



Wigan Borough Open
Space, Sport and
Recreation Provision and
Needs Assessment

February 2017

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Introduction

Study context

- 1.1. This Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision and Needs Assessment has been prepared to support the process of planning for, and managing, open space, sport and recreation land and facilities across Wigan Borough. The assessment has involved researching good practice and requirements, consulting borough residents and key stakeholders such as sports clubs and volunteering groups, surveying and assessing sites, and analysing data.
- 1.2. The purposes of this assessment are to:
 - Inform the development of locally derived standards for provision as part of Local Plan policy.
 - Identify surpluses and deficiencies in provision as applicable and provide evidence to support planning policies.
 - Inform decisions on planning applications in terms of maximising the opportunities for open space, sport and recreation wherever possible.
 - Direct scarce resources, through section 106, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and third party funding to maximise the opportunities for open space, sport and recreation as applicable.
 - Provide evidence to support aims and objectives for improving health and well-being by increasing participation in sport, recreation and active lifestyles.
 - Provide an evidence base for open space, sport and recreation related strategies across the council including the Playing Pitch Strategy.

Study structure

- 1.3. The study provides an assessment of the land and facilities that currently exist including quantity (what categories of open space and sporting facilities there are and how much or how many we have of each), quality (the condition of the site and whether it is fit for purpose), accessibility (the distance from populated areas and the ease of public access), and availability (how available sports facilities are to the general public).
- 1.4. The report is divided into four chapters:
 - **Introduction** – Introduction to the study and contextual background information.
 - **Open space, sport and recreation assessment** – A review of each category of open space, sport and recreation including education provision. Each review includes information on quality, quantity and accessibility of provision in each settlement or local area.

- **Settlement profiles** – Each settlement is assessed independently to highlight any surplus or deficit of open space, sport or recreation facilities within the context of the local population.
- **Open space, sport and recreation standards** – An assessment of the data collected across the borough and a comparison against nearby and national standards and locally recognised need for provision. The localised standards and current position against these standards will be used to inform planning policy and future decisions across the borough.

Overview of the study area

- 1.5. The population and household numbers are forecast to increase in the borough as set out below:

	2011	Increase 2011-2026	2026
Population	318,000	16,000	334,000
Households	136,000	17,000	153,000

Table 1: Anticipated change in population and household figures 2011-2026, Office and National Statistics and Department for Communities and Local Government

- 1.6. As the population increases and age group proportions change, the demand for open space and sport and recreational facilities may also change. It is important therefore to regularly assess need and provision and adapt as the changes occur.
- 1.7. The average age in Wigan Borough is 40 and is in line with the national average however life expectancy is significantly lower. Wigan has a below average percentage of people under the age of 45 when compared with the North West and England. The population age groups between 45 and 85 are higher than average however, as shown in Figure 1.
- 1.8. The health of people in Wigan is varied compared with the England average. Deprivation is higher than average and approximately 19.5% (11,400) children live in poverty.
- 1.9. In 2012, 27% of adults in the borough were classified as obese. Estimated levels of adult physical activity are significantly lower than the England average and rates of smoking related deaths are significantly higher. This highlights the potential for safe and easy access to high quality open space and sport and recreational facilities in Wigan to mitigate the impact of current health related habits and maximise the benefits of exercise and open space use.

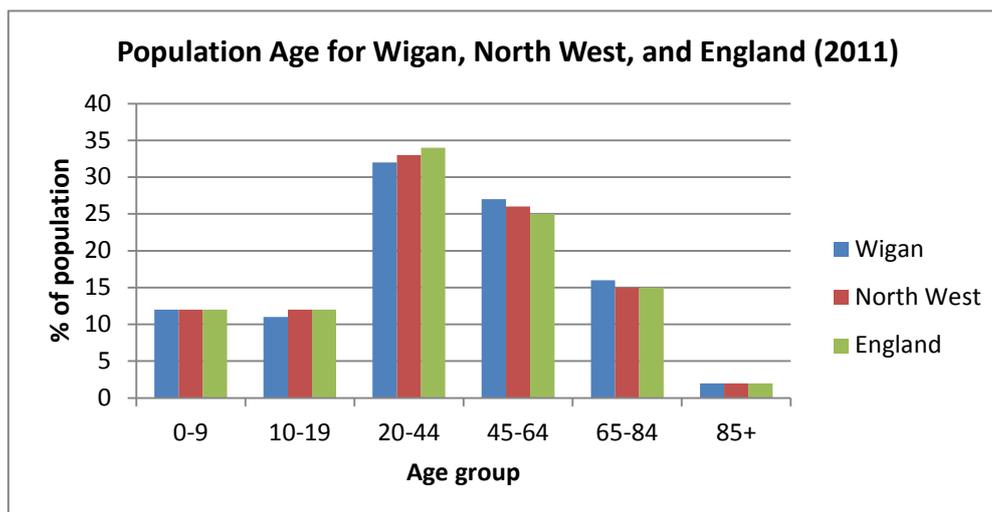


Figure 1: Population age in Wigan compared with North West and England Source: Census 2011

Analysis areas

- 1.10. For mapping and audit purposes Wigan Borough is divided into 13 areas based on, and around, main settlements. Each area / settlement has a unique character and different open space opportunities and requirements. Analysis at this level enables these differences to be taken into account.
- 1.11. The settlements are identified in Table 2 below which shows the area (hectares) of each settlement, the population and the resultant population density using mid-2014 estimates.

Settlement	Area (Ha)	Population (2014)	Population density	Density ranking
Abram & Platt Bridge	1,236	15,659	12.66	10
Ashton	1,324	23,571	17.80	6
Aspull	1,297	5,739	4.42	13
Atherton	813	20,962	25.78	3
Golborne & Lowton	1,807	24,160	13.37	8
Hindley	964	24,934	25.86	2
Leigh	2,122	47,428	22.35	4
Orrell	887	12,360	13.93	7
Shevington	654	8,741	13.36	9
Standish	1,493	15,182	10.16	12
Tyldesley and Astley	2,400	25,992	10.83	11
Wigan North	1,523	51,253	33.65	1
Wigan South	2,298	44,994	19.57	5
Wigan Borough	18,818	320,975	16.87	-

Table 2: Settlements in Wigan Borough including population density
Source: Wigan Council, mid-2014 Lower Super Output Area estimates

- 1.12. The settlements peripheral to the borough are the least densely populated as these areas have the most open space surrounding them. Abram and Platt Bridge presents an exception however as despite being in the centre of the borough the settlement sits surrounded by the borough's Greenheart and Green Belt.
- 1.13. When taking into account the population density per settlement, it is also important for the purpose of this report to analyse the population age profile per settlement. As demonstrated in Figure 1, the population age profile across Wigan Borough can be compared with the North West and England. When this is further broken down into settlements, a localised variation can be analysed, as shown in Figure 2.

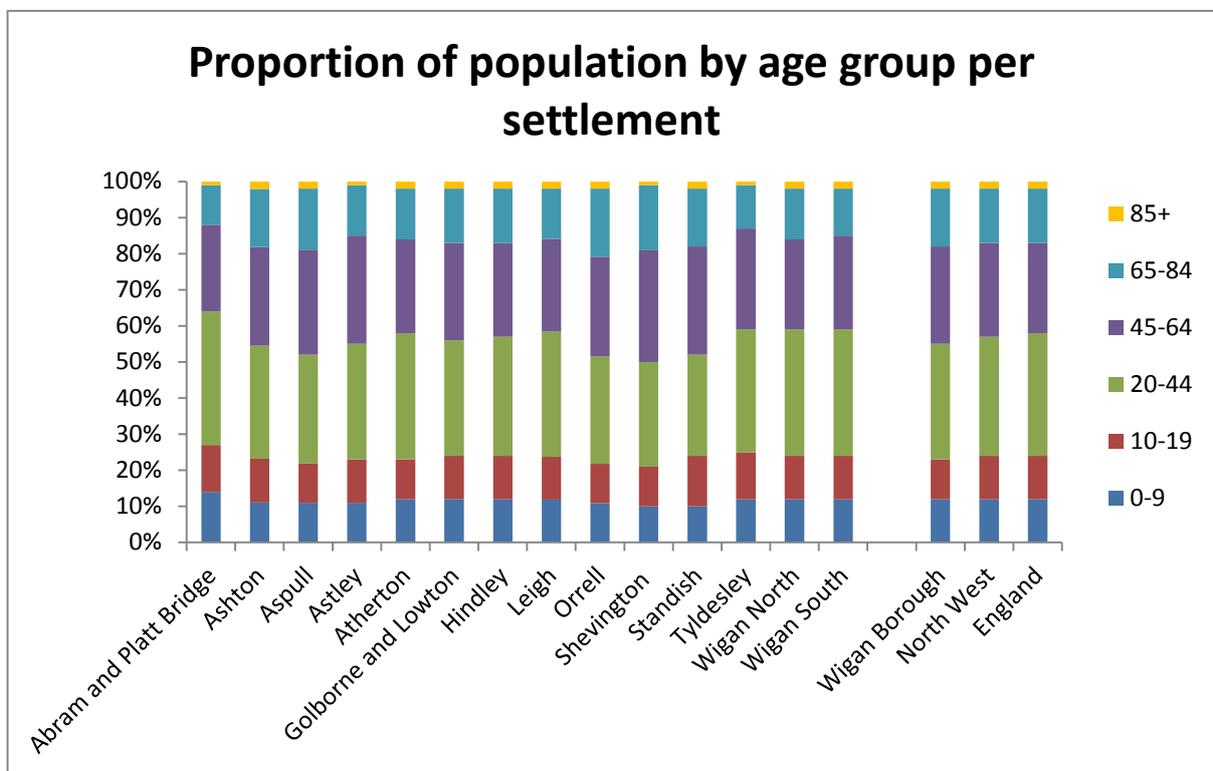


Figure 2: Proportion of the population by age group per settlement

- 1.14. The localised need of the varying population age is addressed in the settlement profiles in Chapter 3 of this report.

Challenges for the report

- 1.15. The overall study area of Wigan Borough presents a number of important characteristics that need to be taken into account when assessing levels of open space, sport and recreation provision across the settlements and working toward borough standards. Challenges include:

- The mixed urban and rural character of Wigan and the different local needs – Wigan is the 9th largest metropolitan borough in England with rural settlements located around the periphery and within its central Greenheart.
 - The age range among settlements – addressing the implications this has on typology and the effect on varying local need e.g. sufficient provision of football pitches may meet the borough standard but not local need for elderly population.
 - Proximity to the major urban areas of Wigan (divided for the purposes of this report in Wigan North and Wigan South) and Leigh, and the consequent effect on patterns of recreational and sporting activity and catchment standards.
 - The contrasting issues that affect urban and rural communities in relation to the provision of, and access to, open space, sport and recreational opportunities.
 - The influence of local value - a small site (below the assessment size threshold) may have significant value to the local community due to a lack of similar spaces or for environmental or heritage reasons, whereas a large space that is of irregular shape or is poorly placed (e.g. adjacent to a major highway) may not be useful to the population despite meeting the size threshold and typology standard.
- 1.16. Around 70% of Wigan Borough is open land or other open space. There are important areas for recreation such as the flashes, formed as a result of mining subsidence, which extend through the centre of the borough from Wigan to Leigh and Ashton and form much of the Greenheart countryside park.
- 1.17. The River Douglas, Leeds-Liverpool Canal, Bridgewater Canal and an extensive system of abandoned railway lines form a network of green corridors across the borough.
- 1.18. These features provide significant opportunities for informal recreation and linkages between open spaces. Most towns are separated by open land designated as Green Belt. Much of this is agricultural land, especially around the edges of the borough.
- 1.19. The borough's scattered settlement pattern leads to a 'green' environment and, therefore, this study focuses on open space within or serving urban areas. For example, small areas of accessible woodland that are relatively remote from population centres are not included.

The benefits of open space, sport and recreation

- 1.20. Notwithstanding the challenges presented by the demographic identity of the borough, the philosophy that a high standard of accessible open space and sport and recreational facilities are essential to the health and wellbeing of communities is fundamental to this study.
- 1.21. The benefits of good quality open space and sport and recreational facilities are widely promoted. These benefits include:

For people:

- Encourage physical activity and outdoor play
- Provide safer and more accessible sustainable travel routes and destinations
- Establish community cohesion and social inclusion, encouraging equality and diversity
- Empower communities and inspire pride in the local area
- Promote community development and regeneration

For the environment:

- Encourage biodiversity and provides habitats and corridors
- Contributes to sustainable environmental resource management and flood risk alleviation
- Provides unique character, local identity and sense of place
- Promotes education and environmental awareness
- Encourages community involvement and investment into maintenance of open spaces

For health:

- Provide positive community health through sense of space
- Contribute to good mental health and wellbeing
- Improve physical health through exercise
- Provide clean and safe recreational spaces away from highway pollution
- Encourage an attitude change among the community toward outdoor leisure and recreation

For the economy:

- Attract economic investment and regeneration
- Provide local employment through open space maintenance and built sporting and recreational facilities
- Encourage tourism and associated ongoing revenue
- Improve the image of the area and increase land and property values

Open space typology

- 1.22. The different types of open space are consistent with the archived publication ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to (the former) PPG17’. Each site is categorised according to its primary purpose so as to avoid double counting, although sites have been subdivided for the purposes of the study where that is more appropriate. The sports content is informed by Sport England’s ‘How to undertake and apply needs assessments for sport’ (December 2013). The different types are set out in Table 3 below.

	Open space type	Primary purpose
Green spaces	Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
	Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
	Natural/semi-natural greenspaces, including urban woodland	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.
	Green corridors	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
	Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
	Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
	Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
Civic spaces	Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians	Providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.
Sports facilities	Outdoor sports facilities (pitch and non-pitch)	Participation in outdoor sports, including pitch sports (football, rugby league and union, cricket and hockey), tennis, bowls, golf and athletics.
	Indoor sports facilities (built facilities)	Participation in indoor sports, such as badminton, swimming and gymnastics.
	Education provision (playing fields)	School participation in sports, some high schools/colleges have pitches marked for rugby/football, partnerships with local clubs and teams to use facilities out of school hours
	Artificial pitches	Indoor and outdoor pitch sports matches and training

Table 3: Open space typologies

- 1.23. Each chapter is also supported by data obtained through consultation which is used to check, challenge and validate information gathered from site surveys and desktop work.
- 1.24. Together with other amenities, land used for open space, sport and recreation forms an important part of the multifunctional green infrastructure. This term refers to the natural outdoor environment and includes our countryside, parks, woodlands, wetlands, mosslands, canals and rivers, trees, and allotments and community gardens.
- 1.25. Green infrastructure can help reduce the adverse impacts of extreme weather conditions and climate change, such as flooding and hot weather. It can also create better opportunities for recreation and leisure to promote healthier lifestyles, for walking and cycling, and for wildlife.
- 1.26. Our core green infrastructure is Greenheart and the mosslands. The mosslands are centred on Astley and Bedford Mosses, of which over 90 hectares is recognised as being of international importance and is a European designated Special Area of Conservation.

Auditing local provision

- 1.27. A minimum size threshold of 0.25 hectares has been applied for auditing open space, as this is considered a suitable minimum size to provide for active use rather than just visual amenity. Sites below this threshold have only been audited and mapped if they are identified through assessment as being of particular significance in the locality.
- 1.28. A total of 1,390 open spaces have been identified, plotted on the digital mapping and assessed to evaluate their quality and value. Each site is classified according to its primary open space purpose to ensure each space is counted only once, as set out in Table 3. A map showing the full borough with all open space, sport and recreation facility is in Appendix A1.

Database development

- 1.29. All information relating to open spaces in Wigan Borough was collected and analysed using a bespoke database developed specifically for this purpose. This has the capacity to bring in information from digital mapping and other information held by the council and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles using Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) assigned to each site. Other data held includes site name and reference number, site sub-type (particularly for sport grounds and playing pitches), size and description, and site visit and desktop data.

Quality and value analysis

- 1.30. An analysis of the quality and value of a site helps to identify its importance in a locality and inform planning decisions. It enables objective identification of spaces or facilities which should be given the highest level of protection by the planning system, those which require enhancement in some way and those which may no longer be needed for their present purpose.
- 1.31. Quality and value may not necessarily be related. As an example, a low quality site could be the only one of its category in a locality and, therefore, would be rated as being of high value to residents.
- 1.32. Quality and value are measured using a series of criteria relevant to the type of open space examined. The quality criteria used to assess site quality include:
- Maintenance and management of the site
 - Awards, accreditations and volunteer groups
 - Safety and security of sites including natural surveillance
 - Presence of facilities such as footpaths, bins, seating, signage, etc.
 - Accessibility by public transport and availability of car parking
- 1.33. For assessing the value of a site, the criteria used include:
- Context of site in relation to the proximity of other open spaces
 - Structural and landscape benefits - defining the character of the area
 - Ecological benefits - supporting biodiversity and wildlife habitats
 - Educational benefits - providing opportunities for learning or links to schools
 - Social inclusion, community cohesion and health benefits
 - Cultural and heritage benefits - includes listed buildings, monuments, public art of other locally important features
 - Amenity benefits
 - Economic benefits
 - Health benefits
- 1.34. Open spaces were audited and received a score to reflect quality and value based on the above criteria. This was undertaken as a desktop exercise, supplemented by additional information from site visits and from other sources such as the maintenance regimes employed by the council, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and other managing bodies. The results were then colour coded (red, amber and green) against a baseline threshold. Scores for individual criteria were weighted to ensure they had appropriate influence on the quality analysis of the site under consideration.

Accessibility standards

- 1.35. Accessibility standards for different types of open space are a method of identifying communities that are not currently served by existing provision. Some accessibility standards are set nationally but there is discretion locally. Other accessibility standards are more appropriately determined locally, for example using the results of the 2013 residents' survey asking how far people would be willing to travel to access different types of open space.
- 1.36. Table 4 sets out the accessibility standards. Further details are included in the relevant section on each type of open space, and assessed in the final chapter of this report.

Open space type		Accessibility standard	Source
Parks and gardens	Principal	3,200m - 15 minute drive time	Locally derived
	Settlement	1,200m – 15 minute walk time	
	Other	600m – under 10 minute walk time	
Amenity green space		700m – under 10 minute walk time	Locally derived
Natural and semi-natural green space		300m – 5 minute walk time	ANGSt standards
Green corridors		No standard set	-
Children and Young People	LAP	300m – Under 5 minutes walking time	Fields in Trust
	Casual	300m – Under 5 minutes walking time	
	LEAP	600m – Under 10 minutes walking time	
	Youth	600m – Under 10 minutes walking time	
	NEAP	1200m – Under 20 minutes walking time	
Allotments		1,200m – 15 minute walk time	Locally derived
Cemeteries		No accessibility standard	-
Civic space		No accessibility standard	-
Outdoor sports		See individual sport for details	-

Table 4: Accessibility standards by open space typology

National policy position

- 1.37. The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) set out the Government's planning policies for England and their application. It requires planning policies to be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities, and opportunities for new provision. It states that assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area (paragraph 73).

- 1.38. The NPPF continues to say that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
- An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements, or
 - The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location, or
 - The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision for which the need clearly outweighs the loss.
- 1.39. In addition, the framework encourages multiple benefits from the use of land, recognising that some open land can perform many functions such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, and food production under the term Green Infrastructure.
- 1.40. Finally, it requires policies to take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all, and deliver community and cultural facilities and services to meet local need (paragraph 17).

Local policy position

- 1.41. Wigan Council's Corporate Strategies set out a vision for 'Confident Place – Confident People' and 'Start Well, Live Well, Age Well'.
- 1.42. The outcomes sought under **Confident Place** include:
- Ensuring the boroughs green spaces are accessible to local people and enable a range of opportunities to enjoy them.
 - Ensuring that a leisure and culture offer is in place that delivers a range of quality facilities and positive activities that are accessible to all.
- 1.43. The outcomes under **Confident People** include:
- Supporting local sports clubs that encourage independent, healthy and active lifestyles.
 - Narrowing the gaps in health and wellbeing of the general population and our most vulnerable groups.
- 1.44. The outcomes under **Start Well, Live Well, Age Well** include:
- Ensuring that children and young people (under 18) reach their full potential through getting the best start in life.
 - Ensuring that adults of working age have healthy, productive working lives – reducing the risk of avoidable early deaths and long-term life limiting illnesses.

- Ensuring that older citizens (65+) can live healthy, independent lives that prevent or delay the need for high levels of health and social care.
- 1.45. The strategic context for the provision of sport and recreation in the borough is set by the Leisure and Culture Activity Strategy 2013-2023. This seeks to prioritise services which impact on health, with the aim of increasing participation in regular physical activity.
- 1.46. Consistent with this, Wigan's Local Plan Core Strategy identifies health as a key issue to address, in particular: relatively low life expectancy and levels of participation in physical activities, and high incidences of multiple health problems, particularly in inner areas of the borough. The related objective for health and well-being makes a connection with enhancing opportunities for people to participate in sport, physical recreation, and cultural activities, as well as walking and cycling, and improving the environment where people live.
- 1.47. The spatial and core policies in the Core Strategy provide the policy framework within which decisions on planning application are made. It will be supplemented by the detailed policies in the Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan.
- 1.48. Core strategy policy CP2 covers the protection and enhancement of valuable open space, sporting and recreational facilities. It is supported in particular by policy CP1 on health and well-being, policy CP9 on green infrastructure, and policy SP5 on Greenheart - a countryside park through the core of the borough.
- 1.49. Wigan Borough's action plan to get residents involved in regular physical activity or sport is SHAPE (Sport, Health, and Physical Education). It has been developed with Public Health, Wigan Sports Council, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (formerly WLCT) and other partners in the private and voluntary sectors. This multi-agency approach is designed to achieve maximum impact in the health and wellbeing of residents by improving activity rates.
- 1.50. The Wigan Deal encourages residents of the borough to get involved in their community. This includes a volunteer scheme where residents can volunteer at their local park, sports club, community facility or any other location. Volunteers help to maintain open space and the programme encourages a level of community ownership for the open spaces in the borough.

Consultation

- 1.51. Community and stakeholder consultation is important in order to assess needs and attitudes to open space and sporting provision locally. Consultation was undertaken in phases commencing August 2013 with a residents' survey, followed by surveys of local interest and community groups and other stakeholders, sports clubs and leagues, finishing in June 2014. The total number of responses received from the groups contacted is set out in Table 5 below.

Survey type	Responses received	Target return	% achieved
Residents	912	1,200	76
Community Groups	39	70	56
Professional groups	14	19	74
Sports Clubs	57	168	34
Leagues and referee groups	3	9	33
Schools	20	-	-

Table 5: Community and stakeholder consultation, responses received

- 1.52. The most commonly visited open spaces, as reported in the residents' survey, are set out in Table 6. Respondents were free to select as many categories as required.

Open space facility	Percentage
Footpath/cycle path	74
Park	73
Nature area	59
Civic space/non-green space	55
Churchyard/cemetery	47
Sport/leisure centre	46
Play area for children	44
Grassed area on housing estate	39
Outdoor sports facilities	32
Play area for teenagers	12
Allotment	10
Other	6
None	4

Table 6: Visits to open space by type, Residents survey, 2013

- 1.53. A full breakdown of the consultation process is available in the consultation statement that accompanies this report.

Chapter 2

Open space, sport and recreation assessment

2. Parks and gardens

Introduction

- 2.1 Parks and Gardens are large and small urban parks and more formal gardens that offer opportunities for informal recreation and community events in a high quality environment.

Current provision

- 2.2 35 sites have been identified as parks and gardens across Wigan Borough with a combined area of over 210 hectares. This equates to an average of 0.66 hectares per 1,000 people across the borough. No size threshold has been applied so all sites identified have been included. All sites are shown in Appendix A2 and listed in Appendix B1.
- 2.3 4 of these sites are classed as gardens as they lack the facilities of a park but are still regarded as a formal space for recreation and reflection. These areas are highly maintained and often include flower beds, fencing, benches and paths. Although similar, these sites differ from other typologies as they have a more formal use.
- 2.4 The Parks and Green Spaces Strategy for Wigan Borough was approved by Cabinet in 2008. The strategy developed a vision for the borough that parks and green spaces would contribute to quality of life and offer opportunities for people to 'get active'. It resulted in a hierarchy of parks being identified to make best use of resources available and ensure the greatest number of people have access to a park within defined access thresholds.
- 2.5 Three principal parks were identified, including Haigh and Pennington Flash Country Parks and Mesnes Park in Wigan, and a further fifteen settlement parks. Each of these parks is recognised under policy CP2 in the Local Plan Core Strategy. There are 17 other parks or gardens, some of which are very small, but may commemorate people or events and are important locally.
- 2.6 The residents' survey (2013) showed that 73.4% of respondents had visited a park or garden within the previous 12 months.

Accessibility

- 2.7 The residents' survey also indicated that over two thirds of current users walk to the park, of which three quarters take less than 15 minutes. Only 8% cycled while 28% used the car or bus. Of those who cycled, or used the car or bus,

45% travelled for less than 15 minutes while 34% travelled for up to 30 minutes and a further 21% for more than 30 minutes. Residents who travel further are likely to have visited principal parks.

2.8 Existing accessibility standards remain appropriate:

- **Principal parks:** 3,200 metres or 15 minutes driving time
- **Settlement parks:** 1,200 metres or about 15 minutes walking time
- **Other parks:** 600 metres or under 10 minutes walking time.

2.9 When applying these standards, 9 catchment gaps in parks and gardens provision have been identified across the borough. To address these gaps it is suggested that amenity green space in the area could be improved or formalised to perform as a park or garden. These gaps in provision are shown in table 7 below.

Settlement	Catchment gap location	Other open space available
Abram & Platt Bridge	Minor gap to north-west	Low Hall Local Nature Reserve
Atherton	Minor gap to north-east	Marlborough Road provision for young people
Golborne and Lowton	Lowton mainly served by principal park	Braithwaite Road AGS
Hindley	Minor gaps to north-east and east of settlement area	Coupland Road AGS and woodland. Alders Green Road AGS
Orrell	North of settlement area	Burns Close AGS
Shevington	West and north-west around settlement boundary	Bankwood AGS Woodnook Road AGS Whiteacre provision for young people
Standish	North of settlement area	Former Robin Hill Colliery NSNGS
Tyldesley and Astley	East and south of settlement area	Parkfield Drive AGS Ellesmere Street AGS Whitehead Hall Meadow NSNGS
Wigan South	South of settlement area (Winstanley Highfield)	Tan House Drive AGS Warminster Grove AGS Fulbeck Avenue AGS
<i>AGS: Amenity green space / NSNGS: Natural and semi-natural green space</i>		

Table 7: Parks and gardens catchment gaps and other open space available

2.10 The 2013 residents' survey found that most people are satisfied with the number of formal parks in the borough. Half of survey respondents stated that provision is sufficient, while a third felt that availability was average. 19% of respondents however felt that provision is poor or very poor and 6% were unsure; these respondents tended to come from Golborne and Lowton, Orrell, Leigh, and Wigan South where there are large catchment gaps.

Quality

- 2.11 The qualitative assessment of the sites is shown in Appendix B2 with colour coding for high, medium and low quality set against a baseline threshold. The methodology for scoring is set out in the introductory chapter.
- 2.12 76% of parks scored 'high' for quality against the criteria. The highest scoring sites are Pennington Hall Park in Leigh and Alexandra Park in Newtown, South Wigan, both of which are Green Flag parks. Jubilee Park in Ashton also has Green Flag status but scores slightly lower due to the lack of a car park. Mesnes Park in Wigan North and some settlement parks also scored well because they are noted for providing a wide range of good quality features, such as bandstands, cafés and refreshments, play areas, and sports provision, all attracting a variety of different users.
- 2.13 Haigh Country Park is currently undergoing renovation and is nearing the end of a 5 year project involving a 12 million pound investment. The historic manor house and the surrounding 25 hectare site will be improved significantly. Highlights of Haigh Woodland Park will include:
- A £6 million restoration of Haigh Hall through the creation of a 30- bed hotel with spa and fitness centre, transforming the stately home in a fashion which is sympathetic and respectful to its heritage. Investment for the hall will come from a private sector operator, Contessa Hotels.
 - Transformation of the Stables Courtyard into a Kitchen Courtyard for some of the region's best food and drink producers.
 - A family adventure zone with high ropes, adventure golf, and new adventure play equipment.
 - New walks and bikes trails supported by a new cycle centre on site
 - Infrastructure, such as parking, will also be improved with a new Woodland Management Plan to conserve, protect and enhance the park's historic plantations.
- 2.14 Mesnes Park has recently undergone a £6.1 million restoration project with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the park to its Victorian glory. Many features have been restored and others refurbished to provide a 'park for the people' in the 21st century. The play area has also been re-landscaped to provide modern, accessible play equipment. The restoration project has gained acclaim from other organisations and has resulted in the park winning a number of awards including a Royal Town Planning Institute Planning Achievement Award for Collaboration in Planning Work, the Best Heritage Regeneration Award and Overall Best Design Award at Wigan Council's

Building and Design Awards, and Best Heritage Area Award at the North West In Bloom Awards all in 2014. Mesnes Park was awarded the Green Flag Award in August 2015 (National Standard for Parks and Open Spaces).

- 2.15 To achieve Green Flag Standard a site needs to be affiliated with a community group who are active on site. All Green Flag sites have an affiliated 'Friends of Group', as shown in Table 8, this goes hand in hand with a site management plan and action plan of how the site will be developed and improved in the long term. Many of the boroughs sites have a 'friends group' or community group involved with the site though not all have Green Flag status:

Affiliated group	Green Flag Status
Atherton Environmental Network	-
Braithwaite Road Residents Association, Lowton	-
Butts Bridge Tenants and Residents Association	-
Friends of Alexandra Park, Wigan South	Yes
Friends of Ashton	-
Friends of Haigh Hall Country Park	-
Friends of Haigh Walled Garden	-
Friends of Jubilee Park, Ashton	Yes
Friends of Leyland Park, Hindley	-
Friends of Lilford Park, Leigh	-
Friends of Marsh Playing Fields	-
Friends of Mesnes Park, Wigan North	Yes
Friends of Mosley Common, Tyldesley	-
Friends of Orrell Water Park	-
Friends of Pennington Hall Park, Leigh	Yes
Friends of Rayner Park, Hindley	-
Friends of Shevington Memorial Park	-
Friends of Three Sisters Recreation Area, Ashton	-
Howe Bridgers, Leigh	-

Table 8: 'Friends Of' groups and Green Flag status

- 2.16 The Wigan Deal is a new approach to service provision which relies on cooperation between the council, residents and its partners. This provides an opportunity for parks and gardens as it encourages communities, especially young people, to get involved with maintenance and improvements and promotes greenspaces as a venue for healthy and active leisure. In many cases, active Friends groups are engaged with The Deal to promote volunteer activity in their park or garden.
- 2.17 Many parks have received investment since 2010 from a variety of funding sources to refurbish or provide new play and outdoor gym equipment, improve surfacing and pathways, install sculptures or, as at Pennington Hall Park, provide a community hub café.

- 2.18 Golborne Park received the lowest quality score of all settlement parks however still achieved an average rating. Site observations suggest that this is due to a need to replace and update facilities, and a lack of natural surveillance leading to potential community safety issues. Six other parks scored average for quality however they have not benefitted from recent investment and as a result tend to have dated equipment and facilities. Printshop Lane is the only site to score low for quality.
- 2.19 When asked to rate the overall quality of park provision in the borough, 57% of residents indicated that it was good or very good, 23% said it was average, while 17% felt it to be poor or very poor.
- 2.20 Stakeholder opinion expressed various frustrations with park management regimes. These included a cycle of decline and restoration rather than constant maintenance, which seems to predominate, and declining resources meaning it is difficult to know who to contact if an issue requires attention. Friends of groups can be frustrated by a lack of attention to detail sometimes by maintenance but appreciate gaining greater control over assets and their use. Nevertheless a sense of fear was expressed for the future upkeep of parks given potential future cutbacks in maintenance and investment.
- 2.21 It is anticipated that austerity pressures will continue for at least 2 to 3 years, which will result in further reductions in resource availability and changes to how park services are delivered. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and Greenspaces have started to address these changes and management plans have been developed. In Wigan the focus for parks from 2014/2015 onwards is to:
- Redesign horticultural strategy
 - Recruit more volunteers and make greater use of their input
 - Develop a stronger commercial presence
- 2.22 In April 2015 the strategic development, management and maintenance of all parks and open spaces within the borough was reintegrated back into Wigan Council's Corporate Land Management team with the exception of Shevington Memorial Park which is managed by Shevington Parish Council, and Printshop Lane which is managed by Fred Longworth High School.
- 2.23 Wigan Council's Corporate Land Management team carry out regular site visits and have responsibility over maintenance regimes which include grass cutting, shrub and hedge pruning, general site maintenance such as bin emptying and path inspections, and seasonal floral displays in certain locations. This is currently sufficient to maintain quality standards.

Value

- 2.24 61% of parks scored highly for value against the criteria. This demonstrates the vast social inclusion and health benefits, ecological value, and sense of place that parks can offer. This is supported by consultation with Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and the results of the 2013 residents' survey. When asked to name their favourite open space in the borough, the three principal parks all received a high number of mentions, as might be expected. The settlement park that received the most mentions was Three Sisters, followed by Lilford Park and Orrell Water Park.
- 2.25 Value is also demonstrated in the residents' survey by the number of visits people make to parks with 61% indicating that they did so at least once a week or more, 25% visited once a month and 14% visited less frequently.
- 2.26 Only one settlement park received an average score for value with all others scoring highly. Ten of the smaller 'other' parks received an average score, reflecting overlaps in catchments or a need to increase the attributes and facilities at these parks. Printshop Lane again scored poorly.

3. Amenity green space

Introduction

- 3.1. Amenity green space is a space suitable for informal recreation activities or that makes an important contribution to visual amenity. Sites range from tree lined walkways to grassed areas on housing estates, and recreation grounds and informal playing fields to reclaimed land. They are informally laid out and might include surfaced footpaths, seating, bins, flower beds, trees and space for informal sports and recreation. It could also include facilities like a fixed position goal and a playground but the latter would be categorised separately.

Current provision

- 3.2. 243 sites have been identified as amenity green space across the borough. These have a combined area of 108 hectares, which equates to an average of 0.34 hectares per 1,000 people. Amenity green spaces serve as a visual enhancement to the area and range in size from highway verges and tree lines to grassed walkways or sitting areas. All sites are shown in Appendix A3 and listed in Appendix B2.
- 3.3. The residents' survey showed that two-fifths of respondents had visited a grassed area on a housing estate within the previous 12 months. However, many may consider amenity green space areas to be play areas and parks and record them as such.

Accessibility

- 3.4. The residents' survey also indicated that 89% of current users on housing estates walk to amenity green space, of which 66% arrived within 10 minutes. Although some sites are large there is no evidence that people drive to them from outside of the locality. A catchment of 600 metres has therefore been applied for all sites mapped.
- 3.5. Catchment mapping shows that areas of greater population density generally have greater provision of amenity green space within a 10 minute walk time. However, it is evident that there are some small catchment gaps in provision. These are summarised in Table 9.

Settlement	Catchment gap location	Other open space available
Aspull	North West Aspull	Haigh Country Park
Abram and Platt Bridge	Abram	Victoria Fields, Bickershaw Colliery to the east

Shevington	Central Shevington	Shevington Memorial Park, Birley Wood, Elnup Wood
Tyldesley and Astley	Mosley Common and south of East Lancs	Mosley Common Recreation Ground, Bedford Moss
Orrell	South East Orrell	Orrell Water Park
Hindley	South and east Hindley	Bickershaw, Westlake Park

Table 9: Amenity Green Space catchment gaps and other open space available

- 3.6. Results showed that most people are satisfied with the amount of amenity green space in the borough. One-fifth said that provision is sufficient, while one-third felt it is average. However a further fifth feel that provision is insufficient. The survey of residents groups revealed a shortage of amenity space in the Winstanley area of Wigan South and a general frustration that green space is required for building.
- 3.7. The majority of amenity green space is managed as part of the council's Corporate Land Management portfolio. This involves grass cutting and occasional shrub and hedge pruning, general site maintenance (bin emptying and path inspections) and seasonal floral displays where appropriate. Exceptions to the portfolio include land on housing estates where the developer has an agreement for maintenance, and other privately owned but publically accessible spaces.

Quality

- 3.8. 69% of amenity green spaces scored highly for quality against the criteria. The highest scoring site was The Wiend in Wigan town centre.
- 3.9. Some sites have an active residents group who play a part in maintaining and caring for the site. Currently the following groups are noted for providing additional community support and, consequently, amenity green spaces in the area are of very high quality:
- Shevington Parish Council for maintenance and container planting
 - Standish Community Forum for planting and public art
 - Braithwaite Residents Association.
- 3.10. The lowest scoring sites tend to be those that are temporarily landscaped pending redevelopment. These sites are also identified in our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and may be allocated for housing. However, some sites scoring low for quality are of high value to the local community as they are the only amenity green space in the locality. These sites could be a priority for future investment.

- 3.11. The residents' survey also asked people to rate the overall quality of amenity green space provision in the borough. 3 in 10 people stated that it was good or very good and the same number felt that it was average. The remainder were split equally between those who feel that it is poor or very poor and those who don't know.

Value

- 3.12. 44% of sites score highly for value against the criteria; this is supported by consultation with Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles. It demonstrates the contribution that amenity green spaces make to the environment and to peoples' sense of wellbeing in a locality. It is also supported by comments made in the residents' survey of the value placed on green spaces close to home.
- 3.13. Value is demonstrated by the number of visits people make to amenity green spaces. The residents' survey showed that 39% of respondents visited grassed areas on housing estates parks and gardens and two thirds of these did so at least once a week or more frequently.
- 3.14. Sites scoring low for value are commonly located in areas of catchment overlap with other amenity green spaces or which do not have facilities such as a bin, footpaths or play facilities.
- 3.15. Value is also demonstrated in the residents' survey by the number of visits people make to grassed areas, with 75% indicating that they did so at least once a week or more frequently, 12% visiting once a month and 13% visiting less frequently.

4. Natural and semi-natural green space

Introduction

- 4.1. Natural and semi-natural green space is informal open space that is managed for wildlife and public enjoyment. In Wigan Borough this includes woodland (ancient and more recently planted), still water features including ponds and flashes (water bodies formed as a result of mining subsidence), waterways (canals and rivers), reed beds, grassland, mosslands, reclaimed industrial land, and former tips. Large areas at Haigh and Pennington Flash Country Parks and Three Sisters Recreation Area are identified as natural and semi-natural green space.

Current provision

- 4.2. 219 sites have been identified as natural or semi-natural green space across the borough with a combined area of 1743 hectares. This equates to an average of 5.5 hectares per 1,000 people across the borough. A size threshold of 2 hectares has been applied to accord with Natural England's recommended minimum size for accessible natural green space; current provision exceeds this national standard. These sites are shown in Appendix A4 and listed in Appendix B3.
- 4.3. A large proportion of the borough's strategic green infrastructure runs from north to south through the core of the borough. This vast open space is promoted as the borough's Greenheart and covers 57 square kilometres of multifunctional green space; see Appendix A5.
- 4.4. There are currently six key gateways to Greenheart, including:
- Haigh Country Park
 - Wigan Flashes
 - Three Sisters Recreation Area
 - Amberswood Common
 - Pennington Flash Country Park
 - Bickershaw (former colliery, proposed as a country park)
- 4.5. These key sites have an important role as hubs for the delivery of health and wellbeing programmes across the borough. Over half of the borough's population live within a 10 minute walk of Greenheart.
- 4.6. The designation of sites as Local Nature Reserves provides a statutory commitment to maintaining public access to land protected for nature conservation purposes, as well as helping areas meet Local Biodiversity

Action Plan and sustainable development targets. There are currently seven Local Nature Reserves in the borough. They are:

- Wigan Flashes (Wigan South)
- Borsdane Wood (Hindley)
- Greenslate Water Meadows (Orrell)
- Low Hall Park (Platt Bridge)
- Three Sisters (Ashton)
- Pennington Flash (Golborne and Lowton / Leigh)
- Kirkless (Aspull)

4.7. The two most recent LNR designations were Pennington Flash (89 hectares) and Kirkless (25 hectares) which were designated in October 2014. The addition of these sites has increased the total area designated from 269 hectares in 2007 to 383 hectares. Natural England recommends there should be one hectare per 1,000 people. On this basis the borough would need 326 hectares for the projected population of the borough in 2026. The recent designations ensure this is already exceeded.

4.8. The residents' survey showed that 59% of respondents had visited a nature area within the previous 12 months.

Accessibility

4.9. Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends the following standards for public access:

- A site of 2 hectares or more, no more than 300 metres (5 minute walk) from home.
- At least one accessible site of 20 hectares or more, within two kilometres of home – over 80% of the homes in the borough achieve this.
- An accessible site of 100 hectares or more within five kilometres of home – the majority of homes in the borough achieve this.

4.10. The Woodland Trust's Access to Woodland standards is similar - a 2 hectare wood within 500 metres of home and a 20 hectare wood within 4 kilometres. Woodland Trust figures show that we are almost satisfying the second part of the standard but only 40% of people have a 2 hectares wood within 500 metres of their home.

4.11. As would be anticipated, in built-up areas these standards are more difficult to achieve. The Greenheart initiative highlights that opportunities presented through new development and other initiatives, such as those related to transport or health, should focus on improving linkages between natural and semi-natural green spaces throughout the borough.

- 4.12. Through consultation it was noted that although the mossland areas are of international importance they have very poor public access, an issue which should be addressed in the future. A lack of prominent signage was also noted, meaning that fewer people visit accessible green spaces because they are not aware of them.
- 4.13. The residents' survey also indicated that half of the people who visit nature areas walk to get there and 60% of those travel for less than 15 minutes. Two fifths of visitors travelled by car or bus to natural and semi-natural green spaces and around ten per cent cycled. The distance travelled by those on bicycle, or by car or bus to visit a site was evenly split between travelling for less than 15 minutes, for up to 30 minutes and for 30 minutes or more. As the distance travelled is directly related to the size and importance of the site, these figures accord with the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard.
- 4.14. The borough has a large amount of natural and semi-natural green space. This is largely as a result of Wigan's mining heritage with areas of derelict Green Belt land that have been reclaimed naturally or through active management.
- 4.15. There are notable catchment gaps in and around town centres however these locations are well served by parks and/or amenity green spaces or have access to countryside areas on public rights of way. It is therefore not considered a priority to increase the amount of natural and semi-natural green space. Instead the priority is to continue to improve the quality and accessibility of green space that we have through Greenheart and other local improvements.
- 4.16. The 2013 residents' survey found that most people are satisfied with the amount of natural and semi-natural green space. 60% of survey respondents stated that provision is sufficient, while 18% said availability was average. 10% of respondents felt that provision is insufficient, however as most of these respondents were in areas where the level of provision is high, it suggests that they may have been unsure of what distinguishes this type of open space.

Management

- 4.17. Management responsibility for natural and semi-natural green space is shared across a variety of organisations including the council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission, United Utilities, Canal and River Trust and private landowners.

- 4.18. Some maintenance is undertaken in partnership with volunteers and 'Friends of' groups who provide a vital role in the regular upkeep and management of sites. They assist with tasks such as tackling invasive plant species, maintaining footpaths and stiles, way marking and installing features such as information boards, benches, and bird boxes. They also have the ability to lever additional funds into particular sites. Sites which have active 'Friends of' groups include:
- Haigh Country Park
 - Wigan Flashes
 - Kirkless Local Nature Reserve
 - Amberswood
 - Low Hall Local Nature Reserve
 - Three Sisters Recreation Area
 - Greenslate Water Meadows
 - Borsdane Wood
 - Pennington Flash Local Nature Reserve
- 4.19. Sites within Greenheart are managed in line with the Greenheart Action Plans and Local Nature Reserves management plans. Many sites outside council ownership also have active operational management plans ensuring that they benefit from a higher level of stewardship, and enhancing their quality and value to the local area.
- 4.20. A large and diverse coalition of partners is now evolving to take Greenheart forward based on existing local partnerships collaborating in various combinations on projects. The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside (LWT) is the largest environmental charity in the North West committed to the protection and promotion of wildlife. LWT manage sites directly for Wigan Council and in conjunction with the Development Manager for Biodiversity within Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, provide ecological support on Greenheart's premier wetland resource and other regionally and nationally important wildlife sites including 7 Local Nature Reserves, 89 Sites of Biological Importance, 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation. This is supplemented by external capital funding for project work, revenue resources from Natural England to support the Greenheart farm concept, and section 106 open space monies.
- 4.21. Woodland management is a very labour intensive and costly activity. The council's approach is a programme of risk assessments and an associated work programme for tree management. This ensures that council owned trees are inspected every 2 to 5 years depending on the level of risk of personal injury identified. Work is commissioned accordingly through the

programme which enables woodlands to be maintained as well as possible despite public sector financial constraints.

- 4.22. Amberswood received a Woodland Improvement Grant to undertake management works during 2015/16. Similarly, Pennington Flash falls within the Investment Priority Area identified in Leigh to improve pedestrian links to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal from the town centre and Leigh Sports Village and benefits from that.

Quality

- 4.23. 63% of semi-natural green spaces score 'high' for quality against the criteria. The highest scoring site was the Wigan Flashes.
- 4.24. Many sites do not score highly for quality compared with other open space categories due to their remote location and a lack of natural surveillance. Sites often deliberately have little on-going maintenance in order to provide unmanaged habitats. Some sites do require appropriate signage to encourage people to use them and this was included in the scoring criteria.
- 4.25. The need for a visitor centre at Wigan Flashes to provide a much needed focus for Greenheart was noted by stakeholders. A visitor centre could provide interpretative facilities, refreshments and toilets, and be an operational base for the Wildlife Trust and volunteer activities. The provision of a visitor centre is included in the masterplan for mixed use development at Westwood. Provision for a visitor centre is also indicated in the masterplan for the former Bickershaw Colliery site.
- 4.26. Stakeholders also identified the tensions between managing sites both for wildlife and for public access, and to ensure that sites continue to be managed in a way that encourages people to visit.
- 4.27. Some sites scored poorly due to fly tipping, fire damage, vandalism and damage caused by unauthorised motorcycling with the latter noted as causing deterioration of footpaths, noise disturbance and other nuisances. Other issues such as dog fouling and litter were mentioned as being problematic in several areas, including Amberswood, Three Sisters and Borsdane Woods. The dumping of garden waste and the prevalence of invasive species such as Japanese knotweed were also mentioned as concerns by stakeholders.
- 4.28. When asked to rate the overall quality of nature areas in the borough, 62% of residents indicated that they are good or very good, 20% said it was average and only 12% felt it to be poor or very poor.

Value

- 4.29. 42% of semi-natural green spaces score 'high' for value. The highest scoring sites are Wigan Flashes and Amberswood. Value is a measure of the importance of the site for nature conservation purposes and it is logical that the designated Local Nature Reserves should score well. However, it is also a measure of the level of community use.
- 4.30. When asked to name their favourite open space in the borough, Haigh Country Park and Pennington Flash Country Park received a high number of mentions from residents, as might be expected. Other sites such as Amberswood, Low Hall, Borsdane Wood and Viridor Woods also received a high number of mentions.
- 4.31. Value is demonstrated in the residents survey by the number of visits people make to nature areas, with 62% indicating that they did so at least once a week or more frequently, 26% visiting once a month and only 12% visiting less frequently.
- 4.32. Sites scoring lower for value tend to be those which have been partially reclaimed from industrial dereliction with evidence of dereliction remaining. These sites are being naturally colonised by vegetation but remain unmanaged and although they are easily accessible they have very few facilities.

5. Green corridors

Introduction

- 5.1. Green Corridors include rivers, canals, and former railway alignments suitable for walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or off-road travel. These areas also provide opportunities for wildlife migration. Many are designated bridleways or serve as a footpath or cycle route as part of the Public Rights of Way network. They provide important links between areas of open space, and between open spaces and built up areas, including in the Greenheart countryside park. Smaller brooks and streams also play an integral role in the green and blue infrastructure of the borough however these have not been included in the study.

Current provision

- 5.2. 124 kilometres of green corridors have been identified through this assessment; all corridors are shown in Appendix A6 and listed in Appendix B4. This typology of open space is more accurately defined by length than area (132Ha) given its linear nature. Only longer distance routes and key connections are included. Many other local corridors such as along brooks are included as part of amenity green space or natural and semi-natural green space.
- 5.3. In addition, the borough has 480 kilometres of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), made up of 435 kilometres of footpaths and 35 kilometres of bridleways, see Appendix A7.
- 5.4. The main green corridors in the borough are:
- Leeds-Liverpool Canal
 - Bridgewater Canal
 - River Douglas
 - Whelley Loop Line (Part of National Cycle Route 55)
 - Leigh – Tyldesley (alongside the guided busway)
- 5.5. Greenheart plays a major role in the promotion of green corridors in the borough. As well as managing and maintaining routes, it also acts as a key destination which all parts of the borough are effectively connected to by high quality green corridors.
- 5.6. The residents' survey showed that three-quarters of respondents had used a footpath or cycle path within the previous 12 months. This demonstrates the

importance of good connectivity and the positive benefits this can have on the health and wellbeing.

Accessibility

- 5.1. There are catchment gaps in the provision of green corridors, in particular on the western side of the borough. Many settlements are well served by other types of open space which provide linkages to key destinations and services. There are opportunities to improve the number and quality of green corridors in the borough or designate informal footpaths as a result of new large scale housing development. Areas of opportunity are identified where possible.
- 5.2. The 2013 residents' survey found that most people are satisfied with the numbers of green corridors in the borough. 43% of survey respondents indicated that provision is sufficient, while 33% said availability was average. Almost one fifth of respondents did not feel that provision was adequate however.

Management

- 5.3. Management of green corridors is the responsibility of a variety of organisations including the council. This includes Lancashire Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust, the Forestry Commission, United Utilities, Canal and Rivers Trust and private landowners.
- 5.4. Wigan Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan was adopted in 2007 setting out intended improvements to the footpath network and is currently being reviewed. It focuses on ensuring that existing communities and new developments have good walking links to key destinations and that key routes are suitably maintained. The plan is complemented by the Local Area [highways] Implementation Plan and the most notable recent investments secured to enhance green corridors include:
 - The production of a series of 'Healthy Walks' leaflets to promote the rights of way network and encourage use as part of adopting a healthier lifestyle
 - Improving pedestrian and cycle route signage giving approximate journey times in minutes to encourage use of key off-road routes
 - Upgrading the Whelley Loop Line multi-user route to provide off-road access to several local facilities including leaflet promotion in the locality
 - The creation of the Leigh Guided Busway
- 5.5. Priorities for the future will see further investment in the green corridor network and promotion of active travel. This will help reduce congestion on the borough's highways and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

Quality

- 5.6. All green corridors score 'high' for quality against the criteria.
- 5.7. Corridors that have received recent investment from a variety of funding sources include:
- Bridgewater Canal for surface enhancements and signage
 - Leeds and Liverpool Canal
 - Whelley Loop Line
- 5.8. When asked to rate the overall quality of footpaths and cycle paths in the borough, 51% of residents indicated that it was good or very good, 27% said it was average, while 17% felt it to be poor or very poor. Stakeholder opinion expressed frustration that barriers intended to prevent unauthorised motorcycle access also impeded cyclists. Residents reported that signage was often lacking and routes were not always kept clear of encroaching vegetation.

Value

- 5.9. All corridors considered in this report score 'high' for value, those that are inaccessible have not been included in the study.
- 5.10. When asked to name their favourite open space in the borough the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, Whelley Loop Line and specific footpaths received a high number of mentions from residents. This indicates the significance of green corridors as key connections and walking, cycling or horse riding routes across the borough.
- 5.11. Value is also demonstrated in the residents' survey by the number of visits people make to use footpaths and cycle ways, with 81% indicating that they did so at least once a week or more frequently, 14% visited once a month and 5% visited less frequently. It is not known however whether the footpaths mentioned are part of the Public Right of Way network.

6. Allotments and community gardens

Introduction

- 6.1. Allotments and Community Gardens include traditional allotment and community urban gardens (orchards and community farms that offer opportunities for people to grow their own produce). Also included are sites where people participate in tending an area that is not individually leased to them, but as a volunteer through a community project as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.

Current provision

- 6.2. 67 sites have been identified as allotments and community gardens across the borough with a combined area of 38 hectares. This equates to an average of 0.12 hectares per 1,000 people. There are 13 statutory allotment sites with all others being non-statutory and private provision. All sites are shown in Appendix A8 and listed in Appendix B5.
- 6.3. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) consider average allotment plot size to be 250 square metres. In reality this is a large area to manage and maintain and current provision is often more diverse, including half plots, individual raised beds and poly tunnels.
- 6.4. The council are currently reviewing the allotments service. The statutory allotments have been actively managed by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles over the past ten years and tend to be satisfactory or good quality sites. The non-statutory allotments have a number of poor quality sites with only a few plots. The review is focused on non-statutory allotment sites and bringing existing sites back into allotment use.
- 6.5. A new allotment site, Bickershaw Allotments, has recently opened at the former Bickershaw Colliery site off Edna Road in Westleigh. The site has 26 plots, a substantial car park and storage facilities.
- 6.6. A new Sport and Recreation development off Vicarage Lane in Shevington was granted planning permission in January 2016, the new facility will include two football pitches, a rugby pitch, around 50 allotment plots and 10 raised beds. The site will also have a car park and storage facilities.
- 6.7. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles was commissioned to implement 'The Get Up and Grow' project. The project is aimed at adults who want to improve their fitness levels by participating in gardening, which brings both physical and

mental health benefits as well as giving a boost to the park in which it is based. The aims of the sessions are to enthuse people about gardening and to give them a hobby that can help people to keep fit, socialise, and grow vegetables that they can turn into healthy meals, whilst at the same time have fun, meet new friends and learn new skills.

- 6.8. The project offers new opportunities at already established parks and allotment sites. There are raised beds and poly tunnels at Mesnes Park and Lilford Park and the scheme is also being carried out at Pennington Hall Park, Guestfold Allotments, Greenslate Farm, Stubshaw Cross Allotments, Worsley Hall Allotments and Alexandra Park.
- 6.9. The residents' survey showed that only 10% of respondents had visited an allotment within the previous 12 months which is consistent with the specialist nature of this provision.

Accessibility

- 6.10. The residents' survey also indicated that 67% of current users walk to the allotments and community gardens and most travel for less than 15 minutes. Only 9% cycled while almost one quarter used the car or bus. Of those who cycled, used the car or bus, 58% travelled for less than 15 minutes while 31% travelled for up to 30 minutes and one in ten for more than 30 minutes.
- 6.11. Accessibility catchments were set at 1,200 metres or 15 minute walking time which covers most of the borough. A catchment of 3,200 metres or 15 minute drive time would cover the entirety of the borough.
- 6.12. Table 10 below outlines the main catchment gaps. Land identified for major housing development in the Core Strategy is noted as a possible source of new allotment sites in applicable areas.

Settlement	Catchment gap location	Major housing development or other opportunities identified
Astley and Tyldesley	The north east of Astley and east of Tyldesley	Housing development at Garrett Hall but now has planning permission
Ashton	West of Ashton	None
Golborne and Lowton	East of Lowton	Broad location for new development includes Pocket Nook at Lowton
Hindley and Leigh	Hindley Green and Westleigh	Broad location for new development at South of Hindley, key strategic site at Northleigh Park
Standish	Major gap across the south and east	Housing developments in Standish with planning permission
Wigan South	South-west of Winstanley	Pemberton Colliery

Table 10: Allotments catchment gaps and identified opportunities

Demand

- 6.13. Consultation with key officers and allotment associations has indicated a general demand for additional allotment provision across the borough, particularly in Leigh, Shevington, Tyldesley and Wigan with people having to wait for more than five years for a plot to become available.
- 6.14. Many of the allotment sites have fewer than 16 plots (0.4 hectares). This is considered by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles to be the minimum size for efficient operation, as it enables an active allotment association to be formed to ensure the site is managed and maintained effectively. It is therefore recommended that new provision should be achieved either by extending existing sites or by providing new sites that meet the minimum size threshold. Better use of existing allotment provision could also be achieved if non-allotment uses and vacant plots could be reduced.
- 6.15. The view that there are insufficient allotments was supported by the residents' survey. Only 10% of respondents stated that provision is sufficient, while twice that amount felt that provision is insufficient. In addition 9 respondents specifically mentioned their allotment as their favourite open space in the borough, highlighting the value of existing allotment provision to residents.
- 6.16. Currently there is a waiting list of approximately 350 for non-statutory allotments. Leased and private allotment sites have their own waiting lists.

Management

- 6.17. The statutory and non-statutory sites are managed as part of the open spaces portfolio by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and the councils Leisure and Property team, or are leased to allotment associations who then manage the site. Other sites are wholly within private ownership. Individual allotment plots are normally managed by the holder but increasing numbers of plots are managed as a community facility.
- 6.18. The following sites have active allotment societies and responded to the group questionnaire:
- Fir Tree Allotment Association
 - Greenslate Community Farm Allotments
 - Guest Fold
 - Hope Carr Allotments
 - Lilford Park Allotment Association
 - Plank Lane Allotments
 - Stubshaw Cross Allotment
 - Tyldesley Allotment Association

- Weston Street Allotments
- Wigan Allotment Network

6.19. The Association at Fir Tree allotments have recently secured self-management status with a long term lease of the site. This may be the model of how allotments are managed in the future and would allow the associations to secure funding to improve the sites. Partnership working under the Wigan Deal is in place at a number of statutory sites.

Quality

6.20. 65% of allotments score 'high' for quality against the criteria. The highest scoring sites are the statutory allotments at Lilford Park, Hope Carr Lane and Tyldesley Allotments.

6.21. A number of allotment sites have received investment since 2007 from a variety of funding sources, including:

- Guest Fold Allotments, Atherton - new allotment provision and poly tunnels
- Greenslate Community Farm, Orrell - new private provision
- Tyldesley Allotment Association - development of a community orchard
- St Luke's, Orrell - new private provision
- Green Crew Community Garden, Hindley - poly tunnel to support gardening for adults with learning disabilities

6.22. The lowest scoring allotment sites are those with poor quality pathways or lack of facilities such as a mains water supply, clubhouse and toilets. Some of these sites have been identified in the Allotment Strategy as suitable for disposal with funds raised being ring fenced for replacement provision.

6.23. When asked to rate the overall quality of allotments in the borough, 10% of residents indicated that it was good or very good, 13% said it was average, while 38% felt it to be poor or very poor. Many allotment societies recorded that they maintained their sites to a high quality.

6.24. Consultation has revealed that some sites experience problems with pathways and surrounding trees (Weston Street) while certain sites suffer from vandalism and security problems (Lilford Park, Weston Street) or a lack of toilet facilities (Weston Street, Fir Tree Avenue.)

6.25. **Value**

6.26. 60% of sites score highly for value against the criteria. Allotment sites tend to score highly for value if the majority of the plots are in active allotment use

and the site serves an area of high deprivation. Those with amber or red scores have increasing numbers of uses as garden extensions, outdoor storage and garages, or are unused. Other sites score poorly for value because there are a limited number of plots on the site which limits its value to the wider community.

- 6.27. Value is also demonstrated in the residents survey by the number of visits people make to allotments, with 41% indicating that they did so at least once a week or more frequently and 14% visited once a month.
- 6.28. Allotments in Wigan are generally well used by community groups with most statutory sites and private sites having allotment associations.

7. Cemeteries and churchyards

Introduction

- 7.1. Cemeteries and Churchyards serve multiple purposes. As well as providing space for burial of the deceased they provide areas for quiet contemplation and are often linked with heritage, history, wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

Current provision

- 7.2. 10 cemeteries and 32 churchyards have been identified across Wigan Borough with a combined area of 90 hectares. This equates to an average of 0.28 hectares per 1,000 people across the borough. No size threshold has been applied so all sites identified have been included in the report. All cemeteries are shown in Appendix A9 and listed in Appendix B6.
- 7.3. The largest sites are Leigh Cemetery at 13 hectares, Gidlow Cemetery in Standish/North Wigan at 11 hectares and Lower Ince Cemetery at 10 hectares.
- 7.4. The residents' survey (2013) showed that 47% of respondents had visited a cemetery or churchyard within the previous 12 months.

Accessibility

- 7.5. The residents' survey also indicated that half of current users walk to the cemetery or churchyard, of which one-third take less than 15 minutes. Only a small number cycled while four out of ten used the car or bus. Half of those surveyed travelled for 15 minutes or less to a cemetery or churchyard with the rest travelling for up to 30 minutes or more.
- 7.6. No accessibility standard has been set as provision is based on demand for burial space. Similarly, cemeteries in adjacent local authorities such as Bolton and Chorley have catchments that extend into Wigan Borough and it is also likely that residents from neighbouring authorities use provision in Wigan.
- 7.7. The 2013 residents' survey found that most people are satisfied with the number of cemeteries and churchyards. Over half of respondents stated that provision is sufficient or average while a small number rated it poor or very poor.

Management

- 7.8. Provision of burial space is not a statutory requirement for councils however provision to dispose of the deceased is. When taking demand into consideration (roughly 75% of the deceased are buried) it is necessary to provide ample burial plots to accommodate localised need.
- 7.9. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles manage and maintain the majority of active cemetery provision in the borough on behalf of the council. This includes grass cutting, shrub and hedge pruning, and general site maintenance (bin emptying and path inspections).
- 7.10. Exceptions to this include the privately run crematorium at Howe Bridge, New Manchester Woodland Cemetery and the churchyards which are managed by the respective churches. Some churchyards have now reached full capacity and are maintained by Wigan Council for health and safety under local agreement. Greater emphasis is placed on maintaining the cemeteries that have new burial space available.
- 7.11. A report on the issues affecting the provision of cremation and cemetery services in the borough was produced by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles in 2006. It highlighted the diminishing availability of burial space, common with many areas. However, take-up of burial space has been slower in recent years due to increasing preference for cremation.
- 7.12. With the current rate of take-up of burial plots it is anticipated that capacity for new burials will be reached at the following dates:
- | | |
|--|------|
| • Howe Bridge Cemetery and Crematorium, Atherton | 2025 |
| • Hindley Cemetery, Hindley | 2017 |
| • Leigh Cemetery, Leigh | 2025 |
| • Tyldesley Cemetery, Tyldesley | 2018 |
| • Gidlow Cemetery, Standish | 2025 |
| • Westwood Cemetery, Wigan South | 2018 |
- 7.13. The rise in preference of cremation over burial is likely to continue which may reduce the uptake of new burial land. There is a requirement for suitable public memorial space for those who do not scatter ashes; to meet this requirement Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles offer the option of leasing space for a memorial plaque for periods of 10 years to store cremated remains. This can take place using ground level memorial tablets or in columbaria (an above-ground memorial for the respectful placement of an urn) which can be sited on existing burial sites.

- 7.14. Consultation with key officers has identified a potential opportunity to expand Gidlow Cemetery on approximately 17 hectares of land currently identified as semi-natural greenspace, either side of the access road and to the south of the existing cemetery. This land is in council ownership. 3.5 hectares of land currently identified as outdoor sports pitch provision has also been identified to expand Leigh Cemetery. The pitch provision would need to be relocated when the additional cemetery land is required.
- 7.15. In order to make best use of available land other councils have reduced the exclusive rights to a burial plot for a set period of time. For example, if time periods are reduced from 100 years to 50 years this enables plots to be re-used more quickly, effectively doubling the existing burial capacity. There is currently sufficient land available to meet burial requirements in Wigan Borough, but this option could be considered in the future if it was to become necessary. The use of land for burial and memorial purposes can therefore be planned and managed in a variety of ways.

Quality

- 7.16. 79% of cemeteries and churchyards score 'high' for quality against the criteria. Additional quality factors have been used to score this category including how safe and secure people consider the site to be, whether parking is available and how accessible each plot is. The highest scoring cemeteries are Howe Bridge, Atherton and Leigh. These sites score well due to the range of facilities available and high levels of maintenance achieved.
- 7.17. The lower scoring sites for quality include the graveyard on Heath Road in Ashton, Church Road graveyard in Astley and St Barnabas Churchyard in Wigan South. This is due to less frequent maintenance, a lack of surveillance leading to areas feeling unsafe, a lack of parking, and/or poor boundaries and signage. Some cemeteries also suffer from vandalism and anti-social behaviour which leads to a feeling of being unsecure.
- 7.18. The residents' survey indicated that half of respondents felt that the overall quality of cemeteries and churchyards was good or very good. One third felt that the quality was average and a very small number felt it to be poor or very poor.
- 7.19. Some war memorials and cenotaphs within churchyards such as Ashton St Thomas' Church, Hindley St Peter's Church and within Ince Cemetery have benefitted from funding from the War Memorials Trust. Cleaning and repair or restoration of the monuments and their immediate surroundings was

undertaken prior to events marking the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.

Value

- 7.20. Churches are often valuable as a focus for the town or village or the particular religious community they serve. The woodland cemetery offers unique provision with a catchment area far beyond the borough boundary. It is therefore considered appropriate that all cemeteries and churchyards are scored 'high' for value. This is supported by consultation with Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and through the 2013 residents' survey. When asked to name their favourite open space in the borough, Gidlow and Hindley Cemeteries were mentioned as quiet and peaceful locations and as convenient and pleasant short cuts.
- 7.21. Value is also demonstrated in the residents' survey by the number of visits people make. 15% of those who visited cemeteries and churchyards did so at least once a week or more frequently and one in five visited once a month.
- 7.22. Sites scoring particularly highly for value include:
- All Saints Churchyard, Golborne and Lowton
 - St Mary's Churchyard, Market Place, Leigh
 - St Wilfrid's Churchyard, Standish
 - St David's Churchyard, Haigh Road, Aspull
 - Leigh Cemetery
- 7.23. These sites scored well because of their settings within conservation areas and/or because they include listed buildings and monuments.
- 7.24. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles recognises the value of cemeteries as an amenity resource that can be used by residents for walking, education and for observing wildlife. These uses are encouraged by signposting at entrances and community engagement. There has however been little success in establishing 'Friends of' groups for any of the sites, although some progress has been made in this respect at Atherton Cemetery.

8. Provision for Children and Young People

Introduction

- 8.1. Provision for Children and Young People includes areas designed primarily for play and social interaction for children and young people such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teen shelters. It also includes unequipped or casual play areas which are grassed areas away from main roads that are well overlooked and considered safe for children to play on.

Current provision

- 8.2. 285 play spaces (123 equipped and 162 unequipped) have been identified across Wigan Borough as provision for children and young people, with a combined area of over 113 hectares. This equates to an average of 0.35 hectares per 1,000 people across the borough. When divided into equipped and unequipped the equipped sites make up around 1/10th of the area due to their relatively small size. As a result many of the comments received through consultation on this provision also relate to the wider area (casual play area) in which they are set.
- 8.3. Play provision is sub-divided into five categories in line with definitions from Fields in Trust (FIT), as set out in Table 11 below.

Category	Definition	Recommended Ha per 1,000 people	Ha per 1,000 people in Wigan
Equipped			
Local Area for Play (LAP)	Must measure 0.01 hectares or more and contain more than one piece of play equipment.	0.25	0.03
Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	Must measure 0.04 hectares or more and contain 5 or more pieces of play equipment.		
Youth Provision (YP)	Includes play provision for children aged 12 years and above such as skate parks, BMX tracks, MUGA's (multi-use games area), basketball courts, youth shelters and games walls.		
Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	Must measure 0.1 hectares or more. It may be divided into sub sections and possibly contain play equipment for a variety of ages.		
Unequipped			
Casual Area for Play (CAP)	Has no equipment but it is designated for casual play.	0.55	0.32

Table 11: Amount of provision by play space category

- 8.4. All sites are shown in Appendix A10 and a map showing just equipped sites is available in Appendix A11. Equipped play facilities are listed in Appendix B7 and all unequipped facilities are listed in Appendix B8.
- 8.5. The residents' survey (2013) showed that 43% of respondents had visited a play area for children and 12% for teenagers within the previous 12 months.

Accessibility

- 8.6. The residents' survey also indicated that nearly three quarters of current users walk to access play provision, for which over three quarters walk for less than 15 minutes. Only 5% of users cycled while one-quarter used the car or bus. Catchment distances relate to the size of the play site and the amount of equipment available, the larger play sites are generally located within main parks and have the furthest average travel distance. Travelling by bus or car to use play facilities would be most appropriate for provision at the borough's principal parks (Mesnes Park in Wigan, Haigh Hall and Pennington Flash Country Park) as people are prepared to travel further for a greater range of facilities. Catchments are applied as set out in Table 12 below.

Facility	Walk time	Straight line distance
LAP	Under 5 minutes	300 metres
Casual	Under 5 minutes	300 metres
LEAP	Up to 10 minutes	600 metres
Youth	Up to 10 minutes	600 metres
NEAP	Up to 20 minutes	1,200 metres

Table 12: Catchment distances for play provision

- 8.7. There are very few areas across the borough that face a total catchment gap and are deficit from all play area types, however there are many areas within each settlement that do not fall within a catchment zone of a LAP or casual play area. As such, many residents are reliant on larger LEAP, NEAP, or youth provision sites which are a further distance away.
- 8.8. Half of respondents to the 2013 residents survey said that provision of play facilities for children and young people in the borough is sufficient or average but just over one-quarter said it is poor or very poor. This suggests that catchment gaps should be addressed and the level of provision improved when opportunities arise as a result of new development or other initiatives.
- 8.9. The vast majority of play areas are managed by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and the councils Leisure and Property team and are inspected weekly to

ensure that they are safe and in reasonable condition. A small number of play areas are managed by private companies commissioned by housing developers.

Quality

- 8.10. The quality criteria used to assess play facilities included the level of investment needed to improve provision, whether the play area is situated within another category of open space such as a park or amenity green space and the availability and standard of associated facilities such as paths and car parks. Some sites score highly for being well located however the play equipment is in need of improvement. In these circumstances an amber code for quality has been awarded to acknowledge the need for investment. Similarly other sites have a lower score for lacking a suitable number of facilities but the play equipment is of good quality, when these criteria are weighted the sites have retained a high quality score overall.
- 8.11. The sites with a lower quality rating have been identified in the play priority list as being in need of improvement. The most common problems affecting the quality of these sites are bad drainage, poor surfacing, old and dated equipment, and vandalism.
- 8.12. Since 2007 a large number of play areas have received significant investment. These improvements have converted LAPs to LEAPs and some LEAPs to NEAPs, thereby providing a larger catchment area for existing play provision and ensuring quality standards are maintained over time.
- 8.13. Play areas that received investment in 2015-16 include:
- Haigh Country Park, Aspull
 - Parklands Drive, Aspull
 - Howe Bridge, Atherton
 - Leyland park, Hindley
 - Lilford park, Leigh
 - Braithwaite Park, Lowton
 - Sovereign Close, Lowton
 - Cobmoor, Orrell
 - Holgate, Orrell
 - Marsh Green Teen meet, Orrell
 - St Aidens, Orrell
 - Ashfield Park, Standish
 - Union Street, Tyldesley
 - Margaret Street, Wigan North
 - Vauxhall Road, Wigan North
 - Whitley, Wigan North

- Gayton Close, Wigan South
- Kipling Park, Wigan South

8.14. Vandalism, including damage to equipment and surfacing, is a major problem for play areas. It can lead to equipment being removed for safety reasons and, as funds are limited, the council cannot replace all equipment that is damaged. A small number of sites that have received investment for improvement, including Vauxhall Road and Marsh Green play area in Wigan South and Ashfield Park in Standish, have since been vandalised.

8.15. The life span of equipment can otherwise depend on the materials used, levels of usage and drainage. Most play equipment companies provide a guarantee of around 15 years for timber and 25 years for metal structures. There is therefore a continuous need to invest in play equipment when it reaches a certain age.

8.16. When asked to rate the overall quality of provision for children and young people, one-third of respondents indicated that it was good or very good, one-fifth said it was average, while nearly one-third felt it to be poor or very poor. Lilford Park has a good quality play area and received positive comments. The play facilities at Alexandra Park, Ashfield Park and Jubilee Park were similarly mentioned.

Value

8.17. Most play areas score highly due to their value locally within a community. Those that did not score highly include provision at Bolton Road, Aspull and Bryn Gates recreation ground as these have minimal equipment and provide only a very basic play experience. These sites also have a small catchment area in comparison to other sites. No play area has been scored as low value as all facilities provide some value for play in the locality.

8.18. Value is also demonstrated in the 2013 residents' survey by the number of visits people make to facilities for children and young people with 63% indicating that they did so at least once a week or more frequently and 21% visited once a month.

9. Civic Spaces

Introduction

- 9.1. Civic Spaces include civic squares, market places and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians and public gatherings. They often provide settings for civic buildings or war memorials and, as such, host events such as annual Remembrance Day ceremonies and Christmas markets, as well as other social and cultural activities.

Current provision

- 9.2. 20 sites have been identified as civic spaces across Wigan Borough with a combined area of 2 hectares. This equates to an average of 0.005 hectares per 1,000 people. No size threshold has been applied. All civic spaces are shown in Appendix A12 and listed in Appendix B9.
- 9.3. The largest contributors to provision are Market Place in Wigan and Town Hall Square in Leigh. Each is approximately 0.25 hectares.
- 9.4. The residents' survey (2013) showed that 55% of respondents had visited a civic space within the previous 12 months. It is likely however that this figure should be higher as residents may not have appreciated the distinction as a civic space.

Accessibility

- 9.5. The residents' survey indicated that nearly two-thirds walk to civic spaces, of which most take less than 15 minutes. No accessibility standard is set for civic spaces as provision is based on opportunity and civic design.
- 9.6. The 2013 residents' survey found that most people are satisfied with the numbers of civic spaces in the borough however 16% of respondents felt that provision is insufficient.

Management and availability

- 9.7. Wigan Council generally manages and maintains the civic spaces identified as part of the street maintenance and cleansing programme. A Town Centre Unit has been set up to oversee public spaces in town centres and is responsible for programming and managing around 40 special events annually, drawing in up to 300,000 people throughout the year.

- 9.8. The traditional outdoor market spaces in Ashton, Hindley and Atherton have been replaced in recent years by car parks. This is in response to a change in the dynamic of town centre uses. If these sites are redeveloped in future it may be appropriate to seek to include civic space in the overall design.

Quality

- 9.9. 95% of civic spaces are regarded as being of high quality with a good standard of maintenance, ample provision of seating and bins, and are free of graffiti and litter. The standard of quality of these sites is monitored by the Town Centre Unit. They are generally well served by public transport and meet the needs of a variety of user groups.
- 9.10. Most civic spaces are covered by CCTV helping to keep incidences of anti-social behaviour to a minimum. However, constant monitoring of anti-social behaviour is required as demographics change with time in various locations. Greater Manchester Police also use Section 30 powers to seize alcohol from people in civic spaces if their behaviour is likely to cause nuisance.
- 9.11. The spaces that did not score as highly for quality are less accessible by public transport, lacked access to public toilets or lacked seating and bins. These factors are not always essential for a small local space however. Other spaces, although scoring well still require improvement such as the square in Tyldesley which saw disruption from the construction of the Leigh Guided Busway and is awaiting ongoing improvements and landscaping.
- 9.12. War memorials and cenotaphs in civic spaces at Aspull, Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Leigh and Standish have benefitted from funding from the War Memorials Trust. This work was undertaken prior to events marking the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War and involved cleaning and repairing the monuments and their immediate surroundings.
- 9.13. The distribution of civic space is likely to change in Wigan town centre over the coming years as proposals to redesign and refurbish parts of the town centre are implemented, including the Galleries and outdoor market. These are likely to result in the creation of new high quality civic space.
- 9.14. One third of respondents to the 2013 residents' survey thought that civic spaces were of high or very high quality with a further third selecting average quality. Some people felt that these spaces were poor or very poor but several were unsure, this is likely to be because they were unable to identify a civic space. The poorer scores tended to come from residents of the smaller settlements which do not have significant amounts of civic space.

Value

- 9.15. 85% of civic spaces also scored highly for value reflecting their presence as a focus for community events, this is particularly true around Remembrance Sunday or the Christmas period and for other special events. One of the most popular events is the Armed Forces Day. Other spaces host weekly or more regular activities such as markets, concerts, displays and summer beaches for children. This is particularly true of the main civic spaces in Wigan and Leigh.
- 9.16. The spaces that did not score so highly for value against the criteria tended to lack prominence on a main road or pedestrian thoroughfare, or were small spaces on which only occasional events are held. However this does not mean they do not provide an important focus for the community.
- 9.17. Value is also demonstrated through the residents' survey by the number of visits people make to a civic space. 58% of those responding to the survey visited civic spaces at least once a week. The new Believe Square created outside Wigan Life Centre North received mention in the residents' survey as being a favourite space. This indicates that historic association is not always essential and newly created spaces can achieve high ratings.

10. Outdoor sports provision

Introduction

- 10.1. Outdoor sports provision is sub-divided into pitch sports and non-pitch sports. Pitch sports that are most frequently played in the borough are football, rugby league, rugby union, cricket and hockey. Non pitch sports include tennis, golf, bowls and athletics. Provision can include grass or artificial surfaces and also includes education provision, especially where it is available to wider community use.
- 10.2. There is provision for water sport facilities, and clubs and associations, across the borough. Water sports include fishing/angling, water-skiing, sailing, kayaking, and canoeing, these facilities are considered in Chapter 3 (settlement profiles).
- 10.3. Our approach is informed by Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities (July 2014). It assesses:
 - Quantity – what facilities there are and how many
 - Quality – how good the facilities are
 - Accessibility – where they are located
 - Availability – how available they are
- 10.4. This assessment does not just rely on council facilities, but includes key information across all sectors including education, voluntary and private sector provision. It also considers new facilities or planned upgrades to existing facilities, planned closures and facilities that are not currently available for community use.
- 10.5. All facilities have been mapped and catchment areas applied, see Appendix A13, this provides a spatial understanding of the facilities and how they relate to health indices such as obesity and cardiovascular disease.
- 10.6. There are two main aspects of quality affecting sporting provision:
 - Condition – the general age, appeal and fabric of the facility and ancillary provision, such as changing rooms, and whether it meets the needs and expectations of users
 - Fitness for purpose – the technical specifications of the facility and ancillary provision, and whether it meets current standards for the relevant sport at the appropriate levels

- 10.7. There are two key measures of the availability of a facility: how much it is used and how much it could be used. Availability is influenced by:
- Management and ownership (public, private, voluntary or education)
 - Programming and sports development policies (opening times, restricted uses)
 - Cost (a potential barrier to use)
 - Patterns of use (peak times, popularity).
- 10.8. Quality and availability information is captured from user surveys wherever possible and from site managers. The views of national or regional governing bodies have also been sought.
- 10.9. The lack of volunteers for sports was raised throughout consultation. A new website was launched in January 2015 by the Wigan Sports Development Group called Wigan VIP. It is a volunteer website and offers a range of opportunities for sport-related activities in Wigan that require volunteer support.
- 10.10. Volunteering will also be helped as part of the Wigan Deal volunteering scheme with Wigan Council and Trust in Leigh.
- 10.11. SHAPE (Sport, Health And Physical Education) is Wigan Borough's 5 year action plan to get local residents involved in regular physical activity or sport. The plan has been developed in partnership with Wigan Council, Ashton Leigh and Wigan Primary Care Trust, the Wigan Borough Sports Council, Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, and other partners in the private and voluntary sectors. This multi-agency approach is designed to achieve maximum impact in improving the health and wellbeing of residents by improving activity rates.
- 10.12. The SHAPE action plan acknowledges the role planning can play in improving the built environment and leisure facilities. This includes provision of cycle lanes, better maintained parks, and new sporting facilities such as the 6 Active Life sports centers across the borough.

11. Cricket

Current provision

- 11.1. 15 sites have been identified for cricket provision across Wigan Borough equalling 0.05 pitches per 1,000 people, see Appendix A14. All are privately run cricket clubs.
- 11.2. The total playable area is based on the Sport England standard average pitch size of 1.37 hectares and does not represent the combined land take of cricket clubs.

General organisation

- 11.3. Cricket clubs are distributed across all settlements in the borough with the exception of Aspull, Ashton and Shevington. Given the distances clubs travel to play fixtures and the number of clubs in adjacent districts, this is not regarded as a particular problem. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles' Sports Development Unit is not aware of any plans by the Lancashire Cricket Board or the local development club to establish any more clubs in the area.
- 11.4. All cricket grounds in the borough are maintained by the clubs, including Atherton, Golborne and Goose Green Cricket Clubs that lease their sites from the council. The council does not maintain any cricket pitches.
- 11.5. Cricket provision is coordinated by the Wigan Cricket Development Group, which has representatives from the borough's senior cricket clubs along with officers from the Sports Development Unit. The group works closely with the cricket community including clubs, players, schools, coaches, national bodies, the Lancashire Cricket Board, and other interested parties.
- 11.6. The main focus is developing youngsters and encouraging and assisting clubs to attain Clubmark status. This is a standard mark to ensure that high quality and safeguarding standards are achieved and maintained at clubs. The Development Group also helps clubs to secure funding for the development of club facilities and encourages clubs to participate in an increasingly prestigious annual 20/20 tournament. Consultation with the clubs revealed growth in junior membership since 2007 with many clubs anticipating this to continue. All clubs that responded to the survey hosted a junior section providing 3-5 junior teams.
- 11.7. Some cricket clubs have links with schools, including Orrell Red Triangle Cricket Club with St James' Primary School and with Upholland High School,

just outside of the borough in West Lancashire. The Wigan Cricket Development Group encourages and supports school-club links through the delivery of coaching sessions in schools. These are usually undertaken indoors in school sports halls.

Ref	Club/Site name	Settlement area	Team breakdown		
			Senior men's	Senior women's / mixed	Junior
AB/OSF/15	Spring View Cricket Ground, Warrington Road	Abram and Platt Bridge / Wigan South	3	0	4
AT/OSF/6	Atherton Cricket Club, Higham Park, Leigh Road, Howe Bridge	Atherton	1	2	3
GL/OSF/17	Golborne Cricket Club, off Stone Cross Lane North	Golborne and Lowton	4	0	5
HI/OSF/11	Hindley St Peters Cricket Club, Hurst Street	Hindley	3	0	4
AT/OSF/16	Westleigh Methodist Cricket Club, Westleigh Lane	Leigh	1	0	0
LS/OSF/7	Leigh Cricket Club, Beech Walk	Leigh	3	0	6
LW/OSF/3	Westleigh Cricket Club, The Pingots	Leigh	2	0	4
OR/OSF/2	Orrell Red Triangle Cricket Club, Winstanley Road	Orrell	4	0	6
ST/OSF/2	Standish Cricket Club, Green Lane	Standish	3	0	5
TY/OSF/4	Astley and Tyldesley Cricket Club, Meanley Road	Tyldesley and Astley	3	0	5
WC/OSF/2	Wigan Cricket Club, Bull Hey, Parsons Walk	Wigan North	4	0	4
PE/OSF/12	Norley Hall Cricket Club, Norley Road	Wigan South	3	0	3
WI/OSF/1	Winstanley Park Cricket Club, Hall Lane	Wigan South	3	0	4
WI/OSF/2	Highfield Cricket Club, Billinge Road	Wigan South	4	0	6
WI/OSF/14	Goose Green Cricket Club, Paris Avenue, Winstanley	Wigan South	2	0	0

Table 13: Cricket Clubs in Wigan Borough and numbers of teams (2014)

- 11.8. Teams play in a number of different leagues including the Liverpool and District League, the Bolton and District Cricket Association, and the Wigan and District Youth League. Senior matches are generally played at the weekends, while junior matches are played on midweek evenings. Many clubs reported that they used local schools for indoor training and also the indoor cricket facility at Robin Park Sports Centre. However some clubs reported that a lack of training facilities prevents further growth and that it is difficult to retain players once they leave school.

Demand

- 11.9. Bolton and District Cricket Association stated that there are sufficient pitches in the borough to accommodate the number of matches to be played in a season, both currently and in the future. Club consultation did not identify a lack of pitches although some are operating at capacity, including Leigh and Orrell Red Triangle (junior section) and, as a result, are not recruiting new members at present. Pitches are in constant use at these clubs throughout the season for matches and training. Without careful management this could have an impact on pitch quality.
- 11.10. Atherton Cricket Club was the only club to report an anticipated decline in playing members (junior males and veterans), although they expected junior and senior females to increase. Other clubs expected membership to remain relatively stable. Clubs which expect to increase male membership include Spring View, Golborne and Wigan.
- 11.11. Two clubs commented that the demand for cricket and the availability of players is adversely affected by the prominence of football and rugby at schools, especially when summer rugby and football is played.
- 11.12. Latent demand is difficult to determine accurately as clubs will close membership if capacity is reached. There is little prospect of additional pitches being provided unless a new private club is formed, although there is evidence that some grounds could host more teams if investment could be secured to improve the quality and range of facilities, especially changing rooms for female players.
- 11.13. Issues of concern reported through consultation include security of tenure on council owned sites, improved security for the venue and a lack of coaches. Levels of demand could be accommodated if some of these issues could be addressed.
- 11.14. Given the numbers of teams currently reported the following team generation rates could be expected for cricket.

Age Group	Population	Number of teams	Teams generated per 1,000 population	Team generation rate
Juniors (mixed) 11-17	26,260	59	2.2	1:445
Senior (male) 18-55	81,640	43	0.52	1:1899

Table 14: Team generation rates for cricket

Women and Girls Cricket

11.15. Leigh Cricket Club and Winstanley Cricket Club are recognised by the Lancashire Cricket Board as centres for excellence for girls' cricket at under-9 and under-11 age groups. At the junior level girls are participating in cricket through mixed teams at a number of clubs including Atherton, Astley and Tyldesley, Golborne, Leigh, Orrell Red Triangle and Wigan. However, a lack of segregated changing facilities and junior facilities is preventing further growth, especially competitively at Atherton Cricket Club. Junior and senior players are anticipated to increase in numbers at Atherton and Leigh Cricket Clubs, while at Wigan and Norley Hall Cricket Clubs they expect to remain the same.

Quality of pitches and other facilities

- 11.16. Club consultation and site assessments rate the majority of pitches as being of good quality. Clubs either employ a groundsman or rely on volunteers to maintain the playing surface in good condition. Issues were raised at certain clubs regarding damage from unauthorised use by horses and golf practice. Poor drainage was reported as a problem at Spring View. Bolton and District Cricket Association rate the quality of grounds in the borough as adequate.
- 11.17. Golborne, Westleigh, Orrell Red Triangle, Norley Hall and Wigan Cricket Clubs raised the need to replace or provide practice nets or artificial wickets. Similarly, Spring View, Golborne, Westleigh, Orrell Red Triangle and Norley Hall reported a need to refurbish changing facilities / the pavilion.
- 11.18. Goose Green Cricket Club has recently been promoted into a higher league. As a consequence the club needs to invest in changing rooms and shower and toilet facilities as well as improving the training nets. The club currently use nets at nearby Highfield Cricket Club for practice but need their own to progress with the training of its members.
- 11.19. Bolton and District Cricket Association raised a wider range of problems, including vandalism, damage by cycles and motorcycles, dog fouling and litter. However they also specified that these problems were no worse in Wigan Borough than in other places. When asked about what club priorities should be for future investment, they identified improvements in the quality of facilities, refurbishing changing rooms and improving site security.

12. Football

Introduction

- 12.1. The term football is used in the names of a number of sports but in this study it refers to Association Football, otherwise referred to as soccer. Provision for football includes grass and artificial surfaces and includes council, education and privately owned sites. This section covers grass pitches that are specifically used for football and are hired out on that basis. If the site is not hired out it is classified as a playing field and is recorded as such or is covered in the education chapter if used by a school. Artificial surfaces are also covered in a separate section.
- 12.2. 16 sites in the borough have pitches for both rugby and football. Most of these are high school playing fields although a number of council sites also cater for both sports. In these instances the sites have been put under the most utilised sport.
- 12.3. The majority of secondary school sites provide for both football and rugby. In addition, primary school playing fields provide a much needed space for sport and can be used for junior and mini soccer. However these sites are generally not open to general public use.

Current provision

- 12.4. 75 sites have been identified as providing for football, both formally and informally, with a combined area of 329 hectares (154ha for football and 176ha for playing fields). This equates to 1 ha per 1,000 people.
- 12.5. These sites are shown in Appendix A15 and listed in Appendix B10 (formal football facilities) and Appendix B11 (playing fields and unmarked pitches).

General organisation

- 12.6. The Football Association is the national governing body for football from the grassroots through to elite level. It is administered locally by the Lancashire Football Association and the Manchester Football Association.
- 12.7. Teams in both senior and junior football play in a number of local leagues including the South Lancs League, Warrington League and Wigan Youth League. Five of the boroughs clubs play in the National Pyramid System in the North West Counties League.

- 12.8. The majority of council pitches are managed by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles. On certain sites the allocations are administered by the league. At Howe Bridge the pitches are allocated on Sundays by the Wigan Youth League. Where grounds are leased the club has full responsibility for the site. Private sites are managed by the clubs.
- 12.9. Wigan Athletic Community Trust is a registered charity that works across four areas: football and sport, community cohesion, education and health, and the Latics in the community scheme. The charity provides educational and sport programmes throughout the borough.
- 6.29. A new Sport and Recreation development off Vicarage Lane in Shevington was granted planning permission in January 2016, the new facility will include two football pitches, a rugby pitch, around 50 allotment plots and 10 raised beds. The site will also have a car park.

School club links

- 12.10. Many clubs use artificial pitches at schools for training during the winter months, primarily at secondary schools. Clubs have commented that it can be quite costly to hire these facilities. However many council pitches are not lit and get worn out from over use and poor drainage and are therefore not suitable for training in the winter months.

Women and girls football

- 12.11. There are only a few clubs in the borough that operate women only teams. There was a dedicated girls' football pitch at Laithwaite Park in Wigan South which has now been leased to the Wigan Football Foundation, they are required to provide facilities for girls' football in the lease however.
- 12.12. Throughout the consultation clubs have expressed an interest in developing female teams however the lack of adequate changing facilities throughout the borough limits this.

Quality and Value

- 12.13. Through the sports survey, clubs identified several areas of concern about the quality of provision, including poor pitch quality, unauthorised usage and the lack of changing facilities at some sites. Lack of, or inadequate changing facilities affect women and junior football in particular.

- 12.14. Clubs also raised insufficient maintenance on council pitches as an issue. This is exasperated by poor drainage, bad weather and over playing and can result in a number of matches being cancelled in the winter months. Some clubs stated that they have lost players to clubs with better facilities.
- 12.15. Council pitches are publicly accessible and this can cause a number of problems including dog fouling and motorbike use. In addition, clubs have reported unauthorised use of pitches by rugby clubs for training to prevent further damage to their own pitches.

Demand

- 12.16. Hiring artificial and grass pitches is a significant expense. Clubs stated that funding is scarce and that this stops them from developing further.
- 12.17. One club noted that there is a lot of competition for facilities especially during the winter months and that this has caused them to lose players due to training facilities only being available late in the evening.

Club developments

- 12.18. The 2007 action plan identified a need to adopt a strategic management approach to all facilities in the borough to implement necessary pitch quality improvements. This could be accomplished by leasing out a number of sites in line with the council's strategic objectives to allow some sites to be self-managed, and the remaining council sites to receive more focussed improvement.
- 12.19. Previously the council leased sites to local sports clubs on an ad hoc basis. In February 2013 a council policy for the leasing of sport pitches and associated assets was introduced. Since then, 4 sites have been leased to local sports clubs; Little Lane pitches to Winstanley Warriors, Laithwaite Park to the Football Federation, and Dootsons Park and Hesketh Meadow to East Leigh Junior Football Club. This enables clubs to establish a base and apply for external funding that the council cannot access. It also encourages community ownership and allows the council to reprioritise spend to other pitches and playing fields.

13. Rugby League

Current provision

- 13.1. 43 pitches across 15 sites have been identified as rugby league provision, which equates to 0.14 pitches per 1,000 people or 1 pitch per 7500 people. This includes privately owned and leased sites and council sites, see Appendix A16.
- 13.2. 16 sites in the borough have pitches used for rugby league, union and football. This is predominantly at educational sites which are covered in a separate chapter. Pitches at other council and private sites have been considered under the predominant sport on the site, none of which are rugby league.
- 13.3. Several rugby teams play on sites used by other sports including New Springs ARLFC who play at Woodshaw Park, the home of Aspull RUFC, and Wigan Bulldogs who play at Scot Lane, a council owned site used mainly for football. These sites are covered in the respective sports sections.

General organisation

- 13.4. The Rugby Football League (RFL) is the national governing body for professional and semi-professional rugby. It also administers the amateur and junior games alongside the British Amateur Rugby League Association.
- 13.5. In 2012 amateur rugby league underwent a fundamental change, with the move by most of the competitions from August - May to February – October, changing the demand for pitches and training venues. The RFL states that there has been a 27% increase in the participation of Rugby League in that timeframe.
- 13.6. Teams play in a number of different leagues including the North West Rugby League and the North West Counties Junior League. Five of the borough's teams play in the National Conference League which is the highest level in the amateur game.
- 13.7. Wigan Warriors Community Foundation and Leigh Centurions Community Foundation are charities set up by professional clubs to promote the participation in Rugby League in Wigan and the North West. The charity provides coaching programmes as well as other health sessions. They also work with both primary and secondary schools and provide education programmes.

School club links

13.8. Many clubs use facilities at secondary schools and colleges for training including artificial pitches. Some also use gyms for fitness training. Flood lit artificial pitches at secondary schools are at full capacity during the winter months with competition also from other sports.

Ref	Club / site name	Settlement	No. of available pitches			Team breakdown			
			Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior Men	Senior Women	Junior	Mini
AB/OSF/20	Spring View ARLFC	Abram and Platt Bridge	3	-	-	1	-	1	-
BR/OSF/9	Ashton Bears, Low Bank Road	Ashton	2	-	-	2	-	7	-
AT/OSF/15	Atherton Dragons, Kings Park	Atherton	-	1	1	-	-	1	1
GL/OSF/12	Golborne Parkside ARLFC	Golborne	5	-	-	2	-	12	-
HI/OSF/5	Hindley ARLFC	Hindley	2	1	-	2	-	12	-
LW/OSF/5	Leigh Miners ARLFC (Seniors)	Leigh	1	-	-	4	1	-	-
LG/OSF/8	Leigh Miners ARLFC (Juniors)	Leigh	3	2	3	-	-	11	-
LS/OSF/15	Leigh East ARLFC	Leigh	3	0	0	4	1	9	-
PE/OSF/1	Orrell St James ARLFC	Orrell	2	-	1	2	-	5	7
OR/OSF/14	Co-operative Community Stadium	Orrell	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PE/OSF/4	Shevington Sharks ARLFC	Shevington	1	0	-	2	1	8	-
IN/OSF/14	Ince Rosebridge	Wigan North	1	-	-	2	-	-	-
IN/OSF/12	Wigan St Patricks ARLFC	Wigan North	2	-	-	3	1	8	6
WM/OSF/5	Wigan St Judes ARLFC, Parsons Meadow	Wigan South	3	-	1	2	1	14	1
PE/OSF/10	Wigan St Cuthbert's ARLFC	Wigan South	3	-	2	2	-	7	4

Table 15: Sites and clubs in Wigan Borough with availability of pitches and numbers of teams

Women and girls' rugby league

13.9. The RFL states that participation by women and girls in rugby league is increasing year on year by around of 40%. Clubs responding to the sports survey have backed this up with increases at both junior and senior levels. Clubs having their own sites with changing facilities helps. A lack of suitable

changing facilities at council sites could impact on women and girls participation for those teams.

Demand

- 13.10. Clubs have expressed a desire to increase the number of teams but are constrained by problems like player retention, lack of volunteers and pitch capacity. Clubs expect playing levels to remain largely the same as many are already at capacity.
- 13.11. The sports survey indicates that clubs find it difficult to retain players after they turn 18 as many do not continue on to open age. They also note that it is hard to retain coaches as children move through the age groups and this can create coaching gaps at clubs.
- 13.12. Clubs have also stated that there is a lack of flood lit facilities to train during winter months and there is competition for use of facilities at secondary schools. For example, the artificial pitch at Golborne High School is at full capacity during winter and teams have to double up to train.
- 13.13. A new Sport and Recreation development off Vicarage Lane in Shevington was granted planning permission in January 2016, the new facility will include two football pitches, a rugby pitch, around 50 allotment plots and 10 raised beds. The site will also have a car park.

Quality of pitches and other facilities

- 13.14. Pitches are generally maintained by the respective clubs including those that lease from the council. Council sites are maintained by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles.
- 13.15. Club consultation has identified pitch drainage issues and pitch surface quality to be of major concern as well as installing artificial pitches and improving changing facilities.
- 13.16. Security is also a concern for clubs as the public can generally access their sites. Ashton Bears' club house was destroyed by fire due to arson in 2013.

Club Developments

- 13.17. Orrell St James ARLFC has leased the playing fields at Bankes Avenue in Wigan. This has allowed them to access grants to build adequate changing facilities at the site. The club sub-lease the football pitches to Wigan Athletic Ladies FC and Wigan Athletic Boys FC.

14. Rugby Union

Current provision

- 14.1. 15 pitches across 5 sites have been identified as rugby union provision, which equates to 0.05 pitches per 1,000 people, or 1 pitch per 21,200 people. All are privately owned by rugby union clubs, see Appendix A17

General organisation

- 14.2. The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is the national governing body for both grassroots and elite rugby in England. Administration locally is provided by the Lancashire County Rugby Football Union (LRFU). The rugby playing season is from September to April and teams play in a number of leagues across the north-west.
- 14.3. In addition to the club sites listed in Table 16, a small number of pitches at education sites are used for training including at St John Rigby College, Abraham Guest Academy and Hesketh Fletcher High School. These sites are covered in the section on education provision.
- 14.4. The main focus for the Sports Development Unit is developing youngsters and encouraging and assisting clubs to attain Clubmark status. This is a standard mark to ensure that quality and safeguarding standards are achieved and maintained at clubs. The unit also helps clubs to secure funding to improve existing pitches and other facilities and secure new pitches. Consultation with the clubs revealed growth in junior membership as a result of the initiatives of the Wigan Rugby Development Group. There are 33 junior teams operating across the borough.
- 14.5. Rugby union clubs are only found in five settlements. Given the distances clubs travel to play fixtures this is not seen as a problem, although many juniors feed into rugby league clubs as they are more numerous. The change of the rugby league season to the spring and summer has also seen players shuttle between union and league.

School club links

- 14.6. An agreement between school and rugby union clubs exists only in Orrell at present. As clubs can be quite self-focussed, some duplication in establishing school-club links has resulted.

14.7. Clubs reported that they use local schools and gyms for training. Other clubs reported that a lack of training facilities prevents further growth and that it is difficult to retain players once they leave school or move to rugby league. Tyldesley RUFC reported that a lack of development within schools impacts on the ability to attract and retain players.

Ref	Club / Site name	Settlement	No. of available pitches			Team breakdown			
			Snr	Jnr	Mini	Snr men	Snr women	Jnr	Mini
AN/OSF/7	Aspull RUFC, Woodshaw Park	Aspull	2	-	-	2	-	2	-
LS/OSF/10 LS/OSF/23 LS/OSF/91	Leigh RUFC, Hand Lane	Leigh	5	-	-	4	1	12	-
PE/OSF/4	Orrell RUFC, St John Rigby College	Orrell	2	-	-	2	-	3	-
TY/OSF/18	Tyldesley RUFC, Astley Street	Tyldesley and Astley	3	-	-	5	1	7*	-
AN/OSF/13	Wigan RUFC, off Wingates Road	Wigan North	3	-	-	3	-	9	-

Table 16: List of clubs mapped and numbers of teams.

*Tyldesley has 2 girls' teams.

Women and girls' rugby union

14.8. Leigh and Tyldesley RUFC's are the only clubs to have a women only team, At a junior level girls are participating in rugby through mixed teams at a number of clubs including Leigh and Wigan. Participation is being developed through targeted training sessions. A lack of pitches and segregated changing facilities and junior facilities is preventing further growth at the existing clubs and is noted as preventing Wigan RUFC from establishing a women's team.

Demand

14.9. Senior male and youth participation is expected to remain the same or increase at the other clubs with none of them reporting a shortage of pitches. Wigan RUFC reported that the availability of coaches prevents further expansion of the club.

14.10. Latent demand has been identified at Leigh, the only club noted to be operating over capacity. The club does not have enough pitches or changing facilities to play and train the number of teams they have and have lost two senior adult sides and a senior colts team as a result. Relocation of some

pitches as a result of negotiations with a house builder will provide an additional pitch to help address this.

- 14.11. Leigh RUFC uses all-weather training facilities at St Mary’s High School, Golborne Sports Club and Lowton High School. The club would like to be able to access rugby specific all weather pitches at Leigh Sports Village.
- 14.12. Given the number of teams currently reported, the following team generation rates could be expected for rugby union.

Age Group	Population	Number of teams	Teams generated per 1,000 population
Juniors (mixed) 11-17 (10-19 in 2011)	26,260 37,900	33	1.26 0.87
Senior (male) 18-55 (20-54 in 2011)	81,640 75,800	16	0.20 0.21

Table 17: Team generation rates for rugby union

Quality of pitches and other facilities

- 14.13. Pitches are generally maintained by the respective clubs, including those who lease the land from the council; Aspull RUFC and Leigh RUFC in part. Tyldesley RUFC’s ground is maintained by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles.
- 14.14. Consultation with Aspull RUFC has identified pitch drainage issues and pitch surface quality to be of major concern. A number of clubs mentioned other issues affecting the quality of pitches, including vandalism and theft of machinery.
- 14.15. Leigh and Wigan RUFC’s reported a need to refurbish changing facilities. Leigh RUFC also requires additional changing room capacity to cater for the numbers of teams playing. Communal showers at Wigan RUFC prevent them from running a women’s team and Tyldesley RUFC’s club house facilities require refurbishment.
- 14.16. Quality is often affected by a lack of club funds and difficulty in accessing grant aid. This is often due to a lack of volunteer help and the amount of paperwork required.

15. Hockey

Current provision

15.1. 9 pitches suitable for hockey provision have been identified across 9 sites in Wigan Borough. This equates to 1 pitch per 35,000 people or 0.03 hockey pitches per 1,000 people. The pitches are listed in Table 15.1 below and shown in Appendix A18.

Ref	Club / Site name	Settlement Area
AT/OSF/9	Howe Bridge Sports Centre all weather pitch	Atherton
GL/OSF/15	Golborne Sports Club hockey pitch	Golborne and Lowton
LW/OSF/16	Leigh Hockey Club, Westleigh High School	Leigh
OR/OSF/19	Winstanley College	Orrell
ST/OSF/15	Standish Community High School	Standish
WC/OSF/12	Wigan Hockey Club, Deanery High School	Wigan North
DO/OSF/11	Robin Park all weather pitch	Wigan South
PE/OSF/4	St John Rigby College	Wigan South
PE/OSF/22	Abraham Guest Academy	Wigan South

Table 18: Provision for hockey in Wigan Borough

General organisation

15.2. England Hockey (EH) governs the sport nationally and locally. The game is played predominantly on sand-based artificial grass pitches (AGPs) and teams in Wigan Borough play in the Northern Regional Leagues which are the feeder leagues to the National League.

15.3. There are three hockey clubs in the borough in Golborne, Leigh and Wigan. Golborne Hockey Club has a pitch at a private sports club and has use of changing facilities shared with tennis. Leigh Hockey Club is based at Westleigh High School and Wigan Hockey Club uses the pitch at Deanery High School and changing facilities at the adjacent private sports club. In addition to the pitches listed in table 18 there are a small number of other artificial grass pitches (AGPs) at education premises including St John Rigby College, Abraham Guest Academy and Lowton High School, that can be used for hockey training.

School-club links

15.4. As already noted there are agreements between schools and hockey clubs in Wigan and Leigh. As can be anticipated youth participation is focussed around the three hockey clubs. Wigan Hockey Development Group employs

a community sports coach to deliver skills based activities in primary and secondary schools.

- 15.5. Clubs train at their home ground and invite youngsters to open training sessions. As such, links are with clubs rather than schools.

Women and Girls' Hockey

- 15.6. Golborne and Wigan Hockey Clubs each have two women's teams. Wigan Hockey Club also has an U16 women's team. The club expects the number of senior women players to remain broadly the same but anticipates growth in youth participation. At a junior level girls are also participating in hockey through mixed teams.

Demand

- 15.7. No club reported that they are operating over capacity or identified latent demand. Wigan Hockey Club anticipates that player numbers at senior level (men, women, veterans and disabled) will remain broadly the same, while youth player numbers are anticipated to increase. The numbers of coaches available was reported as a main constraint on future growth.
- 15.8. Growth could potentially be accommodated at St John Rigby and Winstanley Colleges, and at schools with AGPs, although there is competition for these facilities from football and rugby.

Quality of pitches and other facilities

- 15.9. Pitches are generally maintained by the club or by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles on behalf of the school. It is noted in the artificial pitch section that many AGPs do not receive sufficient maintenance especially given their use for multi-sports purposes by schools and clubs. As such many are now in need of an upgrade.
- 15.10. The pitch at The Deanery High School used by Wigan Hockey Club is two years or more over its predicted life span and there has been very little on-going maintenance. Improvements are a main investment priority.
- 15.11. Wigan and Golborne Hockey Clubs share private changing facilities with other sports, while Leigh Hockey Club uses school changing facilities which are opened for them.

16. Bowls

Current provision

- 16.1. 63 sites with bowling greens have been identified across the borough, with a total of 77 greens and a combined area of 11 hectares. This equates to an average of 0.03 hectares and 0.24 bowling greens per 1,000 population. This provision includes council bowling greens, private bowling clubs and bowling greens associated with public houses or larger sports and recreation clubs.
- 16.2. All sites are shown in Appendix A19 and listed in Appendix B12.

General organisation and development

- 16.3. Bowls is played on crown bowling greens and the British Crown Green Bowling Association is the governing body with overall responsibility for the sport. Teams play in a number of leagues, affiliated to the Lancashire Crown Green Bowling Association, including the Hindley and District League, Wigan Borough Pensioners Bowling League, Carlsberg Tetley North Saturday Bowling League, Leigh and District Parks Bowling League, Atherleigh Ladies League, and Newton and District League.
- 16.4. Clubs generally operate male, female and mixed teams according to the specific leagues they play in. There are sufficient leagues to offer opportunities for men and women to play competitively or in mixed teams depending on preference.
- 16.5. Bowling greens are distributed across all settlements and Eastern Astley is served by provision at Gin Pit and Parr Fold Park and at Peel Park just outside the borough in Salford.
- 16.6. As bowls is most popular amongst older people, both for participation and to watch, it is important that facilities are easily accessible and locally available. The distances people are able to travel to access a bowling green is often limited by their own personal mobility and access to transport. The range of facilities available at the green also has an impact on participation across different groups.
- 16.7. For this reason the Council, in partnership with Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, are moving toward a hub model whereby larger clusters of bowling greens will be available at one of three hubs with a wide range of accessible facilities. This lowers the cost of maintenance for the number of bowling greens across

the borough and provides a more uniform approach to the availability and standard of facilities.

School club links and coaching

- 16.8. Consultation with clubs has revealed that junior membership is only recorded at some clubs, such as Botanical Gardens, Sacred Heart, Leigh Sports Club, St Wilfrid's, St Marie's and Wigan Subscription. Very few bowling clubs deliver coaching sessions for local schools. Only St Wilfrid's Bowling Club mentioned being involved with coaching in schools.
- 16.9. Very few clubs mention having a formal coach or training sessions. Exceptions include Brunswick Recreation Club at Leigh which offers free adult coaching sessions and free membership to under-12s. Leigh Cricket Club's bowling section encourages children through coaching and Wigan Subscription and St Marie's have 2 and 3 coaches respectively.

Demand and Areas of Concern

- 16.10. Consultation has revealed that clubs have, on average, about 60 members and operate around 7 teams. Some clubs feel that there are too few bowling greens in the borough to enable older people to lead an active life however others feel that provision is sufficient.
- 16.11. Greens associated with private sports and recreation clubs been lost since 2007 as clubs have ceased trading or the greens become unviable. Losses include St Paul's Sports and Social Club in Leigh to residential development and Old Springs Hotel in Wigan to an outdoor seating area for the pub. St Paul's Club relocated to the council site at Morley Street in Atherton. The green lost at the former Bulls Head Public House in Goose Green is due to be replaced as part of a residential scheme. Other greens attached to public houses have been lost to car parking, usually prior to 2007. Inevitably, the loss of private greens can place a greater reliance on council facilities and regular upkeep is essential to ensure these greens can meet the standards necessary for competitive play.
- 16.12. The majority of matches tend to be played mid-week, reflecting the age profile and availability of the players. Greens could potentially have capacity for additional games at the weekends. However, whilst some clubs feel that there are insufficient greens, no latent demand was identified as no clubs reported that they would host more teams if more greens were available.
- 16.13. Membership was reported to be stable or declining in all of the clubs that responded to the consultation, with the exception of St Marie's which has a

very proactive programme of participation. With ageing membership at clubs and fewer younger people coming forward to take up the sport, there is a need to respond or clubs will struggle to survive. An example of proactive action has been at the Botanical Gardens Bowling Club, which hosted a 6 week bowling course for beginners in 2014 run by the British Crown Green Bowling Association.

Quality of greens and other facilities

- 16.14. Club consultation and site assessment rates the majority of private greens as being of average or good quality. Clubs either employ a groundsman to maintain the green or rely on volunteers. The increasing age of the membership is causing problems with clubs being unable to undertake all of the tasks required.
- 16.15. Nevertheless, clubs are rightly proud of the time and effort members put into their upkeep to produce high quality playing surfaces and excellent ancillary facilities such as paved surrounds, club house, toilet facilities, floodlighting and facilities for disabled people.
- 16.16. Club facilities often tend to be well fenced for security purposes but some clubs that play on open access greens at Mesnes Park and Alexandra Park, as well as private clubs such as Botanical Gardens, report problems resulting from unauthorised access such as damage to the playing surface, vandalism and break-ins. As a result club funds and fundraising are required for security measures, which are often expensive to install and impacts on the funding available for the upkeep of greens.
- 16.17. Fundraising was mentioned as a priority for the future by a number of clubs. The Lord Nelson Bowling Club has benefited from numerous grants and shows that funding can be secured given time and effort on the part of volunteers. Other clubs have found this process difficult to negotiate however.
- 16.18. Many clubs reported that bowls is an inexpensive way of getting fresh air and exercise and therefore plays an important role in the health and wellbeing of older people, helping them to remain active for longer. Club houses have an equally important role in providing refreshments and toilet facilities, both of which are essential to allow people to spend sufficient time at a venue. The absence of toilet facilities at some clubs and the lack of facilities suitable for disabled people were mentioned in consultation to be a constraint on participating numbers. Some venues such as Leigh Miners Welfare and St Wilfrid's have club houses that are in need of redecoration or refurbishment.

- 16.19. The council's open access greens are generally located within parks and are maintained by the council's Property and Leisure team and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles. There have been some criticisms through the consultation about the standards of maintenance but regimes have had to change in recent years to accommodate budgetary constraints. Security of tenure is an issue for St Jude's Bowling Club playing at Alexandra Park. The council and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles encourage clubs to enter into agreements to take over the maintenance of greens.
- 16.20. Some former greens, including William Foster Playing Field, remain but are no longer open for use while others such as Coronation Park in Standish Lower Ground have been converted into provision for young people. This is not seen as a problem given the stable or declining participation in recent years. The overriding focus in parks is that people are encouraged to be as active as possible in order to remain in good health, and appropriate facilities need to be provided in order to encourage this.

17. Athletics

Current provision

- 17.1. The borough has two athletic tracks, see Appendix A20. Robin Park has an 8 lane outdoor track and an indoor track with changing facilities. Leigh Sports Village, which opened in 2008, has an 8 lane synthetic track. Both sites also cater for javelin, long jump and throwing field sports. Athletic clubs run at both of the tracks with Wigan and District Harriers based at Robin Park and Leigh Harriers based at Leigh Sports Village.

Ref	Site	Settlement	Affiliated Athletic Clubs
DO/OSF/16	Robin Park	Wigan South	Wigan and District Harriers and Wigan All Stars
LS/OSF/4	Leigh Sports Village	Leigh	Leigh Harriers

Table 19: List of athletics sites

- 17.2. The facilities are of good quality and provide for needs in the borough. There are no current plans to update them. Bolton Arena also provides athletic facilities for the northern part of the borough.
- 17.3. There are also four running clubs in the borough: Astley and Tyldesley Road Runners who are based at the Miners Welfare Institute, Atherton Running Club, Wigan Phoenix, and Wigan All Stars. These clubs are not based at an athletics facility instead using open space and roads to train. They include membership from across the borough, cater for mixed abilities and age ranges, and provide opportunities for members to run in social groups.
- 17.4. A park run is run at Pennington Flash in Leigh every Saturday at 9 am. It is a free weekly 5 km timed race and is part of a national initiative aimed at increasing the number of people running regularly. All participants need to do to enter is to register online at www.parkrun.com and print off a barcode.
- 17.5. There is also a Cycle Speedway Track at Astley and Tyldesley Miners Welfare Club which recently received funding from British Cycling (March 2016) to rebuild the Gin Pit Track built when the club first opened 25 years ago. The funding package has allowed the track to be rebuilt and re-profiled to modern standards, with new fencing, drainage and shale which will improve the experience for all riders.
- 17.6. Astley and Tyldesley are a British Cycling Go-Ride Accredited Club and have held Sport England Clubmark status since 2005, demonstrating a long-term commitment to developing cycling for young people. They have also recently formed a women's section.

18. Tennis

Current provision

- 18.1. 16 sites have been identified as providing for tennis across the borough with a total of 69 outdoor and four indoor full size tennis courts. This equates to 0.24 courts per 1,000 population across the borough.
- 18.2. There are four indoor courts and four outdoor courts at the Lawn Tennis Association Performance Centre at Wigan's Robin Park Sports Centre. There are nine other council sites with a total of 34 courts and six tennis club sites with a total of 31 courts. There are other courts at high schools throughout the borough however these are generally multi-purpose so are over-marked for other sports.
- 18.3. All sites are shown in Appendix A21 and listed in Appendix B13.

General organisation and development

- 18.4. Tennis provision is coordinated by the Lancashire Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) along with Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles' Sports Development Unit based at Robin Park. Both work closely with all aspects of the tennis community including clubs, players (boys and girls), schools, coaches and coach education. The LTA has identified Wigan as an area for tennis development within Lancashire. Six of the clubs are affiliated to the LTA and four (Bellingham, Robin Park, Tyldesley and Winstanley) have Clubmark accreditation. The main focus is developing youngsters through mini tennis.
- 18.5. Teams play in a number of different leagues including the Bolton Sports Federation Tennis League, Warrington Tennis League, Walkden Tennis League and Lancashire Club Doubles Winter League. Leigh has two national junior club teams and Tyldesley plays in the Aegon U18 Girls National Club League. Warrington Tennis League operates male and female divisions. Other leagues cater with mixed teams.
- 18.6. Junior membership is generally strong across the Clubmark clubs, with the Tyldesley club anticipating growth to continue. However, the Bellingham club reported difficulty in retaining girls aged 12-19 unless playing in a large group and the Leigh club noted a slight downward trend in membership over the last five years, with ageing club members and declining junior interest.
- 18.7. There are tennis courts across most settlements with the exceptions of Astley, Shevington and Standish. Astley is catered for by provision in

Tyldesley, and Shevington and Standish by provision in Wigan, including Robin Park, as well as in adjacent districts. There are pay and play facilities in adjacent districts at Bolton Arena, Middlebrook in Horwich, Mawdesley Lawn Tennis Club in Chorley Borough and at Chorley Tennis Club.

- 18.8. Given the availability of facilities in adjacent districts, the availability of additional courts at schools and the fact that people are prepared to travel to access club tennis, the lack of provision in Astley, Shevington and Standish is not a major concern.

School club links

- 18.9. A number of tennis clubs deliver coaching sessions in local primary schools, often feeding into club coaching sessions delivered during the school holidays. Bellingham Tennis Club is a good example. The Winstanley club's main priority for the future is to foster improved links with local schools and colleges to provide targeted player and coaching programmes. They are already linked with Upholland High School nearby in West Lancashire.

Demand and areas of concern

- 18.10. There were no capacity issues reported by clubs or leagues regarding the number of courts available at the club or in the local area. Some reported that playing hours could be extended, especially in winter if there was more floodlighting or indoor facilities. One club commented that the demand for tennis is adversely affected by other competing interests.
- 18.11. Issues of concern for clubs include declining membership and related income, notably at the Tyldesley club. A variety of membership options, discounts and visitor rates are offered at the Winstanley club to encourage people to join. Subsidised coaching is available for junior and senior members at the Tyldesley club.

Quality of courts and other facilities

- 18.12. Club consultation rated the majority of courts as being of good quality. Clubs either employ people to maintain their courts or rely on volunteers and facilities tend to be well fenced with security measures in place controlling access.
- 18.13. Clubs reported a variety of court surfaces including artificial grass and tarmacadam. The Bellingham club has 3 floodlit championship standard courts, 4 European red clay courts and two practice walls. All clubs have at

least one floodlit court. The Winstanley club is seeking to provide a practice wall and increase the number of courts with floodlighting. Some clubhouses were noted to be in need of redecoration or refurbishment, the Winstanley clubhouse is new however.

- 18.14. Court cleanliness and net condition were mentioned as issues at the indoor courts at Robin Park. This facility is used by most clubs, especially for winter practice. There is frustration around the venue being closed for tennis when in use for other events and many felt that the outdoor courts are in poor condition.
- 18.15. Wigan Council open access courts are generally provided in parks and are maintained by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles. The courts are tarmac surfaced except at Leyland Park in Hindley, which has the only free to use grass courts in north-west England. According to the site assessments, the lowest scoring courts for quality are at Printshop Lane in Tyldesley, which have not been maintained for a number of years.
- 18.16. Issues affecting the quality of courts include damage to nets and perimeter fencing and poor surface quality. Some open access courts have been lost to other sporting uses such as basketball and skate parks in recent years. This is not necessarily seen as a problem as there has been a decline in participation in tennis. The overriding focus in parks is that people are encouraged to be as active as possible in order to remain in good health and appropriate facilities need to be provided in order to encourage this.

19. Golf

Current provision

- 19.1. There are 9 sites providing for golf across the borough with a combined area of 229 hectares equating to 0.72Ha per 1,000 people. There are five private 18 hole golf clubs and two private driving ranges at Astley and Golborne. The courses at Haigh Country Park and Pennington Flash Country Park are municipal courses. Three of the private clubs cross the borough boundary including the Haydock club which is partly in St Helens, Dean Wood which is partly within West Lancashire, and Wigan Golf Club being partly within Bolton.
- 19.2. Appendix A22 shows the location of golf facilities, while Table 20 below lists the sites mapped and the facilities provided.

Ref	Club / Site name	Settlement Area	Facility	Ownership
AN/OSF/11	Wigan Golf Club	Aspull	18 holes	Private
AN/OSF/12	Haigh Hall Golf Course	Aspull / Wigan North	9 hole and 18 hole	Municipal
GL/OSF/3	Haydock Golf Course	Golborne and Lowton	18 holes	Private
GL/OSF/5	Sycamore Driving Range	Golborne and Lowton	Driving Range	Private
LE/OSF/10	Pennington Flash Golf Course	Golborne and Lowton	9 holes	Municipal
AN/OSF/10	Hindley Hall Golf Club	Hindley / Aspull	18 holes	Private
OR/OSF/11	Dean Wood Golf Course	Orrell	18 holes	Private
SL/OSF/5	Gathurst Golf Club	Shevington	18 holes	Private
AM/OSF/12	Astley Driving Range	Tyldesley and Astley	Driving Range	Private

Table 20: List of Golf Facilities by settlement area

General organisation

- 19.3. England Golf is the governing body for amateur golf in England. Local clubs are part of the Lancashire Union of Golf clubs. The Lancashire County Golf Partnership (LCGP) is made up of the Lancashire Union of Golf Clubs, the Lancashire Ladies County Golf Association and the Lancashire Professional Golfers Association. Their aim is to draw people into golf, keep them in the sport, motivate them to play regularly and take up membership.
- 19.4. Since the previous survey Standish Court Golf Club has ceased trading. A Leisure Needs Assessment was prepared by Neil Allen Associates which concluded that there is sufficient alternative provision in the borough.

Demand

- 19.5. There appears to be sufficient capacity for golf in Wigan Borough. Most of the clubs have spare capacity for membership. The English Golf Union Membership Survey in 2010 showed that 95% of clubs in Lancashire had membership vacancies. It also showed that 74% of clubs experienced a decrease in membership over the previous two years, compared to 60% nationally.
- 19.6. One of LCGPs priorities, in line with Golf England's, is to increase growth in participation in the 14-25 age range.
- 19.7. Golf England commissioned Sports Marketing Survey Inc. to research the methods of clubs who have successfully retained or increased membership. The report concluded that successful clubs offered different types of flexible membership to retain players. They recognise that different times and circumstances restrict the degree to which people can play. Flexible membership allows members to continue playing without the burden of a full time commitment.
- 19.8. Golf England are investing funds into increasing golf membership and have set up the Play More Golf Fund to help local clubs to increase levels of participation.

Quality of course and other facilities

- 19.9. Apart from the two municipal courses which are maintained by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, clubs are responsible for the maintenance of their own courses.
- 19.10. Both Haigh and Pennington golf courses are highly maintained and are in a good condition.

20. Indoor Sports

Introduction

20.1. This section covers facilities for indoor sports including swimming pools, sports halls, fitness training, and keep fit facilities. Sport England provides assessment tools including the Facilities Planning Model (FPM) and Active Places Power (APP) which have been used to inform this section. All sites are mapped in Appendix A23.

Current provision

20.2. The main publically owned indoor multi-sports facilities are managed by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles on behalf of the council. These include Robin Park Arena and Robin Park Sports and Tennis Centre in Wigan, and Leigh Indoor Sports Centre at Leigh Sports Village. These operate as regional centres of excellence for gymnastics and tennis, as well as athletics at the Arena and at Leigh Sports Village. Table 21 lists the facilities in the borough. Artificial outdoor pitches adjacent to indoor facilities are covered in a separate section.

Ref	Provision	Settlement Area	Facilities
BR/BF/2	Ashton Leisure Centre, Old Road	Ashton	Swimming – main & small pools All weather pitch Multi-use sports hall Fitness suite (32 exercise stations)
AT/BF/1	Howe Bridge Sports Centre	Atherton	Swimming – main & small pools Grass pitch Multi-use sports hall Exercise studio 3 squash courts Fitness suite (67 exercise stations)
HG/BF/1	Hindley Sports Centre, Mornington Road	Hindley	Multi-use sports hall 4 squash courts Exercise studio Function room & bar Sauna, steam room, plunge pool Fitness suite (28 exercise stations)
LS/BF/2	Leigh Indoor Sports Centre	Leigh	Swimming – main & small pools Aerobics studio Multi-use sports hall Conference facilities Fitness suite (65 exercise stations)
WC/BF/3	Wigan Life Centre Healthy Living Zone	Wigan North	Swimming – main & small pools Aerobics studio Sauna, steam room Profiles fitness suite (80 exercise stations)
WC/BF/4	Wigan Youth Zone (Community)	Wigan North	Sports hall 10m indoor climbing wall 4 all-weather sports pitches Boxing & martial arts facilities

Ref	Provision	Settlement Area	Facilities
			Dance, performing arts Fitness suite (29 exercise stations)
DO/BF/1	Robin Park Sports and Tennis Centre	Wigan South	4 indoor tennis courts 4 outdoor tennis courts Powerade hall Sports Hall Exercise studio Fitness suite (60 exercise stations)
DO/OSF/16 DO/OSF/11	Robin Park Arena	Wigan South	Gymnastics 60 m indoor running track Conference facilities Athletics arena All weather pitches

Table 21: Summary of main public indoor sports and fitness facilities

Sports halls

- 20.3. There are 29 sports halls across the borough with a minimum capacity of four badminton courts. Three quarters of these are on school sites so are not available during school hours and otherwise have varying degrees of accessibility. Appendix A23 shows the location of sports halls across the borough, while Table 22 gives details of these sites.
- 20.4. There are sports halls in all but one settlement across the borough so all residents are within a 15 minute drive-time of such a facility as recommended by Sport England. The exception is Aspull but residents there can access facilities in Wigan or in nearby Bolton Borough.
- 20.5. Formal dual-use arrangements are in place between sports centres and schools in Hindley and Ashton. Schools such as Fred Longworth open their sports halls on a pay and play basis from 5pm onwards and at weekends. School facilities built since the last assessment in 2007 include Abraham Guest Academy in Orrell.
- 20.6. The quality of sports hall provision varies between sites and some have received recent investment. One example is Platt Bridge Community Centre which received a £50,000 grant from Sport England's Inspired Facilities fund. The grant was awarded to Wigan Table Tennis Club to extend the facility to provide double the playing space on a seven day a week basis, the extended facility opened in August 2014.
- 20.7. A 20 minute travel time is applied to community sports facilities for general recreational use by Sport England. It assumes most people travel by car. This is an issue in areas of low car ownership or when a car is not available. It is therefore appropriate to apply a 20 minutes walking time to such facilities in Wigan.

20.8. Specialist facilities have a wider catchment such as Lawn Tennis Association 'Places to Play Strategy' which sets a 45 minute drive time on High Performance Centres such as Robin Park indoor tennis centre. This brings it to the reach of the whole borough and beyond.

Ref	Site name	Settlement	Facilities	No. Courts	Access type	Ownership	Management type	Built	Refurb
AB/BF/1	Platt Bridge Community Centre (Table tennis centre of excellence)	Abram and Platt Bridge	Activity hall	0	Pay and play	Council	Community organisation	1979	2014
AB/BF/2	Newbridge Learning Community	Abram and Platt Bridge	Main hall	4	Club/ Association	Community school	Community school	2008	
BR/BF/2	Ashton Leisure Centre	Ashton	Main hall	4	Pay and play	Community school	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1977	1996
BR/BF/3	Cansfield Community High School	Ashton	Activity hall	1	Private use	Community school	Community school	1940	-
AS/BF/2	St Edmund Arrowsmith RC High School	Ashton	Main hall Activity hall	4 1	Club/ Association	Voluntary aided school	School / College (in house)	1960 1960	2006 2006
AS/BF/3	Byrchall High School	Ashton	Main hall Activity hall	3 1	Club/ Association	Voluntary controlled school	School / College (in house)	1970 1960	2004 -
AT/BF/4	Atherton Community School	Atherton	Main hall	4	Club/ Association		Education		
AT/BF/1	Howe Bridge Sports Centre	Atherton	Main hall	6	Pay and play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1976	2003/ 2015
GL/BF/1	Golborne High School	Golborne and Lowton	Main hall Activity hall	4 1	Club/ Association	Community school	School / College (in house)	1995 1955	- -
LE/BF/1	Lowton Community Sports College	Golborne and Lowton	Main hall	6	Club/ Association	Community school	School / College (in house)	1977	2009
HG/BF/3	Hindley Sports Centre	Hindley	Main hall	4	Pay and play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1975	-
HG/BF/1	Hindley Community High School	Hindley	Activity hall	2	Private use	Community school	School / College (in house)	1960	2009
HG/BF/2	Oakfield High School/College	Hindley	Activity hall	2	Private use	Community special school	School / College (in house)	2009	-
LS/BF/1	Bedford High School	Leigh	Main hall Activity hall	4 0	Club/ Association	Community school	Council	1970 1970	- 2004

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Ref	Site name	Settlement	Facilities	No. Courts	Access type	Ownership	Management type	Built	Refurb
LS/BF/2	Leigh Indoor Sports Centre	Leigh	Main hall	8	Pay and play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	2008	-
LW/BF/1	Westleigh High School	Leigh	Main hall Activity hall	4 0	Club/ Association	Community school	School / College (in house)	1970 1950	2007 1999
OR/BF/2	Winstanley College Sports Centre	Orrell	Main hall	4	Private use	Further education	School / College (in house)	1995	-
OR/BF/3	St Peter's RC High School	Orrell	Main hall Activity hall	4 1	Club/ Association	Voluntary aided school	School / College (in house)	1976 1976	- -
SL/BF/1	Shevington High School	Shevington	Main hall Activity hall	4 1	Club/ Association	Community school	School / College (in house)	1978 1960	2008 -
ST/BF/1	Standish Community High School	Standish	Main hall	4	Club/ Association	Community school	School / College (in house)	1960	2006
AM/BF/1	St Mary's High School	Tyldesley and Astley	Main hall Activity hall	4 1	Club/ Association	Voluntary aided school	School / College (in house)	1965 1965	- -
IN/BF/1	Rose Bridge High School	Wigan North	Main hall Activity hall	4 0	Club/ Association	Community school	School / College (in house)	1995 1995	- -
WW/BF/1	St John Fisher High School	Wigan North	Main hall Activity hall	4 1	Club/ Association	Voluntary aided school	School / College (in house)	1970 1970	2006 -
WC/BF/4	Wigan Youth Zone	Wigan North	Main hall Activity hall	4 0	Pay and play	Community organisation	Community organisation	2013 2013	- -
WC/BF/1	The Deanery High School	Wigan North	Main hall	4	Club/ Association	Voluntary aided school	School / College (in house)	1989	2009
DO/BF/1	Robin Park Sports and Tennis Centre	Wigan South	Main hall	8	Pay and play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1998	2005
PE/BF/2	Central Park Academy	Wigan South	Main hall	4	Pay and play	Academy	School / College	2012	
PE/BF/3	St John Rigby College	Wigan South	Main hall	4	Pay and play	Further education	Other	1985	-
PE/BF/4	Abraham Guest Academy	Wigan South	Main hall Activity hall	4 1	Sports Club/ Community Association	Academy	School / College (in house)	2010 2010	-
PE/BF/1	Wigan Lucozade Power League 5 a side Football Centre	Wigan South	Indoor Outdoor	8 6	Pay and play	Commercial	Commercial	1999	
WM/BF/1	Hawkey Hall High School	Wigan South	Main hall	4	Club/ Association	Community school	School / College	1996	-

Table 22: List of sports halls - The number relates to the size of the hall and the number of badminton courts it can accommodate.

Swimming pools

20.9. 22 swimming pools have been identified across the borough. 4 of these are operated by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, two by community organisations and the remainder are commercial or educational facilities. The community facilities and some of the commercial facilities operate on a 'pay and play' basis. Other commercial facilities require users to be registered members. Appendix A23 shows the location of swimming pools. Table 23 gives the details for the sites.

20.10. There is a good spread of swimming pools across the borough and most residents are within the 15 minute drive-time recommended by Sport England. Most 'pay and play' pools have been built or refurbished since 2004. Quality is therefore generally very good.

20.11. The pools at Wigan Life Centre in Wigan town centre and Leigh Indoor Sports Centre at Leigh Sports Village are both new facilities, opened in 2011 and 2009 respectively. Following a restructure of funding for leisure provision by the council in 2011, Tyldesley Pelican Centre and Hindley Community Pool are now run by not for profit community enterprises able to secure grants from a wider range of sources. Tyldesley is a centre for water polo and Hindley provides good facilities for disabled swimmers.

Ref	Site name	Settlement	Facilities	Lanes	Access type	Ownership	Management type	Built	Refurb
BR/BF/2	Ashton Leisure Centre	Ashton	Main pool Learner pool	4 0	Pay and play	Community school	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1977	2010
AT/BF/1	Howe Bridge Sports Centre	Atherton	Main pool Learner pool	6 0	Pay and play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1976	2003/ 2015
LE/BF/2	FX Leisure, Newton Road	Golborne and Lowton	Learner pool	0	Registered membership	Commercial	Commercial	1996	2009
HI/BF/1	Hindley Phoenix Community Pool	Hindley	Main pool Learner pool	6 0	Pay and play	Community organisation	Community organisation	1970	2005
HG/BF/4	Body Image Fitness	Hindley	Learner pool	0	Pay and play	Commercial	Commercial	1997	2003
LS/BF/2	Leigh Indoor Sports Centre	Leigh	Main pool Learner pool	6 0	Pay and play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	2008	-
LW/BF/2	DW Sports Fitness, Parsonage Retail Park	Leigh	Main pool	1	Registered membership	Commercial	Commercial	2007	-
LS/BF/3	The Escape Zone, Sporting Lodge Inn	Leigh	Main pool	0	Pay and play	Commercial	Commercial	2002	-
SL/BF/2	Spindles Health & Leisure, Britannia Hotel	Shevington	Learner pool	0	Pay and play	Commercial	Commercial	1995	2004

Ref	Site name	Settlement	Facilities	Lanes	Access type	Ownership	Management type	Built	Refurb
ST/BF/2	St Wilfrid's Academy	Standish	Learner pool	0	Education	Council	Education		
ST/BF/3	Swimsmart, Bradley Lane	Standish	Learner pool	0	Pay and play	Commercial	Commercial		
AN/BF/1	Vital Health & Wellbeing, Macdonald Kilhey Court Hotel	Standish	Leisure pool	0	Registered membership	Commercial	Commercial	1994	-
TY/BF/1	The Pelican Centre	Tyldesley and Astley	Main pool	5	Pay and play	Community organisation	Community organisation	1990	-
WC/BF/3	Wigan Life Centre Healthy Living Zone	Wigan North	Main pool Learner pool	8 0	Pay and play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	2011	-
PE/BF/1	DW Sports Fitness, Stadium Way	Wigan South	Main pool	0	Registered membership	Commercial	Commercial	2002	-
WM/BF/2	Total Fitness, Warrington Road	Wigan South	Main pool Learner pool	6 3	Registered membership	Commercial	Commercial	2000	-

Table 23: Details of swimming pools

Fitness facilities

- 20.12. 25 sites have been identified as providing fitness facilities across the borough, of which two-thirds are operated by the commercial sector. Council fitness facilities are branded as Profiles Fitness Suites and are located in six of the major active leisure complexes listed in Table 21 above. They are equipped with computerised machines which can be programmed to enable people to meet their own individual exercise targets. Profiles membership allows use of any of the facilities across the borough. Each centre also offers a wide range of exercise classes to suit all ages and abilities.
- 20.13. Some schools and colleges also have fitness suites or gyms equipped with exercise machines that can be used by members of the public and sports clubs outside school hours. A number of private commercial facilities also allow 'pay and play' use of their facilities. Appendix A23 shows the location of fitness facilities across the borough, while Table 24 sets out the details of each site.
- 20.14. Information has been obtained from the Sport England Active Places website and does not provide an exhaustive list of such facilities. Only those with 20 or more exercise stations have been included as this is considered to be the minimum number of stations for effective general use.

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Ref	Site Name	Settlement	No. of stations	Access Type	Ownership Type	Management Type	Built	Refurb
BR/BF/2	Ashton Leisure Centre, Old Road	Ashton	32	Pay and Play	Community School	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1998	2003
AN/BF/1	Vital Health & Welbeing (Kilhey Court)	Aspull	31	Registered Membership	Commercial	Commercial Management	1994	2014
AH/BF/1	Fit and Funky, Ladies Gym	Atherton	24	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2011	n/a
AH/BF/2	Fitness Xchange	Atherton	40	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	1998	2012
AT/BF/1	Howe Bridge Sports Centre	Atherton	67	Pay and Play	Commercial	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1976	2005
LE/BF/2	FX Leisure, Lowton	Golborne & Lowton	55	Registered Membership	Commercial	Commercial Management	1996	2007
GL/BF/2	The Gym, Golborne	Golborne & Lowton	37	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2008	n/a
HI/BF/2	Apex Health & Fitness Centre	Hindley	44	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	1999	2006
HG/BF/1	Hindley Sports Centre	Hindley	28	Pay and Play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	2004	2007
LW/BF/2	DW Sports Fitness	Leigh	220	Registered Membership	Commercial	Commercial Management	2007	n/a
LS/BF/2	Leigh Indoor Sports Centre	Leigh	65	Pay and Play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	2008	n/a
LS/BF/4	F Y Gym	Leigh	50	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	1984	2006
OR/BF/1	Gymetc. (Orrell)	Orrell	63	Registered Membership	Commercial	Commercial Management	1997	2006
ST/BF/4	Body Fitness Unit 2 82A Preston Road, Standish	Standish	N/A	Registered Membership	Commercial	Commercial	-	-
AN/BF/1	Vital Health & Wellbeing, Macdonald Kilhey Court Hotel	Standish	N/A	Registered Membership	Commercial	Commercial	1994	n/a
AM/BF/2	Gym 28	Tyldesley and Astley	80	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2012	n/a
TY/BF/3	Unit 7 Gym	Tyldesley and Astley	40	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	1984	2003
IN/BF/2	Royces Health & Fitness Studio	Wigan North	65	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2000	2003
WC/BF/3	Wigan Life Centre Healthy Living Zone	Wigan North	80	Pay and Play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	2011	n/a
WC/BF/2	Xercise4less	Wigan North	300	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2012	n/a
PE/BF/4	Abraham Guest Academy	Wigan South	21	Private Use	Academies	School/College/University	2010	n/a
PE/BF/1	DW Sports Fitness	Wigan South	200	Registered Membership	Commercial	Commercial Management	2002	2012
DO/BF/1	Robin Park Sports Centre	Wigan South	60	Pay and Play	Council	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	1998	2013

DO/BF/2	Ladybird Fitness Club For Women	Wigan South	25	Registered Membership	Commercial	Commercial Management	2006	n/a
WM/BF/2	Total Fitness	Wigan South	220	Pay and Play	Commercial	Commercial Management	2000	2007

Table 24: Details of fitness facilities

Consultation

- 20.15. The residents' survey showed that 33% of respondents had visited a sport or leisure centre, swimming pool, sports hall or fitness suite in the previous 12 months. Nearly half of survey respondents indicated that provision of indoor sports facilities is sufficient while one quarter said it is average. However one in 7 respondents felt that provision is insufficient.
- 20.16. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles officers confirm that the physical activity strategy for the borough prioritises services that impact on health, especially groups who are currently inactive. The aim is to increase the numbers of people participating in regular physical activity as well as to meet the needs of local residents.

Accessibility

- 20.17. The residents' survey indicated that nearly half of current users would walk to get there and nearly two-thirds of those who walk do so for less than 15 minutes. 12% of users would cycle while 65% use the car or bus. Of the car or bus users over one-third would travel for up to 15 minutes, one-fifth for between 15-30 minutes and only 7% for more than 30 minutes, indicating a good catchment range.
- 20.18. Sport England recommends that indoor sports facilities should be available within 15 minute drive time from home. Centres of regional excellence (Robin Park and Leigh Sports Village) should be available within a 30 minute drive time.

Quality

- 20.19. Quality standards are divided into design specification, to ensure facilities are fit for purpose; and management and maintenance, to lead to high quality leisure experience for users. All of the public leisure centers have Quest accreditation.
- 20.20. Since 2007 significant investment has been made in active leisure in the borough which is programmed to continue. This has resulted in new facilities at Leigh Indoor Sports Centre (2009), Wigan Life Centre (2011), Wigan Youth Zone (2013) and Howe Bridge (2015). Wigan Youth Zone provides a purpose built facility for young people aged 8 – 19, with

membership costing £5 per year. It was made possible via a partnership of private, public and voluntary sector investors and is run by charity donations.

- 20.21. In 2014-2015 modernisation of Howe Bridge Sports Centre took place, supported by a £500,000 grant from the National Lottery Sport England Improvement Fund and £2.5 million from council funds. The refurbished center combines traditional sports facilities with a high quality health and fitness suite and innovative leisure products, including VerTGo Adventure Climbing, Indoor Extreme Skate and BMX Park, and Adventure Play facilities. This is to encourage more young people (aged 16-25) to develop sporting habits. A new health and fitness suite has also been installed including an 80-station gym, sauna and steam room, a group cycling studio, a group fitness studio, and new changing rooms. In addition, there is a new high quality, synthetic football and rugby-compliant outdoor pitch.

Catchment gap analysis for indoor sports facilities

- 20.22. The 2013 residents' survey found that the majority of people are satisfied with the numbers of indoor sports facilities in the borough. 46% of survey respondents indicated that provision is sufficient, while 24% said that availability was average. However 14% of respondents felt that provision is insufficient. Over 47% said the quality was good or above and a further 25% scoring the facilities as average.

21. Education Provision

Introduction

- 21.1. This section covers provision at education establishments including schools and colleges. In particular, it looks at playing field provision and is split between primary school playing fields, mainly for recreation, and secondary school pitches marked out for sport. Marked pitches that are used only for one sport are included under the particular sport category to avoid duplication.
- 21.2. Most primary schools have some form of playing field for sport and recreational activities. These are typically grassed areas with no goal posts, shown in Appendix A24 and listed in Appendix B14.
- 21.3. Secondary schools generally have larger playing fields and provide opportunities for rugby, football and other outdoor sports. These are shown in Appendix A24 and are listed in Appendix B15.
- 21.4. A number of secondary schools also have artificial pitches which are covered in a separate section.

Consultation

- 21.5. A questionnaire was sent out to all schools to ask about the range of outdoor facilities at each school. Unfortunately the response rate was poor at 15%. However, those schools that responded stated that their playing fields suffer from poor drainage which prevents children from using them, particularly during wet periods.
- 21.6. Leigh C.E and Leigh Sacred Heart, and St Mary's and St John's Catholic Primary near Wigan town centre, stated that they did not have any outdoor green space for sport or recreation.

Accessibility

- 21.7. The council has had an open field policy for its schools for a long time. This requires school playing fields to be accessible for casual use by the community outside school hours during daylight.
- 21.8. Schools can apply for an exemption from the council for security purposes and a number of schools now have academy status which means they are outside of the control of the council. As a result many playing fields are

not accessible outside of school hours unless by prior arrangement. Some sports clubs use school pitches by such arrangements.

- 21.9. Schools have reported problems due to unauthorised use such as damage by motorcycles and dog fouling.

Management and Quality

- 21.10. Schools are responsible for maintaining their playing fields and sport pitches. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles has contracts to maintain some of the schools pitches in the borough.

22. Artificial pitches

Introduction

- 22.1. Artificial grass pitches (AGPs) provide clubs and schools with an opportunity to play sport in most weather conditions as they are better drained and more durable than grass surfaces. They are used for a range of sports including rugby, football and hockey, especially if they are floodlit and therefore useable on winter evenings for winter training.
- 22.2. Most AGPs are located at secondary schools or colleges to enable use by educational establishments and linked sports clubs; others are located at council facilities. All sites are shown in Appendix A25 and listed in Appendix B16.

Provision

- 22.3. There are 43 artificial pitches in the borough across 27 sites, of which 27 are full (or nearly full) sized for rugby, football and field hockey and 16 are 5 or 6-a-side sized. This equates to 0.1 full sized artificial pitches per 1,000 people or 1 pitch per 11,000 people, and 0.07 5 or 6-a-side sized artificial pitches per 1,000 people or 1 pitch per 14,000 people.
- 22.4. Older artificial pitches are sand based. More recently installed surfaces are generally based on a rubber crumb pile. Earlier variations of this were known as 3G with more recent versions being 4G.

Consultation

- 22.5. The sports clubs consultation indicates that there is a high demand for artificial pitches for winter training. The pitch at Golborne High School is already at capacity and teams are doubling up for training.

Accessibility

- 22.6. Secondary Schools hire out their artificial pitches outside of school hours. Private and council sites can be accessed throughout the day.

Management and Quality

- 22.7. Schools are responsible for the maintenance of their own facilities and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles maintain the council run sites.

- 22.8. The Deanery High School shares its artificial pitch with Wigan Sports Club and is used by Wigan Hockey Club. The pitch is 14 years old and the surfacing and fencing needs replacing. The state of the pitch has resulted in a decrease in participation at both adult and youth level.
- 22.9. In September 2014 the all-weather pitch at Robin Park Arena was re-opened following a £318,000 council-funded refurbishment. It now provides a 3G FIFA 2 star pitch which also meets the International Rugby Board's standard.
- 22.10. The artificial pitch at Howe Bridge sports centre was refurbished as part of a £3 million redevelopment of the sports centre's overall facilities in 2015 and is now a high quality synthetic football and rugby compliant pitch.

Chapter 3

Settlement Profiles

23. Introduction

- 23.1. This chapter of the report addresses each of the 13 settlements within Wigan Borough to identify surplus open space, sport and recreation provision and highlight deficits and catchment gaps. This spatial analysis helps to assess local need in each settlement and works to develop a strategic borough-wide standard that each settlement can then be assessed against.
- 23.1. The separation of the two parts of this study, the typology analysis and settlement profiles, presents a number of benefits to a range of audiences. For example, one audience may have an interest in a particular local area whereas another may have an interest in key findings per typology. The separation of the two parts also allows for an ease of access for stakeholders and for use in planning policy and decision making. Both parts of the study should be taken into account for maximum benefit.
- 23.2. Taking into account the mixed nature of the borough, each settlement profile assesses the open space, sport and recreation provision against the proposed borough standard within a spatial context. In that, each settlement profile provides a strategic analysis of the open space and sporting provision with special considerations made for any demographic and geographic challenges in the settlement.
- 23.3. By providing a unique and focussed analysis for each settlement and considering these profiles in a broader borough-wide context, a fair, equal and justified standard based upon the existing provision and local need can be devised. This borough-wide standard, by taking into account the individual settlement needs, can then address challenges listed in Chapter 1, such as the proximity to major urban areas and age-related demands.

24. Abram and Platt Bridge

Settlement characteristics

- 24.1. Abram and Platt Bridge has a history of mining activity which is reflected in both the residential and open space characterisation in the area. The settlement includes the villages of Abram, Platt Bridge, Bickershaw, Bamfurlong, and Spring View, and is closely connected to the surrounding settlements of Wigan North, Hindley, Ashton, and Leigh. See Appendix A26.

People

- 24.2. The population in Abram and Platt Bridge is younger than the wider borough, with a higher percentage of under 20's and a lower number of residents over 45. The open space focus for the settlement reflects this through the number of play areas and outdoor sport facilities.

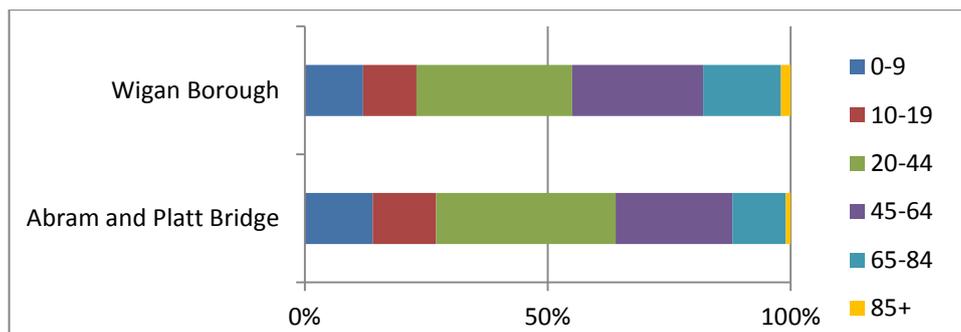


Figure 3: Population age of Abram and Platt Bridge compared to Wigan Borough

Places

- 24.3. Abram is heavily populated along the central north-south route of the A573 Warrington Road, through Spring View, Platt Bridge and Abram, with a range of pre/post WW1 terraces, post war social housing, and a large amount of post war and more recent private residential development.

Spaces

- 24.4. The defining feature of Abram and Platt Bridge is the large areas of natural and semi natural green space surrounding the settlements, including Amberswood Common and Low Hall to the north, Wigan Flashes to the west, Viridor Wood and Lightshaw Meadows to the south, and Victoria Fields and the former Bickershaw Colliery to the east. There is an extensive right of way network in Abram and Platt Bridge which extends into the agricultural spaces.

Parks and gardens

- 24.5. Abram and Platt Bridge has only one park, Abram Park in the centre of Abram, which is of high quality and value.
- 24.6. There is sufficient park and garden space in Abram and Platt Bridge to meet catchment standards. The provision is aided by Abram Park centrally, Three Sisters to the west, and Pennington Flash Country Park, of principal significance, to the south east in Leigh. There is a small catchment gap that falls outside of the buffer zones to the north west of the settlement; however the presence of Low Hall Local Nature Reserve offers compensation in this area.

Amenity green space

- 24.7. Abram and Platt Bridge has 10 areas of amenity green space. The majority of spaces were scored highly for value and quality. Only 1 of 10 spaces received an average score for both quality and value while 6 spaces achieved a high score for both.
- 24.8. No sites scored poorly for either quality or value. Therefore the amenity green space is of value to the area, particularly in the built up areas of Abram and Platt Bridge. There is potential to improve the quality of lower scoring amenity green spaces in the area to match the high value that is attached to these spaces.
- 24.9. While there is sufficient provision of amenity open spaces in the north, there is a significant catchment gap to the south. The former Bickershaw Colliery site offers alternative open space in this area however.
- 24.10. Other types of open space are also available within the catchment gap that share characteristics with amenity green space, such as children and young people's play areas and parks and gardens.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 24.11. Abram and Platt Bridge has 10 areas of natural and semi-natural green space. All of which score highly for value with 9 sites also scoring highly for quality. Only one site achieved an average score for quality and no sites are of poor quality or value.
- 24.12. Abram and Platt Bridge is located within Greenheart in its entirety and is well served with natural and semi-natural green space.

- 24.13. Low Hall Park in Platt Bridge is one of seven Local Nature Reserves in the borough that works toward meeting sustainable targets and providing accessibility for the enjoyment of wildlife in its natural habitats.

Green corridors

- 24.14. All green corridor sites across the borough were scored highly for quality and value. Abram and Platt Bridge has three green corridors, the two most significant of which are the dismantled railway from the West Coast mainline at Spring View though Platt Bridge eastwards, and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal (Leigh Branch) that passes to the west of Platt bridge and Abram. The third passes between Warrington Road and Taylors Lane.
- 24.15. The catchment gap toward the north of the settlement provides opportunity for the development of new corridors through improved rights of way.

Allotments and community gardens

- 24.16. There are 6 allotment sites in Abram and Platt Bridge, two of which are statutory. One of these was scored highly for quality and value and one obtained an average score for both quality and value. Of the remaining four sites, three are non-statutory and one is privately owned, these sites received mixed scores for quality and value. Wright Street/Kingsdown Road non-statutory allotments received a poor score for both.
- 24.17. There is adequate provision of allotment space within the settlement. However, the quality and value of the space available presents a challenge. There is a small catchment gap to the east however no further sites are proposed so improving existing sites and returning former sites to use is a key action.

Cemeteries and churchyards

- 24.18. There is one churchyard in the area, St Johns C of E Church, located in the centre of Abram. It is managed by the church and was scored highly for quality and value.

Provision for children and young people

- 24.19. Abram and Platt Bridge has 15 equipped play areas and 8 unequipped play areas for children and young people. Six different play area types have been identified across these sites. All equipped play types are available with some youth provision in the centre of the settlement.

- 24.20. Over half of these sites scored highly for both quality and value, with over three quarters achieving a high score for value. No equipped sites scored poorly but 3 unequipped sites scored poorly for quality, this is due to boundary conditions at the sites.
- 24.21. There is adequate local and neighbourhood provision for children and young people play areas in Abram and Platt Bridge.

Civic spaces

- 24.22. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. There is one civic space in Abram and Platt Bridge at Platt Bridge War Memorial. It is the only civic space in the borough to be scored average for both quality and value; this is due to a lack of prominence in the area.

Provision for outdoor sports

- 24.23. There is provision within the settlement for a range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Spring View Cricket Ground
Football (incl. playing fields)	Miners Welfare Institute Furlong Close Bryn Gates Recreational Ground Abram Labour Club Playing Field St John's Street Recreational Ground
Rugby League	Spring View Sports Club
Rugby Union	None
Hockey	None
Bowls	Abram Park Bowling Green Platt Bridge Community Centre Bowling Greens Bowling Green, Warrington Road
Athletics	None
Tennis	Abram Park
Golf	None

Table 25: Outdoor sports provision in Abram and Platt Bridge

- 24.24. There are three bowling greens in Abram and Platt Bridge, two of which are owned by the council and one is privately owned.
- 24.25. There are two angling societies, the largest of which is located at Kingsdown Flash where land is leased from the council. Other fishing provision is at Bryn Flash, Moran's Moat, and Fan Lodge.

- 24.26. There is no provision for hockey, rugby union, athletics, or golf within Abram and Platt Bridge but these are available in neighbouring settlements.

Provision for indoor sports

- 24.27. There are two sports halls in Abram and Platt Bridge. Platt Bridge Community Centre is a 'pay and play' activity hall owned by the council. It was built in 1979 and refurbished in 2014. Newbridge Community Learning is a 'club / association' main hall owned by a community school.
- 24.28. There are no swimming pools or fitness centres but both can be accessed in neighbouring Hindley and Wigan.

Provision at schools and colleges

- 24.29. There are five primary schools with playing fields in Abram and Platt Bridge, all located within Platt Bridge, Spring View and Bickershaw toward the north of the area. There are no secondary schools or colleges.

Artificial pitches

- 24.30. There is one 3G type artificial pitch located at Newbridge School in Platt Bridge. There are sand-filled artificial pitches available in Wigan and Leigh.

25. Ashton

Settlement characteristics

- 25.1. Ashton is the third largest town in the borough. It is 4 miles south of Wigan and shares boundaries with Garswood and Haydock in St Helens Borough. The town is closely contained by the settlement boundary and has one of the largest industrial estates in the borough. See Appendix A27.

People

- 25.2. The population age in Ashton is in line with the average for the borough. It has a large percentage of working age residents but over a third are under 20 or over 65. .

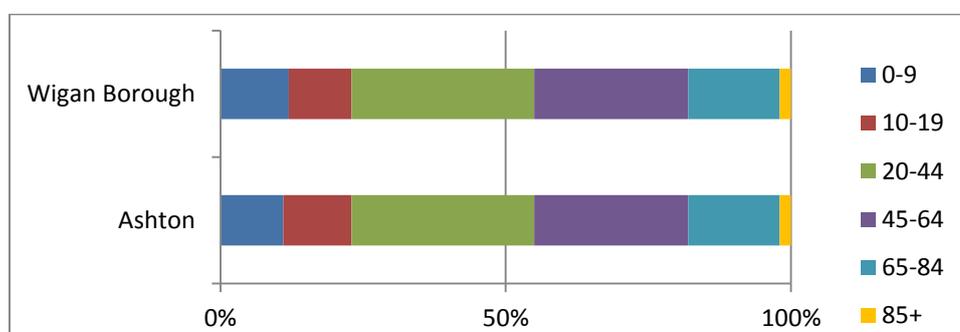


Figure 4: Population age of Ashton compared to Wigan Borough

Places

- 25.3. The area is heavily populated around the A49 Wigan / Warrington Road to the east of the M6 motorway, and along the A58 Bolton Road eastwards, with the town centre focussed around the junction of these roads. The town consists of largely post war to 1980 housing with rows of pre/post WW1 terraced housing along the main roads.

Spaces

- 25.4. Ashton's main open space is Jubilee Park in the centre of the settlement which has green flag status. Wigan Flashes falls outside of the settlement boundary but provides a large aspect of natural and semi-natural green space close to the town.

Parks and gardens

- 25.5. Ashton has three parks. All three are of high quality with two also achieving a high score for value. An overarching friends group known as Friends of Ashton is associated with these parks as well as being involved with a wider range of open spaces.
- 25.6. Three Sisters recreational area is a large park of strategic importance to the west of the borough and neighbouring areas. Although lacking the necessary facilities to become a national park there is a large amount of natural and semi-natural green space at the site and an active friends group, as such the park is considered locally to be of similar significance to the national parks in the borough.
- 25.7. Jubilee Park is the main traditional park in Ashton. It is a Green Flag park with a dedicated active friends group, Friends of Jubilee Park. It was scored highly for both quality and value although there is no car parking provision.
- 25.8. Edmund Collins Park is a smaller park in Bryn to the north of Ashton. It was scored highly for quality but only as average for value, indicating that it is not as significant locally as the other two parks.
- 25.9. There is a minor catchment gap to the west of Ashton. However, there is compensatory provision in the form of Brocstedes Road playing field.

Amenity green space

- 25.10. Ashton has 19 areas of amenity green space. Six of these areas scored highly for both quality and value, five achieved an average score for both and the remaining sites received a combination of high and average scores.
- 25.11. There is a minor gap to the north east of Ashton where there is a lower population density. Other types of open space are available in this area that share characteristics with amenity green space, such as unequipped children and young people's play areas and parks and gardens.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 25.12. Ashton has 16 areas of natural and semi-natural green space, the majority of which were scored highly for quality and value.
- 25.13. Three Sisters is one of seven Local Nature Reserves in the borough that enable people to enjoy wildlife in its natural habitats. The wider Recreational Area is a key gateway to the borough's Greenheart.

25.14. Sandyforth Farm and Allscott Way were scored as high and average respectively for quality but poor for value. This could be due to the nature of the sites and/or their accessibility.

25.15. There is a large catchment gap in the centre of Ashton however there are sufficient amenity green spaces and parks within that area to meet open space requirements.

Green corridors

25.16. There are no green corridors in Ashton. Linkages into Greenheart, especially by bicycle, are a priority for improvement.

Allotments and community gardens

25.17. Ashton is well served by 5 allotments and community gardens with only a minor gap to the west of the town. The majority of these sites were scored high or average for quality and value, with one site achieving a high score for both.

25.18. Stubshaw Cross Allotments has an active allotment association and is part of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles' 'Get Up and Grow' project.

25.19. One site at Beech Street received a poor score for both quality and value due to a lack of surveillance and poor boundary conditions giving rise to security concerns. This site could be a priority for improvement.

25.20. There are no further sites proposed in Ashton therefore improving existing sites and returning former sites to use is a key action.

Cemeteries and churchyards

25.21. There are five churchyards within Ashton, all managed by their respective church. All sites were scored highly for value with four of the five also being scored high for quality.

25.22. The Graveyard on Heath Road was one of three sites within the borough to receive a poor quality rating. This is due to a lack of regular maintenance and security provision, leading to less frequent use of the site.

25.23. Memorials in St Thomas Churchyard benefitted from recent funding from the War Memorials Trust.

Provision for children and young people

- 25.24. There are 10 equipped sites and 13 unequipped sites. There are no LEAP sites however there is sufficient provision of larger NEAP sites and smaller LAP sites offering accessible provision across the settlement with one site providing activity space for young people aged 12+.
- 25.25. The majority of play areas scored highly for value with 11 of the sites scoring highly for quality also. Five sites received an average score for both quality and value. One unequipped site scored poorly for quality.

Civic spaces

- 25.26. Civic spaces are spaces for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. Ashton was one of three settlements to lose its outdoor market square due to increased demand for car parking.
- 25.27. There is one civic space in Ashton, the Ashton War Memorial near the town centre. This site benefitted recently from funding provided by the War Memorials Trust to clean and restore the monument.

Outdoor sports

- 25.28. There is provision within the settlement for a small range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	None
Football (incl. playing fields)	King Georges Field, Armoury Bank Brocstedes Road Bryn Recreational Ground Ashton Town Football Ground, Edge Green Street Ashton Athletic AFC Ashton Bears, Low Bank Road
Rugby League	Ashton Bears, Low Bank Road
Rugby Union	None
Hockey	None
Bowls	St Oswald's Bowling Green, rear of Bryn Street Ashton Recreation Society Bowling Green, Council Avenue Garswood Hall Bowling Club Our Lady Immaculate Bowling Green Bryn Road, Ashton-In-Makerfield
Athletics	None
Tennis	Jubilee Park
Golf	None

Table 26: Outdoor sports provision in Ashton

25.29. There are five bowling greens in Ashton, one is owned by the council and four are privately owned.

25.30. There is provision for water sports, with water-skiing competitions held at Three Sisters Recreational Area.

25.31. There is little provision for sports requiring specialist grounds within the settlement, other than the rugby league pitch at Ashton Bears. However these are available in neighbouring areas.

Indoor sports

25.32. Ashton Leisure Centre, in the centre of the town, is managed by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles. It caters for a range of activities with a multi-use sports hall, swimming pool, an all-weather pitch, and fitness suite. It can be used on a pay and play basis.

25.33. There are three further activity halls for sports and recreation in Ashton, two of which are for sports club or association use only. There is sufficient provision in Ashton for indoor sports.

Education provision

25.34. There are eight primary school playing fields in Ashton and two high school playing fields with rugby and football pitches.

Artificial Pitches

25.35. There are two sand-filled artificial pitches within Ashton.

26. Aspull

Settlement characteristics

- 26.1. Aspull is the least densely populated settlement in the borough. The majority of the population is concentrated in the centre and is surrounded by large areas of farm land. It has links to Wigan North and to West Houghton in the east. See Appendix A28.

People

- 26.2. The population in the area is comparatively older than that of the borough with nearly half of residents aged over 45 and a higher than average percentage of residents aged over 65.

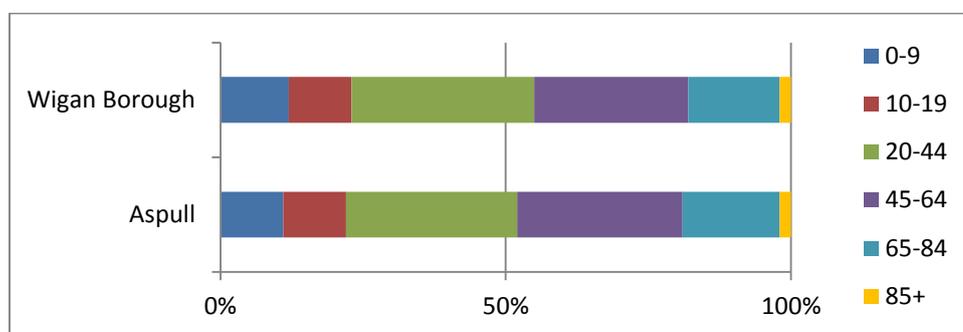


Figure 5: Population age in Aspull compared with Wigan Borough

Places

- 26.3. The majority of housing in Aspull was built post war. The area to the east of B529/Bolton Road is dominated by post war private housing whereas the west is largely dominated by inter-war and post-war social housing. There are some remaining pre-WW1 terraces along the main roads through the area.

Spaces

- 26.4. Aspull's main open space asset is Haigh Hall Country Park which provides a formal park and natural and semi natural green space provision in the west of the settlement.

Parks and gardens

- 26.5. There are two parks within the settlement allowing for complete coverage through the combined catchment zones of the parks.

- 26.6. Aspull Civic Park is of settlement importance. The park scored highly for quality but average for value indicating that it is not as important locally as the other park in the area.
- 26.7. Haigh Hall Country Park is a Principal Park that crosses the boundary of Aspull and Wigan North. The park scored highly for both quality and value and has two active friends groups, Friends of Haigh Hall Country Park and Friends of Haigh Walled Garden.
- 26.8. Haigh Hall Country Park is part-way through an investment project of £12million over a five year period up to 2020, including restoration on the historic Haigh Hall, new and improved parking facilities, a family activity zone including a high ropes course, and new walking and cycling trails.

Amenity green space

- 26.9. Aspull has 20 areas of amenity green space, all of which scored highly for quality with most scoring average for value. Three sites scored highly for both quality and value at Haigh Road / Ratcliffe Road, Adjacent 165 Haigh Road and Wigan Road/Holly Road. Two sites scored poorly for value.
- 26.10. Provision for amenity green space in Aspull is satisfactory in the southern areas of the settlement however there is a large catchment gap to the north-west. Other types of open space are available that share the characteristics of amenity green space such as unequipped children and young people's play areas and parks and gardens. The presence of Haigh Hall Country Park minimises the impact of the catchment gap.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 26.11. The southern and western areas of Aspull are included within Greenheart. Haigh Country Park is a key gateway to the Greenheart and has an active friends group that helps to maintain the site.
- 26.12. There are 13 sites of natural and semi-natural green space in Aspull, 8 which scored highly for value with 8 scoring highly for quality. 6 sites scored highly for both quality and value. One site scored poorly for value at Prospect Hill Woodland on Haigh Road but no sites scored poorly for quality.
- 26.13. Kirkless Wood is one of seven Local Nature Reserves in the borough that works toward meeting sustainable targets and providing accessibility to conservation areas in the borough. The site also has an active friends group.

26.14. Kirkless Wood received a high score for value but an average score for quality indicating that improvements are needed at this site including surveillance and car parking facilities.

26.15. There is a large catchment gap to the north and east side of the settlement however there are other green spaces in the area to mitigate this deficit.

Green corridors

26.16. There are two green corridors that cross the boundaries with Wigan South and Standish. The corridors are a section of the Top Lock to borough boundary part of the canal and Red Rock Railway (South) which both scored highly for quality and value.

Allotments and community gardens

26.17. There are two allotment sites near to the centre of the settlement. The area currently has surplus allotment space for the population size.

26.18. Haigh Walled Gardens is a non-statutory site that received a high score for both quality and value. The site at Crawford Street is privately owned and managed and received a high score for quality but an average score for value.

Cemeteries and churchyards

26.19. Aspull has two churchyards but no cemeteries; there is sufficient provision in the area for the population size. Both churchyards are managed by the Church.

26.20. St David's C of E churchyard on Haigh Road received one of the highest scores for value and a high score for quality. St Elizabeth's C of E churchyard on Bolton Road however received an average score for quality but a high score for value.

Provision for children and young people

26.21. There is sufficient catchment coverage for children and young people play areas in Aspull however the range of play types available is very small and as such the overall provision is insufficient.

26.22. There are two local play areas, one neighbourhood equipped play area, and two youth provision sites as well as six unequipped play spaces. All three equipped sites received an average score for quality with two of three also receiving a high score for value. Both youth provision facilities at Haigh

Country Park scored highly for both. All but one of the casual play spaces scored highly for quality with half scoring highly for value also, the remaining sites received average scores. This presents an opportunity to improve the equipped offering in the area for both quality and quantity.

26.23. The NEAP site at Haigh Hall Country Park was one of 13 sites to receive investment in 2013-2014 however continued vandalism to the equipment has resulted in an average score for quality but a high score for value.

Civic spaces

26.24. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. There is one civic space in the settlement. Aspull Cenotaph Finger Post received a high score for both quality and value.

26.25. The Aspull Cenotaph benefitted recently from funding provided by the War Memorials Trust to clean and restore the monument.

Outdoor sports provision

26.26. There is provision within the settlement for a small range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	N/A
Football (incl. playing fields)	Aspull Common, Haigh Road Aspull Civic Hall, Woods Road (2 pitches)
Rugby League	N/A
Rugby Union	Aspull RUFC, Woodshaw Park
Hockey	N/A
Bowls	Aspull Civic Park Bowling Greens
Athletics	N/A
Tennis	Aspull Civic Park
Golf	Haigh Hall Golf Course Hindley Hall Golf Course Wigan Golf Club

Table 27: Outdoor sports provision in Aspull

26.27. Aspull RUFC leases the site from the council. The site suffers from poor drainage and the quality of the pitch is affected because of it. This indicates that improvement is needed at the site.

26.28. Haigh Hall Golf Course is a municipal site that offers a 9-hole and 18-hole course. This site provides adequate sport facilities for the settlement of Aspull and for neighbouring East Wigan. Wigan Golf Club is a privately owned 18-

hole course that crosses the boundary with Wigan North. Similarly, Hindley Hall Sports Club is an 18-hole private course shared with Hindley settlement.

Indoor sports provision

26.29. There is no provision for sports halls or swimming pools in Aspull however these facilities are available and accessible in the neighbouring settlement of Wigan.

26.30. There is a fitness suite in Aspull at Vital Health & Wellbeing that operates on a registered membership use only basis. The suite has 31 exercise stations and was refurbished in 2014.

Education provision

26.31. There are two playing fields within the settlement at Our Lady's RC Primary School and Aspull Church Primary School.

26.32. There is no provision for high schools, marked pitches, or other open playing fields in the settlement.

Artificial pitches

26.33. There is no provision for artificial pitches in Aspull however both sand-filled and 3G pitches are accessible in the neighbouring settlement of Wigan.

27. Atherton

Settlement characteristics

- 27.1. Atherton's population is widely spread across the settlement. There are four main residential areas; Hag Fold in the north, Atherton Town in the centre, Hindsford to the east and Howe Bridge to the west. Atherton is well connected to Tyldesley, Leigh and Hindley. See Appendix A29.

People

- 27.2. There is a larger proportion of working age residents in Atherton in comparison with the borough and a lower proportion of resident's aged 65-84.

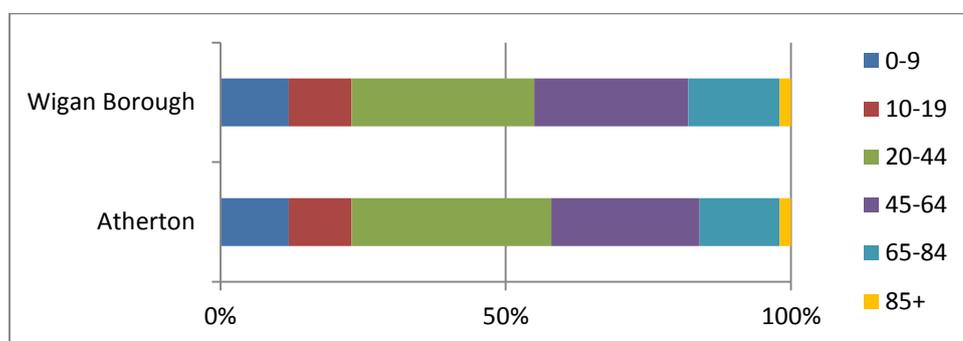


Figure 6: Population age in Atherton compared with Wigan Borough

Places

- 27.3. The town is varied between linear residential developments of pre/post-war terraces and areas of post-war housing. Hag Fold and Hindsford are characterised largely by social housing and Atherton Town by terraces, whereas Howe Bridge is largely dominated by private residential dwellings.

Spaces

- 27.4. The two parks situated in the north and centre provide a good coverage of formal open space and there is generally a good variation of informal open space in the area.

Parks and gardens

- 27.5. There are two parks in the area that are both of high quality. Central Park was scored highly for both quality and value whereas Devonshire Place received a high score for quality but an average score for value. Atherton Environmental Network is a community group involved with the maintenance of these sites.

- 27.6. The settlement is well covered by the catchment zones for the two parks with supplementary provision at Lilford Park to the south in Leigh.

Amenity green space

- 27.7. There are 11 areas of amenity green space. The majority of sites achieved a high score for either quality or value and five sites achieved a high score for both. The site at Tyldesley Road received a poor score for quality and a high score for value; this is an opportunity for improvement in the area as the site is of importance to the local area but is in need of restoration.
- 27.8. In line with the characteristics of amenity green space, there is a need to improve the lower scoring sites to enhance the visual appearance of the area as well as the accessibility to informal sporting and play areas, and to wildlife corridors and habitats.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 27.9. There are 12 sites of natural and semi-natural green space. Five sites received a high score for both quality and value and two sites received an average score for both.
- 27.10. The remaining sites received mixed scores for quality and value including the site off Gretna Road/Leigh Road which scored highly for quality but poor for value, Bee Fold Fishery which scored poor quality and average value, and Gardeners Woodland which was scored average quality but poor value.
- 27.11. There is a need to improve the quality of some natural and semi-natural green spaces within the area. There is generally sufficient provision of natural and semi-natural green spaces in the south of Atherton with further provision supplied by the Greenheart settlements to the west, and other green space provision in the urban centre.

Green corridors

- 27.12. There is one green corridor in Atherton, the Westleigh Lane to Lovers Lane link, which scores highly for both quality and value. The corridor is located to the west of the settlement.

Allotments and community gardens

- 27.13. There are five allotment sites in the area, one of which is statutory, three are non-statutory and one is privately owned and managed.

- 27.14. One site at Wardour Street received an average score for both quality and value. All sites scored highly for quality and value except Factory Street which received an average score for value.
- 27.15. There is adequate provision of allotment space in the area due to the introduction of the Guest Fold Allotments site in 2013 to meet local demand. Guest Fold Allotments has an active allotment association and is part of the 'Get Up and Grow' project. This site also received funding since 2007 for new allotment provision and polytunnels.
- 27.16. Weston Street Allotments also has an active friends group. The site received a high score for both quality and value despite consultation highlighting security issues, lack of facilities, and poor vegetation maintenance.

Cemeteries and churchyards

- 27.17. There are two cemeteries that are managed by the council. Both Howe Bridge Cemetery and Crematorium and Atherton Cemetery were scored highly for quality and value.
- 27.18. There are no churchyards in the area but there is adequate provision of burial plots in the two cemeteries available. There is one crematorium in the borough at Howe Bridge. Howe Bridge Cemetery and Crematorium has an anticipated plot provision until 2025.

Provision for children and young people

- 27.19. Atherton has 10 equipped play areas and 8 unequipped play areas for children and young people. Across the 18 sites, 6 different play area types are included.
- 27.20. All of the equipped play areas have received investment since 2012; this is reflected in the majority of sites achieving high scores for both quality and value. Collier's Corner achieved green flag status and scored among the highest in the Borough for quality.
- 27.21. Two sites, Dorset Road Play Area and Devonshire Place Recreation Ground, received a high score for value but an average score for quality. The play area at Howe Bridge was fully refurbished early in 2016.
- 27.22. There are no catchment gaps in the settlement and the residential areas are well provided with spaces for both local and neighbourhood play.

Civic spaces

- 27.23. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. There are two civic spaces in the town, both of which were scored highly for quality and value.
- 27.24. The former Market Place has since been turned into a car park but is still regarded locally as a civic space.
- 27.25. The Atherton Cenotaph benefitted recently from funding provided by the War Memorials Trust to clean and restore the monument.

Outdoor sports provision

- 27.26. There is provision in Atherton for a range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Atherton Cricket Club, Higham Park, Leigh Road, Howe Bridge
Football (incl. playing fields)	Alder House Football Ground Crilly Park, Spa Road Pennington FC, Leigh Road Spa Road Playing Field Devonshire Road Playing Field Douglas Street Playing Field
Rugby League	Atherton Dragons, Kings Park Central Park
Rugby Union	None
Hockey	Howe Bridge Sports Centre all weather pitch
Bowls	Botanical Gardens Bowling Green, Tyldesley Road The Club House Bowling Green, Fletcher Street Gardeners Arms Bowling Green, Lovers Lane Morley Street Bowling Greens
Athletics	None
Tennis	Morley Street
Golf	None

Table 28: Outdoor sports provision in Atherton

- 27.27. Atherton Cricket Club is the only facility in Borough that offers a women's/mixed team as well as 1 senior team and 3 junior teams.
- 27.28. While not having athletics teams or facilities in Atherton, there is a running club that operate in the area.
- 27.29. There is adequate provision for smaller local sports in the settlement and provision for all other outdoor sports in the neighbouring settlements.

Indoor sports provision

- 27.30. Howe Bridge Sports Centre provides a multi-use sports hall, main and small swimming pools, an exercise studio, three squash courts, a grass pitch, and a fitness suite with 67 stations. It was built in 1976 and refurbished in 2003 and is owned and managed by the council and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles.
- 27.31. This site secured a £500,000 grant from National Lottery Sport England Improvement Fund and £2.5 Council funds to refurbish for the second time. The refurbished centre will combine traditional sports facilities with a high quality health and fitness suite and innovative leisure products including VerTGo Adventure Climbing, Indoor Extreme Skate and BMX Park and Adventure Play facilities. A new health and fitness suite is also planned, to include an 80-station gym, sauna and steam room, a group cycling studio, a studio for group fitness and new changing rooms. In addition, there will be a high quality, synthetic football and rugby-compliant pitch on site.
- 27.32. There are two sports halls located in Atherton. The main hall at Howe Bridge Sports Centre operates on a 'pay and play' basis whereas the main hall at Atherton Community School is only accessible by club or association.
- 27.33. There are three fitness suites in Atherton; the largest is located at Howe Bridge Sports Centre with 67 stations. There is a ladies only gym providing 24 stations at Fit and Funky, and a further 40 stations available at Fitness Xchange. All fitness suites in the area operate on a 'pay and play' basis.

Education provision

- 27.34. There are five primary school playing fields in Atherton. There are no secondary school playing fields for sports however there is sufficient provision in the neighbouring settlements to accommodate users from Atherton.

Artificial pitches

- 27.35. There are artificial pitches at Atherton Community School (3G rubber crumb pile) and Howe Bridge (sand-filled). There is further provision for artificial pitches in the neighbouring settlement of Leigh to the west.

28. Golborne and Lowton

Settlement characteristics

28.1. The settlement has two main residential areas, Golborne to the west and Lowton to the east. It is well connected with Ashton to the west and Leigh to the east. See Appendix A30.

People

28.2. The age proportions of the population are in line with the average for the borough.

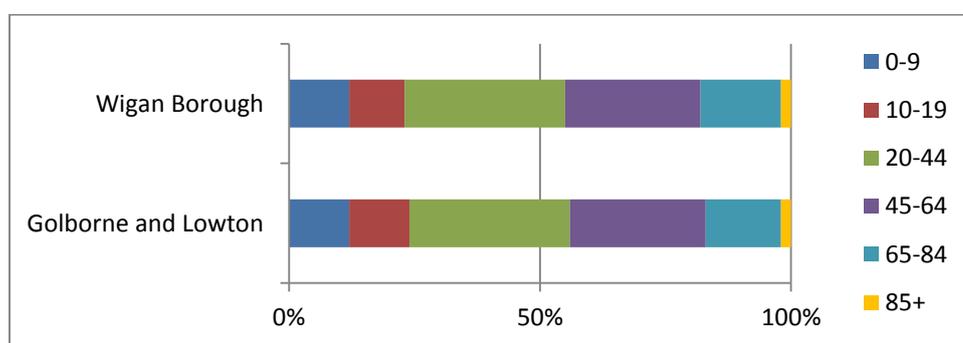


Figure 7: Population age in Golborne and Lowton compared with Wigan Borough

Places

28.3. The two areas are dominated by post-war to 1980 built private housing, largely concentrated around the Lowton area. There are pockets of post-war social housing to the east, west, and south of the private built populated areas. There are small clusters of pre/post-war terraces to the east and west boundaries of the settlement following the main roads and leading to neighbouring Ashton and Leigh.

Spaces

28.4. The residential areas are surrounded by farm land and there is moss land to the south at Highfield Moss. Pennington Flash Country Park covers the north east of the settlement

Parks and gardens

28.5. There is generally sufficient provision of parks and gardens with Pennington Flash Country Park providing a vast catchment area as a Principal Park in the north east. The site scored highly for quality and value.

- 28.6. Golborne Park is located to the north west of the settlement and was the lowest scoring settlement park for quality. This is due to the lack of natural surveillance in the area, the site scored highly for value however.

Amenity green space

- 28.7. There are 20 areas of amenity green space providing adequate provision across the urban core of the settlement.
- 28.8. Amenity green space provides an informal play area and sporting provision amongst visual enhancement and fundamental green open space, it is also often categorised as other types of open space. For this reason a lack of amenity green space in unpopulated areas is not a concern.
- 28.9. Braithwaites Residents Association is involved with the maintenance of amenity green spaces, as well as other open spaces, within the settlement and has received funding and support for this responsibility.
- 28.10. The majority of sites scored highly for either quality or value with eight sites scoring highly for both, and three sites receiving an average score for both. Of the remaining 9 sites, 7 scored highly for quality but average for value and no sites scored poorly.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 28.11. There are five sites of natural and semi-natural green space in Golborne and Lowton. Four of five sites scored highly for quality with three of five also scoring high for value.
- 28.12. Millingford Brook Woodland is the only site in the borough to score poorly for both quality and value. The site is a small area of dense vegetation adjacent to a brook. There is poor access and no surveillance at the site despite its location near to a housing estate. This presents an opportunity for improvement through future development.

Green corridors

- 28.13. There are three green corridor sites located in the east of Golborne and Lowton. All sites received high scores for both quality and value.
- 28.14. There are two stretches of canal in the settlement joining Golborne and Lowton to Leigh and Astley via the canal through Leigh, and to Leigh and Abram and Platt Bridge via the Pennington to Westwood canal.

28.15. A green corridor joining Newton Road to Gerrards Bridge also adds to the level of provision in the area.

Allotments and community gardens

28.16. There is sufficient provision of allotments in Golborne and Lowton with 3 sites in the settlement and additional provision from sites in neighbouring Leigh.

28.17. There are a variety of allotment types and sizes. Two sites scored highly for both quality and value with the one private site scoring average quality but high value. This indicates that allotments are of importance to the settlement.

28.18. Fir Tree Avenue statutory allotments have an association that have recently achieved self-management status.

Cemeteries and churchyards

28.19. There are no cemeteries in the settlement and four churchyards. All sites in Golborne and Lowton are managed by the church. All sites received an average score for quality and a high score for value with the exception of St Luke's Church on Slag Lane which received a high score for both.

28.20. All Saints Churchyard received one of the highest scores for value.

Provision for children and young people

28.21. Golborne and Lowton have 9 equipped play areas of varying type and quality, all sites scored highly for value and no sites scored poorly.

28.22. There is one neighbourhood equipped site at Golborne Park. This site also offers young people play provision. Golborne Park was one of five sites to receive an average score for quality.

28.23. There are three local equipped sites with the remaining sites catering only for local area play.

28.24. There are 10 unequipped casual play spaces in Golborne and Lowton all within the centre of the settlement. 9 sites received a high score for quality with 4 receiving a high score for value also. The remaining sites received an average score for quality and/or value.

28.25. There is a catchment gap in southern Golborne and south east of Lowton that presents a challenge for the area. Opportunities to invest in new play areas should be considered through new development sites.

Civic spaces

- 28.26. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. There are two civic spaces in the area, as such there is considered to be adequate provision.
- 28.27. Peter Kayne square scored highly for both quality and value. Golborne Cenotaph, having recently benefitted from funding from the War Memorial Trust, achieved a high score for quality but an average score for value due to its location away from the main road lacking prominence.

Outdoor sports provision

- 28.28. There is provision within the settlement for a range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Golborne Cricket Club, off Stone Cross Lane North
Football (incl. playing fields)	Golborne Sports Club Hesketh Meadows Legh Street
Rugby League	Golborne Parkside ARLFC
Rugby Union	None
Hockey	Golborne Parkside Sports Club Golborne Sports and Social Club
Bowls	Golborne Village Club, Beech Road Bowling Green Parkside Sports and Community Club, Rivington Avenue Golborne Sports Club Bowling Green High Street, behind no. 18 Red Lion Pub Bowling Green, Newton Road
Athletics	None
Tennis	Golborne Sports Club Tennis Courts
Golf	Pennington Flash Golf Course Haydock Golf Course Sycamore Driving Range

Table 29: Outdoor sports provision in Golborne and Lowton

- 28.29. There are two hockey pitches that host one of the boroughs three hockey teams.
- 28.30. There are five bowling greens, three of which are private with the other two leased from the council.
- 28.31. Golborne and Lowton has ample provision for golf with three courses in the settlement. Pennington Flash is a municipal 9-hole course to the north east. Haydock Golf Course is a private 18-hole course in the south west and

crosses the boundary into Haydock, St. Helens. Sycamore Driving Range is the smallest of the sites and is a private course located to the north-west.

Indoor sports provision

- 28.32. There are two indoor sports facilities offering sports halls, both are accessible by club/association only. Golborne High School has both a main hall and activity hall. Lowton Community Sports College offers only a main hall that was refurbished in 2009.
- 28.33. Swimming provision is very poor within the settlement with only a learner pool available on a registered membership basis at FX Leisure on Newton Road.
- 28.34. There are two fitness suites in the settlement. FX Leisure in Lowton is the largest in the settlement with 55 exercise stations. This site operates on a registered membership use only basis and was refurbished in 2007. The Gym in Golborne is smaller with 37 'pay and play' exercise stations.
- 28.35. There is further indoor sporting provision at the council operated Leigh Indoor Sports Centre.

Education provision

- 28.36. There is adequate provision for educational green space with eight playing fields all located at primary schools. There are two marked pitches for rugby/soccer in the settlement at Golborne High School and Lowton High School.

Artificial pitches

- 28.37. There are three sand-filled pitches in the settlement at Golborne High School, Lowton High School and Golborne Sports and Social Club. There is no provision for 3G pitches but these are accessible in neighbouring Leigh.

29. Hindley

Settlement characteristics

29.1. Hindley has one of the highest density rankings in the borough. The majority of the settlement is built up however there are large areas of open space at Amberswood Common to the west and Victoria Fields to the south. Hindley has good connections with Wigan North, Abram and Platt Bridge, Atherton, and Leigh. See Appendix A31.

People

29.2. The population in Hindley is relatively in line with the borough average, with a marginally higher proportion of residents aged 20-44.

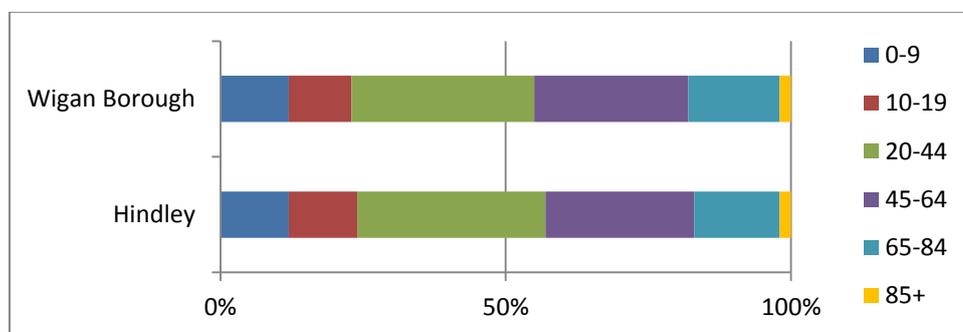


Figure 8: Population age in Hindley compared with Wigan Borough

Places

29.3. There is a large cluster of pre/post-war terraces toward the north west of the settlement with some linear development following the main roads. The north is largely dominated by post war social housing whereas the south and east are largely privately developed post-war built estates.

Spaces

29.4. Hindley has large areas of parkland and a Local Nature Reserve which characterise the open space in the settlement.

Parks and gardens

29.5. Hindley has three parks. Leyland Park, to the East of the settlement is of settlement importance and has an active friends group that organises events throughout the year. The park was scored highly for both quality and value,

having had some improvements in summer 2014 with an aerial runway and new play equipment installed.

- 29.6. Rayner Park is currently suffering from drainage problems that have resulted in play equipment being removed from the site; this is reflected in the high score for value but average score for quality. There is a friends group known as Friends of Rayner Park associated with this site.
- 29.7. Westlake Park is the third park in the area and scored high for quality and average for value. There is a small catchment gap in the north east.

Amenity green space

- 29.8. There are seven amenity green spaces, three of which score highly for both quality and value and two received an average score for both. The remaining two sites scored averagely for quality and high for value.
- 29.9. No site scores poorly. This indicates that the amenity green spaces in Hindley are of value to the settlement but require improvements to the quality.
- 29.10. There is a need to increase the quality and value of the existing amenity green space and to provide good links to existing open space from new developments.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 29.11. Hindley has ten areas of natural and semi-natural green space. The majority of sites received an average score for value.
- 29.12. Borsdane Wood is one of seven Local Nature Reserves in the borough that works toward meeting sustainable targets and providing accessibility to conservation areas in the borough. The site has an active friends group.
- 29.13. Over half of the sites were scored average for quality with five of those sites also scoring average for value. One site scored poorly for quality but highly for value, this presents an opportunity to better the conditions of the land adjacent to Hindley Hall Golf Course as this is a valued area.
- 29.14. The western side of the settlement is within the Greenheart area. The majority of natural and semi-natural green space falls to the north, south, and western boundaries of the settlement with no provision in the centre or the east of the town. There is sufficient provision in the urban areas from parks and gardens and other green spaces however.

Green corridors

29.15. The settlement has five green corridors to the north-west and south-west. All sites are of high quality and high value. These sites complement the Greenheart area and local areas of natural and semi-natural green space.

Allotments and community gardens

29.16. There are five allotment sites and community gardens in Hindley, all located to the north of the settlement. Green Crew Community Garden is the only private site and received a high score for quality and value. This site has also received funding since 2007 to provide a poly tunnel to support gardening for adults with learning disabilities.

29.17. The remaining sites are non-statutory with a generally poor score for quality but a largely high score for value. This indicates that there is a need to better manage the allotment sites in Hindley and presents an opportunity to replace the existing sites with more efficient and better maintained allotments.

Cemeteries and churchyards

29.18. There is one cemetery in Hindley and four churchyards. All five sites received a high score for both quality and value. St Peters Church has benefitted from funding from the War Memorials Trust that made provision for cleaning and repairing of monuments and their immediate surroundings.

29.19. Hindley Cemetery is anticipated to reach maximum plot capacity in 2017. Further provision is available at the remaining four churchyards and neighbouring settlement cemeteries however.

Provision for children and young people

29.20. There are 8 unequipped play areas and 10 equipped play areas including a range of local and neighbourhood play. Leyland Park provides for both older and younger children with a toddler and junior play area, trim trail, and aerial runway. This site benefitted from investment during 2013-2014.

29.21. All equipped play areas except Ward Street and Newman Close score highly for quality and value. 7 unequipped play spaces received a high score for quality with 6 sites achieving a high score for value. All remaining scores were average for quality or value, no sites scored poorly.

29.22. There is a gap in play provision to the east of the borough. The deficit can be addressed by requesting on site provision for any new developments in this area.

Civic spaces provision

29.23. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. Hindley lost both of its outdoor market squares due to an increased need for parking provision. The lack of civic spaces in Hindley presents an opportunity to improve the social and cultural offering in the settlement through future development and urban design.

Outdoor sports provision

29.24. There is provision for a wide range of outdoor sports in Hindley. The few sports unavailable in the settlement are accessible in the neighbouring settlements.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Hindley St Peters Cricket Club, Hurst Street
Football (incl. playing fields)	Recreation Ground off Leigh Street Close Lane Playing Field Thomas Street Playing Field Leyland Park Playing Fields Hindley Town FC Playing Field Park Road Playing Fields
Rugby League	Hindley ARLFC
Rugby Union	None
Hockey	None
Bowls	Brunswick Recreation Club Bowling Green, Leigh Road Lord Nelson Bowling Green, Bridge Street Platt Lane Bowling Green Bowling Green off Chapel Street Sacred Heart Bowling Green, Swan Lane
Athletics	None
Tennis	Leyland Park
Golf	Hindley Hall Sports Club

Table 30: Outdoor sports provision in Hindley

29.25. Hindley has five bowling greens, three are privately owned, one is council owned and one is leased from the council. Lord Nelson Bowling Green has benefitted from numerous grants in recent years.

29.26. There are three tennis courts available at Leyland Park. Leyland Park hosts the only free to use grass courts in the North West with all other courts in the borough being tarmac.

29.27. Hindley Hall Sports Club is a private 18-hole golf course that crosses the settlement boundary into Wigan North.

29.28. There is provision for fishing/angling at three sites in the area at Westlake, Hindley Square Lodge and Hindley Deep Pit.

Indoor Sports

29.29. Hindley Sports Centre provides a multi-use sports hall, four squash courts, an exercise studio, sauna, steam room and plunge pool, and a fitness suite with 28 stations. As well as the pay and play main hall at Hindley Sports Centre, there are two private use activity halls at Oakfield High School and Hindley Community High School.

29.30. There is provision for swimming at two sites. Body Image Fitness has a learner pool and Hindley Phoenix Community Pool has a learner pool and main pool. Both sites operate on a 'pay and play' basis and were refurbished in the early 2000s.

29.31. As well as the Sports Centre, there is provision for fitness suites at Body Image Fitness which provides 95 'pay and play' exercise stations.

Education Provision

29.32. There are eight primary school playing fields and one marked pitch for rugby/soccer located at Hindley High School.

Artificial Pitches

29.33. There are no artificial pitches in Hindley however both sand-filled and 3G pitches are accessible in neighbouring settlements.

30. Leigh

Settlement characteristics

- 30.1. Leigh's defining feature is the abundance of natural and semi natural green space, the majority of which is reclaimed land. It is the second largest town in the borough and has good links with Hindley, Atherton and Astley. See Appendix A32.

People

- 30.2. The population in Leigh is relatively younger than that of the borough with a larger percentage of residents aged 20-44.

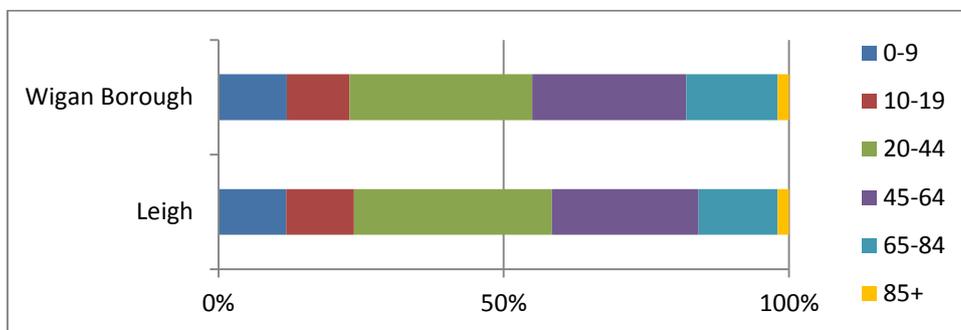


Figure 9: Population age in Leigh compared with Wigan Borough

Places

- 30.3. The mining history of the settlement is reflected in the historic landscape characteristics and residential dwelling types. The densely populated urban centre is dominated by pre-WW1 terraced housing with pre-war social housing sprawling toward the edges of the settlement. The south and east of are dominated by 1980 to 2000 built private dwellings with the exception of the Higher Folds estate.

Spaces

- 30.4. The 5 smaller local parks provide formal recreation for the built up areas in the centre of the settlement and this is further enhanced with easy access to Pennington Flash to the south west. Bickershaw Colliery is to the east, Gin Pit to the west and Hope Carr Local Nature Reserve to the south.

Parks and gardens

- 30.5. Leigh has surplus provision of parks and gardens. There are seven parks altogether with two being of settlement importance. Lilford Park provides provision for the east of the settlement and Pennington Hall Park to the South. Pennington Flash situated cross-border with Golborne and Lowton settlement also serves as additional provision to the west.
- 30.6. 5 parks scored highly for both quality and value and the remaining parks received an average score for both quality and value.
- 30.7. The settlement also has five other parks of value. Firs Park provides play space for both the younger and older age groups. In addition it has a fishing pond which provides an additional wildlife asset to the locality.
- 30.8. Pennington Hall Park and Lilford Park have active friends groups. Pennington Hall Park is a green flag park and received one of the highest scores for quality. A third friends group known as "Howe Bridgers" also operates in the Leigh area.

Amenity green space

- 30.9. Leigh has 31 amenity green spaces. The majority of spaces received an average for quality or value. No site scores poorly for both quality and value.
- 30.10. Peregrine Drive scored low for quality due to incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- 30.11. There are six sites that score highly for both quality and value. There is a need to invest in the existing amenity green spaces to improve the quality and value of the vast number of other sites in the settlement.
- 30.12. Other types of open space are available that share the characteristics of amenity green space such as unequipped play areas and parks and gardens. The availability and accessibility of other open space types does not however remove the need to improve the offering of amenity green spaces in the settlement.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 30.13. There are 28 natural and semi-natural green spaces in Leigh. The majority of sites are of high quality but average value. Seven sites scored highly for both quality and value, including 42-acre Hope Carr Nature Reserve.

- 30.14. Two sites scored poorly for quality but high or average for value. This indicates a need to improve the quality of these green spaces to the high standard of similar sites in the settlement.
- 30.15. There is good provision of natural and semi-natural green space around the boundary of Leigh with a significant gap in the urban centre, this deficit is addressed by the availability of amenity green space and parks and gardens in the centre of the settlement however.
- 30.16. Pennington Flash is one of seven Local Nature Reserves in the Borough that works toward meeting sustainable targets and providing accessibility to conservation areas in the Borough. This site is also a key gateway to the Greenheart area. The former Bickershaw Colliery site, sharing a boundary with Abram and Platt Bridge, is a further key gateway to the Greenheart area.

Green corridors

- 30.17. There are three green corridor sites within the Leigh settlement. All sites scored highly for quality and value. These are the two canal sections through the settlement, and the Leigh-Manchester-Salford busway.

Allotments and community gardens

- 30.18. There are five allotment sites in Leigh. The four statutory sites are of high quality and value with a large number of plots and the non-statutory site at Grange Street received a high quality score but an average score for value.
- 30.19. There is a major gap in west Leigh which overlaps with south Hindley. There are opportunities through new developments to introduce new sites and there is also an opportunity to extend the northern site at Lilford Park.
- 30.20. A new allotment site, Bickershaw Allotments, has recently opened at the former Bickershaw Colliery site off Edna Road in Westleigh. The site has 26 plots, a substantial car park and storage facilities.
- 30.21. Lilford Park Allotments has an active allotment association and is part of the 'Get Up and Grow' project. The scheme is also in place at Pennington Hall Park in the settlement. The site was one of the highest scoring sites for quality despite reports of vandalism and poor security during consultation.
- 30.22. Hope Carr Lane Allotments has an active association and was one of the highest scoring sites for quality alongside Plank Lane and Lilford Park.

30.23. There is a waiting list for allotment sites in the borough of 350 suggesting that there is not enough provision in the borough. Consultation in Leigh revealed that residents wait for more than five years for an allotment plot to become available indicating a need for further provision.

Cemeteries and churchyards

30.24. There is one cemetery in Leigh that is managed by the Council, and three churchyards. Two churchyards are managed by the church however St Mary's churchyard is managed by the council.

30.25. All four sites scored highly for both quality and value. Leigh Cemetery was one of the highest scoring cemeteries in the Borough for both quality and value and St Mary's churchyard was among the top highest scores for value.

30.26. Leigh Cemetery is the largest site in the borough with 13 acres of land and is expected to provide burial space until 2025. An extension is proposed on the adjacent playing field when the existing plots are near exhaustion.

Provision for children and young people

30.27. Leigh has 15 play areas that provide a range of local and neighbourhood play and a further 19 casual unequipped play sites.

30.28. The area has a mix of provision for younger and older children including a skate ramp at Higherfolds, a MUGA and gym equipment at Dootsons Park, and a BMX track at Crankwood Road.

30.29. All play areas except Firs Park score highly for quality and value. Firs Park has a good range of play equipment for older children however its play area for under 10's is in need of refurbishment; as such it received an average score for quality.

30.30. The play area at Higher Folds was fully refurbished in 2014. Dootsons park has also been rejuvenated with a new MUGA and outdoor gym equipment installed as part of a project by the local community group in summer 2014. The group are now trying to generate funding to provide additional play equipment for a younger age group at the site. Westleigh Park and Firs Park also received investment in 2013-2014.

30.31. Over half of the unequipped sites received a high score for quality with over half scoring highly for value. 6 sites scored highly for both quality and value with the remaining sites scoring a combination. Grasmere Street scored

poorly for quality but highly for value, this is due to poor boundary conditions and indicates a need for improvement.

Civic spaces

30.32. There are two civic spaces in Leigh, both of high quality and value. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities.

30.33. Leigh Town Hall Square and Leigh Cenotaph Square provide a high quality focal point for the town centre with the Cenotaph Square benefitting from recent funding from the War Memorials Trust.

Outdoor sports provision

30.34. There is provision within the settlement for a wide range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Westleigh Methodist Cricket Club, Westleigh Lane Leigh Cricket Club, Beech Walk Westleigh Cricket Club, The Pingots
Football (incl. playing fields)	Pennington FC, Leigh Road Lawson Avenue Playing Field Hakhurst Street Playing Field Lodge Lane Playing Field Queensway Football Pitch Lilford Park Dootsons Park Playing Field East of Pennington Brook Marsh Playing Field Playing Field Off Hope Carr Road Melrose Playing Field Watsons Playing Field
Rugby League	Leigh Miners ARLFC (Seniors) Leigh Miners ARLFC (Juniors) Leigh East ARLFC
Rugby Union	Leigh RUFC, Hand Lane
Hockey	Westleigh High School Leigh Sports Village
Bowls	Village Club Bowling Green, Westleigh Lane St Gabriel's Bowling Green Lilford Park Bowling Greens Leigh Bowling Club, Pownall Street Sandersons Croft Bowling Green Dootsons Park Bowling Green Bowling Section, Leigh Cricket Club Pennington Park Bowling Green Leigh RUFC Bowling Green Leigh Miners Welfare Club Bowling Section Tamar Public House Bowling Green, Nel Pan Lane

Athletics	Leigh Harriers at Leigh Sports Village
Tennis	Pennington Park Leigh Sports Club tennis section
Golf	None

Table 31: Outdoor sports provision in Leigh

- 30.35. Leigh Cricket Club is recognised by the Lancashire Cricket Board as a centre for excellence for girls' cricket for under-9 and under-11 age groups.
- 30.36. Leigh Miners ARLFC (juniors) has the highest number of pitches available at the facility with 3 senior, 2 junior, and 3 mini pitches. 11 junior teams use this facility. Leigh RUFC is one of 2 facilities in the Borough that offer a women's team as well as 4 men's teams and 12 junior teams. The site has 5 senior pitches with no provision for junior pitches.
- 30.37. Leigh Centurions Community Foundation, alongside Wigan Warriors, is a charity set up by a professional club to promote the participation in Rugby League in Wigan and the North West. The charity provides coaching programmes as well as other health sessions. They also work with both primary and secondary schools and provide education programmes.
- 30.38. Leigh Sports Village opened in 2008 and has an 8 lane synthetic track. The site also caters for javelin, long jump and throwing field sports.
- 30.39. There is also provision for fishing/angling in Leigh along the Leigh branch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

Indoor sports provision

- 30.40. There is a local authority active indoor leisure complex in Leigh. Leigh Indoor Sports Centre provides a multi-use sports hall, main and small swimming pools, an aerobics studio, conference facilities, and a fitness suite with 65 stations. There are three sports halls in Leigh. The only 'pay and play' main hall is located at the Leigh Indoor Sports Centre and is owned and managed by the Council and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles.
- 30.41. There are also two main hall/activity halls at Bedford High School and Westleigh High School that are club or association access only. Both sites were refurbished between 1995 and 2010.
- 30.42. There are three swimming pools in Leigh, two operate on a 'pay and play' basis, these are located at Leigh Indoor Sports Centre and The Escape Zone

at Sporting Lodge Inn. There is also a pool available only by registered membership at DW Sports Fitness at Parsonage Retail Park.

30.43. There are three fitness suites within the settlement, the largest is at DW Sports Fitness with 220 exercise stations and is open only to registered members. The other two sites operate on a 'pay and play' basis and are located at Leigh Indoor Sports Centre and F Y Gym with 65 and 50 exercise stations respectively.

Education provision

30.44. There are 9 playing fields in the Leigh settlement, all located at primary schools and two marked sports pitches, both located at Bedford High School.

Artificial Pitches

30.45. Artificial pitches are available at three sites in the settlement, two provide sand-filled pitches (Bedford High School and Westleigh High School) and one provides a number of 3G rubber crumb pile pitches (Leigh Sports Village).

31. Orrell

Settlement characteristics

- 31.1. Orrell's population is situated in the centre and to the north of the settlement. The south is mainly agricultural and farming land. There are good transport links via the M58 and M6 at junction 25 on the eastern boundary and the settlement is well connected to Wigan South. See Appendix A33.

People

- 31.2. The population in Orrell is comparatively older than the borough with almost half of resident's aged over 45 and a significant increase in resident's aged over 65.

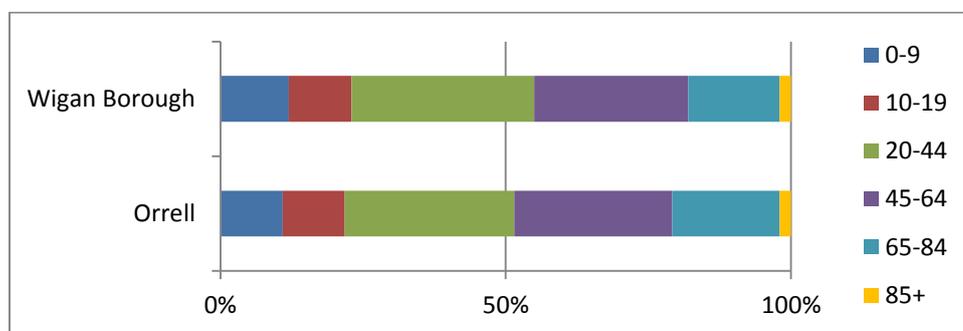


Figure 10: Population age in Orrell compared with Wigan Borough

Places

- 31.3. Orrell is largely dominated by private housing with small pockets of social and pre/post WW1 terraced housing. The populated area between Orrell Road and the M58 contains social housing from the inter-war and post-war periods, with a small concentration of pre-war social housing to the south of the estate.

Spaces

- 31.4. Orrell Water Park is a Local Nature Reserve and provides a place for formal recreation, fishing, and bio-diverse activities. The park is near to private housing but is accessible to all populated areas via public transport.

Parks and gardens

- 31.5. Orrell Water Park is the only park in the area and is of settlement importance, it also has an active friends group. The park scored highly for both quality and value and was among the top three sites to be mentioned for local significance.

Amenity green space

- 31.6. There are two areas of amenity green space in Orrell. Both sites, Middlecot Close and Pinewood Crescent, received a high score for quality and an average score for value. This indicates that the amenity green space in the area is sufficient for the demand in the settlement.
- 31.7. There is generally sufficient provision of amenity green space in the settlement however there is a small catchment gap in the south east. Other open space is available within the catchment gap area to fulfil the deficit however.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 31.8. There are 10 areas of natural and semi-natural green space of varying quality and value. Four sites achieved a high score for both quality and value, three sites received an average score for both, and one site received a high score for quality with an average score for value. Three sites scored poorly for quality and average for value.
- 31.9. Greenslate Water Meadows is one of seven Local Nature Reserves in the Borough that works toward meeting sustainable targets and providing access to conservation areas in the borough. Greenslate Water Meadows has an active friends group.
- 31.10. There is a trend in Orrell that the higher value areas are those of a higher quality, it is possible therefore that an improvement to the lower scoring areas might lead to more frequent use and more local interest. There is sufficient provision for natural and semi-natural green space in Orrell however there are issues to address with the quality of some of the sites.

Green corridors

- 31.11. There are no green corridors in Orrell. The Leeds and Liverpool canal runs along the boundary with Shevington providing access to a green corridor for the area.

Allotments and community gardens

- 31.12. There are six allotments sites in Orrell, all scored highly for quality with half scoring highly and half scoring average for value. This indicates that the standard of sites is very high in the settlement however the demand may not be as high as the level of provision caters for.

31.13. Greenslate Community Farm Allotments has an active allotment association and is part of the 'Get Up and Grow' project. This site, alongside St Luke's Allotments, received investment for private provision.

Cemeteries and churchyards

31.14. There are no cemeteries and three churchyards, all managed by the church, that scored highly for value. St Luke's Church on Lodge Road and Salem United Reformed Church on Church Street scored highly for quality as well as value. St James' Church on St James' Road received an average score for quality due to a lack of regular maintenance and surveillance.

Provision for children and young people

31.15. There are three equipped play areas and three unequipped play areas offering provision for most of the urban settlement. There is however a small catchment gap to the north. All equipped sites scored highly for value.

31.16. Orrell Water Park received a high score for quality and both Cob Moor and Holgate Recreation Ground received an average quality score. Youth provision is available at the MUGA site off Sandbrook Road; this site received an average score for quality.

31.17. The casual, unequipped play spaces are located near to or surrounding the equipped sites in the settlement. The recreation ground off Moor Road and the recreation ground off Upholland Road both received a high score for both quality and value. The site to the rear of numbers 9-55 Gantley Avenue received an average score for both quality and value.

Civic spaces

31.18. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. There are no civic spaces in Orrell. The lack of civic spaces presents a challenge to improve the social and cultural offering in the settlement.

Outdoor sports provision

31.19. There is provision within the settlement for a range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Orrell Red Triangle Cricket Club, Winstanley Road
Football (incl. playing fields)	Playing Field to the west of St James' Road

Rugby League	Orrell St James ARLFC Co-operative Community Stadium
Rugby Union	Orrell RUFC, St John Rigby College
Hockey	Winstanley College
Bowls	Bispham Hall Recreational Club Bowling Green YMCA Bowling Green, off Winstanley Road Holts Arms Bowling Green, Crank Road St James' Bowling Green
Athletics	None
Tennis	Winstanley Tennis Club
Golf	Dean Wood Golf Course

Table 32: Outdoor sports provision in Orrell

31.20. Winstanley Tennis Club is affiliated with the Lancashire Lawn Tennis Association and is one of four teams to have a Clubmark accreditation.

Indoor sports provision

31.21. There are two main halls in the settlement that are both managed by a form of educational establishment. Winstanley College Sports Centre is private use only and St Peter's Catholic High School main hall and activity hall are both for use by club/association only.

31.22. There is no provision for swimming in Orrell. Fitness suites are available at two sites however both are for registered members or private use. Gymetc has 63 exercise stations and was refurbished in 2006 and Winstanley College Sports Centre is smaller with 20 stations.

Education provision

31.23. There are three primary school playing fields in the area and two marked pitches for rugby/soccer at Winstanley College Sports Centre and St Peter's Catholic High School.

Artificial pitches

31.24. There is one 3G pitch in Orrell at St Peter's Catholic High School. There is provision for sand-filled pitches in the neighbouring ward of Wigan South.

32. Shevington

Settlement characteristics

- 32.1. Shevington settlement is divided by the M6 motorway. The population is split between Shevington Moor to the north, Appley Bridge to the west, and the Town Centre to the east. See Appendix 34.

People

- 32.2. The population in Shevington is considerably older than that of the borough with half of residents aged 45 and above. There is a lower percentage of residents under the age of 19 and in the age group 20-44.

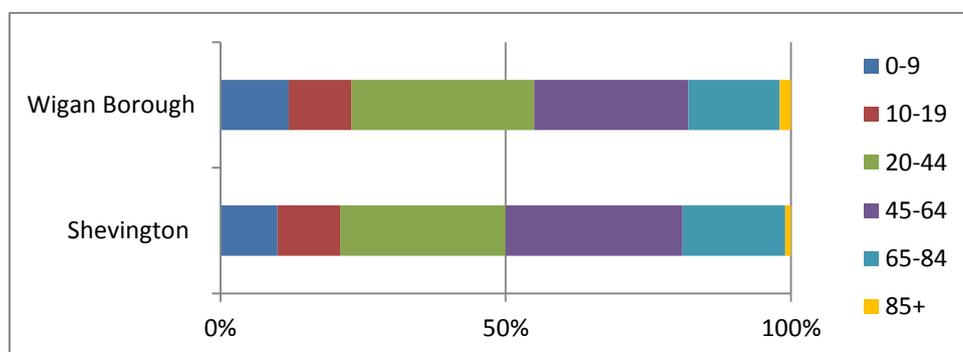


Figure 11: Population age in Shevington compared with Wigan Borough

Places

- 32.3. The three main urban areas are dominated by post-war private housing with some social housing in Shevington Town Centre.

Spaces

- 32.4. Shevington Memorial Park in the centre of the settlement provides a place for formal recreation, Gathurst golf course is to the south.

Parks and gardens

- 32.5. Shevington Memorial Park is located in the centre of the settlement. The park is of settlement importance with a catchment zone covering the majority of the area. It has an active friends group and is managed by Shevington Parish Council.

Amenity green space

- 32.6. There are 10 areas of amenity green space. Five sites received a high score for both quality and value with four sites receiving a high score for just quality also. Shevington Parish Council is involved with planting and general maintenance of the amenity green spaces in the area.
- 32.7. There is generally sufficient provision of amenity green space in the settlement however there is a catchment gap in the centre. This can be addressed through new development in the area. Other types of open space are available within the catchment gap area that share the characteristics of amenity green space such as unequipped play areas and parks and gardens.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 32.8. There are 9 areas of natural and semi-natural green space. The majority of sites received an average score for quality and value, one site scored highly for both and all others received mixed scores.
- 32.9. There is a large catchment gap in the western side of the settlement, west of the M6 motorway. This is partly addressed by the parks and gardens in the area however there is a need to improve the offering of green space in this part of Shevington.

Green corridors

- 32.10. Shevington has one green corridor that follows the western boundary of the settlement. The Top Lock to Appley Bridge section of the canal was scored highly for both quality and value.

Allotments and community gardens

- 32.11. There are four allotment sites in the area, two of which received a high score for quality. The leased site at Forest Fold raised beds received a high score for quality and average score for value and Crooke Road non-statutory site was scored average for quality and poorly for value.
- 32.12. A new Sport and Recreation development off Vicarage Lane in Shevington was granted planning permission in January 2016, the new facility will include two football pitches, a rugby pitch, around 50 allotment plots and 10 raised beds. The site will also have a car park and storage facilities.
- 32.13. There is a waiting list for allotment sites in the borough of 350 suggesting that there is not enough provision in the borough. Consultation in Shevington

revealed that residents wait for more than five years for an allotment plot to become available indicating a need for further provision.

Cemeteries and churchyards

32.14. There are no cemeteries and one churchyard located at St Annes C of E Church on Church Lane. The churchyard received a high score for both quality and value.

Provision for children and young people

32.15. There are four equipped play areas and four unequipped play areas for children and young people in Shevington including a range of different play types, all of the play areas received a high score for value.

32.16. Shevington Memorial Park, Stockley Drive Play Area and Whiteacre Play Area received funding in recent years and received a high score for quality.

32.17. Herons Wharf Play Area is the only equipped play space in the settlement to receive an average score for quality.

32.18. 3 of the 4 unequipped sites received a high score for quality, two of which also scored highly for value. Two sites scored highly for quality with an average score for value and one site, High Park (between numbers 26 and 28), received an average score for quality but a low score for value due to the location of the site.

32.19. There is sufficient catchment provision of play areas in Shevington as Shevington Memorial Park and Whiteacre Play Area have a large catchment area due to the type of play facilitated, however smaller equipped local sites are needed.

Civic spaces

32.20. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. Shevington War Memorial is the only civic space in the area and was scored highly for both quality and value.

Outdoor sports provision

32.21. There is provision within the settlement for a small range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	None
Football (incl. playing fields)	St Annes Recreation Ground Playing field off Crooke Road
Rugby League	Shevington Sharks ARLFC
Rugby Union	None
Hockey	None
Bowls	Shevington Bowling Club, Forest Fold Shevington Conservative Club Bowling Green
Athletics	None
Tennis	None
Golf	Gathurst Golf Club

Table 33: Outdoor sports provision in Shevington

32.22. There is provision for fishing/angling on the River Douglas in Gathurst within the Shevington settlement.

32.23. Two new football pitches and one rugby pitch with ancillary facilities was recently granted planning permission at a site off Vicarage Lane.

Indoor sports provision

32.24. There is an activity hall and main hall at Shevington High School that operates on a club/association basis. Both halls were refurbished in 2008.

32.25. There is one 'pay and play' learner pool in the settlement at Spindles Health and Leisure Club, Britannia Hotel. There is no provision for fitness suites in Shevington however facilities are available and accessible in the neighbouring settlement of Wigan South.

Education provision

32.26. Shevington has four primary school playing fields and one marked pitch for rugby/soccer at Shevington High School.

Artificial pitches

32.27. There are two 3G pitches at Shevington High School.

32.28. There is no provision for sand-filled pitches in the settlement however there are sand filled artificial pitches available in the neighbouring settlement of South Wigan.

33. Standish

Settlement characteristics

- 33.1. Standish is one of the least populated settlements in the borough. The majority of the population surrounds the town centre and follows the main road through the settlement. It is well linked to Wigan North and the northern part of Shevington. See Appendix A35.

People

- 33.2. The population in Standish varies slightly from that of the borough with a slightly higher percentage of age groups 10-19 and 45-64 and a considerably lower percentage of age groups 0-9 and 20-44.

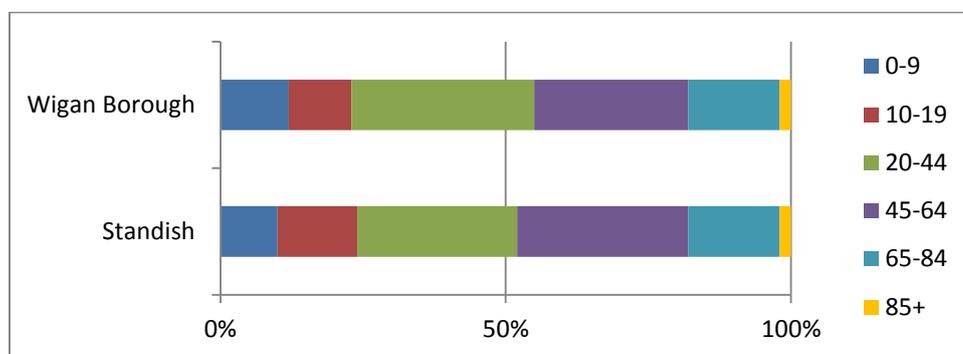


Figure 12: Population age in Standish compared to Wigan Borough

Places

- 33.3. Development in Standish is largely private residential dwellings to the west of the A49 with a mix of private and social housing to the east of the main road.

Spaces

- 33.4. There are large areas of farming and agricultural land to the north and south west, and woodland in the east of the borough. Ashfield Park provides a space for formal recreation in a heavily populated area of the settlement.

Parks and gardens

- 33.5. Standish has two parks. Ashfield Park in the south of settlement scored highly for both quality and value. Quaker Burial Ground is a smaller formal garden that achieved a high score for quality but an average score for value.

- 33.6. There is a gap in provision in the north however other open space is provided by the semi-natural open space at Former Robin Hill Colliery.

Amenity green space

- 33.7. There are 13 areas of amenity green space; the majority of these were scored highly for value with an average score for quality.
- 33.8. Seven sites scored highly for both quality and value and four sites received an average score for both. The remaining two sites scored a combination of high and average.
- 33.9. Standish Community Forum operates in the settlement and offer community support for planting and public art across the green spaces in the area, and takes part in the Borough in Bloom competition each year.
- 33.10. There is generally sufficient provision of amenity green space in Standish however there is a need to improve the quality of some sites. Other types of high quality open spaces are available in the catchment gap area that are share the characteristics of amenity green space such as unequipped play areas and parks and gardens.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 33.11. There are 25 areas of natural and semi-natural green space, five of which cross over the boundary with neighbouring settlements.
- 33.12. Eight of the sites achieved a high score for both quality and value, four sites received an average score for both, and the remaining sites received mixed scores. The majority of sites received an average score for value.
- 33.13. Five sites scored poorly for quality but there were no poor scores for value, this indicates that all natural and semi-natural open spaces are of value however there is a need to improve the quality of a large number of sites.

Green corridors

- 33.14. There are five green corridors within Standish, all located to the south east of the settlement. All green corridors are of a high quality and have a high value.
- 33.15. The largest corridor is the dismantled Red Rock Railway connected to Boars Head. Other corridors in the area include the Whelley Loop Line and Whelley Loop Line Viaduct.

33.16. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal also passes through Standish, the section of the canal known as Top Lock to the settlement boundary forms one of the green corridors in the settlement.

Allotments and community gardens

33.17. There is one allotment site in the west of the settlement which scored highly for both quality and value. There is a major gap to the south and east of the settlement. Further provision should be sought through new development.

Cemeteries and churchyards

33.18. Standish has one council owned cemetery and two church owned churchyards in the settlement. All sites received a high score for both quality and value.

33.19. Gidlow Cemetery to the south of the settlement shares a boundary with Wigan North. The site is the second largest in the Borough at 11 hectares and has an expected capacity until 2025.

33.20. St. Wilfrid's Churchyard on Rectory Lane/Market Place received one of the highest scores for value.

Provision for children and young people

33.21. There are seven equipped play areas within the settlement that all scored highly for value. The LAP at Standish Library and the LEAP at Whiteacre Play Area achieved a high score for quality; all other sites received an average score for quality.

33.22. Ashfield Park is a MUGA site that offers provision for Neighbourhood Equipped play and Youth Play including a basketball court. This site provides a large catchment zone that covers the majority of the urban settlement.

33.23. There are a further 9 unequipped play areas which scored a combination of high and average scores for quality and value with the exception of Byley Rise which scored poorly for quality.

33.24. There is sufficient catchment coverage from the existing play areas however more small equipped sites are needed to raise the level of provision in the area.

Civic spaces

- 33.25. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. There are three civic spaces in Standish including a Market Place. All sites scored highly for quality and value.
- 33.26. Standish Cenotaph on High Street benefitted recently from funding provided by the War Memorials Trust to clean and restore the monument.

Outdoor sports provision

- 33.27. There is provision within the settlement for a small range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Standish Cricket Club, Green Lane
Football (incl. playing fields)	Ashfied Park Highcliffe Court Southlands Avenue Playing Field
Rugby League	None
Rugby Union	None
Hockey	None
Bowls	Boars Head Public House Bowling Green St Wilfrid's Bowling Green, off Rectory Lane St Marie's Bowling Green, Almond Brook Road
Athletics	None
Tennis	None
Golf	None

Table 34: Outdoor sports provision in Standish

- 33.28. There is provision for fishing at two still water locations in Standish; Houghton's Lodge and Scot Lane New Pond.
- 33.29. Provision for other outdoor sports facilities is accessible in the neighbouring settlement of Wigan North.

Indoor sports provision

- 33.30. There is one sports hall at Standish Community High School. The main hall is managed by the Community School and is operated on a club/association basis. The site was built in 1960 and refurbished in 2006.
- 33.31. There are three learner pools in the settlement. St Wilfrid's Academy is open only for educational groups, Swimsmart on Bradley Lane is a 'pay and play'

facility and Vital Health & Wellbeing at Macdonald Kilhey Court Hotel is operated on a registered membership basis.

33.32. There are two registered membership fitness facilities in Standish.

Education provision

33.33. There are three primary school playing fields and one marked pitch for rugby/soccer at Standish High School providing sufficient coverage for the area.

Artificial pitch

33.34. There is one sand-filled pitch in Standish at Standish Community High School. 3G pitch provision is available in neighbouring Wigan North.

34. Tyldesley and Astley

Settlement characteristics

- 34.1. The population is concentrated in Shackerley to the north, and Tyldesley and Astley town centres stretching down to the East Lancashire Road. There are good links with neighbouring settlements Atherton and Leigh to the north and west, and to Worsley outside of the borough to the east. See Appendix A36.

People

- 34.2. The population in Tyldesley and Astley is younger than that of the borough with a higher proportion of all age groups up to age 65 and a reduced number of residents in the groups 65-84 and 85+.

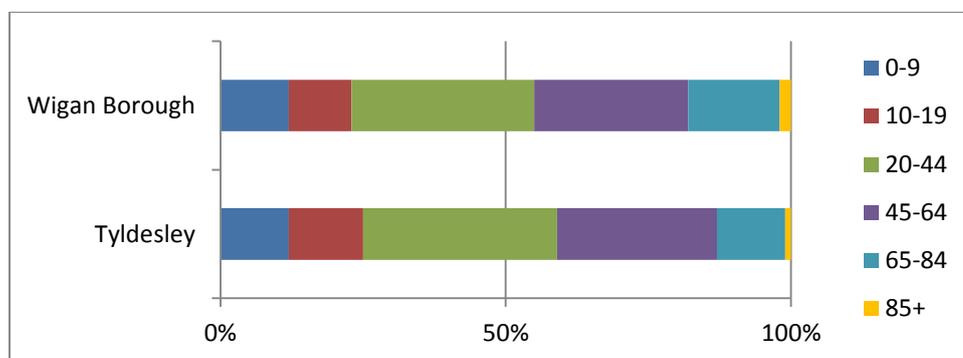


Figure 13: Population age in Tyldesley compared with Wigan Borough

Places

- 34.3. Shakerley is largely characterised by pre-war social housing with some post war private development, whereas Tyldesley Town Centre is largely dominated by terraced housing. The development in the centre of the settlement follows a linear route to the eastern boundary comprising a range of terraced and private housing in the centre and social housing toward the border.
- 34.4. In Astley the majority of residential dwellings were built for private residence in the period post-war to 1980 with pockets of 1980-2000 built private dwellings and post-war social housing.

Spaces

- 34.5. The north of the settlement is largely farms and agricultural land with public footpaths running through, whereas south of the East Lancashire Road the

settlement is dominated by mosslands and farm land. These areas are sparsely populated and are largely inaccessible to the public however they do have biological importance.

Parks and gardens

- 34.6. There are three parks in the area. One park scored highly for both quality and value, another scored average for both and the third, Mosley Common in Astley, scored highly for quality but average for value. 'Friends of Mosley Common' are associated with the parks and gardens in the Tyldesley and Astley settlement.
- 34.7. Printshop Lane has recently undergone improvements by the community group Grow for Giving. The site is owned and maintained by the Places Directorate of Wigan Council and has been tidied up. The friends group are applying for funding to improve the MUGA and install outdoor gym equipment on the site.
- 34.8. While there is sufficient provision of park and garden space in Tyldesley to the west, there is a catchment gap in the east of the settlement. Lilford Park in the neighbouring settlement of Leigh provides additional provision to the western part of Tyldesley centre.
- 34.9. There is a vast park space deficit in Astley with a catchment gap that covers most of the settlement, however as the southern part is sparsely populated and the northern part is close to provision in Tyldesley, this is not a major cause for concern.

Amenity green space

- 34.10. Tyldesley and Astley has 13 areas of amenity green space. Two sites scored highly for quality and value. All other sites received a high score for quality and an average score for value, with the exceptions of Land on Elliot Street, between Charles Street / Cross Street, and North Lane (adjacent no.12), as these sites received an average score for quality but a high score for value. Withington Drive scored poorly for quality but highly for value.
- 34.11. This indicates that while the amenity green space available is generally of a high quality it isn't used frequently due to the availability of other nearby types of open space.
- 34.12. There is sufficient provision of amenity green space in Tyldesley and Astley to meet the catchment standards. There is a large gap in the south however there is less need for provision in this area as the population is concentrated

in the north and the characteristics of amenity green space are less relevant in unpopulated areas.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 34.13. There are 23 areas of natural and semi-natural green space in the settlement. Four sites score highly for both quality and value. Only five sites in total score highly for value with the remaining sites achieving an average score.
- 34.14. Tyldesley and Astley is outside of the Greenheart area that provides a significant amount of the boroughs natural and semi natural green space, however it is well provided for in the south of the settlement and there are good connections to neighbouring Greenheart settlements.

Green corridors

- 34.15. There are two green corridors in the settlement, both of which are main green corridors for the borough; the Leigh-Tyldesley section of the guided busway through Atherton centre, and the canal through Leigh in Astley. Both scored highly for quality and value.

Allotments and community gardens

- 34.16. There is one statutory allotment site, one non-statutory site and five private allotment sites in the area, as such there is adequate provision in Tyldesley and Astley. The settlement has the largest statutory allotment site in the borough with 144 plots run by the Tyldesley Allotment Association. The majority of sites scored highly for either quality or value with three sites scoring highly for both.
- 34.17. Tyldesley Allotments has an active allotment society who has received funding since 2007 for the development of a community orchard.
- 34.18. There is a waiting list for allotment sites in the borough suggesting that there is not enough provision in the borough. Consultation in Tyldesley revealed that residents wait for more than five years for an allotment plot to become available indicating a need for further provision, whereas the two sites in Astley scored average for value indicating less demand in the area.
- 34.19. Despite having the largest provision in Wigan, contributions should be sought to improve existing sites throughout the borough and identify new locations for additional allotments where demand exists.

Churchyards and cemeteries

34.20. There are two cemeteries in the area. New Manchester Woodland Cemetery on City Road, which is privately owned, and Tyldesley Cemetery and Cenotaph, both sites scored highly for quality and value. There are also two churchyards at St George's Church in Tyldesley which scored highly for quality and value, and the Former St Stephen's Churchyard in Astley.

34.21. The council owned Former St Stephen's Churchyard on Church Road scored highly for value but received one of the lowest scores in the borough for quality. This is due to a lack of regular maintenance and poor surveillance at the site, presenting an opportunity for improvement.

34.22. Tyldesley Cemetery is expected to reach full capacity in 2018.

Provision for children and young people

34.23. There are seven play areas in the settlement that offer a range of equipped local and neighbourhood play. Astley Street Park provides for both older and younger children.

34.24. All of the play areas except Green Avenue and Mosley Common score highly for quality and value. Union Street play area was fully refurbished in 2016 with new equipment, surfacing and fencing.

34.25. There are a further 18 unequipped play spaces in the settlement, scoring a range of high and average scores for quality and value.

34.26. There is a gap in equipped play provision to the west. The deficit can be addressed by requesting on site provision for any new developments in this area. In Astley there is only locally equipped play areas, this ought to be addressed through new development.

Civic spaces

34.27. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. There are two civic spaces in Tyldesley, both are squares within the town centre. There are none in Astley.

34.28. Both sites score high for quality and value. They are well maintained and provide a valuable space for the communities and a focal point for the town centre. Both areas have had recent investment and have been refurbished as part of the town centre improvements.

34.29. The lack of civic spaces in Astley presents an opportunity to improve the social and cultural offerings in the settlement through future development.

Outdoor sports provision

34.30. There is provision within the settlement for a range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Astley and Tyldesley Cricket Club, Meanley Road
Football (incl. playing fields)	Ellesmere Street Recreation Ground Lodge Lane Squires Lane Football Pitch St Georges Park Gin Pit Playing Field Parkfield Avenue Playing Field Mosley Common Playing Field Lilford Centre Playing Field
Rugby League	N/A
Rugby Union	Tyldesley RUFC, Astley Street
Hockey	N/A
Bowls	Astley and Tyldesley Miners Welfare Institute Bowling Club Tyldesley Subscription Bowling Club, Garden Street
Athletics	N/A
Tennis	Printshop Lane Park Tyldesley Tennis Club Astley and Tyldesley Sports Club
Golf	Astley Driving Range

Table 35: Outdoor sports provision in Tyldesley and Astley

34.31. There is an athletics running club, Astley and Tyldesley Road Runners, which operate from the Miners Welfare Institute.

34.32. Tyldesley RUFC is one of 2 facilities in the Borough to offer a women's team, and is the only site to offer 2 girls teams. The site also offers 5 men's teams and a total of 7 junior teams; all teams operate on the 3 senior pitches at the facility.

34.33. There are three tennis courts in Tyldesley, one of high quality which is privately owned and club associated, one of average quality and one of poor quality, both of which are publicly accessible. The court at Printshop Lane received one of the lowest scores due a lack of maintenance over a number of years causing the site to degrade.

34.34. Tyldesley Tennis Club is one of six clubs across the Borough to be affiliated with the Lancashire Lawn Tennis Association and one of four to receive Clubmark accreditation. Tyldesley Tennis Club also offers a mini tennis court.

Indoor sports facilities

34.35. There is one sports hall in the Tyldesley area of the settlement at Fred Longworth High School. The hall operates a 'pay and play' scheme in the main hall and activity hall at the site. There is also a main hall and activity hall at St Mary's Catholic High School however this site is accessible for club/association only. This indicates that there is insufficient provision of open access sports halls.

34.36. There is a 'pay and play' main pool at The Pelican Centre in the north of the settlement.

34.37. There is also a 'pay and play' fitness suite operating 40 exercise stations at Unit 7 Gym in the north of the settlement and a recently built (2012) 'play and play' gym with 80 exercise stations at Gym 28 in Astley.

Education provision

34.38. There is generally sufficient provision of educational open space and playing fields in Tyldesley and Astley with nine playing fields located within the settlement. Seven of the ten playing fields are located at primary schools and two at high schools.

Artificial pitches

34.39. There are two sand-filled artificial pitches at St Mary's Catholic High School and Fred Longworth High School.

34.40. Provision of 3G pitches is supplied by neighbouring settlement Leigh and the larger settlement in the centre of the Borough, Wigan.

35. Wigan North (Wigan North, Ince Scholes Whelley)

Settlement Characteristics

- 35.1. Wigan North includes the majority of the town centre. Due to its location it is the most densely populated part of the borough. The majority of the settlement is built up with large residential areas and small urban open spaces. The area is well connected to neighbouring Wigan South, Standish, Hindley, and Abram and Platt Bridge. See Appendix A37.

People

- 35.2. The population in Wigan North largely in line with that of the borough. There is a slight increase in the proportion of residents aged 20-44 and a slight reduction in the age groups 45-64 and 65-84.

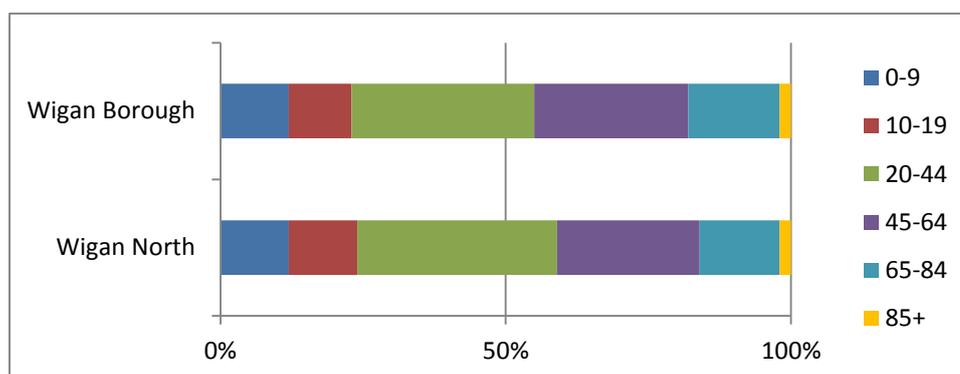


Figure 14: Population age in Wigan North compared with Wigan Borough

Places

- 35.3. There is a range of housing types offering varied characteristics within the settlement. Pre/post WW1 terraced housing is spread throughout the but densely concentrated in the west. The northern part of the settlement is dominated by pre/post WW1 terraces and interwar social housing with some private development. The southern part of the settlement is dominated by post-war social and private development with pockets of terraced housing.

Spaces

- 35.4. The defining open space feature of Wigan North is that it is served by two of the boroughs principal parks, Mesnes Park in the centre and Haigh Country Park to the north east.

Parks and gardens

- 35.5. There are three parks in the area. Mesnes Park and Haigh Hall Country Park, bordering with Aspull, are of principal importance and provide a wide ranging catchment that spans the majority of the settlement. Walmsley Park is a smaller park of settlement importance. All parks in the settlement are of high quality value.
- 35.6. Haigh Hall Country Park has two active friends groups, Friends of Haigh Hall Country Park and Friends of Haigh Walled Garden. The site is due to have an investment of £12million over a five year period up to 2020, including restoration on the historic Haigh Hall, new and improved parking facilities, a family activity zone including a high ropes course, and new walking and cycling trails.
- 35.7. Mesnes Park has recently undergone a £6.1 million restoration project with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund, many features have been restored and others refurbished. The play area has also been re-landscaped to provide modern, accessible play equipment. The site has an active friends group and will be entered for the Green Flag Award in 2015 (National Standard for Parks and Open Spaces). The restoration project has gained acclaim from other organisations and has resulted in the park winning a number of awards
- 35.8. There is sufficient provision for parks and gardens in Wigan North.

Amenity green space

- 35.9. There are 61 amenity green spaces in the settlement. 22 sites scored highly for both quality and value, 6 scored average for both and the remaining sites scored a combination of high, average and poor for quality and/or value. No sites scored poorly for both.
- 35.10. Seven sites scored poorly for value and one site scored poorly for quality. Bluebell Avenue / Forest Avenue received a low quality score due to the poor boundary conditions of the site as there is long grass leading to inaccessibility during bad weather.
- 35.11. There is sufficient provision of amenity green space in Wigan North however there is a need to improve the quality of some sites. The amount of high quality sites in the settlement is sufficient when considering catchment zones however, reducing the need to increase the quality generally across the settlement.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 35.12. Amberswood Common is a key gateway to the Greenheart and has an active friends group that helps to maintain the site. This site received a Woodland Improvement Grant to undertake management works during 2015/16 and is one of seven Local Nature Reserves in the borough.
- 35.13. There are 34 areas of natural and semi-natural open space in Wigan North. The majority of sites scored highly for quality with a high or average score for value.
- 35.14. Five sites scored poorly for quality due to their remote location and/or lack of maintenance. This presents a need to improve the quality of some open spaces.
- 35.15. There is adequate provision of natural and semi-natural open space as areas of deficit are compensated by other types of open space.

Green corridors

- 35.16. There are four green corridor sites in Wigan North, all of high quality and value. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal crosses the settlement from Top Lock to Appley Bridge, and again at Makerfield Way.
- 35.17. Belle Green Lane to Railway crosses over the Leeds and Liverpool Canal route to the south east of the settlement and the Whelley Loop Line crosses the boundary into Standish.

Allotments and community gardens

- 35.18. There are six allotment sites in Wigan North, three sites are non-statutory and are of a mixed quality and value, and three sites are private and are of a high quality and value.
- 35.19. The majority of sites were scored highly for quality with over half of sites scoring highly for value also. Some non-statutory sites received an average score for value indicating that there may be little available space at the sites or that they are not as relevant to the community.
- 35.20. Wigan Allotment Network is an active friends/community group that operate across Wigan North and Wigan South.

- 35.21. The 'Get Up and Grow' scheme is in place at Mesnes Park and there is potential to further develop this scheme to include local allotment sites.
- 35.22. There is a waiting list for allotment sites in the borough of 350 suggesting that there is not enough provision in the borough. Consultation in Wigan revealed that residents wait for more than five years for an allotment plot to become available indicating a need for further provision.

Cemeteries and churchyards

- 35.23. There are two cemeteries in Wigan North. Lower Ince Cemetery including Ince Cenotaph and Wigan Crematorium, which is the third largest site in the Borough at 10 hectares, and Ince-in-Makerfield Cemetery. Both sites received high scores for quality and value.
- 35.24. There are two churchyards in the area also, Wigan Parish Church Gardens, including Wigan Cenotaph, is managed by the Council and received a high score for both quality and value. St John the Baptist Church on Kirkless Street is a church managed site and received a high score for value but an average score for quality.

Provision for children and young people

- 35.25. There are 14 equipped play areas for children and young people offering a range of play area types.
- 35.26. The majority of sites received a high score for quality with five receiving an average score, and all sites were scored highly for value. The play areas at Mesnes Park and Redwood Park benefitted from investment during 2013-2014.
- 35.27. There are a further 30 unequipped play spaces in Wigan North that received a range of high and average scores for quality and value. No sites scored poorly for quality however three unequipped sites scored poorly for value.
- 35.28. There are enough play areas in the area for the catchment zone to cover the populated settlement, however there is a need for increased LAP provision.

Civic spaces

- 35.29. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. There are five civic spaces in Wigan North, all of which received high scores for both quality and value.

35.30. The new Believe Square at Millgate received one of the highest scores for value and was noted as a favourite space, despite the lack of traditional historic association.

Outdoor sports provision

35.31. There is provision within the settlement for a wide range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Wigan Cricket Club, Bull Hey, Parsons Walk
Football	William Fosters Playing Field Seaman Way, Ince St Catherine's Recreation Ground Cale Lane playing fields Spelding Drive adjacent Christopher Park Coronation Park
Rugby League	Ince Rosebridge Cale Lane Playing Fields Wigan St Patricks ARLFC
Rugby Union	Wigan RUFC, off Wingates Road
Hockey	The Deanery
Bowls	Whelley Labour Club Bowling Green St Patricks Club Bowling Green Walmsley Park Bowling Green Rosebridge Sports and Community Club Bowling Green Mr Earl's Club Bowling Green, Brook Street Wigan Subscription Bowling Green, Park Crescent Bellingham Bowling Club, Wigan Lane Great Acre Bowling Greens, Longshoot Mesnes Park Bowling Green Pagefield Bowling Green, Glassbrook Street
Athletics	N/A
Tennis	Bellingham Tennis Club Mesnes Park
Golf	Haigh Hall Golf Course

Table 36: Outdoor sports provision in Wigan North

35.32. **Wigan** Warriors Community Foundation, alongside Leigh Centurions, is a charity set up by a professional club to promote participation in Rugby League in Wigan and the North West. The charity provides coaching programmes as well as other health sessions. They also work with both primary and secondary schools and provide education programmes.

35.33. Bellingham Tennis Club is one of six clubs across the borough to be affiliated with the Lancashire Lawn Tennis Association and one of four to receive Clubmark accreditation. Bellingham Tennis Club also offers a mini tennis court.

35.34. At Mesnes Park however, five of the eight courts were among the lowest scores for quality as four are currently not open for use due to being deemed dangerous and the fifth is in very poor quality.

Indoor sports provision

35.35. Wigan Life Centre Healthy Living Zone provides main and small swimming pools, an aerobics studio, sauna and steam room, and a fitness suite with 80 stations. Wigan Community Youth Zone provides a sports hall, 10m indoor climbing wall, four all-weather sports pitches, boxing and martial arts facilities, dance and performing arts facilities, and a fitness suite with 29 stations.

35.36. There are four sports halls in Wigan North, three are located at high schools and operate on a club/association basis, and the hall at Wigan Youth Zone operates on a 'pay and play' basis.

35.37. Wigan Life Centre Healthy Living Zone has an 8-lane 'pay and play' swimming pool, this facility offers provision to the neighbouring settlements also.

35.38. There are three fitness facilities in Wigan North, all of which operate on a 'pay and play' basis. The largest facility is Xercise4less with 300 stations, Wigan Life Centre Healthy Living Zone has 80 stations, and Royces Health & Fitness Studio has 65 stations.

Education Provision

35.39. There are 13 playing fields in the area, 11 of which are located within primary school grounds. There are two marked pitches for rugby/soccer in Wigan North at Rose Bridge High School.

Artificial Pitches

35.40. There are two sand-filled artificial pitches at St John Fisher Catholic High School and The Deanery High School, and two 3G pitches at Rose Bridge Sports and Community Centre and Wigan Youth Zone.

35.41. There is sufficient provision in the settlement. The pitches in Wigan North are utilised by neighbouring settlements also.

36. Wigan South (Wigan West, Wigan South, Winstanley Highfield)

Settlement characteristics

- 36.1. The defining feature of Wigan South is the Wigan Flashes Local Nature Reserve to the south east, one of the most significant sites of open space in the borough and providing a large area of the open space in the settlement. See Appendix A38.

People

- 36.2. There is a larger proportion of working age residents in Wigan South; this is likely due to good transport links for commuting to Manchester, Liverpool and Preston, and the proximity to Wigan Town Centre.

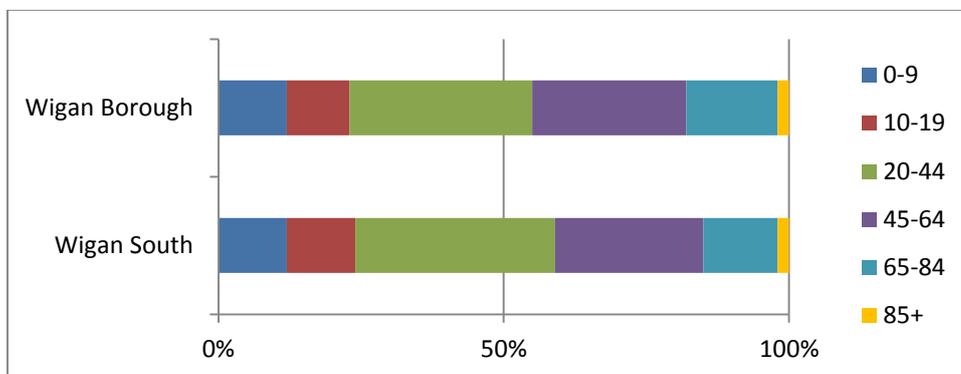


Figure 16: Population age in Wigan South compared with Wigan Borough

Places

- 36.3. The majority of the population is located in the centre of the settlement. The northern part of the populated area is dominated by pre-war social housing with pockets of terraced housing and private development. The centre of the settlement displays a range of terraced housing and post war private development which sprawls out toward the largely private southern areas. There are areas of post-war social housing to the south east.

Spaces

- 36.4. There is generally sufficient formal and informal open space in the Wigan South area with additional provision at the boundaries with neighbouring settlements.

Parks and gardens

- 36.5. There are six parks and gardens in Wigan South of varying size, quality, and value.
- 36.6. Alexandra Park received one of the highest scores in the borough for quality and a high score for value also. This site is a green flag park and has an active friends group. All other parks in the area are smaller with a mix of scores for quality and value.
- 36.7. This indicates that the larger park in the area provides the open space that is of most use and value to the settlement whereas the smaller parks are less frequently visited or maintained.
- 36.8. There are also several parks close to the boundaries giving additional open space provision with Three Sisters to the south, Orrell Water Park to the west, and Mesnes Park to the north.

Amenity Green Space

- 36.9. There are 26 amenity green spaces in Wigan South. 8 sites received a high score for quality with 17 scoring average and 1 scoring poorly. 5 sites scored highly for value with 18 sites receiving an average score and the remaining 3 scoring poorly. Within these, 5 sites scored highly for both quality and value, 15 sites scored average for both, and one site scored poorly for both.
- 36.10. The majority of sites received an average score for either quality or value or both, indicating a need to improve the quality of the amenity green space in the settlement.
- 36.11. The site at Whitecroft Road / Killington Close scored poorly for both quality and value due to the land becoming boggy and unusable for most of the year.
- 36.12. There is generally sufficient provision of amenity green space in Wigan South however consultation indicated a shortage in the Winstanley area and a general frustration that green space is required for building.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 36.13. Wigan Flashes in the east is a key gateway to Greenheart and has an active friends group that helps to maintain the site. It is one of seven Local Nature Reserves in the borough that works toward meeting sustainable targets and providing accessibility to conservation areas.

- 36.14. The site received a high score for quality and value however the need for a visitor centre at Wigan Flashes was mentioned by stakeholders, to provide a much needed focus for Greenheart visitors. A visitor centre would provide interpretative facilities, refreshments and toilets, and be an operational base for the Wildlife Trust and volunteer activities.
- 36.15. There are 40 areas of natural and semi-natural green space in Wigan South; the majority of sites are of high quality with a high or average value. Three small sites received a poor score for quality due to a lack of surveillance and/or maintenance at the site.
- 36.16. No sites received a poor score for value indicating that natural and semi-natural green space is of importance to the Wigan South settlement.

Green corridors

- 36.17. There are two green corridors in the settlement; both are sections of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal from Top Lock to Appley Bridge and from Top Lock to the boundary.

Allotments and community gardens

- 36.18. Wigan South has 12 allotment sites, of these one is a 9 plot statutory site that scored highly for value and quality; the remaining sites are largely non-statutory and are of generally high quality.
- 36.19. Eight sites were scored highly for both quality and value, one site scored average for both and one site scored poorly for both. Wigan Allotment Network is an active friends/community group that operate across Wigan North and Wigan South.
- 36.20. Worsley Hall Allotments at Poplar Avenue is part of the 'Get Up and Grow' project. The scheme is also in place at Alexandra Park within the settlement.
- 36.21. There is a gap in provision in the south west of the settlement. Further allotment provision could come from the nearby Pemberton Colliery site.
- 36.22. There is a waiting list for allotment sites in the borough of 350 suggesting that there is not enough provision in the borough. Consultation in Wigan revealed that residents wait for more than five years for an allotment plot to become available indicating a need for further provision.

Cemeteries and churchyards

- 36.23. There is one cemetery, Westwood Cemetery, and four Church owned churchyards. All sites received a high score for value with all but one scoring highly for quality also. St Barnabas Church received one of the lowest scores for quality in the borough due to a lack of surveillance leading to vandalism and a lack of security.
- 36.24. Westwood Cemetery has an expected capacity until 2018.
- 36.25. There is sufficient provision of burial space in the settlement.

Provision for children and young people

- 36.26. Wigan South has 13 equipped play areas for children and young people. All sites received a high score for value and 10 sites also scored highly for quality, two sites received an average score, and three sites scored poorly.
- 36.27. The play area at Alexandra Park received one of the highest quality scores. The sites at Buckland Drive and Marsh Green benefitted from investment in 2013-2014 however the teen meet at Marsh Green has since been vandalised to a point where the quality has been severely degraded.
- 36.28. The sites at Gayton Close and Highfield Gardens, whilst being adequately sign posted and having moderate surveillance, received a poor score for quality due to the lack of maintenance and the general appearance of the site. This presents an opportunity for improvement.
- 36.29. There are 26 casual or unequipped play areas in Wigan South which received a range of scores for quality and value.
- 36.30. There is sufficient provision for a range of play areas in Wigan South however there is a need to improve the quality of the sites that scored poorly or averagely as they remain of high value to the local area.

Civic spaces

- 36.31. There is no provision for civic spaces in Wigan South however there are several sites that are accessible in neighbouring Wigan North.
- 36.32. Civic spaces are designed for pedestrians and public gatherings and are often associated with particular events and social and cultural activities. The lack of civic spaces in this settlement present a challenge to improve the social and cultural offering in Wigan South, however there are other open spaces

available in the area and good access to nearby civic spaces to meet the deficit.

Outdoor sports provision

36.33. There is provision within the settlement for a range of outdoor sports.

Sport	Facility
Cricket	Norley Hall Cricket Club, Norley Road Winstanley Park Cricket Club, Hall Lane Highfield Cricket Club, Billinge Road Goose Green Cricket Club, Paris Avenue, Winstanley
Football	Orrell St James ARLFC St Cuthberts Rugby Ground Little Lane Playing Field Wigan Rovers Laithwaite Park, Scot Lane Oldhams Fold Playing Field Scot Lane Playing Field Playing Field rear Marus Bridge Primary School Land at Beech Walk / Sunnyfields Parsons Meadow Playing Field
Rugby League	Wigan St Judes ARLFC, Parsons Meadow Wigan St Cuthbert's ARLFC
Rugby Union	N/A
Hockey	Robin Park
Bowls	Beer Engine Bowling Green Pemberton Working Men's Club Bowling Green, Belle Vue Street Newtown & Central Conservative Club Bowling Green, Ormskirk Road Alexandra Park Bowling Greens (St Jude's Bowling Club) Highfield Gardens Bowling Greens, off Enfield Street Pemberton Conservative Club Bowling Green, off Park Road St Mathews Bowling Club, Billinge Road St Aidan's Bowling Club
Athletics	Wigan and District Harriers and Wigan All Stars at Robin Park
Tennis	Alexandra Park Robin Park
Golf	N/A

Table 37: Outdoor sports provision in Wigan South

36.34. Wigan South has 4 cricket facilities with a range of teams across the sites. There are 16 senior teams and 17 junior teams within the settlement.

36.35. The Lucozade Power League five a side Football Centre has eight indoor and six outdoor hall/pitch football facilities.

36.36. Wigan Warriors Community Foundation, alongside Leigh Centurions, is a charity set up by a professional club to promote the participation in Rugby

League in Wigan and the North West. The charity provides coaching programmes as well as other health sessions. They also work with both primary and secondary schools and provide education programmes.

36.37. Wigan St Judes ARLFC offers the largest team provision in the Borough with 18 teams using the facility. It is also one of five sites in the borough to offer a women's team, as well as 2 men's teams, 14 junior teams and 1 mini team, playing across 4 pitches.

36.38. Two of the borough's four running clubs are based at Robin Park, Wigan Phoenix and Wigan All Stars.

36.39. Robin Park Tennis Club is one of six clubs to be affiliated with the Lancashire Lawn Tennis Association and one of four to receive Clubmark accreditation. Robin Park Tennis Club also offers a mini tennis court.

Indoor sports provision

36.40. Robin Park Sports and Tennis Centre provides a multi-use sports hall, a Powerade hall, exercise studio, four indoor tennis courts and four outdoor courts, and a fitness suite with 60 stations.

36.41. Robin Park Arena provides a 60m indoor running track, athletics arena, gymnastics facilities, and all-weather pitches.

36.42. There are six sports halls in Wigan South, four operate on a 'pay and play' basis and two are for club/association use only.

36.43. There is provision for swimming in Wigan South at DW Sports Fitness and Stadium Way Total Fitness on Warrington Road. Both sites operate on a registered membership basis.

36.44. There are five fitness suites in Wigan South, two are 'pay and play' sites, Robin Park Sports Centre has 60 stations and Total Fitness has 220 stations. There is also two registered membership operated sites at DW Sports Fitness which has 200 stations, and Ladybird Fitness Club For Women which has 25 stations. Abraham Guest Academy has a 25 station private use facility.

Education provision

36.45. There are 15 playing fields in the area, 13 of which are located within primary school grounds.

36.46. There are two marked pitches for rugby/soccer at high schools Abraham Guest and Hawkley Hall High School.

Artificial pitches

36.47. There is one sand-filled pitch at Hawkley Hall High School and six sites offering 3G pitches including Powerleague Soccerdome which has 14 3G pitches.

36.48. The all-weather pitch at Robin Park Arena re-opened in September 2014 following a £318,000 council-funded refurbishment. It now provides a 3G FIFA 2-star pitch which also meets the International Rugby Board's standard and can be used in all weather conditions.

36.49. There is sufficient provision with the pitches in Wigan South being utilised by neighbouring settlements also.

Chapter 4

Open space, sport and recreation standards

37. Development of standards

- 37.1. Standards identified in the 2007 open space, sport and recreation study have been used as the foundation to develop the new standards. The updated accessibility standards are demonstrated in Chapter 3 (Settlement Profiles) of this report.
- 37.2. Standards for quantity, quality and accessibility are proposed on a borough wide level to inform the council and other key stakeholders on where there might be surpluses or deficits in provision, and/or accessibility issues. This then helps to inform planning policies and decisions on proposals for investment or development.
- 37.3. There are three main elements to standards for open space, sport and recreation provision:

Quantity standards: these are determined by analysing existing provision in the borough against localised levels of use and subsequent value to the local area and wider borough, as identified through public and stakeholder consultation. The result of this analysis is a recommended size (Ha) or number of facilities per 1,000 people.

Quality standards: these are set using the findings of the audit of open space and sport and recreational facilities, local surveys, and stakeholder consultation. This chapter examines the data collected against the findings of the previous open space, sport and recreation study (2007), to highlight areas for improvement and locate established and upcoming assets.

Accessibility standards: these reflect the needs of potential users in light of the size, type and use frequency of a site. Spaces and facilities that are used frequently need to be within easy walking distance and have safe access. Other facilities that are used less frequently but for longer periods of time, such as large sports centres or Principal Parks, can be further away. A standard in metres is determined through walking and driving time and is set using the findings of facility and open space audits, local consultation and mapping catchment areas.

- 42.4 It is important to take all three standards into account when assessing individual sites and making strategic recommendations, due to the diverse nature of the borough and the individual settlements. As identified previously in this report, the relationship between quality, quantity and subsequent value varies dependent on a range of factors.

42.5. The standards proposed are for minimum levels of provision, therefore settlements that enjoy levels of provision exceeding the minimum standard should not be considered to have surplus provision unless it is evidenced in the quality and value scores also. In a similar way, a high level of provision that is largely inaccessible to the public may be considered both a surplus due to the size and amount of space, and a deficit due to the lack of usability by the population. In these cases the sites are assessed based on a combination of standards taking into account the typology definition, consultation findings and local need.

43. Summary of standards

43.1. This section outlines the proposed quantity and accessibility standards for Wigan Borough. It does not define standards for quality as these are largely contextually derived and vary dependent on the typology and settlement characteristics. Quality has a significant impact on site usage and must be considered contextually in conjunction with these standards. Justification for these standards is provided in the following section.

Open space quantity and access standards

43.2. Following the completion of the audit of provision and assessment of local need, and a review of open space, sport and recreation audits neighbouring districts, the following standards of provision of open space are proposed.

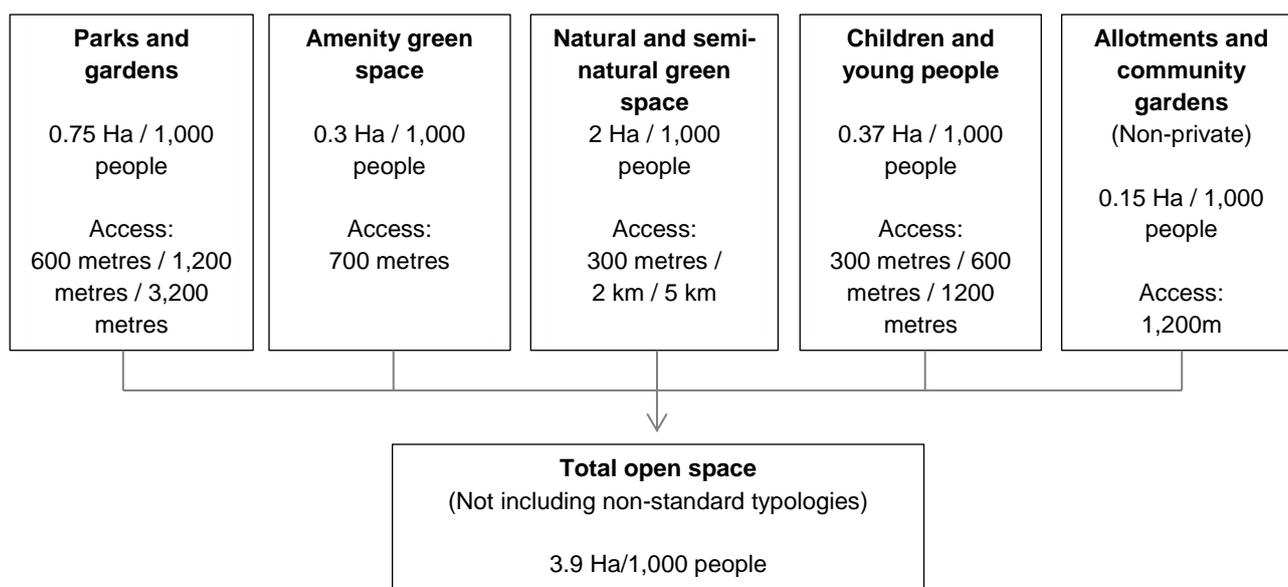


Figure 17: Proposed quantity and access standards for open space in Wigan Borough

43.3. There is no quantity or accessibility standard set for:

- **Green corridors:** While an important asset to the borough and one that is present in most settlements, the availability of publicly accessible (and restricted access) green space in both urban and rural areas means that the demand for such spaces is much lower than in densely urban areas where the role of green corridors would be more significant. The majority of green corridors within the borough are located in and around the main urban centres where demand would be most prominent, therefore there is no requirement for a standard to be set. The presence of other types of open space fulfil the role of green corridors also as many sites are multi-functional in their typology. There is an extensive rights of way network across the borough providing further green corridor provision and access routes to open spaces.
- **Cemeteries and churchyards:** These sites have been identified and mapped where known however no standards have been set as although cemeteries and churchyards offer an important area of open space and reasonable access to them is required, there is little opportunity to have a strategic influence over them. While there may be opportunities to enhance the quality of these open spaces through regular maintenance, there is little opportunity for new provision. There is a need for new cemetery and churchyard space however this is for burial provision rather than for open space, for this reason it was not deemed appropriate to set a standard for this typology.
- **Civic spaces:** Civic spaces are open public places that largely hard landscaped but softened with some planting and give priority to pedestrians over vehicles. These sites host a range of social and cultural interactions and events and as such have an essential community value. Civic spaces are key features in town centre areas and other smaller centres, incorporating street furniture, signage, and monuments to give a unique character. New civic space can be created as part of development. While there is benefit to having an accessible and local civic space, no standard can be set due to the nature of the typology, its reliance on development, and the restricted context in which it can be applied.

Indoor and outdoor sporting facilities quantity and access standards

43.4. In setting standards for sport and recreational facilities there are a number of considerations to be taken into account. Some sports and facilities are consistent in their size and format, such as those included in Table 3.1. By contrast, some cannot be judged entirely on size or number of pitches as a range of teams can use different areas of one pitch. As such latent demand or pitch deficiencies may not be accurately defined by the existing pitch provision. For this reason, a basic standard has been determined by analysing the results of the residents' survey and comparing the number of pitches available with those of nearby districts. A more detailed provision statement is provided for each typology in relevant sections of Chapter 1.

Facility	Proposed standard per 1,000 people	Proposed facility per no. population	Proposed drive time / walk time (minutes)
Sports halls (main and activity) (<i>indoor</i>)	0.1	1 per 20,000	15 - 20
Swimming pools (main and learner) (<i>indoor</i>)	0.06	1 per 20,000	15 - 20
Fitness stations	5.5	1 per 250	10 – 15
Tennis courts	0.25	1 per 4,000	15 - 20
Bowling greens	0.25	1 per 4,000	15 – 20
Football pitches	0.19	1 per 5,500	15 - 20
Rugby league pitches	0.15	1 per 6,500	15 - 20
Rugby union pitches	0.06	1 per 17,500	20 - 30
Artificial pitches	0.1	1 per 20,000	20 - 30

Table 38: Proposed quantity and access standards for sports facilities in Wigan Borough

43.5. The following sport and recreational facilities are considered individually to ensure that the specific requirements of the sport and/or teams are accounted for. They cannot in every case be compared against a national average as the demographic of the borough and existing facility provision has an influence over the type of sports played:

- **Cricket:** No issues were raised during the facilities audit or club surveys to indicate a pitch shortage. However some clubs are operating at or near full capacity. It is therefore considered that the current provision presents a reasonable quantity standard at 0.05 pitches per 1,000 people, or facility standard of **1 pitch per 22,000 people**, given the high team generation rate of 1:445 for junior teams and slightly below average 1:1,899 for senior teams.

- **Rugby League:** No issues were raised during the facilities audit or club surveys to indicate a pitch shortage but it is noted that despite some clubs wanting to increase team numbers there was a poor rate of player retention. Current provision is sufficient to accommodate the existing teams and future demand with 43 pitches at a standard of 0.15 per 1,000 people or **1 pitch per 6,500 people**.
- **Rugby Union:** Latent demand has been identified at Leigh, the only club that has stated it is operating over capacity. The club does not have enough pitches or changing facilities to play, or to train the number of teams it has at present. No other issues were raised during the audit and surveys. Relocation of pitch provision in Leigh as a result of housing development will help to accommodate existing and future demand. Current provision is at 0.05 pitches per 1,000 people or 1 pitch per 21,200 this is not sufficient to meet current or future demand. A standard of 0.06 pitches per 1,000 people or **1 pitch per 17,500 people** is proposed, requiring the addition of 4 new pitches.
- **Hockey:** No issues were raised during the facilities audit or club surveys to indicate a pitch shortage or suggest operation at or near full capacity. There was no indication of latent demand. However the availability of coaches was noted as a challenge for future growth. Current provision is sufficient to accommodate the existing teams and future demand with 9 pitches, at a standard of 0.03 per 1,000 people or **1 pitch per 35,500 people**.
- **Golf:** No issues were raised during the facilities audit or club surveys to indicate a shortage of golf courses. However it is noted that there was spare capacity for membership at some clubs, indicating a surplus of courses for the current level of demand. Current provision is sufficient to meet the existing and future demand and provides a reasonable standard of **0.72 Ha per 1,000 people**.

44. Justification of standards

- 44.1. The standards for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to the future planning and provision of facilities across the borough. Standards are designed to highlight areas of deficiency or surplus provision in terms of quantity and identify deficiencies in accessibility and quality, which in turn directly relates to health and wellbeing, climate change, and sustainable living.
- 44.2. The standards proposed through this report follow guidance by national and local planning policy as outlined in Chapter 1, and reflect the current provision,

demand determined through the residents survey and stakeholder consultation, and local characteristics, as examined in Chapter 2. Standards are also based upon the findings of the 2007 audit and report and are amended to reflect current need and usage.

- 44.3. Neither national or local planning policy, nor related planning practice guidance, offer policies or direction on the location, design, or quantity of the majority of audited open space typologies. There are however specific policies, strategies, or guidance relating to allotments, children's play areas, and outdoor sport provision. See each typology section in Chapter 1 (Main report) for further detail.
- 44.4. Former national Planning Policy Guidance advocated that councils move away from the National Playing Field Association (NPFA) 'Six Acre Standard' toward tailored standards based on local need. In 2008 the (former) NPFA, now Fields In Trust (FIT), released 'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play', which offers national mean standards to guide local assessment of need. It advocates the use of Sport England's 'Towards a Level Playing Field' methodology when assessing provision for playing pitches. This guidance has been used to develop the local standards for Wigan Borough.
- 44.5. Wigan is the ninth largest metropolitan borough in England, it contains a vast amount of green space including the Greenheart countryside park area which covers 5700Ha, and covers in part 9 of the borough's 14 settlements. The population age is largely in line with the national average as outlined in Chapter 1; however, Wigan has a higher than average population of residents aged 40-75 and a below average 20-35 age group. This is considered to have an impact on the type of sports and recreational activities undertaken across the borough. In this respect, the proposed borough standards reflect the localised demand for open space, sport and recreational facilities, and the influence that the demographic of the borough has on this.
- 44.6. This report assesses accessibility to sites within Wigan Borough and maps the catchment zones of each site or facility. Access is cross boundary between settlements within Wigan, and with neighbouring districts within Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside and Warrington. Cross boundary provision, where significant, is highlighted in the relevant typology section of Chapter 1 and settlement profiles in Chapter 3.

45. Application of standards

45.1. This chapter of the report seeks to examine the existing provision across the borough with the purpose-set standards. The settlement profiles (Chapter 3) consider each typology on a local level and identify any challenges presented locally through the open space and sport and recreational facility audit and consultation, and make recommendations for future planning.

Accessibility standards

- 45.2. Access to open space and sport and recreational facilities is generally very good across the borough with each settlement achieving or exceeding the standard set for at least one type of open space and one sport.
- 45.3. The majority of urban settlements across the borough are within walking or a short driving distance of all types of standardised open space (not including green corridors, cemeteries and churchyards and civic spaces) and have access to sport and recreational facilities within the settlement boundary or in the neighbouring settlement.
- 45.4. By examining the settlements in relation to catchment zones, any deficiencies or access restrictions become more identifiable. The Greenheart project seeks to provide a green network that promotes access to open spaces across the borough, this will have a positive impact on accessibility and further benefit Wigan's open spaces in the future.
- 45.5. Accessibility and quantity standards for children and young people's play areas were amended from the standard set in the 2007 study to better suit the requirements and existing provision within the borough. The new standards acknowledge the FIT requirements (as detailed in Chapter 1) and reflect the results of the residents' survey to show an increase in distance to each category of play area, and a reduced size per population standard.
- 45.6. Similarly, other open space accessibility standards have been amended following the audit to better suit local provision and demand and to better satisfy national standard recommendations. In this, the accessibility standard for local or 'other' parks has increased by 200 metres allowing a greater catchment area per park and a more appropriate level of provision for the borough, taking into account the other types of open spaces available and accessible within the same locations. The standard for accessibility has decreased for allotments and community gardens, and natural and semi-natural open space. This decrease reflects the value of the open space typology, the results of the residents' survey, and standards set by Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt).

45.7. All other categories remain unchanged from the 2007 report. Where standards were not applied previously, new standards have been developed to reflect local need and national guidance as applicable.

Quantity standards

45.8. The majority of open space, sport and recreation typologies meet the minimum requirements as set by this report. Tables 38.2 and 38.3 assess the existing level of provision against the standard set for each typology, and Table 38.4 demonstrates the level of provision in each settlement against the standard for the borough.

45.9. Wigan has a large amount of natural and semi-natural green space and amenity green space. These offer provision for informal play space and, in some areas, informal sports provision also. As expressed throughout this report, typologies are categorised by their primary function but multiple functions of a site is common throughout the borough. This must be taken into consideration when analysing existing provision against the proposed standard.

Typology (standard only)	Existing number of sites	Existing Ha size	Existing Ha per 1,000 people	Position against proposed Ha per 1,000 people standard
Parks and gardens	33	210	0.66	-0.09
Amenity green space	243	107	0.33	+0.03
Natural and semi-natural green space	220	1,743	5.5	+3.5
Allotments and community gardens (total / non-private)	67 / 49	37 / 27.5	0.12 / 0.09	-0.03
Children and young people	285	113	0.35	-0.02
Equipped play	123	11	0.03	-0.015
Unequipped play	162	102	0.32	-0.005

Table 39: Comparison of existing open space quantity against the proposed quantity standard

45.10. Open space provision across the borough demonstrates surplus green spaces in some categories and shortfalls or deficits in others. When compared against the borough standard, there is a shortfall in parks and gardens and children's play spaces, and a surplus of amenity green space and natural and semi-natural green space. The results of the open space audit identified that

some of the sites within the categories showing a surplus are of a low quality. There is scope therefore to improve the quality of these sites and redefine their primary function to meet the shortfall in other typologies.

Facility	Existing number of facilities	Existing standard per 1,000 people	Existing facility per no. population	Position against proposed standard per 1,000 people
Sports halls (main and activity)	29 halls	0.09	1 per 10,000	-0.01
Swimming pools (main and learner)	22 pools	0.06	1 per 20,000	Meets standard
Fitness gyms	1,962 stations	6.16	1 per 200	+0.66
Tennis courts	77 courts	0.24	1 per 4,250	-0.01
Bowling greens	77 greens	0.24	1 per 4,250	-0.01
Football pitches	75 pitches	0.19	1 per 5,500	+0.06
Rugby league pitches	43 pitches	0.15	1 per 6,500	Meets standard
Rugby union pitches	15 pitches	0.05	1 per 21,200	-0.01
Artificial pitches	45 pitches	0.14	1 per 15,000	+0.04

Table 40: Comparison of existing quantity of sports facilities against the proposed quantity standard

45.11. The quantity of sport provision is generally very good, often exceeding the defined standards. The number of pitches does not, however, accurately represent the year-round pitch provision as the physical number does not take into account the pitch quality or the impact on seasonal use. Similarly, not all pitches are publicly accessible, and some can be divided into smaller pitches for use by more than one team at a time. The figures in the table above therefore are a baseline figure for the provision in the borough.

45.12. Individual outdoor sports standards are defined earlier in this chapter and represent the existing supply and demand. There is a good quantity of sports facilities across the borough, with a good team generation rate, providing reasonable existing standards to support future demand. The quantitative assessment does not take into account the quality of sites and the availability of facilities and the impact of this on regular use. Therefore a combined assessment of quality and quantity is required to usefully address sporting provision. This is highlighted in the main sporting sections of Chapter 1.

45.13. There is broad coverage of open space, and sport and recreation provision. Table 3.4 below identifies areas of sufficient provision (✓) and under supply (×) across the 14 settlements. In many settlements areas of deficiency are met by provision of other types of open space. The level of provision across the settlements demonstrates a shortfall in parks and gardens, allotment

spaces, children's play areas, and civic spaces, while showing sufficient or surplus provision of amenity green space, natural and semi-natural spaces, and sporting and educational provision. The provision of these typologies does overlap however, as demonstrated throughout Chapters 1 and 2.

Settlement	Parks and gardens	Amenity green space	Natural and semi-natural open space	Green corridors	Allotments and community gardens	Cemeteries and church-yards
Abram and Platt Bridge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ashton	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Aspull	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
Atherton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Golborne and Lowton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hindley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leigh	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Orrell	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Shevington	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Standish	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Tyldesley and Astley	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Wigan North	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Wigan South	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Settlement	Children and young people	Civic spaces	Outdoor sports	Indoor sports	Education provision	Artificial pitches
Abram and Platt Bridge	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Ashton	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aspull	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Atherton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Golborne and Lowton	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hindley	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Leigh	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Orrell	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shevington	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Standish	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tyldesley and Astley	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wigan North	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wigan South	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 41: Comparison of open space, sport and recreation typologies by settlement against the borough standard

Quality standards

- 45.14. The standards for quality are largely considered through the typology sections of Chapter 1 and the subsequent sections within the settlement profiles in Chapter 3. Key points for each typology are noted below:
- **Parks and gardens:** 76% of the 35 sites audited in Wigan scored highly for quality; the remaining sites suffer from a lack in the range of facilities and require investment. 3 parks are of nationally recognised Green Flag standard with a fourth site at Mesnes Park is put forward for recognition. 19 sites have 'Friends' or community groups. The results of the residents' survey indicate that over half of respondents see the quality of parks and gardens to be good, while 27% feel it is average and 17% see the quality as poor or very poor. Stakeholder engagement indicated that a cycle of deterioration and restoration was in place rather than continuous maintenance and is a cause of frustration. **Overall quality standard is good to very good.**
 - **Amenity green space:** Over half of the 243 sites audited scored highly for quality; of the remaining sites 42% were of average quality and 4% were poor quality. The lowest scoring sites were, in most cases, temporarily landscaped pending redevelopment. In contrast, 3 in 10 residents' surveyed thought that the quality of provision was high and a further 3 in 10 saw quality as average. The remaining 4 in 10 selected poor quality or stated that they were unsure. Three quarters of resident's said they visit sites of amenity green space weekly or more frequently and the remaining quarter visit once a month or less frequently. **Overall quality standard is average to good** in Wigan and requires improvement.
 - **Natural and semi-natural green space:** 63% of the 220 sites audited scored highly for quality with only 10% receiving a poor score. Reasons for the poor score include isolated locations, lack of natural surveillance, lack of maintenance, fly-tipping, and unauthorised use by motorcycles. Similarly, the results of the residents' survey showed that 63% of those surveyed felt the quality of provision was good with only 12% feeling the quality was poor. Stakeholder engagement indicated tensions between managing sites for wildlife and for public access. **Overall quality standard is good.** However, there is a need to improve management programmes and priorities as well as public access.
 - **Green corridors:** All 20 green corridors audited scored highly for quality. In contrast, half of the residents surveyed felt that the quality of the corridors was good whereas 17% felt that quality was poor or very poor.

Sites that did not score highly tended to do so due to poor maintenance for wet weather use or poor access. It was also reported that signage was often lacking and routes were not always kept clear of encroaching vegetation. Stakeholder opinion expressed frustration at a lack of barriers to prevent unauthorised access by motorbikes. **Overall the quality standard is good.** However there is a need to improve management programmes and priorities as well as public access.

- **Allotments and community gardens:** Of the 67 allotment sites audited across Wigan, 65% were considered to be of high quality and 13% were of a low quality, the low scoring sites commonly displayed poor access, vandalism, or a lack of natural surveillance and security. In contrast, only 10% of residents surveyed expressed that the allotment provision in the borough was of a good quality while 38% thought the quality was poor or very poor. These sites were noted to have poor quality footpaths and a lack of facilities such as toilets or running water. The **overall quality standard is average.** There is a need to improve the offering of facilities and quality of footpaths across numerous sites.
- **Cemeteries and churchyards:** 79% of the 42 cemetery and churchyard sites audited were of a high quality with only 7% receiving a low quality score. Similarly, over half of residents surveyed thought that provision was of a good or very good quality, with a further third giving an average score. Sites that received a lower score did so due to a lack of regular maintenance - these tended to be church owned sites that were often at full capacity - and a lack of natural surveillance and security. The **overall standard is good – very good.**
- **Children and young people:** Of the 285 play areas audited, 72% scored highly for quality with only 7% receiving a low score. In contrast, the results of the residents' survey indicate that only one-third of residents surveyed feel that provision is of a good or very good quality and almost a third feel that overall quality is poor or very poor. The most common problems affecting the quality of these sites are bad drainage, poor surfacing, old and dated equipment and vandalism. This, alongside a need for further provision, requires consideration for investment and improvement. The **overall quality is good** but further high quality provision is required.
- **Civic spaces:** Of the 20 civic spaces audited, all but one site received a high quality score with the remaining site scoring averagely. In contrast, one-third of residents surveyed suggested that civic spaces in Wigan are of a high quality, while a further third felt that the quality is average. The

remaining scores were divided between 'unknown' and poor quality. Poorer scores tended to come from areas with little or no civic space provision. The **overall quality is very good** but further high quality provision is required.

- **Indoor sports:** The majority of sites audited, including leisure centres, fitness suites, swimming pools, and sports halls, are of a reasonable or high quality. Provision is mostly owned and maintained commercially, by communities or by schools, with some owned and maintained by the council or Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles. A large number of older facilities have been refurbished within the last ten years and many of the remaining facilities have been built within the last ten years. The **overall quality is good – very good**.
- **Outdoor sports:** A range of sporting facilities were audited for this report. They are divided here into pitch and non-pitch sports; see Chapter 1 for further category breakdown. All pitch sports reported a need for new or refurbished changing facilities with all but cricket reporting poor pitch quality also, due to poor drainage. Some council owned sites received higher scores. However the majority of the provision in Wigan Borough is not council owned. The **overall quality for pitch sports is average**. All non-pitch sports are generally reported to be of good quality; however some issues were raised about outdoor court surfaces and indoor court cleanliness for tennis. The **overall quality for non-pitch sports is good**.
- **Education provision:** Due to the poor response rate observed during the site surveying period, representative quality data for education provision is unavailable. The schools that returned the questionnaire expressed a lack of green space or low quality green space due to poor drainage. However this does not accurately represent the provision on a borough-wide level.
- **Artificial pitches:** Many school owned artificial pitches are in state of disrepair and require resurfacing and new fencing is required at some sites. A number of sports centres have been refurbished in recent years, including Robin Park Arena where new and refurbished artificial pitches offer high quality provision. The **overall quality is average – good** but refurbishment of a number of sites is required.

Strategic options

45.15. Developing strategic options enables the council to make recommendations and prepare draft policies using the evidence base and applied borough standards determined through this report. Strategic options are considered under the following titles:

- **Existing provision to be protected:** This is a critical priority in avoiding further deficiencies developing. It is of particular importance for nature or heritage conservation sites, or for areas where the site is the only space of its typology.
- **Existing provision to be enhanced:** This includes spaces which scored poorly in the quality or value assessment, and those which are critical to avoiding deficiency in quantity, diversity or accessibility. Sites that are of high value but low quality are a priority.
- **Existing provision to be redefined:** In some areas it may be possible to redefine an area of open space to better suit the needs of the population. This is particularly relevant to areas with one type of open space above the recommended minimum standard and a deficiency in another. Of similar importance, areas of low quality open space could be better defined as a more suited typology to fill a deficiency in a different category of open space.
- **Proposals for new provision:** New provision may be required in areas where there are planned population increases, or in areas where there are established deficiencies or latent demand for a type of space or facility that is in short supply.

45.16. Strategic recommendations are made at borough-wide level and are not site specific; they are intended to highlight key priorities for future investment and development.

Existing provision to be protected

45.17. Loss of existing provision should be avoided unless new or alternative provision can be provided.

45.18. The results of the audit and residents' survey indicate that a lot of sites across the borough are of high value. The most valuable sites, including those which may be the only one of its typology in the area, should be protected and enhanced where relevant.

Existing provision to be enhanced

45.19. The quality of many sites including sport facilities, children's play areas, allotments, and natural and semi-natural green spaces, requires improvement and investment where appropriate.

Existing provision to be redefined

45.20. Open space categories that have quantities above the minimum borough standard should be redefined where applicable to better suit the needs of the local area and meet the shortfall of related typologies. In areas where there is a deficit in parks and gardens or casual play space, excess amenity green space or natural/semi-natural green space could fulfil the catchment gap.

45.21. Each typology is categorised by its primary function although multi-functional sites are common in Wigan. By redefining the primary function of natural and semi-natural or amenity green space, a more accurate representation of casual play space can be demonstrated.

Proposals for new provision

45.22. Chapters 1 and 2 of this report highlight catchment gaps across the borough where additional provision should be sought from new development to meet the deficit.

45.23. There is a lack of supply to meet the demand for allotments in a number of settlements across the borough. This should be addressed through new development where applicable and practicable.

45.24. The priority for new provision is equipped play areas for children and young people. Provision for non-equipped play areas should be sought through redefining and re-categorising other open spaces where applicable.

45.25. An increase in the number of green corridors in the borough should be sought through providing better access and improved rights of way, and connecting areas of open space.

46. Strategic priorities by settlement

46.1. Chapter 3 details the assessment of need and existing provision for each settlement in the borough. Strategic priorities are drawn from the findings of each settlement profile, as demonstrated in Table 3.5.

Settlement	Strategic priority
Abram and Platt Bridge	- Improve the quality of amenity green space, allotments and civic spaces.
Ashton	- Improve the quality of amenity green space, allotments and civic spaces. - Introduce informal rights of way and footpaths to improve accessibility.
Aspull	- Improve the quality and quantity of children's play areas.
Atherton	- Protect, maintain, and enhance where appropriate, existing open space and sport and recreational facilities.
Golborne and Lowton	- Improve the quality and quantity of children's play areas.
Hindley	- Improve the quality and quantity of allotment provision. - Consider options for introducing civic spaces through future development.
Leigh	- Improve the quality of amenity green space. - Improve the quality and quantity of allotment provision.
Orrell	- Improve the quality of amenity green space. - Introduce informal rights of way and footpaths to improve accessibility. - Consider options for introducing civic spaces through future development.
Shevington	- Improve the quality and quantity of children's play areas.
Standish	- Improve the quality of amenity green space and natural and semi-natural green space.
Tyldesley and Astley	- Improve the quality and value of natural and semi-natural green space. - Redefine and enhance existing amenity green space to provide informal children's play areas and/or pocket parks.
Wigan North	- Improve the range of children's play areas.
Wigan South	- Introduce informal rights of way and footpaths to improve accessibility. - Consider options for introducing civic spaces through future development.

Table 42: Strategic priorities by settlement

47. Recommendations

47.1. To address deficiencies in quality, a series of quality standards should be derived to assess sites and facilities against and to inform future development and existing provision enhancement. It is noted that the introduction of quality

standards may lead to an increased level of maintenance which may in turn put further pressure on council, corporate and private budgets.

- 47.2. To meet the borough level deficiency in parks and gardens it is recommended that excess open space such as vast areas of casual play and low value natural and semi-natural open space is redeveloped to create pocket parks and gardens. The open space audit identified 6 amenity green spaces of high quality but low value due to a lack of use and a large amount of similar spaces nearby. By redesigning and enhancing the appeal of these sites the open space in the borough can be further diversified and a more balanced provision against the standards achieved.
- 47.3. Improvements to sports facilities, including new or modernised changing facilities, are vital for the future of sports demand in the borough. Flood lighting and improved drainage of playing fields and other sports grounds will allow for more use of sporting grounds throughout the year and can therefore cater for a higher number of teams. Tennis courts are of particular relevance when assessing the need for quality improvement as a high number of sites were identified as requiring enhancement.
- 47.4. Artificial pitches can act as an alternative use for some sports grounds as they provide better drainage and can offer all-season usability, however the current supply is not fully accessible. More municipal and open access artificial pitches would improve the sport and recreational offering in the borough and relieve pressure from full or over-capacity grounds.
- 47.5. The quality of education provision, in particular primary school playing fields, requires improvement. Investment from local developments into the availability and quality of green spaces for schools should be sought for the future.
- 47.6. Sites of any typology where the quality is low but the value is high should be a priority for future improvement and investment.
- 47.7. Better use of the existing natural and semi-natural green spaces and the Greenheart to provide high quality access through green corridors and rights of way should be a priority.

Sites to be resurveyed

- 47.8. Sites will be resurveyed over a 5 year period to assess and monitor provision across the borough. The sites to be resurveyed each year will include a range of private and municipal sites and cover all typologies of this report.