



REQUEST 19513

I am submitting this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding both Wigan Council's Community Involvement Framework and the Government's Civil Society Covenant, which states that Government and Councils must: "provide opportunities for people to be involved in decisions and activities that affect their lives," "represent the interests of the people they have been established to support," "ensure all relevant groups are involved in policy making," and "work together with society to build a healthy democracy and to champion democratic participation." Please provide the following information:

Part A – Community Involvement Framework

1. The Community Involvement Framework
 - a. The most recent version of Wigan Council's Community Involvement Framework or equivalent policy document.
 - b. Any updates, revisions, or supplementary guidance produced in the last five years.
 - c. Any internal training materials, toolkits, or instructions issued to staff on how to apply this framework.
2. Evidence of How the Framework Has Been Applied

For all significant programmes, plans, or strategic decisions in the past three years, please provide:

 - a. Records or summaries showing how community involvement was carried out in line with the framework.
 - b. Details of the methods used (e.g., consultations, workshops, focus groups, surveys, advisory panels).
 - c. Any evaluations, assessments, or internal reviews measuring compliance with the framework.
 - d. Any documents explaining how public views were incorporated into decision making.
3. Governance and Decision Making

Minutes, reports, or officer decision records showing monitoring for compliance and who carries this out.

RESPONSE

The responses to Part A in in relation to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The SCI is prepared in the context of the Community Involvement Framework and Civil Society Covenant Responsibilities as far as they are applicable and it is what we are legally required to comply with.

- a. The Council's latest Statement of Community Involvement can be viewed online at: [Statement of Community Involvement \(September 2023\)](#)
- b. The September 2023 version of the SCI replaced the July 2021 version – attached.
- c. There are no internal training materials, toolkits, or instructions issued to staff on how to apply the Statement of Community Involvement.

This is set out in the following documents:

- [03.05.01 Places for Everyone - Statement of Consultation.pdf](#)
- [SD31. Wigan Council Statement of Community Involvement Compliance Statement](#)
- [Wigan Borough Local Plan - Options and Preferences Consultation report](#)

Compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement is a legal requirement. Compliance is assessed as part of the independent examination of a plan to ensure that it has been prepared

in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, as set out in paragraph 36 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Instances of Non Compliance or Exceptions
 - a. Any records identifying occasions when the framework was not followed, partially followed, or set aside.
 - b. Explanations, justifications, or exemption reports for those instances.
 - c. Details of any complaints, internal challenges, or public feedback regarding lack of community involvement.

- a. None
- b. None
- c. Public feedback regarding the lack of community involvement will be set out in the Consultation Reports identified in the response to Q2 above, alongside responses from the GMCA or Wigan Council.

5. Specific Application to Recent Consultations or Planning Processes

For any recent strategic planning, regeneration, masterplans, or development related consultations (including, but not limited to, the Gibfield Park Masterplan):

- a. How the Community Involvement Framework was applied.
- b. Documentation showing which community involvement activities took place.
- c. Records showing how public comments influenced, altered, or were considered within these decisions.

For the Places for Everyone Plan and the Local Plan, this is set out in the Consultation Reports and the SCI Compliance Statement provided in response to Q2 above.

The recent consultation on the West of Gibfield masterplan was undertaken by the landowner Peel, not Wigan Council. Peel is not required to comply with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

Part B – Civil Society Covenant Responsibilities (Atherton Specific Questions)

Please provide the following information regarding decisions affecting Atherton, including the identification of land plots for development such as warehouses or commercial buildings:

6. Involvement of Atherton Residents
 - a. How Atherton residents were involved in the decision to identify specific plots for building work, including warehouses or industrial development.
 - b. Any consultations, engagement activities, meetings, workshops, or resident facing communication carried out.

The responses to Part B are in relation to the Places for Everyone Plan which allocates land West of Gibfield (for housing and employment development) and the draft Wigan Borough Local Plan which proposes to allocate land South of Atherton and East of Atherton for residential development.

- a. At all stages of the preparation of the Places for Everyone Plan and the Local Plan, Wigan Council has undertaken engagement and consultation in accordance with legislation and its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- b. The methods of consultation are set out in the documents identified in response to Q2 above.

7. Representation of Local Interests

- a. How the Council has represented the interests of residents living in Atherton during planning, land use decisions, and development proposals.
- b. Any assessments, reports, or documents showing how residents' interests were considered.

- a. All comments submitted as part of the consultation stages during the preparation of the Places for Everyone Plan and the Wigan Borough Local Plan have been considered by the Council and have informed plan content. A summary of responses received and the Council and/or GMCAs response is set out in the Consultation Reports set out in response to Q2 above.

All representations received on the Initial Draft Local Plan (in April-June 2025), including all comments received on policies H5 South of Atherton and H6 East of Atherton, are currently being considered by the council and will inform the publication version of the Local Plan.

8. Acting on Feedback From Atherton Residents

- a. How the Council acted on feedback received from people living in Atherton.
- b. Documentation showing changes made, issues raised, or concerns responded to as a result of this feedback.

For the Places for Everyone Plan and the Options and Preferences stage of the Wigan Borough Local Plan, this is set out in the Consultation Reports provided in response to Q2 above.

A Consultation Report relating to the consultation on the Initial Draft of the Wigan Borough Local Plan will be published alongside consultation on the Publication version of the Local Plan later this year.

9. Keeping Local People Informed

- a. How the Council has kept Atherton residents informed from the consultation stage through to the present time.
- b. Copies of newsletters, public notices, emails, web updates, press releases, or other communications regarding the developments.

As part of the preparation of the Places for Everyone Plan and the Wigan Borough Local Plan, the Council have engaged with the community in accordance with its Statement of Community Involvement. This is set out in the Consultation Reports provided in response to Q2 above.