

Request

Please send details of consultation carried out for your latest corporate plan, please include:

- Method
- For surveys the questionnaire used and number of responses for each survey Any reports

Response

Please find on the following pages a report outlining the method and outcomes for the Big Listening Project which took place in 2018 and informed our current corporate plan the 'Deal 2030' which was published in 2019.

As outlined in the report this was carried out in an open conversational way with residents, rather than a structured survey, with the opening question being 'What should the borough look & feel like in 2030?' and conversation developed as a result.

We carried out a further public engagement exercise the 'Big Listening Festival' in 2021 to refresh and update our strategy following the pandemic. Full details are available on our website:

[Big Listening Festival \(wigan.gov.uk\)](http://wigan.gov.uk)

BIG LISTENING PROJECT

The Deal

The Deal 2030

**10th January
2018**



Background

Deal 2030 is our borough-wide vision, setting out where we want to be by 2030. The Deal, Deal Principles and 'Be Wigan' behaviours all form fundamental building blocks of our vision for 2030. This vision is being co-designed with our strategic partners and our communities to jointly develop and own the strategy – making Deal 2030 'a plan for the place'.

To facilitate the co-design of Deal 2030, we launched The Big Listening Project as a vehicle by which we could engage with our communities and partners all over the borough. This engagement programme was officially launched on 27th September and ran until 14th December 2018

This report sets out the initial findings that have arisen through engagement with our partners & residents as part of the Big Listening Project for the development of Deal 2030. These findings, along with our other corporate and strategic priorities have been translated into a proposed draft Deal 2030 strategy.

1- The Big Listening Project

In the development of our new strategy we committed to ensuring that Deal 2030 would be co-designed with our residents and partners and would have a greater focus on inclusion. The Big Listening Project was initiated to ensure that all of our residents were given the opportunity to tell us their aspirations for the future.

In total we visited 75 locations across the borough including health centres, schools, shops, football matches, hospitals, carers centre, and community organisations and on busy high streets. We spoke to more than 2500 people via the sofa and received almost 5,000 individual ideas or suggestions. A map/ list of all locations is attached at Appendix A.

In total we engaged with over 6,000 people through a variety of methods across the full breadth of the borough and at different times to ensure everyone had the opportunity to be involved.



We utilised a number of tools to engage with our residents to make sure that we were inclusive in our approach; we have also targeted specific groups to ensure that their voice is heard:

1.1 The Big Green Sofa

Rather than expecting residents to come to us we have been visiting all areas of the borough and using a “big green sofa” as a platform to encourage residents to sit and chat to us about their aspirations for the future. We have taken an ethnographic approach to this engagement; residents have been asked the question: “What should the borough look & feel like in 2030?” and a conversation has developed as a result. We have captured these views on ideas sheets that have been collated and themed.



This approach worked extremely well and discussions with residents have generated some really interesting and insightful feedback. We have found that many residents have opened up to us about their personal circumstances by using an informal approach. We have also covered weekends and evenings to ensure that all residents are able to access a session. The sofa became well recognised; as we were out and about other partners and community groups have asked us to come along to them with the sofa and we have accommodated these requests wherever possible.

In total, over 2,500 residents spoke to us via “The Big Green Sofa” and gave us over 5,000 comments to analyse and include as part of our Deal 2030 strategy.

1.2 The Listening Booth

As part of The Big Listening Project we hired a video booth for two weeks. One of the commitments that we made around the development of Deal 2030 was that children and young people were given the opportunity to tell us about their aspirations for the future. We wanted to find a way of engaging with our young people in schools to help capture this important voice, recognising that these children will be adults by 2030. The Listening Booth was really well received by schools and we visited primary and secondary schools as well as sixth form colleges with the booth. We have spoken to more than 350 students and captured some brilliant ideas from these young voices.

We have also taken the Listening Booth to the Grand Arcade, Leigh Market, the Transition Event, Clifton House Sheltered Scheme, Sunshine House and Wigan Town Hall.



1.3 Big Listening Events

We have hosted two large evening public meetings, one in Wigan, one in Leigh to allow residents to come together and tell us about what they see as important for 2030. We promoted these through social media, local newspaper, posters and via elected Members. We held panel discussion at both events with key representative from the local area acting as panel members including the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Senior Officers from Greater Manchester Police, Headteacher, key representatives from the Business and Community sectors.

An artist was present at both meetings and captured views. These are attached at Appendix B.

Wigan:



Leigh:

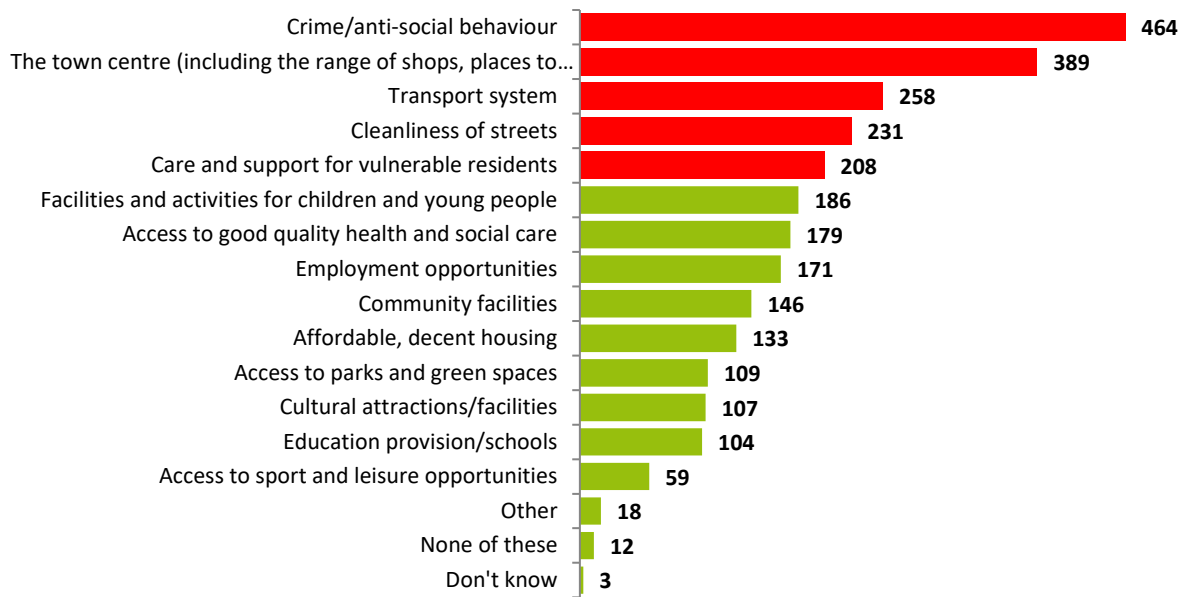


1.4 Online Survey

An online survey ran throughout November and received over 650 responses. Through the support of our Public Relations team, the survey was pushed via Social Media and seen by over 250,000 people.

The survey confirmed the thinking and messages that the public have been telling us are consistent across all methods of communication. The chart below demonstrates the priorities that our residents have chosen.

Which, if any, of the following are most in need of improvement in Wigan Borough?



1.5 Targeted Engagement

In addition to the wide spectrum of engagement taking place across the borough, arrangements have been made over the consultation period to ensure the views of all residents are taken into account in particular those who are included in the protected characteristics covered by the Council's Equality and Diversity policy.

Various faith groups and organisations who work to support BME communities have been approached for their views, including SWAP, LASARS and representatives from the Wigan and Leigh Mosques. We have also met with the Wigan Metro Access Committee.



In addition we have also carried out some targeted work with Youth Cabinet, Eco Schools Event, Carers Centre, Sheltered Housing Schemes, Dementia Cafes, Mother & Baby Groups, Transition event, Wigan Pride, Armed Forces Hub, Blind Veterans Group.

1.6 Partner Engagement

The essence of Deal 2030 is that it is being co-designed with our strategic partners to jointly develop and own the strategy – making Deal 2030 ‘a plan for the place.’ To ensure that our partners have been engaged in the development of the future strategy we hosted a Leadership Summit in September 2018. Over 80 of our partners attended the event and were given the opportunity to provide their vision for 2030. A summary of the key themes that were generated from the session are attached at Appendix C. Many of the themes that arose within the session echoed the suggestions from our residents around town centres, employment, community, infrastructure, opportunities for young people, environment and health.



A second Leadership summit has been arranged for January 2019 to discuss the findings of the Big Listening Project with our partners and to set out the proposed Deal 2030 plan for their comment, amendment and approval.

We consulted with our partners about proposed locations of our Big Listening sofa pop up’s and we visited numerous partner locations including medical centres, hospital, shopping centres, community venues and attended specific events with GMP and the GM Fire Service. When asking residents about their ambitions for the future we always emphasised that this was a partner approach to encourage them to think about the borough as a place.

1.7 Members Engagement

An essential component of our Big Listening Project was to ensure that our Elected Members were fully engaged and given the opportunity to feed their views in, as well as help capture the views of the residents in their wards.



We facilitated two Members Seminars that all Elected Members were invited to and asked about their vision for the future; we have included their suggestions within our feedback analysis. Members were keen to see our town centres revived, with the consideration of extended opening hours to accommodate working families. They want opportunities for children and young people to be a key focus of 2030 and for us to be able to retain our talent within the borough. Community events and residents all working together with us and our partners was a key ambition for 2030 from Members. Employment and apprenticeships were one of the key components of 2030 for Members; the importance of preparing for the jobs of the future and ensuring that we have the skills within the borough was raised as an important issue and one which would encourage big businesses to invest here in the future. Feedback from the Seminar is attached at Appendix D.



We consulted with Members on all proposed Big Listening Event locations within their wards and amended/ added venues as a result of Member feedback. A full list of dates & times of all events was promoted to Members and was also published on Wigan Council website.

Many Members joined us at our Big Listening Event sofa pop-up's across the borough; we printed posters that Members utilised to promote the events within their own communities and encourage residents to come along and have their say.

1.8 Staff Engagement

As part of the co-design of the Deal 2030 we wanted to ensure that the powerful voice of our staff was also heard; we recognised their knowledge of the community, passion for the borough and creativity and we wanted to ensure that we offered everyone in the organisation the opportunity to share their ambition for the future of the borough – as a member of staff but more than likely also as resident of the borough too. We consulted with Trade Unions about our proposed engagement method to ensure that we were inclusive in our approach.



All staff are invited to attend their own Directorate Listening into Action (LIA) session hosted by their individual Director; these interactive sessions cover lots of various key issues for the individual directorate as well as corporate and strategic priorities. Staff are given the opportunity to ask questions of the Director and put their ideas forward. Deal 2030 was included across all Directorates as a part of the overall session and staff were asked to come up with their ideas for the future of the borough.

Staff really engaged with this exercise and generated some fantastic, creative suggestions with clear deliverables and outcomes that could be achieved. Passion for the borough was clearly evident from the feedback received and a real sense of energy and ambition was felt from staff as part of the process. From monorails, to ice rinks, from a “boutique borough” to a place that encourages resilience in our children and young people at the earliest opportunity, ideas were big and bold. Staff want the borough to be a place that people visit – a destination town, they want bespoke shops, an artisan market, they want community events, green spaces, culture, music and art.

Over 2000 staff took part in the exercise; some examples of the ideas, creations and even poetry that came from the sessions are attached at Appendix E.

The themes from staff were again consistent with the messages residents were telling us:-

Health and Wellbeing

The general comments from staff are around support for our residents that may feel isolated. This stretches to support for people finding themselves out of work, including internal restructures.

Town Centres

The main themes around town centre conversations from staff focused on concerns regarding big retailers rumoured to be leaving; staff as residents enjoying free parking at the weekend and questioned whether we could do more to encourage shops to stay.

Infrastructure / Transport & Public Transport

Concerns raised around transport issues across the borough whilst also making suggestions to improve current road networks. Suggestions include better transport links to Manchester, a Poolstock to Westwood link road and a bypass that doesn't go through the town centre of Wigan.

Opportunities for Young People

A lot of comments in this area seem to focus on more activities for young people to help keep children off the street. Staff felt that by resolving this issue, it would in turn reduce anti-social behaviour.

Mental Health Provision

Staff suggestions focus on end to end provision and staff as advocates/leaders in mental health support.



2 - Residents Feedback

2.01 Pride in our Borough

We have listened to our residents and analysed the most common themes and priorities for the people living in the borough. There is a strong sense of pride in the borough; residents are passionate about where they live and they want this place to be the best it can be. They are keen that we celebrate our heritage, our sporting successes and our green spaces. Residents are keen that we retain this sense of pride and passion for the borough for 2030.



2.02 Town centres

Our town centres featured significantly in many residents' comments. Lots of residents are concerned that the decline of the town centres would increase anti-social behaviour and prevent people visiting the borough. It is often recognised however that this is the case for many other towns.



Frequently mentioned was the lack of shops, particularly with the anticipated closure of key retail stores reported across the media, so therefore many residents would like to see more shops in the town centre. This is important as the town centre was cited as a “ghost town” with empty shops and galleries. Some residents suggest we make better use of derelict shops for art and culture. They also want to see more residential housing in the town centre as a way of keeping the town centres alive both day and night

A lot of residents were also keen to see town centres transition from commercial spaces to providing more leisure facilities. Residents expressed views over having more facilities to promote an evening economy, e.g. more bars/restaurants/cinema, escape rooms, ice rink etc. It was also important to residents to promote the borough as a place to ‘enjoy’ and visit. A common suggestion made is having cheaper business rates as a way of attracting new businesses to the area. Many have acknowledged the temporary free parking at weekends, but explain that this is needed on a permanent basis; people do not want to pay for parking when shopping in Wigan. Lots of people have talked about a “bespoke” offer, artisan market and independent shops, cafes and restaurants. A common theme has been that often residents choose to spend their disposable income outside of the borough for leisure as the offer is not strong enough here. Also there has been recognition that as many people work, the 9-5 offer means that the town centre offer is not particularly accessible for them.

Our younger people want more of a “city vibe”; they want café’s, healthy food options, town centre events and experiences such as an ice rink and escape rooms. One young person felt that a few more “twinkly lights” dotted around our town centres would make things feel prettier.

2.03 Feeling safe

Residents across the borough have expressed concerns about feeling safe, crime & anti-social behaviour. This has frequently been referenced by children within our schools too. Visibility of our police has been referenced but the majority of people recognise that this has reduced due to funding cuts. Common aspirations include less crime and anti-social behaviour, more CCTV, residents want to feel safe across all areas of the borough. They are also keen to tackle bad driving, including speeding.



2.04 Continued focus on environment

Overall, residents viewed improving the environment as a crucial component to 2030. Litter was expressed as a concern and residents want to prevent this wherever possible; they don’t want it to be dropped in the first place. Many of our young people expressed an ambition that this borough would be litter-free by 2030. It was suggested that more street litter/recycling bins and across local parks are needed within the majority of local areas. People do mention the three weekly collections as an issue, but talk about recycling more as a result. One resident mentioned including footprints to litter bins to discourage littering. Items mentioned with regards to environment were:

- Litter / dog fouling
- Cleaner air
- Pot holes
- Protect and looking after our green spaces
- Keeping the borough looking pretty



Residents were proud that Wigan was the ‘greenest’ place to live in Greater Manchester and wanted this to continue into 2030. Residents also want to have places to stop, sit and enjoy our green spaces.

2.05 Community & Inclusion

Residents see community and inclusivity as an essential component of the borough for 2030. Ambitions include:

- A diverse borough that embraces and welcomes all cultures
- A place that celebrates our differences
- Activities that our ageing population can join in with
- Support tackling loneliness
- Support with digital isolation – support aging residents but also the mental health and isolation of our young people
- To feel proud and celebrate our heritage
- Access to all facilities and services for everyone

Many of the children we spoke to in our schools had a clear ambition that we all just “be kind” to each other.



2.06 Better Leisure Opportunities

Residents are keen to see a broader offer around the leisure opportunities in the borough that cater for all ages. Family friendly activities, more restaurants across the borough, more sports and access to hobbies have all been common themes, People also want cheaper (or free) activities such as walks, interactive treasure maps of open spaces.

Our younger people want leisure offers that don’t just focus on “pubs” or fast food, but more experiences such as live music, ice rinks, “escape rooms” and a Nandos!

2.07 Opportunities for children and young people

Residents expressed the need for more opportunities for children/teenagers outside of school hours. The majority of parents were satisfied with the schooling their children received, however some believed that it would be beneficial for more low cost/ free activity clubs to keep children occupied and safe within the local community. There has been some discussion of there not being enough nursery places within specific locations. In addition, many residents suggested that young people need to have high aspirations and this can come from community based groups that allow for young people to have more responsibility/goals to aim for. Wigan Youth Zone seems to be a highly valued place for children and young people to go, and people want more facilities like this closer to where they live. Key themes that have been captured around children and young people include:

- A greater ambition for our young people, so that they can go on to achieve anything they want, regardless of the postcode they are born in
- More activities to prevent young people having “nothing to do”
- A University in Wigan to help us retain our talent
- More childcare to support our children but also parents working commitments
- Affordable childcare



2.08 Health & Well Being

Positive feedback around access to health services has been a common theme. Residents feel that health care is good in our borough. Residents talked about the opportunities to be active and our access to walks. Suggestions have arisen about reduced rates for gym membership and more group walks/ cycles as an incentive to get more people active.



Feedback received from the hospital and particularly from staff was the drain on emergency services caused by drug & alcohol use. NWAS & WWL staff highlighted that a large proportion of their work comes from people using A&E due to misuse of alcohol & drugs.

Some residents talked about a lack of seating in both town centres and along some of our walks; some of our older people and those with limited mobility told us that they would be more encouraged to be active if they could stop and sit along the way. People also told us that sitting and chatting to people when they are out and about helps them to feel connected to other people and reduces their sense of loneliness.



Key themes around health & well-being included

- More Nurses and better pay for the NHS
- More services for our carers, particularly our young carers
- Education of healthy options
- Better life expectancy
- Quicker access to healthcare
- Healthy food choices (less takeaways)
- Support keeping people at home instead of hospital or care
- More GP's to reduce waiting times

2.09 Housing

Housing issues that emerged from our residents focused on:

- More affordable housing
- More social housing
- Housing in the town centre
- Infrastructure in place to support new housing
- More one and two bed properties
- More houses for disabled residents

Homelessness was a key concern amongst many and our school children were particularly passionate about this. Many of them told us that by 2030 they want there to be no homelessness in the borough.

2.10 Employment

People have spoken to us about employment being a concern. Residents want to see more job opportunities, especially for young people and graduates, and more apprenticeships. Some younger people have talked about lack of opportunity for the types of careers that they are aspiring to being available within the borough; and also wanting more support for young entrepreneurs has been referenced. Residents want to see more aspirations around careers. They see it is essential to attract more businesses in order to generate more jobs. People are also keen that we encourage more training and skills within the borough – focusing on careers and preparing children for life at the earliest opportunity within our schools. People want to see young people thinking about the jobs that will exist and be in demand in the future and acquiring the skills to achieve their career goals.



2.11 Connectivity

Transport and travel have been referenced by many residents. It is recognised that the borough is well connected to other areas but the feeling has been that it is difficult to travel around the borough, due to traffic in particular and the road infrastructure being unable to handle the volume of traffic. Saddle Junction works have been referenced on many occasions and querying the introduction of cycle lanes and presumption that the Council have funded this. Marus Bridge roundabout has been referenced too, as well as Hindley as a bottleneck.

Public transport was also mentioned as an issue, with bus frequency and reliability being highlighted as an area of frustration. Some residents also expressed a desire to have a tram network or monorail in Wigan.

Free parking at weekends has been really well received and residents expressed a desire to see this all year round to encourage people to shop in the town centres.

Potholes are a cause of frustration for some residents.

2.12 Education

Key themes around education were the recognition that we have great schools; people are keen for us to maintain this. Other ideas that came through included:

- More childcare options
- Education options outside core hours
- More education on internet safety
- A University in Wigan
- Preparing children for apprenticeships and careers



One young person told us that she would like school to be “less about tests”.

2.13 Mental Health

Residents have expressed a concern over mental health and the long term consequence it brings to the individual/ family and wider community. Loneliness has been mentioned as an issue within different communities and the concern that it is affecting our older generation; however there are signs that loneliness is impacting all ages for different reasons. One of the major concerns is about the long term impact mental health has on the individual and how short term responses like medication are not overly beneficially to some residents/families. In addition, residents expressed that more awareness over the impact of mental health is needed within the borough and more tolerance to those individuals struggling with on-going mental health issues is needed within the borough. It has been mentioned frequently that there is still a huge stigma around this issue and people don't feel comfortable discussing it.

NWAS & WWL staff at the hospital highlighted that they receive high demand from people at crisis point in terms of mental health who are then accessing A&E; it was suggested that this is not the right facility but due to demand on current mental health provision is often the only option.

Young people and mental health has also been a common theme, with suggestions such as counselling for children, and mental health support clinics within communities.

3 - Summary

The Big Listening Project was initiated to ensure that we empowered our partners and residents to tell us their aspirations and ambitions for the future. We embarked on a journey across the borough to listen to our partners, staff, elected members and residents about what mattered to them and what they want this borough to look and feel like in 2030. We were amazed at the passion, creativity and sense of ambition within our borough. People really engaged positively with the project; we were able to have honest and open conversations with people about the priorities for our place. These valuable ideas and suggestions are hugely important to us and we are committed to jointly delivering a strategy – Deal 2030 - that everyone can identify with. The priorities have been themed and are being aligned with our corporate, strategic and partner priorities to develop a co-designed and co-owned Deal 2030 that we all work together to deliver. Our young people really engaged with the project too and had some fantastic ambitions for the future of this borough. Our Deal 2030 will be the strategy that our young people grow up with; by working together we feel are certain we can create a place to be even more proud of.



Appendix E Additional pictures

