019 cohort was born. However, the rate has since dropped to 93.2% in 2020 and to 91.5%, back below the baseline. The position is illustrated in Figure 11.5. The rate of students

admitted to one of their three primary school preferences in 2020 was 97.3%. This figure has consistently been between 97-99% over the last 10 years.

**Figure 11.5:** Percentage of students admitted to first choice primary school, 2010-21



Source: Wigan Council

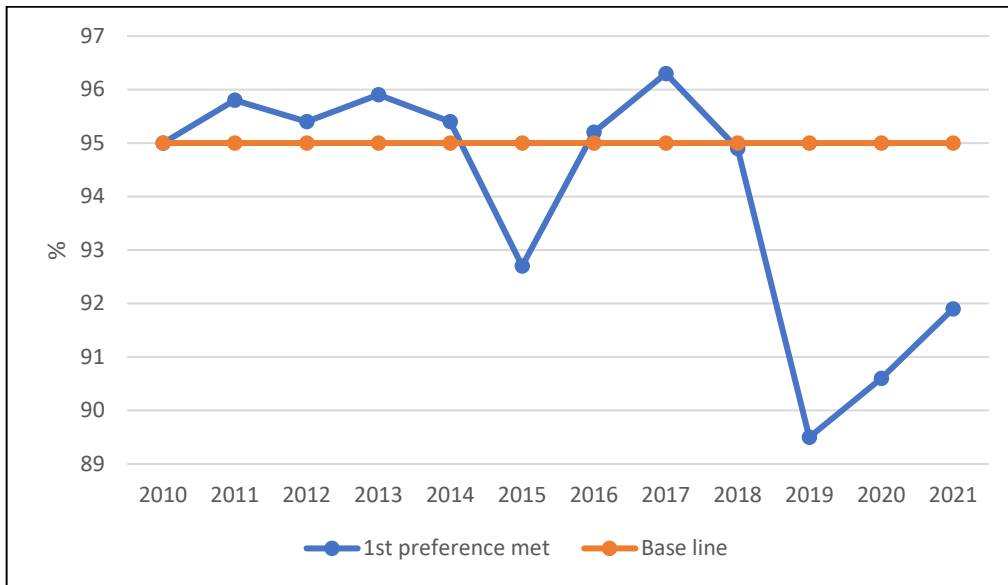
11.27 In contrast, the admission rate to first choice high schools has equalled or exceeded the baseline position in all but four years since 2010, as illustrated in Figure 11.6. However, the rate in 2019 fell significantly to 89.5%. This low figure was influenced by the 2019 cohort being the largest in recent years. The rate increased slightly in 2020 to 90.6% and again in 2021 to 91.9% but remains below the baseline.

11.28 Other factors which affect the percentage of first preferences met include:

- Parents are often aspirational with their first preference, resulting in schools with good or outstanding Ofsted reports receiving very high numbers of applications.
- Some parents name schools that do not give them priority in their admission arrangements, for example non-Catholic families applying for Catholic schools.

11.29 The rate of students admitted to one of their three high school preferences in 2021 was 97.6%. This figure was consistently above 99% from 2010-18 but dropped to 96.9% in 2019.

**Figure 11.6:** Percentage of students admitted to first choice high school, 2010-21.



Source: Wigan Council

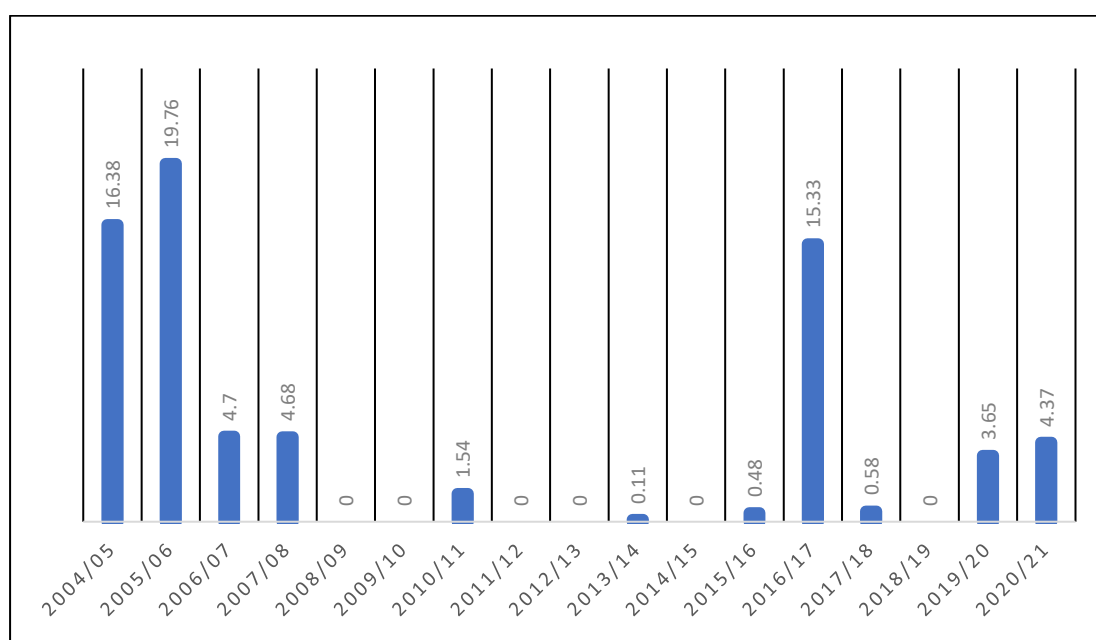
## **12 Policy CP5: Economy and Employment**

- 12.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for economy and employment is to modernise and grow the borough's economy with more, and better skilled, jobs in growth sectors that are better paid, slow the decline in traditional employment sectors, and equip and enable people to take advantage of job opportunities in surrounding areas, notably the city region centres of Manchester, Liverpool, Central Lancashire and Warrington where job growth will be highest.
- 12.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP5 seeks to create sustainable economic growth, boost our economic performance profile and provide a wide range of job opportunities.
- 12.3 The performance of part of this policy is monitored against indicators where planning can have a direct influence, relating to employment land take up, and the amount of employment land lost to non-employment uses.
- 12.4 The policy is also monitored against contextual indicators relating to the occupation in key growth sectors, unemployment, and wages and earnings. Whilst planning does not directly influence the borough's performance against these indicators, it can help establish and protect environments that attract and retain business investment and provide a wide range of job opportunities for borough residents.

### **Bringing forward a range of employment sites of the right quality**

- 12.5 In order to compete successfully at the national and regional level for investment and jobs, the Local Plan Core Strategy identified a need for new employment sites of the right quality in the borough to attract, maintain and grow businesses. Policy CP5 commits to make provision for around 200 hectares of new employment land to meet needs to 2026, equating to around 13.33 hectares per annum. However, as shown in Figure 12.1, take up has been significantly below this with only 24.52 hectares taken up during 2011-21, equating to just 2.45 hectares per year.
- 12.6 Whilst the low take-up rate from 2009 to around 2015 was primarily dictated by the international recession, which had a major impact on investment nationally and particularly across towns in the north of England, the limited supply of good quality larger deliverable sites has also been a factor. This can be evidenced by the significant fall in delivery rates after 2006, two years before the recession began, as well as the fall off in 2017/18 and 2018/19. 2019- 2021 has seen a slight uplift in take up of 8 hectares over two years, albeit still significantly below policy requirements.

**Figure 12.1:** Employment land take up (hectares) (2004-21)



Source: Wigan Council

12.7 The high take-up rate in 2016/17 comprised 1.98 hectares at Westwood Park, developed as part of the relocation of Nice Pak's manufacturing plant from Hindley Green; and 13.35 hectares spread across three plots at South Lancashire Industrial Estate, developed for three Class B8/B2 warehouses occupied by Bunzl plc (3.87 ha), Poundland regional distribution centre (8.04 ha) and a Compagne Fruitiere banana ripening facility (1.44 ha). These predominantly occupied land previously occupied by Georgia Pacific, which was destroyed by fire in 2011. Within 5 years of the fire, the site was cleared, sold, planning permission applied for and granted, and development completed.

### **Employment land within designated Primary Employment Areas lost to non-employment uses**

12.8 Figure 12.2 shows that 11.73 hectares of employment land within the borough's 35 designated Primary Employment Areas were lost to non-employment uses between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. A total of 62.55 hectares has been lost since 2011, with the vast majority being for residential development, including:

- Pemberton Colliery (David Wilson Homes, Barratts)
- Former AG Barr Site, North Road, Atherton (Keepmoat)
- Parsonage, Leigh (Lancet Homes)
- Land at Garrett Lane, Astley (Rowland Homes)
- Former household waste recycling centre, Frog Lane, Wigan (Gleesons)
- Wigan Enterprise Park, Ince (Barratts)
- Parr Bridge Works, Mosley Common (Bellway)

**Figure 12.2:** Employment land within designated Primary Employment Areas (PEA) lost to non-employment uses, 2020-2021

EM1A ref:	Application No.	Site Name	Emp. land lost (ha)	New use
9	A/19/87155/RM	Land off Garrett Lane (Chaddock Lane East)	2.95	Housing
7	A/09/72812	Bridgewater Business Park, Leigh	6.78	Major redevelopment (Housing led)
	A/15/80681			
10	A/17/83702	Maxilead Metals, Parr Bridge Works, Mosley Common	2	Local centre / retail
<b>Total</b>			<b>11.73</b>	

Source: Wigan Council

12.9 In addition, employment land was lost to retail uses at both Parr Brow in Mosley Common and at Woodhouse Lane, Wigan in 2021.

12.10 Figure 12.2 only includes sites with full permission or with reserved matters approval which have been built or where development has started. Figure 12.3 identifies an additional 17.97 hectares with permission for non-employment uses (including outline permissions), on sites where development, as at April 2021, had not yet started.

**Figure 12.3:** Unimplemented extant planning permissions for non-employment uses within Primary Employment Areas (April 2021)

PEA ref:	Planning App Refs:	Site Name	Employment land lost (ha)	New use
EM1A 24	A/20/89753	Land at Whitworth Way, Woodhouse Lane, Wigan	0.58*	Retail (Lidl)
EM1A 24	A/11/75748	Land at Frog Lane / Field Street, Wigan	1.73*	Housing
EM1A 27	A/17/85026/OUT	Bradley Hall Industrial Estate, Standish	5.61	Housing
EM1A 30	A/19/87673/OUTMAJ	Former Pemberton Colliery (North), Wigan	10.05	Housing
<b>Total</b>			<b>17.97</b>	

\*As at 1 December 2021, these sites are now under construction, and will be recorded as 2021/22 employment land losses in the 2022 Authority Monitoring Report.

Source: Wigan Council

12.11 A total of 6.61 hectares of employment land outside of Primary Employment Areas has been lost to non-employment uses since 2011 at the former Bispham Hall Brick and Terracotta Works in Orrell, Howe Bridge Mill in Atherton, and on land to the rear of Moss Industrial Estate in Lowton. Land at

Kirklees industrial Estate at Cale Lane was granted permission for housing in October 2017 but the permission has recently lapsed.

- 12.12 Figure 12.4 presents a summary of employment land losses since 2011, with the majority for housing. Proposals for housing or other uses are often supported by compelling evidence that sites are either unviable for the continued employment use, or that there is a proven lack of demand. Poor accessibility to the motorway network and/or the outdated condition of existing sites or accommodation often contributes to this.

**Figure 12.4** Summary of employment land lost in the period April 2011 - April 2021

Employment land lost	Implemented (Ha)	Unimplemented extant permissions (Ha)	Total	Loss to housing
Within Primary Employment Areas	62.55	17.97	80.52	83%
Outside Primary Employment Areas	6.61	0	6.61	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69.16</b>	<b>17.97</b>	<b>87.13</b>	<b>84%</b>

Source: Wigan Council

- 12.13 Notwithstanding the changes to the use classes order and the introduction of use Class E in September 2020, the development of non-employment uses within designated Primary Employment Areas is not in accordance with policies in the adopted development plan, and therefore proposals for such uses need to be justified rigorously.

### **Growth in key employment sectors**

- 12.14 Figure 12.5 shows how the number of people employed in key employment sectors has changed during the periods 2011-19 and 2018-19, and provides a comparison with the Greater Manchester average. The target is for growth in each key sector compared to the baseline.
- 12.15 The figures show that business and financial services, manufacturing and construction remain the dominant employment sectors in the borough, with modest growth in these sectors in the period 2011-21. Despite modest growth in manufacturing overall, there has been no growth in both food and drink and textile manufacturing in the borough, though this compares well with national and sub-regional trends where this sector has been retracting.
- 12.16 Another sector where there has been no growth in the borough since 2011 is logistics, despite the borough's strategic location on the M6 corridor and a notable increase in Greater Manchester of over 50%. This strongly reflects the limited supply of attractive available employment sites in the borough over the last decade, compared to other Greater Manchester districts. The recent approval of land at M6 Junction 25 for logistics development should start to reverse this trend.



**Figure 12.5:** Employment within key employment sectors in Wigan Borough

Key Employment Sector	Employees (000s)			Change (000s)		2011-19 change (%)	
	2011	2018	2019	2011-19	2018-19	Wigan	GM
Construction	11.1	10.4	12.5	1.4	2.1	13%	20%
Total manufacturing	13.9	14.8	14.2	0.3	-0.6	2%	2%
- Advanced manufacturing	4.2	4.3	4.3	0.1	0	2%	1%
- Food and drink manufacturing	4.6	4.9	4.6	0	-0.3	0%	5%
- Textile manufacturing	0.9	0.9	0.9	0	0	0%	-8%
- Other manufacturing	4.3	4.7	4.4	0.1	-0.3	2%	3%
Logistics (transport and storage)	6.9	6.6	6.9	0	0.3	0%	51%
Business and financial services	16.3	18.7	18.8	2.5	0.1	15%	20%
Creative and digital industries	2.3	2.9	3	0.7	0.1	30%	35%
Science and Research & Development	0.6	2	1.7	1.1	-0.3	183%	60%

Source: Greater Manchester Forecasting Model (2019)

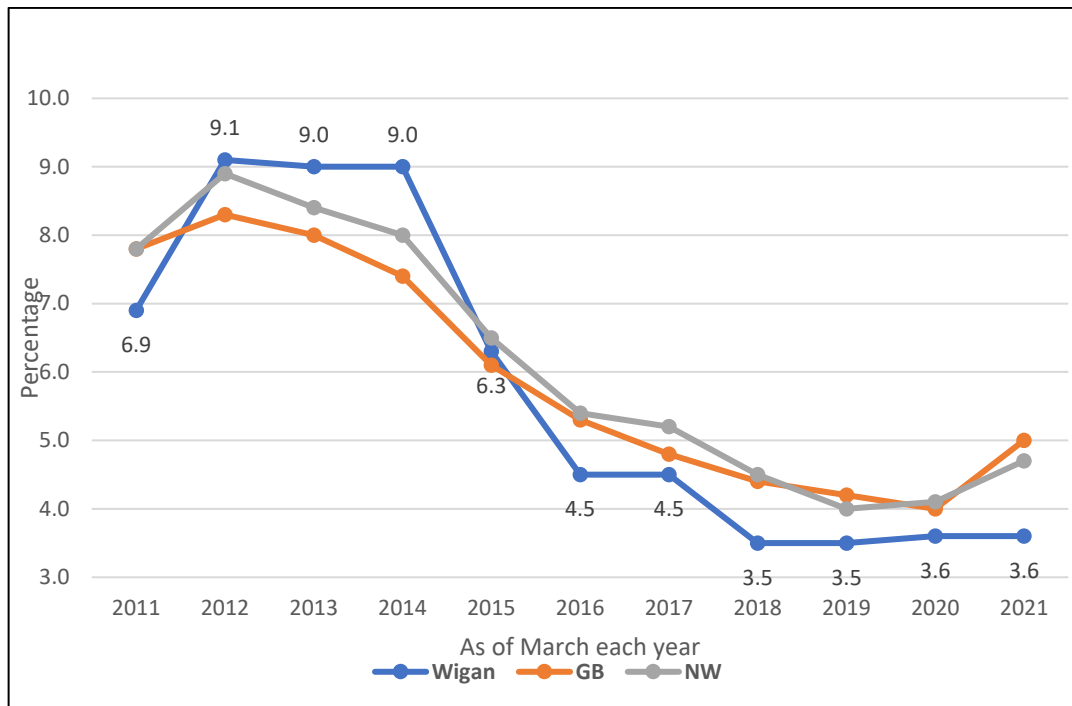
12.17 In the period 2018-19, there has been a notable increase in the construction sector (2,100 jobs) and an increase in logistics (300 jobs), but with a reduction in the manufacturing sector (600 jobs) and in Science and Research and Development (300 jobs).

12.18 The figures however need to be treated with some caution given that job categories are not easily defined and there may be some level of inconsistency in how jobs are categorised each year that are then fed into the model.

### Unemployment

12.19 Figure 12.6 compares unemployment levels in Wigan Borough with the regional and national average, for the period 2011-21. It shows that unemployment rates in the borough reduced significantly and continuously from 2014 to 2018, broadly in line with both national and regional trends.

**Figure 12.6: Unemployment rates**



Source: NOMIS

12.20 Between March 2019 and March 2021, which included the first 12 months of the Covid-19 pandemic, unemployment rates in Wigan increased by 0.1% from 3.5% to 3.6%, below both the regional (0.7%) and national averages (0.8%). The higher increases in unemployment rates for the regional and national figures are possibly due to the number of larger national retailers closing during the pandemic which has also had some impact on Wigan. In March 2019 and March 2021 Wigan reported the joint lowest unemployment rates in Greater Manchester.

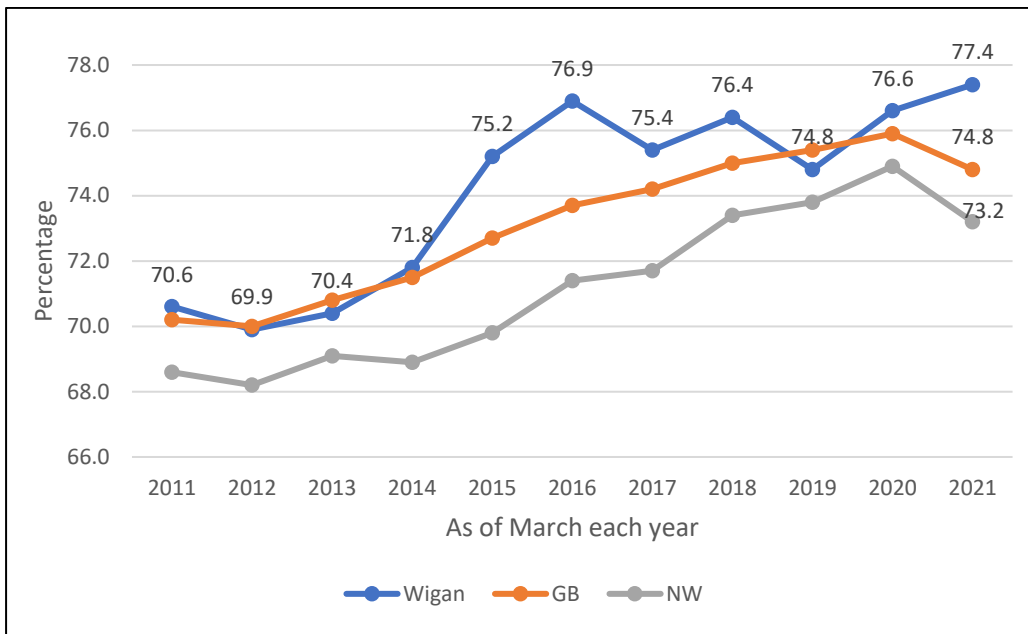
12.21 Mid-year data from NOMIS for 2021 has confirmed that the unemployment rate for Wigan has fallen to 3.4% up to June 2021 however the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has yet to be fully felt and assessed at this time.

### Employment rates

12.22 Figure 12.7 compares the employment rate in Wigan Borough with the regional and national average during the period 2011-21. It confirms that, at March 2021, the employment rate in Wigan (77.4%) was 4.2% and 2.6% higher than the regional and national rates respectively.

12.23 The data shows that employment rates in the borough increased continuously from 2012 to 2016, at a faster rate than the national and regional average. However, rates decreased in the period 2016-19 against national and regional trends resulting in the employment rate dipping below national levels in 2019 for the first since 2013. Two consecutive periods of increase since 2019 has resulted in the employment rate in 2021 being the highest recorded in the last decade.

**Figure 12.7: Employment rates**



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (NOMIS)

- 12.24 Mid-year data from NOMIS for 2021 has confirmed that the employment rate has remained at 77.4% up to June 2021 and regional and national employment rates have continued to decline.
- 12.25 The higher declines in employment rates for the regional and national figures are possibly due to the number of larger national retailers closing during the pandemic. The full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has yet to be completely felt and assessed at this time.

### **Wages and earnings**

- 12.26 Figure 12.8 shows the change in median gross weekly pay of full-time employees working in the borough since 2011, compared to regional and national averages. Since 2011 wages in Wigan have increased by around 23.5%, higher than both the regional and national increases. In 2011, the figures show that average weekly wage levels were 7% below regional levels and 15% below national levels. In 2020, Wigan remains lower than regional and national level (6% and 11% respectively). However due to higher growth rates in Wigan's wages, the difference between Wigan and regional and national levels is reducing.

**Figure 12.8:** Weekly wages of people working in Wigan Borough since 2011

	Weekly pay – gross (£)			Wigan comparison		% increase since 2011		
	Wigan	NW	GB	% NW	% GB	Wigan	NW	GB
2011	425	460	500	93%	85%			
2012	420	469	508	89%	83%	-1.2	2	1.6
2013	445	481	518	93%	86%	4.7	4.6	3.6
2014	422	483	520	87%	81%	-0.7	5	4
2015	459	489	529	94%	87%	8	6.3	5.8
2016	458	504	540	91%	85%	7.8	9.6	8
2017	474	514	552	92%	86%	11.5	11.7	10.4
2018	488	530	571	92%	86%	14.8	15.2	14.2
2019	504	551	587	91%	86%	18.6	19.8	17.4
2020	525	560	587	94%	89%	23.5	21.7	17.4

Source: NOMIS

12.27 Figure 12.9 shows the change in median gross weekly pay of full-time employees living in the borough since 2011, compared to regional and national averages. Since 2011, wages for residents living in Wigan Borough have increased by 25.5%, higher than the national and regional averages.

12.28 Compared with the data in Figure 12.8, the data in Figure 12.9 shows that resident-based weekly earnings in the borough have consistently been between £30-60 higher than jobs-based earnings in Wigan. This indicates that the high proportion of borough residents who commute outside of the borough for work are receiving higher wages. Resident based earnings in the borough are also consistently on par with the regional average and in 2020 exceeded the regional weekly pay.

**Figure 12.9:** Weekly wages of people living in Wigan Borough since 2011

	Weekly pay – gross (£)			Wigan comparison		% Increase since 2011		
	Wigan	NW	GB	Wigan	NW	GB	Wigan	NW
2011	458	459	500	100%	92%			
2012	471	472	508	100%	93%	2.8	2.8	1.6
2013	491	483	518	102%	95%	7.2	5.2	3.6
2014	482	485	521	99%	93%	5.2	5.7	4.2
2015	502	492	529	102%	95%	9.6	7.2	5.8
2016	500	503	541	99%	95%	9.2	9.6	8.2
2017	516	515	552	100%	94%	12.7	12.2	10.4
2018	523	530	571	99%	92%	14.2	15.5	14.2
2019	523	556	588	94%	89%	14.2	21.1	17.6
2020	575	560	587	103%	98%	25.5	22	17.4

Source: NOMIS

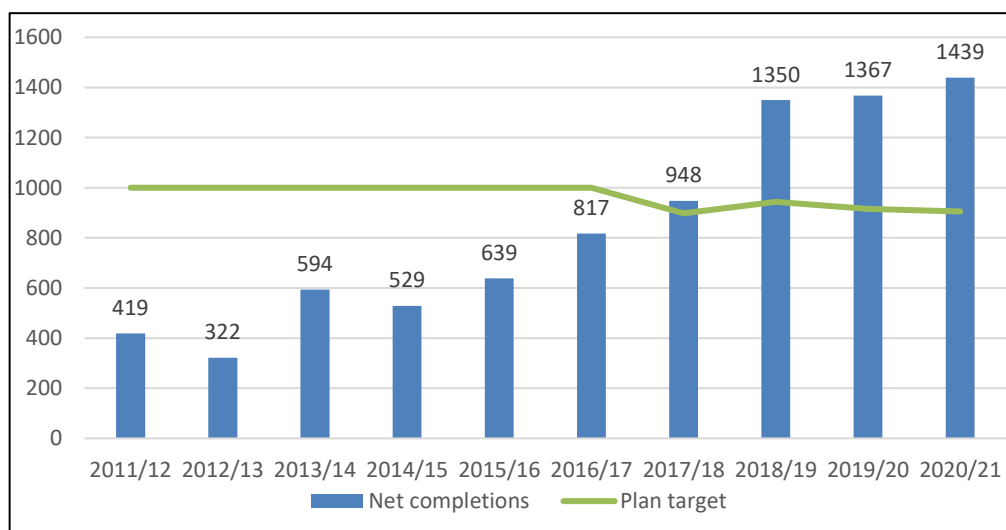
## 13 Policy CP6: Housing

- 13.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for housing is to ensure that there is sufficient housing in the borough to meet people’s needs and support a good quality of life. This will be achieved through ensuring new homes are built across a range of types and tenures, with the east-west core of the borough as the focus for housing growth to assist in the regeneration of towns within it.
- 13.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP6 requires the provision for an average of at least 1,000 net additional homes per year between 2011 and 2026; focuses at least 80% of new housing in the east-west core of the borough; encourages new homes on previously developed land; seeks to reduce the proportion of empty homes; seeks an appropriate mix of house types, tenures, sizes and affordability to meet local needs; seeks the provision of 25% affordable housing on all sites of 10 or more homes; and the provision of a new site for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople to meet any shortfall in pitches and plots.
- 13.3 The performance of this policy is monitored against indicators where planning can have a direct influence, relating to additional new homes built; the borough’s five-year land supply of deliverable housing sites; the proportion of homes built within the east-west core of the borough; the provision of affordable housing; the level of long-term empty homes; and the provision of pitches and plots to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.

### Additional new homes built

- 13.4 Policy CP6 of the Local Plan Core Strategy set an annual requirement for 1,000 net housing completions per year. This target was not met during the period 2013-18, as shown in Figure 13.1. However, net completions have grown year-on-year since 2014 and have more than tripled since 2011/12.

**Figure 13.1:** Net housing completions (2011-21)

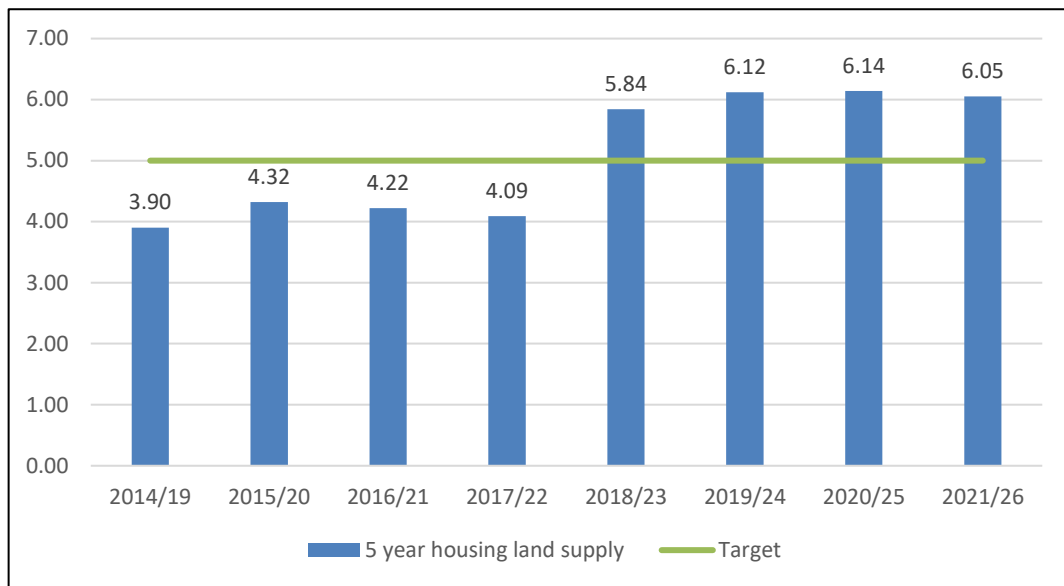


- 13.5 In 2018 the Government introduced a standardised methodology for calculating housing need. This set a net additional dwelling requirement for Wigan of 898 dwellings in 2017/18, 944 dwellings in 2018/19, 916 dwellings in 2019/20 and 905 dwellings in 2020/21. Set against these targets, the annual housing need was met in these four years with 948, 1,350, 1,367 and 1,439 net completions respectively, and the Local Plan Core Strategy target was greatly exceeded in 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- 13.6 The Government also introduced an annual Housing Delivery Test in 2018 for all local planning authorities. The test sets out a standard measure to compare the delivery of homes over the previous three financial years against the number of homes required during that period. The number of homes required annually is based on either the plan requirement where a plan is less than 5 years old or a Local Housing Need figure (set annually by Government) where plans are over 5 years old. The implications for failing the test are as follows:
- If delivery has been less than 95%, the council should produce an action plan to address the shortfall.
  - If delivery has been less than 85%, the council should include a 20% buffer when calculating its five-year housing land supply.
  - If delivery has been less than 75% the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, subject to transitional arrangements set out in national planning policy.
- 13.7 In January 2021, the Council achieved a score of 137% in the Housing Delivery Test for the three-year period 2017-20, as completions over this period exceeded housing requirements (adjusted by the Government for 2019/20 to reflect the impact of Covid-19). This means that the Council is only required to apply a 5% buffer when calculating its five-year housing land supply.

### **Maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites**

- 13.8 National planning policy requires local authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.
- 13.9 Where a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites cannot be identified, relevant planning policies within the development plan are deemed out-of-date, limiting the ability of the council to resist planning applications on sites deemed less suitable for development.
- 13.10 To calculate whether it has a five-year supply, the council undertakes an annual strategic housing land availability assessment. This assesses the availability, suitability and deliverability of all identified housing sites in the borough and estimates the number of homes that could potentially be built each year.

**Figure 13.2:** Five-year housing land supply position in Wigan Borough



Source: Wigan Council

13.11 Figure 13.2 shows that the Council can demonstrate a 6.05-year deliverable supply for the period 2021/26 and has been able to demonstrate a five-year supply consistently since 2018. This has coincided with higher net completion rates, but it is also in part due to a reduced annual housing requirement, from 1,000 homes (as determined in the Core Strategy) to 872 homes in 2021/22, as determined by the standardised methodology for calculating local housing need.

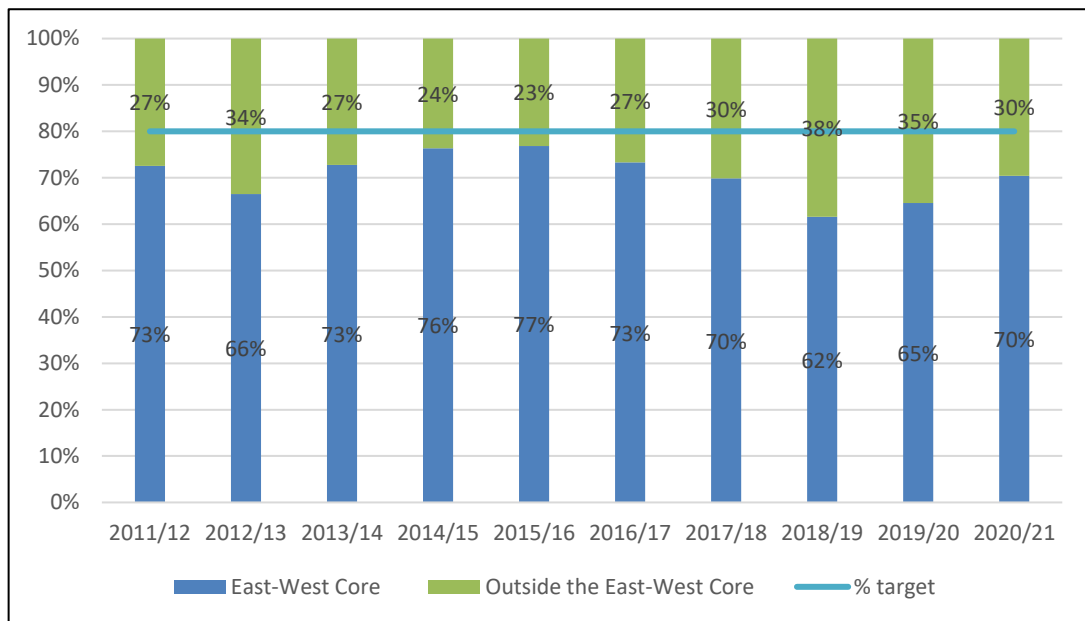
### **New homes within the east-west core**

13.12 The Local Plan Core Strategy sets a target for 80% of new homes to be in the 'east-west core' of the borough by 2026. The east-west core has higher levels of economic and social deprivation and most of the degraded former industrial and mining land.

13.13 Between 2011/12 and 2020/21, the number of net completions in the east-west core ranged between 62% and 77% of total net completions, with an annual average of 69% (5,832 out of 8,424), 11% below the plan target. This is primarily due to high delivery rates on greenfield sites within the settlements of Standish, Golborne, Lowton and Astley which are designated as broad locations for new development in the Local Plan Core Strategy.

13.14 Figure 13.3 shows that the proportion of homes built within the east-west core declined each year from 2015 to 2019. However, the proportion has been rising since 2019/20 to a figure of 70% in 2020/21, which is positive in terms of the plan target and reflects the development of 1,013 homes on sites in the east-west core.

**Figure 13.3:** Net completions in the east-west core of the borough



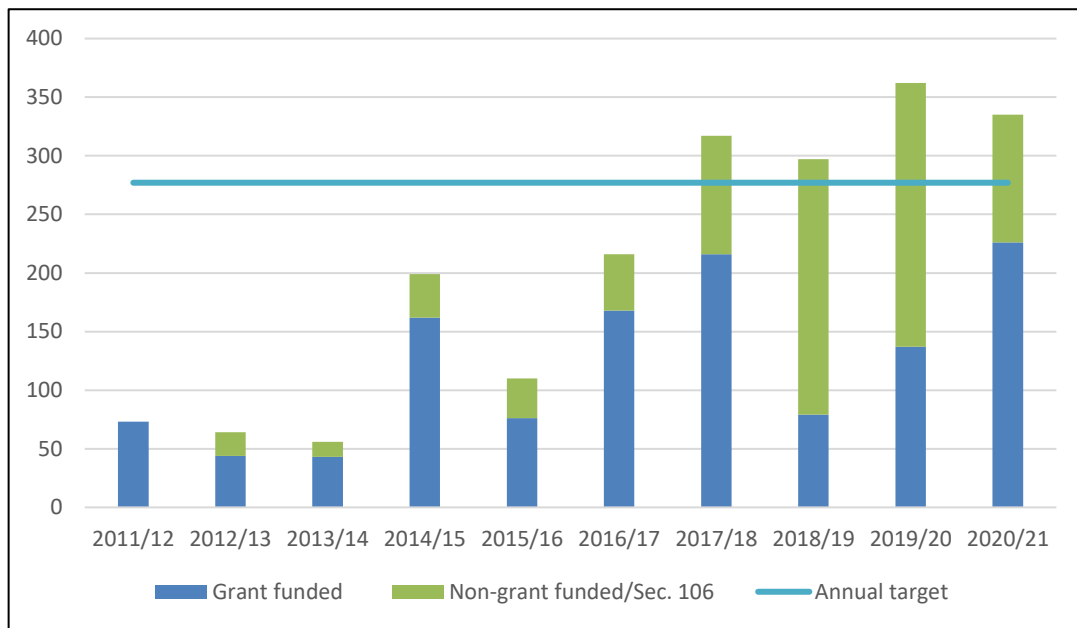
Source: Wigan Council

### Affordable homes

- 13.15 The target is for an annual average of 277 new affordable homes each year. As shown in Figure 13.4, from 2011 – 2017 delivery fell short of this target each year. However, the target has been exceeded every year from 2017/18 onwards, with 335 affordable homes delivered in 2020/21. In total, 2,030 affordable homes have been delivered since April 2011, which equates to an average of 203 per year.
- 13.16 Affordable housing is delivered either directly by the council or by registered providers. Registered providers receive grant funding to build new homes or receive new homes from housing developers as part of section 106 agreements. Section 106 agreements are secured as part of planning permissions for new housing, in line with policy CP6.
- 13.17 The council policy requirement is for 25% of homes on private developments of ten or more units to be affordable, subject to viability. The preference is for these to be offered to registered providers for a mix of affordable rent and shared ownership.
- 13.18 As shown in Figure 13.4, around 60% of affordable homes delivered since 2011 have been grant funded, including homes delivered directly by the council. Since 2017/2018 there have been high numbers of affordable homes delivered through section 106. This has coincided with high delivery rates of new homes in Standish, Golborne, Lowton, and Astley, where the policy requirement for 25% of homes to be affordable has proven to be viable and has been secured.



**Figure 13.4:** Affordable homes delivered in the borough



Source: Wigan Council

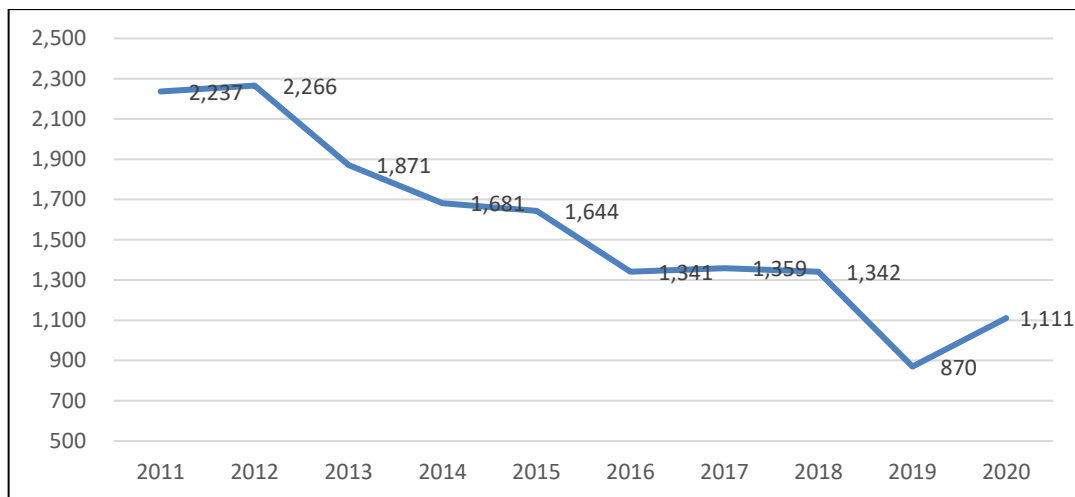
13.19 The council builds a wide range of homes itself but with a focus on specialist and supported housing. It completed 96 homes in 2020/21, funded from the Housing Revenue Account and Homes England grant. These are included as grant funded schemes in Figure 13.4. Wigan Council also works with a number of registered providers to deliver a programme funded through grant from Homes England. In 2020/21 this resulted in the delivery of 130 homes.

13.20 The ability of the council to meet its affordable housing target is dependent on a number of issues, including the availability of grant funding and the success of the council and registered providers in securing it, and the council's ability to secure section 106 agreements with developers.

### Long-term empty homes

13.21 The target is for an annual reduction of long-term empty homes (those vacant for more than six months). Figure 13.5 shows there has been a 50% reduction between 2011 and 2021, from 2,237 to 1,111, with numbers falling sharply between 2018 and 2019 and increasing slightly again in 2020. This represents under 1% of the borough's total housing stock.

**Figure 13.5:** Long term empty homes in Wigan Borough, 2011-2020



Source: MHCLG Live Table 615

### **Provision for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople**

- 13.22 The Greater Manchester Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment Update 2018 identifies a need for an additional 6 gypsy pitches and 17 travelling showpeople plots to meet needs in the borough for the period 2017-22, an additional 2 pitches and 1 plot to meet needs to 2027, and then an additional 2 pitches and 8 plots to meet needs to 2036.
- 13.23 The council cannot currently identify an available supply of additional gypsy pitches, though negotiations are progressing to secure the extension of the existing traveller site at Little Lane, Wigan, which would meet the need to 2036.
- 13.24 The need for additional travelling showpeople plots will be predominantly addressed at a new site at Moss Hall Farm at Seaman Way, Ince where 24 plots are currently being developed. Eight of these plots were occupied during 2020/21. These plots are replacing 10 plots at Presbyterian Fold in Hindley which has planning permission for housing. This equates to a net increase of 14 plots in the borough, resulting in the need for an additional 3 plots to meet needs to 2022, and a further 9 plots to meet needs to 2036.

## **14 Policy CP7: Accessibility**

- 14.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for accessibility is for people in the borough to be better able to move around the borough by private and public transport.
- 14.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP7 promotes and seeks the delivery of a number of major transport infrastructure interventions; promotes accessibility improvements across the borough notably within out of town centres; seeks to maximise use of the existing bus and rail network and the capacity, efficiency and safety of the borough's roads; seeks to develop and enhance our on and off-road networks for walking and cycling; seeks to ensure the provision of appropriate well designed and safe parking for all vehicles, including bicycles, as part of new developments; supports the provision of infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles; and promotes the use of travel plans for appropriate development.
- 14.3 The performance of the policy is monitored against measurable indicators relating to the delivery of specific major transport interventions, net changes to travel times on designated routes, bus and rail service use, and the percentage of new homes within 30 minutes public transport time of key services.

### **Wigan Bus Station**

The new Wigan Bus Station opened in October 2018

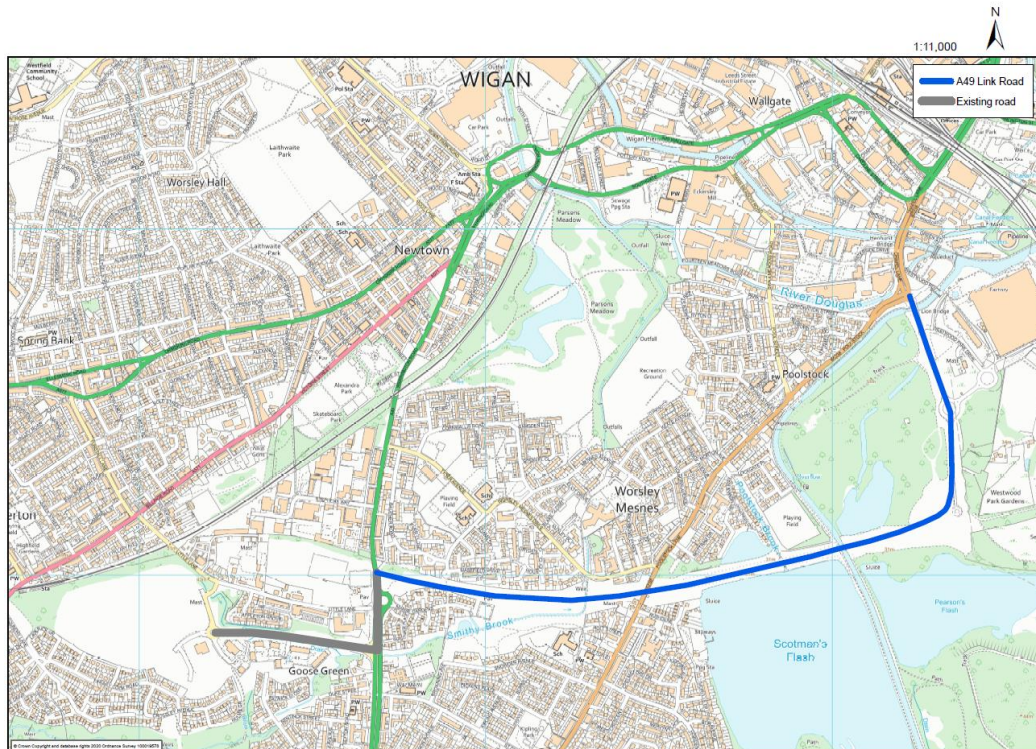
### **A578 Leigh Road to A58 Liverpool Road**

- 14.4 This scheme is part of wider objectives for improved east-west accessibility. In 2020, the council was unsuccessful with its joint bid with Bolton Council for Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) which would have enabled the delivery of this link by 2025. The scheme is dependent on future funding opportunities.

### **A49 Diversion (now known as the A49 Link Road)**

- 14.5 The A49 Link Road is a connection from A49 Warrington Road at Goose Green to Wigan town centre, via Westwood Park. It comprises 2.3 km of new carriageway and opened in June 2020.

**Figure 14.2: Route of the A49 Link Road**



### Leigh-Salford-Manchester busway

14.6 The Leigh-Salford-Manchester busway was opened on 3 April 2016. Since opening, over 7.8 million passenger journeys have been made on the route. A survey of busway passengers, undertaken in March 2019, showed that 21% of respondents had switched mode since the introduction of the busway services. Over three million passenger journeys were made on the route in 2018/19 and, since opening, it has led to 580,000 fewer car journeys in the area.

### Bus and rail service use

14.7 Figure 14.3 shows the proportion of trips by different modes into Wigan town centre during the AM peak in 2011, 2019 and 2020. It shows that in the period 2011-19, the proportion of trips by bus and rail reduced marginally, whilst the proportion of trips on foot increased by 5%. The 2020 surveys occurred during the Covid-19 outbreak, and therefore should be treated with some caution. It shows a reduction of around 800 trips overall compared to in 2019, with a significant decrease in the proportion of trips by bus, and an increase in the proportion of trips by car.

**Figure 14.3:** Trips into Wigan Town Centre, AM peak (07:30 - 09:30), 2011-2020

Mode	Proportion of trips			% change	
	2011	2019	2020	2011-19	2011-20
Bus	25%	23%	17%	-2%	-8%
Rail	11%	8%	10%	-3%	-1%
Walk	26%	31%	32%	5%	5%
Cycle	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Car	37%	38%	40%	0%	3%
All	100%	100%	100%		
Total trips	9,481	9,155	8,377	-326	-1,104

Source: TfGM Highways Forecasting and Analytical Services

### **Percentage of new homes within 30 minutes public transport time of key services**

- 14.8 This indicator has not been monitored in detail to date. However, previous analysis has shown that most homes in the borough are within 30 minutes public transport time of a town centre, including reasonable walking time to and from a bus stop or train station. The means of monitoring this more robustly will be investigated.

### **Net changes to travel time on designated routes**

- 14.9 The target is to continually reduce travel time on designated routes. Data from the Highway Forecasting and Analytical Service (HFAS), as part of Transport for Greater Manchester, as shown in Figure 14.4, show that the average journey time on A and B roads increased during the period 2011-19, although it remained below the Greater Manchester average. Average journey times in Wigan and across Greater Manchester decreased notably in 2020, most likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the Wigan figure remaining below the Greater Manchester average. Please note that from 2017 onwards data has been analysed on a calendar year basis rather than financial year.

**Figure 14.4: Average Journey Time Rates (Mins / Mile)**

Year	8am – 9am	10am – 4pm	5pm – 6pm
<b>Wigan</b>			
2005/06	3.87	2.91	3.58
2006/07	3.77	2.88	3.48
2007/08	3.76	2.90	3.51
2008/09	3.53	2.92	3.68
2009/10	3.60	2.91	3.57
2010/11	3.55	2.87	3.43
2011/12	3.46	2.84	3.38
2012/13	3.37	2.87	3.36
2013/14	3.61	2.88	3.56
2014/15	3.69	2.93	3.66
2015/16	3.70	3.00	3.73
2017	3.76	3.02	3.80
2018	3.90	3.08	3.85
2019	3.87	3.13	3.99
2020	3.19	2.96	3.24
<b>Greater Manchester</b>			
2015/16	4.04	3.27	4.19
2017	4.14	3.32	4.25
2018	4.23	3.36	4.28
2019	4.24	3.39	4.25
2020	3.42	3.20	3.49

Source: TfGM Highways Forecasting and Analytical Services

## **15 Policy CP8: Green Belt and safeguarded land**

- 15.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for the built environment and landscape includes the protection of the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
- 15.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP8 states that there will be no alterations to the Green Belt boundary and only allows development within the Green Belt in accordance with national planning policy.
- 15.3 The performance of this policy is monitored against a measurable indicator relating to the amount of Green Belt land lost to development.

### **Amount of Green Belt land lost to development**

- 15.4 There have been no alterations to the boundaries of the Green Belt in the borough since the Green Belt was established in the early 1980s. Since 2011, the vast majority of development within it has been limited infilling or the redevelopment of brownfield sites, in accordance with national planning policy and the Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 15.5 A total of 3.19 hectares of Green Belt land has, however, been granted planning permission for 'inappropriate development' as part of a residential-led mixed-use development at the former Maxilead Metals site in Mosley Common (planning reference A/17/83702). Following a detailed assessment, it was considered that the level of benefits that the proposed development would bring constituted 'very special circumstances', which significantly outweighed Green Belt harm and any other harm, in line with national planning policy. This site is now under construction.

### **Greater Manchester Spatial Framework / Places for Everyone**

- 15.6 To ensure that Wigan and Greater Manchester had a sufficient supply of land for housing and employment, the GMSF proposed to redraw the boundaries of the Green Belt for the first time since the early 1980s. However, the GMSF is no longer being taken forward following the withdrawal of Stockport Council from the process. The remaining nine Greater Manchester districts are continuing with a modified plan called 'Places for Everyone'. The publication version of this plan was issued for consultation from 9 August to 3 October 2021. This included the release of three Green Belt sites in Wigan and the creation of additional Green Belt at six locations in the borough.

## **16 Policy CP9: Strategic landscapes and green infrastructure**

- 16.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for strategic landscape and green infrastructure is to improve the borough's countryside and open land, forge a more positive local identity and sense of place and increase its value as 'green infrastructure', particularly in the Greenheart of the borough.
- 16.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP9 seeks to strengthen landscape character through the appropriate location and treatment of development; the ongoing restoration of despoiled landscapes and natural and semi-natural features; and managing our green infrastructure as one extensive high quality and multifunctional network and safeguarding it from development that would compromise its integrity.
- 16.3 The performance of this policy is monitored through other spatial and core policies, most notably Greenheart (SP5), open space, sport and recreation (CP2), wildlife habitats and species (CP12) and flooding (CP16).



## 17 Policy CP10: Design

17.1 A strategic objective of the Core Strategy is to improve the built environment of the borough and help make it a better place to live, visit, and for businesses to locate and thrive. The policy identifies 10 factors that new development should consider or demonstrate, including (but not limited to): local character; integration with the surroundings; conservation of natural resources; accessibility; quality landscaping; reducing risk of crime and anti-social behaviour; maintenance; servicing and opportunities for public art.

17.2 The performance of this policy was proposed to be monitored against the following indicators:

- i. Percentage of applications approved in line with policy requirements
- ii. Number of units built to a 'very good' standard against the Building for Life Assessment

17.3 The Building for Life Assessment was replaced in 2020 by 'Building for a Healthy Life' which operates a traffic light rating system. This is widely accepted as forming the national standard for measuring design quality in a comprehensive manner. We have therefore adopted this approach for measuring performance in indicator (ii). The revised indicator (ii) is as follows:

### **Number of schemes rated 'green' overall against the Building for a Healthy Life Assessment.**

17.4 Figure 17.1 measures the performance of eight residential schemes in the borough. These represent a sample of schemes completed across the borough since the adoption of the Core Strategy and have been selected to provide a range in terms of location, size, and developer.

17.5 In future years it is intended that the sample size will increase. In addition, the intention is to extend monitoring to assess the schemes twice: at plan stage (based upon original consented scheme) and upon completion. This will provide insight into the effect of any variations on the design quality of the scheme.

17.6 Figure 17.1 shows:

- The traffic light rating (red, amber, green) on each of the 12 Building for a Healthy Life criteria for each scheme. Not all criteria are relevant to every scheme, with these recorded as 'N/A'.
- An overall rating is provided for each scheme. This is not a feature of Building for a Healthy Life, but we have introduced it to help summarise the assessment. This applies a majority rating, so if a scheme scores mostly amber it is considered amber overall. However, if a scheme scores red on any criterion, it cannot be considered a 'green' scheme overall, and can be attributed a maximum score of amber.

- The results show that 5 of the 8 sites scored an overall rating of green.
- The 3 sites that scored below 'green' did so because they were rated 'red' on a criterion. These 3 schemes scored red on different criteria: natural connections, facilities and services, and making the most of where it is.
- All schemes scored 'green' on criteria (7) 'well defined streets and space' and criteria (8) 'easy to find your way around'.
- Criteria (6) 'a memorable character' scored the most 'ambers'.

**Figure 17.1:** Assessment of residential schemes against the 12 Building for a Health Life criteria

App No.	Address	Number of Units	Building for a Healthy Life criteria												Totals			
			1. Natural connections	2. Walking, cycling and public transport	3. Facilities and services	4. Homes for everyone	5. Making the most of what is there	6. A memorable character	7. Well defined streets and spaces	8. Easy to find your way around?	9. Healthy streets	10. Cycle and Car parking	11. Green and Blue Infrastructure	12. Back of pavement, front of	Overall	Number of Reds	Number of Ambers	Number of Greens
A/14/79775	Land rear of and including 4 Ratcliffe Road, Aspall	9			N/A	N/A							N/A			1	3	6
A/15/81209	Land south of Pepper Lane, Standish	300														0	5	7
A/14/79462	Agricultural land north of 23 Old Pepper Lane, Standish	39														0	3	9
A/17/84541	155 Preston Road, Standish	21		N/A								N/A	N/A			0	3	6
A/15/81114	Open land south east of 79 Stone Cross Lane North, Lowton	362														1	6	5
A/16/83385	Site of The Rose Centre, Hesketh Meadow Lane, Lowton	36														1	3	8
A/15/81040	Open land north of 76 Ashton Road, Golborne	10			N/A	N/A						N/A				0	2	7
A/18/85351	Land at Ullswater Road, Golborne	32			N/A											0	4	7

## **18 Policy CP11: Historic Environment**

- 18.1 A strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy is to maintain and enhance the built environment; and conserve and enhance the borough's built heritage.
- 18.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP11 seeks to conserve and enhance the borough's heritage assets and their settings; encourage the sympathetic and appropriate re-use of existing buildings and structures; and promote the value of our historic environment through signing, interpretation, public art and other measures.
- 18.3 The Council has recently adopted its Historic Environment Strategy in line with the proposals under Policy CP11. As such an opportunity has been taken to reassess our annual monitoring indicators and develop them so that they better reflect the aims of the strategy.
- 18.4 The performance of this policy has been assessed by monitoring the number of buildings and conservation areas on the Heritage at Risk Register and developments causing substantial harm to designated heritage assets as well as celebratory and promotional activities to celebrate the borough's historic environment.

### **Number of Buildings and Conservation Areas on the Heritage at Risk Register**

- 18.5 Historic England, the Government's statutory advisor for heritage publishes its Heritage at Risk Register on an annual basis. This covers Grade I and II\* listed buildings and Grade II listed places of worship, as well as conservation areas across the country. The register identifies heritage assets that are at risk of losing their significance due to their deterioration and/or neglect.
- 18.6 Figure 18.1 identifies the number of entries on the Register in Wigan Borough annually since 2011, and shows 6 buildings, one place of worship and two conservation areas currently at risk. These include the same 6 buildings and the 1 conservation area that were at risk in 2011.

**Figure 18.1:** Heritage at Risk Register, Wigan Borough

Year	Type of entry*			Total
	Building and structure	Place of worship	Conservation area	
2011	6	0	1	7
2012	6	0	2	8
2013	6	0	2	8
2014	6	1	2	9
2015	6	3	2	11
2016	6	2	2	10
2017	6	2	2	10
2018	6	1	2	9
2019	6	1	2	9
2020	6	1	2	9

Source: Wigan Council

18.7 The heritage assets currently considered to be at risk in the borough are:

- Leigh Spinners Mill (Grade II\*)
- Haigh Hall Park Gateway and Lodges, Wigan Lane (Grade II\*)
- Barn and stable to east of Winstanley Hall and two attached gateways (Grade II\*)
- Winstanley Hall (Grade II\*)
- Haigh Hall (Grade II\*)
- Headgear at Astley Green Colliery (Grade II and Scheduled Ancient Monument)
- Church of St. Catherine, Scholes (Grade II)
- Leigh Bridge Conservation Area
- Tyldesley Town Centre Conservation Area

#### **Development causing substantial harm to designated heritage assets**

18.8 This monitoring indicator aligns with wording in legislation and national policy by using the measure of ‘substantial harm’ to heritage assets or their settings. It replaces the indicator set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for the demolition or significant change to heritage assets or their settings.

18.9 There were no developments that caused substantial harm to designated heritage assets in the borough in the period 2020-21

#### **Promoting the value of our built heritage in line with the Historic Environment Strategy**

18.10 The Council adopted a borough-wide Historic Environment Strategy in 2021 which sets out the policies and actions that will help preserve and conserve the historic environment for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

18.11 A key objective of the strategy is to raise awareness of the importance of our historic environment and to promote and celebrate it. This new indicator monitors the activities undertaken and the materials and publications produced in line with the strategy, shown in figure 18.2.

**Figure 18.2: Activities undertaken to promote the value of the borough's built heritage and historic environment**

Year	Type
2020	Public Meeting to Launch Historic Environment Strategy
2020	Ongoing meetings with Historic Environment Groups.

## 19 Policy CP12: Wildlife, Habitats and Species

- 19.1 A strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy is to strengthen and support wildlife habitats and species by protecting and enhancing key habitats and facilitating opportunities to appreciate wildlife, notably in the Greenheart of the borough.
- 19.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP12 seeks to protect and enhance regional and local priority habits and the borough’s designated environmental assets, including the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at Manchester Mosses, our Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).
- 19.3 The performance of this policy is monitored against measurable indicators relating to the change in area of designated sites; the proportion of SSSIs being in favourable or recovering condition; and the proportion of SBIs where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented.

### Change in area of designated sites

- 19.4 As at 2018, there were 93 SBIs covering a combined area of 1,589 hectares in the borough. A sample of Wigan’s SBIs is reviewed annually by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) in line with their Service Level Agreement, which requires each SBI to be resurveyed at least once every 10 years. The review of SBIs is reported in the year following the survey season, however the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on surveying and led to a delay in the publication of the 2019 and 2020 data. This section will be updated in future reports when more recent data is received.
- 19.5 Figure 19.1 summarises the quality and quantity of SBIs in the borough, and how this has changed since 2011. The grading of sites is defined as follows:
- Grade A - of Regional or County Importance
  - Grade B - of District Importance
  - Grade C - of importance within the locality at a sub-district level.

**Figure 19.1:** Quality and quantity of SBIs in the borough

	2011	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Number of SBI sites</b>					
Grade A	36	36	36	36	36
Grade B	29	31	31	31	31
Grade C	27	24	24	26	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Area of SBIs (ha)</b>					
Grade A	1,115	1,104	1,096	1,094	1,091
Grade B	348	359	359	359	359
Grade C	139	126	126	139	139
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,602</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>1,581</b>	<b>1,593</b>	<b>1,589</b>

Source: Wigan Council

- 19.6 This shows that the overall number of SBIs in the borough increased by one during the period 2011-2018, with an increase of two of district importance and the reduction of one with local importance. Despite this, there has been a reduction of 13 hectares within this timeframe.
- 19.7 As set out in Section 9, there have been two additional Local Nature Reserves in the borough since 2011, at [Kirkless](#) (28.11 hectares) and [Pennington Flash](#) (90.63 hectares), which has increased the overall site area of LNRs by around 50%. There has been no change to Special Areas of Conservation or SSSIs within this period.

### **The percentage area of SSSIs in favourable condition**

- 19.8 Wigan has four SSSIs at Abram Flashes, Astley Moss, Bryn Marsh and Ince Moss, and Highfield Moss. Monitoring the condition of SSSIs is part of the statutory responsibility of Natural England, with the latest assessments available on their [website](#) and summarised in Figure 19.2 below. However, only one of the 4 Wigan SSSIs has been assessed recently, with some assessments dating back to 2011/12. The Core Strategy target is for 95% of each site to be in favourable or a recovering condition.

**Figure 19.2:** Condition of the SSSIs in the borough

Site	Date of last assessment	Site area (ha)	Condition		
			Favourable	Unfavourable	
				Recovering	Declining
Abram Flashes	2011/12	39.63		100%	
Astley Moss	2012	92	1.4%	98.6%	
Bryn Marsh & Ince Moss	2015	70.61	31.6%	23.4%	45%
Highfield Moss	2020	20.16		100%	

Source: Natural England

- 19.9 Figure 19.2 confirms that three of the four sites met the Core Strategy target when last assessed by Natural England, with the majority in a recovering condition. However, nearly half of Bryn Marsh and Ince Moss SSSI was deemed to be in an unfavourable and declining condition when last surveyed in 2015, due to the presence of invasive species, namely New Zealand Pigmyweed, which is nearly impossible to control in areas of large open water such as those found in Bryn Marsh and Ince Moss.

### **The proportion of Sites of Biological Importance where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented**

- 19.10 Due to difficulties with ascertaining information on management from private landowners, the council is looking to establish a new methodology to report on the numbers of SBIs in positive management, but it will likely only include sites owned by the council and partners and not those in private ownership. Due to the delays in SBI monitoring caused by the Covid-19 pandemic the development of a new methodology has also been delayed. This will hopefully be reported on in the 2021/22 Authority Monitoring Report.



## 20 Policy CP13: Low Carbon Development

- 20.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for energy is to strengthen our energy infrastructure and minimise emissions of greenhouse gases.
- 20.2 In 2019 Wigan Council declared a climate emergency and a target to reach net zero by 2038. The council also adopted an Outline Climate Change Strategy in August 2020 setting out how the 2038 net zero target will be reached and how progress will be monitored. These developments supersede the initial aims of this policy, and it is felt that the key environmental performance indicators around carbon emissions across the borough are a more important monitor of progress on low carbon development.
- 20.3 Figure 20.1 shows annual Carbon Dioxide emission estimates (kilo tonnes) in the borough from 2013, when the Core Strategy was adopted, to 2019 across the industrial, commercial, public and domestic sectors. It demonstrates that despite ongoing development and an increasing population in the borough, carbon dioxide emissions continue to decrease.

**Figure 20.1:** Annual Carbon Dioxide emissions in the borough by sector – kilo tonnes (2013-19)

Year	Carbon Dioxide emissions by sector			
	Industry	Commercial	Public sector	Domestic
2013	258.9	189.5	77.8	650.3
2014	245.6	156.5	61.5	546.4
2015	224.2	134.9	70.8	522.3
2106	200.7	112.5	61.6	501.0
2017	191.5	111.2	50.9	477.6
2018	191.0	101.8	49.4	476.2
2019	174.1	91.9	45.2	460.2

Source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

## **21 Policy CP14: Waste**

- 21.1 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for waste is to facilitate the management of waste in line with the 'waste hierarchy', namely minimisation at source as the priority, before increasing reuse as the next priority before recycling and recovery as the next priorities before landfill as the last resort.
- 21.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP14 requires proposals for the development of waste management facilities to demonstrate that they will enable the waste that they will handle to be dealt with as far up the waste hierarchy as possible; working with other authorities through the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document, to identify and safeguard sites for waste management processes; encouraging provision for recycling; and requiring the preparation of site waste management plans for major developments and waste management plans for other developments as appropriate.
- 21.3 The performance of this policy is monitored at Greater Manchester level on behalf of the ten districts. The latest monitoring report for this is for the period 2019/20 and is available [here](#).

## 22 Policy CP15: Minerals

- 22.1 The strategic objective for natural resources and pollution set in the Local Plan Core Strategy includes conserving the integrity of the mossland habitat in the south of the borough and also contributing effectively to the requirement for minerals, albeit balanced against other policy considerations including amenity.
- 22.2 In order to achieve this, Policy CP15 seeks to:
- Make an appropriate contribution to Greater Manchester's apportionment of aggregates.
  - Promote and, where possible, require efficiency in the use of minerals in development.
  - Facilitate the movement of minerals by rail and canal where feasible or practicable.
  - Ensure effective restoration and aftercare of extraction sites where necessary.
  - Not allow further peat extraction on our remaining areas of remnant mossland,
  - Give due consideration to lowland bog as a valuable habitat and carbon sink and only permit peat extraction where areas of degraded lowland bog arising from previous peat-working require restoration.
- 22.3 In addition, it commits to working with other district councils through the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document, to define minerals safeguarding areas as well as identifying sites, preferred areas and/or areas of search for future mineral working, and identifying and safeguarding sites for storage, processing and transfer of minerals in appropriate locations.
- 22.4 The performance of this policy is monitored at Greater Manchester level on behalf of the ten districts. The latest annual monitoring report for this is for the period 2019/20 and is available [here](#).

## 23 Policy CP16: Flooding

- 23.1 Part of a strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy is to mitigate and adapt to all flood risks, in particular at strategic sites in critical regeneration areas. A further strategic objective is to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- 23.2 In order to achieve this Policy CP16 seeks to follow a sequential approach to development and flood risk; incorporate appropriate mitigation and/or management measures to reduce flood risk overall; and specifically, not increase surface-water run-off at greenfield sites and reduce it substantially at previously developed sites.
- 23.3 The performance of this policy is monitored against the number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice and the number of sustainable drainage schemes required and implemented.

### Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice

- 23.4 There were no planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice in 2020/21. The agency did raise some initial objections to some planning applications but, on the most part, these requested the submission of further supporting information or for the application of additional conditions on permissions. None of the applications were approved with an outstanding objection from the agency.

### Number of sustainable drainage schemes

- 23.5 Figure 23.1 shows the number of planning applications and condition discharge application consultations received by the Lead Local Flood Authority between January 2021 and September 2021, and the number which propose the inclusion of sustainable drainage systems. The full year figures for 2021 will be reported in the next Authority Monitoring Report to establish a baseline for future monitoring.

**Figure 23.1:** Sustainable drainage systems proposed in the borough

Year	Number of applications	Number including SuDS
January-September 2021	85	36

Source: Wigan Council

## **24 Policy CP17: Environmental Protection**

- 24.1 A strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy is to maintain soil quality and tackle pollution and ground stability problems. A further strategic objective is to improve the environment where people live.
- 24.2 Policy CP17 sets out to maintain, protect and enhance the environment for the benefit of people and wildlife, and to make the borough a better place for people to live in and business to locate to, by protecting agricultural land; reclaiming, reusing and remediating derelict and contaminated land; managing development impacts on air quality and water quality; supporting strategies to improve water quality; and safeguarding the amenity and quality of life of residents.
- 24.3 The performance of parts of this policy is monitored against indicators where planning can have a direct influence, related to protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land; and bringing derelict and contaminated land back into positive use.
- 24.4 The policy is also monitored against a number of contextual indicators relating to reducing air pollution from particulates, nitrogen dioxide and carbon dioxide. Whilst planning does not directly influence the borough's performance against these indicators, it plays a key role in mitigating the impacts of development on air quality.

### **Number of planning permission granted that would result in irreversible loss of Grade 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land**

- 24.5 The target for this indicator is to have no irreversible loss of Grade 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land. No planning applications were granted for development in 2020/21 that would result in the irreversible loss of Grade 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land.

### **The amount of derelict land reclaimed and contaminated land remediated through development**

- 24.6 There is currently no available information on the amount of derelict land that has been reclaimed or the amount of contaminated land remediated through development. The ability to monitor these indicators effectively in future Authority Monitoring Reports is currently being reviewed.

### **Number of days when air pollution exceeds national 24-hour standard for dust/ particulates (PM10)**

- 24.7 In the period 2011-21, air pollution exceeded the national 24-hour standard for dust / particulates on just two days:
- 27 June 2018 - due to a significant fire on Saddleworth Moor in the Pennines, approximately 30 km from the borough

- November 2020 - due to an increase in bonfires and associated traffic due to a lifting of national lockdown and more people taking part in community Bonfire Night events

24.8 The target for this indicator is for the standard to be exceeded by no more than 35 days per year, so this has been met comfortably since 2011. Data for 2021 is not currently available and will be reported in the 2021/22 Authority Monitoring Report.

**Annual average background nitrogen dioxide concentration ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )**

24.9 The target for this indicator is for the average annual background nitrogen dioxide concentration to not exceed 40 micrograms per cubic metre of air ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ). Figure 24.1 sets out the average annual background concentration for each year since 2011. This confirms that the annual average has not exceeded 40  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and that the concentration level has generally been improving since the 2011 baseline. This is due primarily to improvements in engine efficiencies and this should also continue to improve due to the increased ownership of electric cars.

**Figure 24.1:** Average annual background nitrogen dioxide concentration

Year	Concentration ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )
2011	23
2012	24
2013	25
2014	22
2015	19
2016	21
2017	18
2018	17
2019	19
2020	15

Source: Wigan Council

**Average of annual mean levels for selected nitrogen dioxide roadside diffusion tube monitoring sites ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )**

24.10 The three selected monitoring sites are adjacent to Wigan Town Hall; at Church Lane, Lowton and near to Parsonage Retail Park on Atherleigh Way, Leigh. These have been chosen as they represent a spread across the borough and are monitoring sites which recorded high levels of nitrogen dioxide in 2011.

24.11 The baseline level for this indicator in 2011 was 39  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and the target is for a reduction over time. Figure 24.2 shows annual recordings for the period 2011-20 and confirms that nitrogen levels have reduced notably at all three

sites, though the recording in 2019 was at or just above the baseline at Church Lane and Atherleigh Way. The recordings reduced significantly in 2020 but will have been impacted by lower levels of traffic due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Figure 24.2:** Annual mean levels of nitrogen dioxide at three sites, 2011-20

Year	Nitrogen dioxide annual average ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )		
	Wigan Town Hall	Church Lane, Lowton	Atherleigh Way, Leigh
2011	40	54	49
2012	39	55	52
2013	33	46	46
2014	30	42	37
2015	*	41	37
2016	*	42	40
2017	33	42	41
2018	31	37	38
2019	30	39	39.9
2020	20.1	27	30.2

Source: Wigan Council

24.12 There are around 130 active roadside diffusion tube monitoring sites for nitrogen dioxide in the borough. In 2020, only one of these recorded nitrogen oxide levels in excess of  $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , which is the annual limit value set by the European Union. This was at:

- Winwick Lane, Lane Head, Lowton ( $41.9 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )

24.13 2020 was not a typical year in any sense with the national and local Covid-19 lockdowns significantly reducing traffic levels with a corresponding reduction in traffic related pollution. As the situation returns to normal it is expected that traffic levels will increase with a corresponding increase in traffic related pollution.

#### **Number of tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emitted annually from traffic on local roads**

24.14 Figure 24.3 sets out estimated annual levels of carbon dioxide emitted from traffic in the borough in the period 2011-19. The Local Plan Core Strategy sets a target for a reduction over time. The data shows that emissions have reduced by 9 kilo tonnes over this period with reductions particularly on A Roads and Motorways. Carbon dioxide emissions on minor roads have increased in this timeframe.

**Figure 24.3:** Carbon Dioxide emission estimates (2011-19) – kilo tonnes

Year	Road transport				Diesel Railways	Transport Other	Transport Total
	A Roads	Motorways	Minor roads	Road transport total			
2011	165.1	158.2	153.5	476.8	9.6	7.4	493.9
2012	160.3	159.8	153.3	473.4	9.7	7.3	490.4
2013	153.5	156.2	155.4	465.1	9.7	7.6	482.4
2014	153.7	154.5	162.3	470.5	9.9	7.8	488.2
2015	154.8	159.7	163.8	478.3	9.8	8.0	496.1
2016	154.0	163.1	168.4	485.5	9.7	8.2	503.4
2017	147.8	161.6	168.7	478.1	9.6	8.6	496.3
2018	139.8	153.9	177.3	471.0	9.1	8.7	488.8
2019	134.6	147.3	186.3	468.2	8.5	8.9	485.6

Source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy<sup>1</sup>

### Response to air quality challenges

24.15 Air pollution is linked to a range of very serious health conditions, including cancer, heart disease, stroke and asthma. It contributes to around 1,200 early deaths in Greater Manchester every year, harming our health and our economy.

24.16 Government has directed Greater Manchester and many other areas to bring nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels on local roads within legal limits as soon as possible. The fastest way to do this is a Clean Air Zone.

24.17 The 10 Greater Manchester local authorities have worked together to consider a wide range of measures to tackle air pollution, alongside a Clean Air Zone. Together, these form the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan. An 8-week consultation on plans for a Clean Air Zone took place between 8 October and 3 December 2020. Work is now under way to assess the information and evidence gathered. The implementation date for the final Clean Air Plan is 31 May 2022.

24.18 The proposed Clean Air Zone aims to:

- Bring NO<sub>2</sub> emissions within legal limits as soon as possible and by 2024 at the latest.
- Discourage polluting commercial vehicles from travelling on local roads in Greater Manchester.

<sup>1</sup> Conversion rates are regularly updated by Government. Each year previous annual data records are reviewed against the most recent conversion rates causing a minor fluctuation in previous records. Data shown in this report, including for previous years, is the most recent provided by Government using the most up to date conversion rates. Consequently, they may therefore differ from rates recorded in previous Authority Monitoring Reports.



- Encourage businesses to switch to cleaner, low- or zero-emission vehicles.

24.19 For more information, please visit <https://cleanairgm.com/>

## 25 Policy CP18: Developer contributions

- 25.1 Planning obligations are the current mechanism used to secure additional infrastructure or improved community services and facilities, the need for which arises from new development. These are secured through legal agreements, known as Section 106 agreements, between the council and the applicant. They are intended to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. The council is not a Community Infrastructure Levy charging authority.
- 25.2 In accordance with [Regulations](#)<sup>2</sup>, the council monitors the total value of developer contributions secured annually in the [Wigan Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement](#), which is updated every December.

---

<sup>2</sup>The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019 (Schedule 2, para. 3)

## Appendix 1: Indicators no longer being monitored

Policy	Indicator	Reason for no longer monitoring	New indicator
CP1: Health and Wellbeing	Limiting life-long illness	Up to date information is no longer available	% of obese or overweight adults
CP10: Design	Number of units built to a 'very good' standard against the Building for Life Assessment	Updated guidance	Number of schemes rated 'green' overall against the Building for a Healthy Life Assessment
CP11: Historic Environment	Percentage of applications approved contrary to policy	Replaced by new indicators relating to the Historic Environment Strategy	Activities undertaken to promote the value of the borough's built heritage and historic environment - in line with the Historic Environment Strategy
CP13: Low Carbon Development	-	-	Annual Carbon Dioxide emissions in the borough by sector – kilo tonnes (2013-19) – in line with the Climate Change Strategy