



Wigan Borough Employment Land Position Statement

April 2018

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APPENDIX

Available employment land site maps

1. Introduction

1.1. The council's most recent Employment Land Review was not finalised. It reached an advanced stage with publication of a Draft Employment Land Review in December 2015. It was not completed in part because work on the Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan was stopped and focus transferred to the new Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, with an extended end-date of 2035. There was also an issue with the need for much of the content needing to be updated. Now, over two years on, there is more to update but rather than undertake a full Employment Land Review, this Position Statement has been prepared to set out where we are now. It also updates key data and factors to establish the context for wider work on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. This position statement, therefore:

- Sets out what the Draft 2015 Employment Land Review did and where it was left.
- Reports on the recent take-up and losses of available employment land and employment development, as of April 2018.
- Reports on the long term trend of loss of employment land to housing development.
- Reports on the quality and quantity of available employment land in Wigan Borough, as of April 2018.
- Summarises the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and its implications for the supply of employment land.
- Provides an update on regional scale employment development opportunities in neighbouring districts.
- Summarises the reasons why there is a need to widen the portfolio of employment sites in the borough to attract and help generate significant investment in businesses and jobs within the borough.

2. Draft Wigan Borough Employment Land Review, December 2015

2.1. The Draft Employment Land Review involved a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the borough's employment land and buildings. It was an important part of the evidence base for the Initial Draft Allocations and Development Management Local Plan, published for consultation in October 2015. The Draft Employment Land Review:

- Identified the challenges and opportunities to increase the borough's business base, in order to provide a range of employment sites in the right locations.
- Reported on the quality of the designated employment areas and non-designated employment clusters, as at mid-2014 when the assessments were carried out, by scoring them against a series of criteria including: market attractiveness; commercial viability; quality of the site and wider area; environmental sustainability; strategic access and catchment; and other policy considerations.
- Recommended how the designated employment areas and non-designated clusters should be updated by, as relevant: retaining areas; making boundary

amendments to take account of expansions or losses of employment land; proposing that successful non-designated clusters should become designated employment areas; and by modernising the accommodation.

- Recommended that 'saved' Policies EM1A and EM1B of the adopted Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP) be combined into one policy in a subsequent local plan. The subsequent draft policy in the Initial Draft Allocations and Development Management Local Plan was a more pragmatic approach to considering proposals the loss of employment land and buildings, given ten years of experience of using the two UDP policies.
- Identified a quantitative shortfall of around 35 hectares in the supply of available employment land against the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy requirement of 200 hectares from 2011 to 2026.
- Assessed six sites that could potentially meet the shortfall without affecting the Green Belt boundary, which were: Land South of Leopold Street, Pemberton; East of Stone Cross Lane, Lowton; Land at Pocket Nook Lane, Lowton; Land at Almond Brook Road, Standish; Land at Rectory Lane, Standish; and Land at Smith's Lane, Bickershaw.
- From the options, recommended that the site at Pocket Nook, Lowton would be the best to meet the shortfall to attract growing logistics and advanced manufacturing industries and that Land South of Leopold Street, Pemberton would make a logical small extension to Lamberhead Industrial Estate.

2.2 The recommendations were included in the Initial Draft Allocations and Development Management Local Plan. However further work on that plan was put on hold to focus on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

3. Need for an updated Employment Land Supply Position Statement

3.1. The Draft Employment Land Review is now dated and an updated statement on the supply of available employment land is needed because:

- A number of employment sites and premises have been taken up for employment development since the Employment Land Review was published.
- Similarly a number of sites or premises have been lost to other uses or, at least, planning permission has been granted for alternative development, usually housing, the case for this having been made through the planning process on matters such a market demand, suitability and viability.
- The Employment Land Review was limited to the Local Plan Core Strategy timeframe of 2026 and the policy position it established, so Pocket Nook, Lowton was recommended as the best site option to meet the shortfall in employment land supply to meet needs up to 2026.
- It is increasingly evident that most of the borough's employment land supply is either too small, too long term or in the wrong location to compete for major investment opportunities for business and jobs.
- When the Core Strategy employment land proposals were examined in 2012, there was very little development activity in the business sectors outside of the big city centres such as Manchester, and virtually none in Wigan

Borough, as the area was still severely constrained following the property crash and recession of a few years earlier.

- Since that time, confidence has returned to the market and the demand for high quality employment sites with good access to the strategic route network, for logistics development in particular, has increased greatly.
- The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework is now being prepared, which extends the timeframe through to 2035 and allows a review of the Green Belt to meet employment land needs.
- Wigan Borough needs to take advantage of these opportunities and its strategic assets, including the M6 and M61 Motorways, to secure a greater share of the modern employment market. It is the only borough in Greater Manchester that has direct access to the M6 and M58, which the GMSF recognises as a significant opportunity for manufacturing and distribution development (Use Classes B2 and B8).

4. Take-up and losses of available employment land

Take-up

- 4.1 Table 1 shows that, with the exception of 2017, employment land take-up in the borough has been negligible over the last ten years with annual take-up not exceeding 1.54 hectares since 2008. This low take-up has been primarily due to the international recession which had a major impact on investment in new employment opportunities in towns in the north of England, including Wigan. However, the constrained supply of good quality, deliverable employment land options has also been a contributing factor. This is evidenced by the significant fall in delivery rates after 2006, two years before the international recession began.

Table 1: Take-up of available employment land

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Ha	6.06	16.38	19.76	4.7	4.68	0	0	1.54
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Ha	0	0	0.11	0	0.48	15.33	0.58	

- 4.2 The high take-up rate in 2017, comprised 1.98 hectares at Westwood Park, developed as part of the relocation of Nice Pak’s manufacturing plant from Hindley Green, and 13.33 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. This clearly illustrates that, in reasonable market conditions, if good sites are made available in the borough, they are developed for large units and occupied quickly for the logistics and manufacturing sectors.

- 4.3 On completion of these sites in 2017, take up has returned to low levels with only 0.58 hectares delivered in 2018. This comprises small scale industrial units at Lamberhead Industrial Estate, Pemberton. This is indicative that the supply of employment land in the borough that is available, well located and of suitable scale is limited.

Losses

- 4.4 Over the past three years 8.72 hectares of available employment land has been lost: 4.05 hectares at Wigan Enterprise Park was approved on appeal to housing development, leaving 1.07 hectares of available employment land on the site; 1.82 hectares approved for housing development at Parsonage, Leigh and 2.85 hectares lost to housing at Swan Lane, Hindley Green.

5 Employment development completions and losses

- 5.1 It is also important to report on employment development completions and losses of employment land and buildings which are not part of the identified available employment land supply. Table 2 shows employment development completions and losses from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2018.

Table 2: Employment completions and losses

	Floorspace (sq.m)		
	Offices (B1 a/b)	Industrial and warehousing (B1c/B2/B8)	Total
2014/15			
Completions	200	6,552	6,752
Losses	0	2,856	2,856
Net	200	3,696	2,856
2015/16			
Completions	849	6,908	7,757
Losses	560	3,148	3,708
Net	289	3,760	4,049
2016/17			
Completions	53	85,829	85,882
Losses	7,063	5,835	12,898
Net	-7,010	79,994	72,984
2017/18			
Completions	362	2,695	3,057
Losses	0	0	0
Net	362	2,695	3,057

Note: Monitoring period is 1 April to 31 March each year.

Offices

- 5.2 Over the past four years, very little office floorspace has been developed indicating a weak office market in the borough. The net loss of 7,010 sqm in 2017 was largely due to a retrospective planning application for the continued use of a former office building for Class B8 uses in Stone Cross Business Park and the change of use of offices at Martland Mill, Wigan into a hotel.

- 5.3 Whilst Wigan has a weak office market, neighbouring districts such as St. Helens and Chorley have developed successful office schemes close to the M6 Motorway. Immediately prior to the recession, an office development was commenced on land close to the M6 Motorway in Wigan, but office units have remained empty and the remaining land left undeveloped.

Industry and warehousing

- 5.3 As set out in Section 4 above, there was a significant net growth in industrial and warehousing floorspace in 2016/17, due to the completion of the Nice Pak manufacturing factory at Westwood Park and the Poundland regional distribution centre, Compagne Fruitere banana ripening facility and Bunzl Plc warehouse at South Lancashire Industrial Estate on a site which became available for development following a fire on the former site of Georgia Pacific. These four developments account for 95% of the industrial and warehousing completions in 2016/17.
- 5.4 With the exception of 2016/17, there has been negligible net growth in industrial and warehousing floorspace, which indicates that the supply of employment land in the borough that is available, well located and of suitable scale is limited.
- 5.5 Over the past four years, losses of industrial and warehousing floorspace have remained low compared to completions. There was no loss of industrial and warehousing floorspace in 2017/18, but losses steadily increased from 2,856 sqm in 2014/15 to 5,835 sqm in 2016/17. The majority of losses have been small units to gyms, children's play centres, fitness studios, martial art studios and trampoline parks, which indicates a growing trend in the leisure industry and the attractiveness of industrial and warehousing buildings for these uses.

6 Loss of employment land to housing

- 6.1 Loss of available employment land and floorspace has been discussed in the previous two sections. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to review the long term trends in loss of employment land to housing, as it is a significant source of loss. Since 2006, 121.85 hectares of employment land has been lost to housing, or the case has been accepted and planning permission granted. Recent examples include: Wigan Enterprise Park, Ince; the former AG Barr factory, Atherton; Bridgewater Business Park, Leigh; and part of Bradley Lane Industrial Estate, Standish. Table 3 identifies the full list of sites. In these cases the landowners or developers have demonstrated that reuse or redevelopment for full employment use is not viable, which highlights the issues with the attractiveness of much of the employment land and premises in the borough for modern business needs. This is discussed in more detail in Section 8.

Table 3: Loss of employment land to housing

App No	Approved Date	Address	Description	Site Area (ha)	Approved homes
A/09/72812 further app A/15/80681 - PCO	28/10/11	Bridgewater Business Park	Mixed Use regeneration scheme comprising residential (C3), employment (B1) and small scale retail (A1).	9.87	314
A/11/76138	24/07/12	Pemberton Colliery	Erection of 198 dwelling houses with associated roads and landscaping (Reserved matter of A/08/72069). [Now totals 210 homes as a result of various amendments]	20.23	210
A/10/74595	12/03/13	Site Of Bispham Hall Business Park	To erect 96 dwellings.	4.00	96
A/11/75748	11/11/13	Land At Frog Lane/Field Street/Hey Street	Mixed use development comprising 85 residential units and 1,951 sqm of class B1(a) employment accommodation.	1.85	85
A/13/78383	11/02/14	Former Bickershaw Colliery Site, Leigh	Mixed use development comprising 471 residential units (437 dwellings and 34 apartments), 644 square metres of office space, a community centre and café.	18.20	471
A/14/78942	11/04/14	22-22C And Garage Site To Rear Preston Road Standish	Erection of 7 dwellings and 1 retail unit with self-contained flat above.	0.13	8
A/14/79259	27/10/14	Land At Gibfield Park Avenue	Reserved Matters application for 194 residential dwellings, 65 extra care 1 and 2 bed apartments (Class C3) and 16,509 square metres of commercial floorspace with (Class B8) pursuant to outline permission A/13/78387. Subsequent approval (A/16/83188, approved May 2017) replaces the 65 extra care apartments with 30 homes. Total 224 homes.	6.93	224
A/13/77974	14/11/14	Bradley Hall Trading Estate, Standish	Outline Application for residential development with access (all other matters reserved).	5.60	148
A/14/80174	28/05/15	Airflow 100 Lord Street Leigh	To change use of existing industrial and storage building to form 15 apartments and 9 commercial units.	0.07	15

A/12/77633	24/09/15	Westwood Park	Mixed use development scheme comprising class B1, B2, B8 employment uses, residential uses (Class C3) a neighbourhood centre (Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) and a visitors centre (Class D1) along with associated works.	28.93	430
A/16/82100 /PDO	09/05/16	3 Bridgeman Terrace, Wigan	Change of use from B1(a) offices to six C3 dwellings.	0.02	6
A/13/78163	04/06/16	Wigan Enterprise Park, Ince	Outline Application for development comprising up to 325 dwellings, open space, landscaping and associated works. (All matters reserved except access)	10.80	325
A/15/80803	19/08/16	Former Household Waste Recycling Centre, Frog Lane, Wigan	Residential Development of 51 dwellings with associated landscaping, access and parking.	1.35	51
A/16/82164	20/01/17	Ena Mill Flapper Fold Lane Atherton	Development of grade II listed mill for mixed used development including apartments.	1.48	44
A/16/82975 /RMMAJ	21/02/17	Parsonage, Leigh	Approval of Reserved Matters for A/14/79922/OUTMAJ, submission of layout, appearance, landscaping and scale for 160 dwellings.	6.20	160
A/16/83468	13/04/17	Howe Bridge Mill Complex, Atherton	To erect 123 dwellings. Reserved matters to A/13/78428 for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.	3.32	123
A/14/79838	07/11/17	Land at Alder Lane, Hindley Green	Residential development of 84 homes.	2.85	84
				121.85	2,794

6.2 There is no reason to believe that this trend will not continue. To accommodate it, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2017 Update includes a windfall allowance of 570 homes on 38 hectares of employment land that could be lost for the period 2022-35. This equates to around 44 homes per year.

7. Available Employment Land Supply, April 2018

7.1 Taking account of the recent take-up and losses of available employment land reported in the preceding sections, Table 4 overleaf indicates an available employment land supply of 188.98 hectares as of 1 April 2018. This equates to

21,825 sqm of office floorspace and 623,029 sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace (B1c/B2/B8) based upon standard site area to floorspace ratios. The available land supply is comprised of:

- 69.35 hectares that were included in the draft employment land allocations in the Initial Draft Allocations and Development Management Plan.
- 74.24 hectares as part of major sites, also included in the initial draft plan.
- 45.38 hectares in small vacant plots of land in 13 of the 45 draft employment areas as also identified in the initial draft plan.

7.2 Site plans of the available plots of employment land are in the Appendix.

Table 4: Available Employment Land Supply, April 2018

Site Ref.	Location	Available	Employment split		Floorspace (sqm)	
		gross (ha)	Office	Ind/Wh	Office	Ind/Wh
Employment area allocations						
EM1.1	Land at Leopold Street, Pemberton	2.04	20%	80%	1,632	5,712
EM1.2	Land at Smithy Brook Road, Wigan	14.42	0%	100%	0	50,470
EM1.3	Land at Landgate, Bryn	5.51	0%	100%	0	19,299
EM1.4	South Lancashire Industrial Estate Extension	34.01	0%	100%	0	119,042
EM1.5	Land at Chaddock Lane, Astley	13.37	20%	80%	5,600	22,400
Employment land within major sites						
MS1	South of Hindley	12.00	0%	100%	0	42,000
MS3	East of Atherton	9.00	0%	100%	0	31,500
MS4	Pocket Nook*	38.00	0%	100%	0	133,000
MS5.1	Westwood	4.80	0%	100%	0	16,800
MS5.2	Landgate	2.00	20%	80%	1,600	5,600
SP3	Northleigh Park	8.00	0%	100%	0	28,000
RP1	Wigan Pier Quarter – Plot 1	0.32	100%	0%	1,276	0
RP1	Wigan Pier Quarter – Plot 2	0.12	100%	0%	492	0
Available land within employment areas						
EM2.3	South Lancashire Industrial Estate, Bryn	1.21	0%	100%	0	4,421
EM2.7	Gibfield, Atherton – Plot 1	3.15	0%	100%	0	11,015
EM2.7	Gibfield, Atherton – Plot 2	0.59	0%	100%	0	2,055
EM2.7	Gibfield, Atherton – Plot 3	0.71	0%	100%	0	2,478
EM2.13	Moss Industrial Estate, Lowton – Plot 1	0.37	0%	100%	0	1,278
EM2.13	Moss Industrial Estate, Lowton – Plot 2	1.41	0%	100%	0	4,942
EM2.13	Moss Industrial Estate, Lowton – Plot 3	0.14	0%	100%	0	487
EM2.16	West of Leigh Road, Hindley Green	6.98	0%	100%	0	24,413
EM2.17	Swan Lane, Hindley Green – Plot 1	0.25	0%	100%	0	11,340

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EM2.17	Swan Lane, Hindley Green – Plot 2	0.32	0%	100%	0	879
EM2.17	Swan Lane, Hindley Green – Plot 3	3.24	0%	100%	0	1,131
EM2.23	Hope Carr/Leigh Commerce Park – Plot 1	4.26	25%	75%	4,259	11,178
EM2.23	Hope Carr/Leigh Commerce Park – Plot 2	0.63	25%	75%	626	1,643
EM2.23	Hope Carr/Leigh Commerce Park – Plot 3	1.79	25%	75%	1,785	4,686
EM2.23	Hope Carr/Leigh Commerce Park – Plot 4	0.62	25%	75%	619	1,625
EM2.26	Bradley Lane, Standish	1.07	0%	100%	0	3,728
EM2.27	Makerfield Way, Ince – Plot 1	1.45	0%	100%	0	5,061
EM2.27	Makerfield Way, Ince – Plot 2	0.78	0%	100%	0	2,727
EM2.27	Makerfield Way, Ince – Plot 3	2.18	0%	100%	0	7,623
EM2.28	Wigan Enterprise Park, Ince	1.08	0%	100%	0	3,745
EM2.39	Springfield /Miry Lane, Wigan	2.05	0%	100%	0	7,175
EM2.40	Martland Park and Heinz – Plot 1	2.13	0%	100%	0	7,438
EM2.40	Martland Park and Heinz – Plot 2	3.33	0%	100%	0	11,648
EM2.40	Martland Park and Heinz – Plot 3	1.59	0%	100%	0	5,576
EM2.41	Richmond Hill Industrial Estate, Pemberton – Plot 1	0.15	0%	100%	0	539
EM2.41	Richmond Hill Industrial Estate, Pemberton – Plot 2	0.30	0%	100%	0	1,047
EM2.45	Warrington Road, Hawkley – Plot 1	0.58	0%	100%	0	2,034
EM2.45	Warrington Road, Hawkley – Plot 2	0.98	100%	0%	3,936	0
EM2.45	Warrington Road, Hawkley – Plot 3	2.08	0%	100%	0	7,294
		188.98			21,825	623,029

Notes:

- Site references are from the Initial Draft Allocations and Development Management Plan.
- Plot ratio of 4,000 sqm / hectare has been applied to office development and 3,500 sqm / hectare for industrial and warehousing based on the recommendations in 'Setting Employment Land Targets for the North West of England' 2010, by Roger Tym & Partners for 4NW.
- Base date of land supply is 1 April 2018.
- * Pocket Nook is marked as potential supply as, although it is identified for employment development in the initial draft plan and was proposed for allocation in the Draft GMSF in October 2016, it has little planning status as employment land because it is a broad location for new development for housing under Policy SP4 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy.

8. Quality, deliverability and availability of employment land supply

Uncertain elements in the supply

8.1 As set out in Table 4, the borough has an employment land supply of 188.98 hectares. However there is considerable uncertainty about the availability of around 99.59 hectares (329,770 sqm of floorspace) within the Core Strategy plan period to 2026, and beyond, which is just over half of the total supply. This is set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Uncertain elements in the employment land supply

Site	Available gross (ha)	Floorspace (sqm)		Comments
		Office	Ind/Wh	
Land at Smithy Brook Road, Wigan	14.42	0	50,470	With implementation of the M58 Link Road to Junction 26 of the M6, this site would have excellent access to the motorway network for north, south and west movements. However, access is needed through this site and land values are such that further housing development may be needed to help deliver the road.
Land at Chaddock Lane, Astley	13.37	5,600	22,400	This site is close to the A580 East Lancashire Road and from there the M60. However, the landowner has not secured a developer for the employment land despite the site being marketed, which has had planning permission since 2004. Parts of the wider site have obtained planning permission for housing. This has reduced the size of the site for employment uses, making it more suitable for smaller scale sub-regional occupiers within the Manchester market.
South of Hindley	12	0	42,000	The employment land element at South of Hindley is part of a large strategic site and is dependent on it 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. Improved highway connections will increase the site's market attractiveness but it will likely serve sub-regional or local occupiers that are not dependent on direct motorway access.
East of Atherton	9	0	31,500	This is a low amenity employment site for which there is a current proposal on part that could be implemented soon. However, it is for only 3 ha of the available 9ha and if it doesn't happen there will remain considerable uncertainty on deliverability and timing.
Westwood	4.8	0	16,800	The employment element on this large mixed use strategic site is likely to be the last parcel to be developed and is dependent on the funding and provision of highway connections, agreement of a third party landowner and ground remediation.
Northleigh Park	8	0	28,000	The employment land element of Northleigh Park is part of a large mixed use strategic site

				and is dependent on it coming forward as a whole including ground remediation and major highway connections. There is, therefore, no certainty on deliverability or timing. As with South of Hindley, the site is likely to attract a sub-regional or local market.
Pocket Nook	38	0	133,000	The site has a long interface with residential properties to the north, which means that employment development would need significant mitigating factors to safeguard amenity. Also, a long access road is needed from the A579 Atherleigh Way before substantive development can be serviced, which is challenging for investors. In addition, the proposed route of High Speed 2 Rail crosses the site and isolates land at the western end. It also prevents any early prospect of achieving a through-road to existing employment development at Enterprise Way. These factors all work to make the site less attractive practically for employment development, at least across the whole site.
Total	99.59	5,600	324,170	

Vacant plots in designated employment areas

8.2 As noted previously, 45.38 hectares of the available land supply is comprised of vacant plots in 13 employment areas. The majority of these plots are very small, with only one plot over 5 hectares - West of Leigh Road, Hindley Green. However, this site is subject to challenging ecological constraints. The vacant plots across the borough are likely to be attractive to low cost and low amenity businesses that serve the local area, but not to large scale logistics and advanced manufacturing development, because they are:

- poorly located to access the motorway network
- not of a sufficient scale or quality, and/or
- constrained by nearby housing or other uses.

8.3 The Wigan Economic Prospectus identifies logistics and manufacturing (including advanced manufacturing) as two of five growth sectors that the borough wants to attract. The remaining three growth sectors are health and social care, digital and professional and financial services. Businesses in these sectors also require quality modern accommodation to expand.

8.4 The issues with the employment land supply means that it is also difficult to retain businesses in the borough that require better specifications and/or more space to expand, particularly if there are better opportunities in neighbouring boroughs. Joy Global, who supply mining technology and equipment, recently moved from their long standing premises in Ince to a new purpose built 7,600 sqm facility at Logistics North in Bolton. Such a move may be necessary for the very survival of a business in a global market place, where unsuitable premises cause additional costs and impact on their ability to compete.

- 8.5 The low take-up of available employment land over the past few years is indicative of its problems. The trend appeared to be reversing in 2016/17 when 15.33 hectares was taken up, but, as previously noted, this was an anomaly and related to the delivery of a former employment site on South Lancashire Industrial Estate which became available following a fire in 2011, with low take up rates returning in 2017/18.
- 8.6 Westwood Park employment area and South Lancashire Industrial Estate are good sites. Westwood Park is close to Wigan Town Centre and will have improved access to the motorway network via the A49 diversion scheme; and South Lancashire Industrial Estate has a modern layout, is accessible from the M6 and is largely unconstrained from nearby housing development. The sites are not representative of the majority of vacant employment plots and buildings in the borough that have remained undeveloped or lost to other uses.

Quality sites in the supply

- 8.7 South Lancashire Industrial Estate Extension is the best potential employment sites that the borough has outside of the Green Belt. The site is accessible from Junction 25 of the M6 and the estate has proved popular with local businesses looking to modernise and expand in recent years. Such businesses are expected to be the main driver of demand for the extension land. There is sufficient space to create landscape buffers between employment development and housing and initial phases of development could get underway with relatively little new road infrastructure or ground remediation that would impact on its deliverability.
- 8.8 However the site only contributes 34 hectares, just under 20% of the overall supply and although the site is large, it does not have direct access to the motorway network, which is a key attribute that many large scale occupiers seek.

9. Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

- 9.1 The first draft of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) was subject to public consultation between October 2016 and January 2017. Approximately 27,000 comments were received during the consultation, which are being considered to inform the next draft of the GMSF in 2018.
- 9.2 Due to the uncertainty and unsuitability of the available supply of employment land in the borough to meet the demand for large scale Class B2 and B8 uses in Greater Manchester, the draft GMSF proposes to remove land from the Green Belt and allocate it for employment development along the M6 and M61 corridors, as well as identifying land for employment development along the A580 East Lancashire Road corridor. These Green Belt sites provide the borough with its best opportunities to deliver the types of sites that large scale logistics and advanced manufacturing businesses would be attracted to and to enable the borough to compete with the large scale employment developments being progressed in neighbouring districts (summarised in the next chapter).

9.3 As previously noted in Section 3, the GMSF recognises the significance of the borough's strategic location on the M6 Corridor to increase economic activity in Greater Manchester, with Wigan being the only district with direct access to this national economic asset. The sites that are proposed for release from the Green Belt for employment development in the borough are:

- M6 Junction 25 – This large site is adjacent and has direct access to the M6, which is the most important route for road freight in the UK. It therefore enjoys locational and access benefits which are highly attractive for a Class B8 logistics scheme.
- M6 Junction 26 – This large site is adjacent and has direct access to the M6, and also has direct access to the M58 which is the main route to the new Liverpool 2 Superport. As such it also enjoys locational and access benefits which are highly attractive for a Class B8 logistics scheme.
- West of Gibfield, Atherton – Proposals to link Atherleigh Way / Gibfield Park Way with Junction 5 of the M61 would give this site direct access to the M61, which is the main route that links Greater Manchester with Preston, Lancashire and the M6 from the north. Therefore the site will be attractive to logistics and manufacturing businesses.

9.3 There are no known alternative sites in the borough that are outside of the Green Belt that would be suitable to meet employment needs for large scale Class B2 and B8 uses. Through the Draft Employment Land Review, the suitability of the remaining safeguard land in the borough to meet employment needs was assessed and considered unsuitable compared to Land at Pocket Nook, Lowton, which is part of the available employment land supply. However, issues have emerged in bringing that land forward for employment development and any other remaining safeguarded land in the borough has either been granted planning permission for non-employment uses or is constrained by nearby housing, such that it is unsuitable for large scale Class B2 and B8 development.

10. Update on regional employment developments

10.1 Whilst there are issues with the availability, deliverability and quality of employment land in Wigan Borough, neighbouring local authorities are delivering major, regionally significant economic developments that take advantage of their accessible locations with good access to the motorway network, which is key to their success. These include:

- Omega, Warrington - a 233 hectare site adjacent to Junction 8 of the M62 motorway. The development includes a number of large scale logistics operators including Brakes, Hermes, Travis Perkins, ASDA, Hut Group and Plastic Omnium. Over 316,000 sqm of logistics floorspace have been constructed with 56,658 sqm remaining available.
- Matrix, Buckshaw Village, Chorley - a 32 hectare mixed use development, including a business park providing over 93,000 sqm of warehousing and office accommodation. The site is built out and occupiers include a major distribution depot for Waitrose.

- Logistics North - a 100 hectare development site on a former colliery adjacent to Junction 4 of the M61 motorway in Bolton. Around 336,000 sqm of employment floorspace has been built with only 34,962 sqm remaining available. Occupiers include Aldi, Joy Global and MBDA.
- Parkside, Newton-le-Willows - A 144 hectare, former colliery site straddling the M6 Motorway in St. Helens that is proposed for logistics development and a strategic rail and freight interchange. An outline planning application has been submitted for the first phase of development, west of the M6, for 92,900 sqm of Class B8 floorspace.
- Florida Farm, St. Helens – a 37 hectare Green Belt site on the west side of Haydock Industrial Estate that was granted planning permission in April 2017 for 135,000 sqm of logistics floorspace. Planning permission was granted ahead of the site being allocated and released from Green Belt in the forthcoming St. Helens Local Plan.
- Haydock Point, St. Helens – a planning application has been submitted for a 42.3 hectare Green Belt site located south of Haydock Racecourse for 167,000 sqm of logistics floorspace. The site is also proposed to be allocated and released from Green Belt in the forthcoming St. Helens Local Plan. The planning application is pending a decision at the time of publishing this Statement.
- Liverpool 2 - a new deep water port is open in Liverpool which is capable of accommodating the world's largest shipping vessels. The new port is likely to significantly increase the demand for logistics development land and other trade opportunities in Wigan Borough via the M58 and the proposed M58 Link Road into Wigan.
- Port Salford - a proposed new inland port facility served by road, rail and short sea shipping with a distribution park at Barton, close to the M60 and M62 motorways. Proposals include up to 153,000 sqm of new warehousing facilities providing up to 4,000 jobs.
- Heywood Distribution Park, near Rochdale, close to the M66 and M62, home to Argos, Footasylum, Next, DFS and Moran Logistics with 27,271 sqm of employment floorspace available. An extension of the distribution park is proposed through the Northern Gateway proposal in the GMSF.
- Kingsway, Rochdale – a 170 hectare office, manufacturing and logistics site, home to a new Asda, Wincanton, JD Sports, CR Laurence, E.ON and Takeuchie MFG, with 35,434 sqm of employment floorspace remaining available.

10.2 There are currently no available sites in Wigan Borough that can match the large scale employment sites that are being offered in neighbouring authorities. However, sites at Junctions 25 and 26 of the M6 Motorway and West of Gibfield close to the M61 Motorway and, potentially on the A580 corridor are the borough's best opportunities to compete and offer good new local job opportunities in the borough.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 Wigan Borough has 188.98 hectares of available employment land as at 1 April 2018. However there is currently considerable uncertainty about the deliverability of around half of this supply due to factors including the need for significant transport infrastructure improvements and ground remediation, which could take many years.
- 11.2 Around one quarter of the employment land supply consists of small vacant plots within designated employment areas. These are suitable for small, locally based and low cost or low amenity businesses, and are therefore unattractive to, and unsuitable for, larger Class B2 and B8 uses due to their size, access and location. Many of these small sites have been left vacant or have been lost to housing or other uses.
- 11.3 The highest quality site within the borough's employment land supply that is not constrained by housing or reliant on significant transport infrastructure or ground remediation is South Lancashire Industrial Estate Extension, Bryn. However, this does not have the attributes necessary to compete with the top tier employment sites elsewhere in the region and only accounts for around 20 % of the overall available supply.
- 11.4 Confidence has returned to the market following the recession and the demand for high quality employment sites with good access to the strategic route network, and the motorway network for logistics development in particular, has increased substantially. The recently built Poundland regional distribution centre, Compagne Fruitere banana ripening facility and Bunzl Plc warehouse at South Lancashire Industrial Estate are a testimony to this and demonstrate that if good sites become available in the borough, they are quickly developed. Neighbouring local authorities have also taken advantage of their accessible locations to the motorway network to meet the demand for large scale logistics and advanced manufacturing sites or have released land from Green Belt for these uses ahead of their Local Plans, such as at Florida Farm in St. Helens.
- 11.5 Given the issues with the current employment land supply; that demand for large scale employment opportunities is high; and that the borough has land that would meet that demand; sites at Junctions 25 and 26 of the M6 Motorway and at Gibfield, Atherton are proposed to be removed from the Green Belt and allocated for employment development through the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. These sites present the borough's best opportunities, over and above the offer at South Lancashire Industrial Estate Extension, to deliver the type of sites that large scale Class B2 and B8 businesses would be attracted to, enabling the borough to take advantage of its strategic assets and compete economically at the sub-regional level.