Wigan Council

Wigan Borough Draft Employment Land Review

December 2015

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1. Introduction

1.1 Wigan Borough is ‘Open for Business’. There are over 12,000 businesses in the borough and the council and partners are working closely with them to ensure they have the support they need to prosper and grow. Economic development, skills and jobs are right at the heart of the council’s priorities. New infrastructure is being delivered to make the borough more attractive for economic investment.

1.2 The borough is at the heart of the north-west of England, midway between Manchester, Liverpool and Preston, with direct access to the M6 Motorway and West Coast Mainline Railway. It is an integral part of Greater Manchester, which is leading the way in securing devolved responsibilities from Government across a range of functions, including economic development and transport. The Greater Manchester economy is already the UK’s strongest outside of London and the South East, and clear plans are in place to make it much stronger.

1.3 In promoting economic development there is a wide portfolio of development sites within the borough. This Employment Land Review considers the suitability of this portfolio to meet future requirements and what challenges need to be addressed for the borough to realise its full potential and contribute fully to the economic growth of Greater Manchester and the North-West region.

1.4 Employment land reviews are a fundamental part of the evidence base for Local Plans and the development management process, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. The Employment Land Review has been prepared in accordance with the guidance and methodology on assessing economic development needs in the Planning Practice Guidance.

1.5 A similar review was undertaken in 2007/8 to underpin work on the Local Plan Core Strategy.

1.6 This is the second version of the 2015 Employment Land Review which is published to support the Initial Draft Allocations and Development Management Local Plan. The first version of the review was published for consultation for four weeks in July 2015. A separate Consultation Report is available which summarises the representations we received, how we responded to them and the changes we made to this second version of the review as a result.

1.7 The review will also be evidence for the emerging Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

1.8 The review includes all existing employment land and buildings across the borough other than very small sites. Employment uses are those within Class B of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order, namely offices, research and development, light industry, general industry and storage and distribution, and ‘sui generis’ employment uses that are outside of the use classes. These include activities such as builder's yards and transport depots that are commonly found within many of the borough's employment areas. They are detailed under policy CP5 'Economy and employment' in the Core Strategy.

1.9 There are three main stages of the review:

Stage 1 – Taking stock of the existing situation

1.10 The main objectives of Stage 1 are to:

- Introduce Wigan's spatial context.
- Identify the key policies, plans and strategies relevant to this review.
- Review the borough's economic profile.
- Report on the current condition of the employment market in Wigan.

1.11 Stage 1 also comments on the larger employment land provision proposals in nearby districts, as they are applicable to the interests of Wigan Borough.

1.12 At the end of Stage 1 the key issues and challenges for the supply of employment land in the borough are identified to be addressed in Stages 2 and 3 of the review.

Stage 2 – Creating a picture of future requirements

1.13 The main objective of the Stage 2 is to match the current supply of employment land against future demand for employment land over the plan period up to 2026. To achieve this objective:

- The current employment sites in the borough are identified and assessed in terms of their size and quality, taking into consideration any losses to other uses.
- For each existing employment site that is assessed, the review recommends to release, retain, redefine, modernise or protect its importance as an employment area, to meet future requirements.
- Any shortfalls in the amount and quality of employment land are then identified to inform if new employment sites are required to meet future demand.

1.14 There are two main classifications of existing employment land and buildings - those that are designated as Primary Employment Areas in the Unitary Development Plan and those that are not. The undesignated locations are known as 'employment clusters' for the purposes of this review.

Stage 3 – Identifying a new portfolio of sites

1.15 If any gaps in provision of employment land have been identified, the suitability of potential new employment site options to meet that shortfall are reviewed in Stage 3. In doing this the review will inform the allocation of employment land to be taken forward through the Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan.

1.16 Most of the work on this review has been undertaken by Wigan Council, with key inputs from Parkinson Commercial and New Economy.

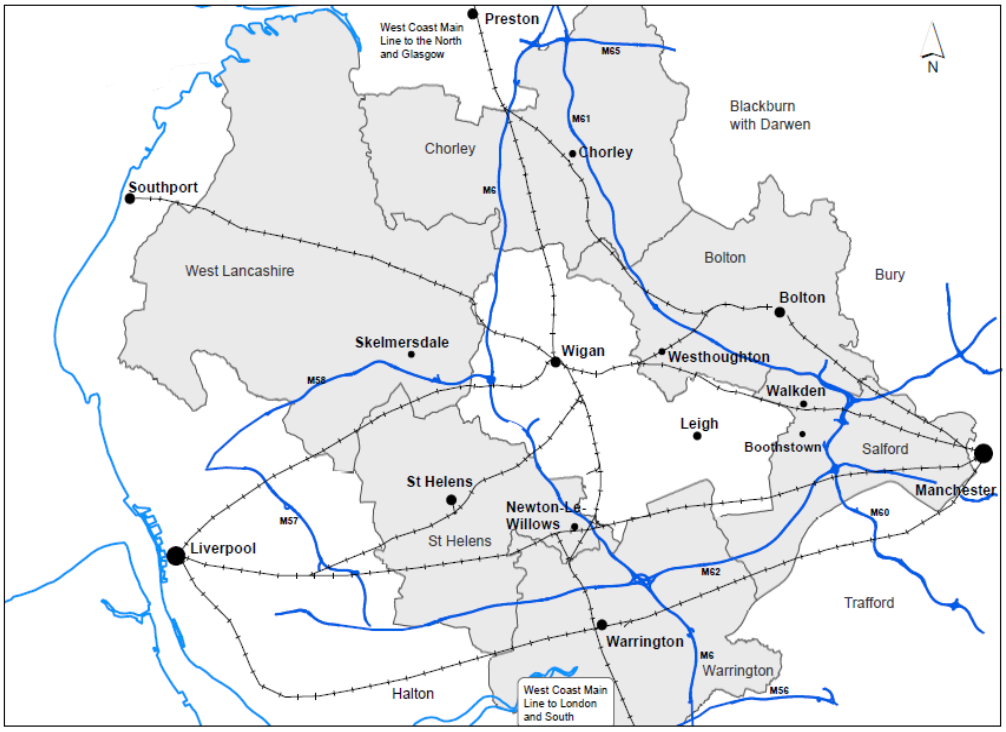
Stage 1: Taking stock of the existing situation

2. Spatial context

The location in context

2.1 Wigan Borough is located at the heart of the north-west of England, in the north-west of the Greater Manchester city region. Outside of Greater Manchester, the borough shares boundaries with Warrington, formerly in Cheshire, St Helens in Merseyside and West Lancashire and Chorley in Lancashire. It is midway between Manchester and Liverpool and includes sections of the M6 and M58 motorways.

Figure 1 – Wigan Borough – the strategic context



Transport links

2.2 The borough has good external road links and is well positioned for the motorway road network. The main north-south M6 motorway runs through the west of the borough, with six connecting junctions, although two provide are accessible only in one direction. The M58 connects with junction 26 of the M6 westwards to Liverpool. In addition, the M61, M62, M65 and M56 motorways are all a short distance from the borough.

2.3 The dual carriageway A580 East Lancashire Road from Manchester to Liverpool runs along the borough’s southern boundary and is a key strategic connection for the south and east of the borough.

2.4 However, historically, Wigan has not capitalised fully on its key strategic location. Most of the main roads in the borough are single lane carriageways with 30 mph speed limits. While congestion is not high in normal conditions, there is a perception of slow journey times and delays. Wigan's Transport Strategy identifies a number of improvements to the road network to improve accessibility. The key improvements are:

- The A49 / Westwood Link Road, Wigan, on which construction will commence shortly.
- The M58 Link Road, Pemberton, which is at the design and consultation stage.
- Amberswood Link Road, Ince, for which a planning application is being prepared.
- A579 Atherleigh Way to Westleigh Lane, Leigh, which is part of an outline planning permission for North Leigh Park.
- A578 Leigh Road to A58 Liverpool Road, Hindley, which is being worked up as part of a proposed outline planning application for South of Hindley.
- The new Southgate Road in Wigan, which has now been in operation for over two years.

2.5 Collectively, these sections of road will provide new east – west connectivity across the borough, and improved access to the motorway network from a number of existing employment sites.

2.6 In terms of rail, the borough is strategically well placed on the national and regional network. Wigan town centre has two rail stations. Wigan North Western station provides access to national north-south services on the West Coast Main Line, with direct trains to London and Edinburgh and other the major conurbations such as Birmingham and Glasgow. There are also local services to Liverpool and Preston. Wigan Wallgate provides east-west links to Manchester, Bolton and Southport.

2.7 There are also proposals for the HS2 high speed link to connect directly into Wigan North Western, which will significantly enhance the town centre's position on the national rail network.

2.8 Funding has been secured for a £16 million redevelopment of Wigan Bus Station. This will provide a better arrival point for visitors and improved connections to Wigan and Leigh College, the Deanery High School, Wigan Youth Zone and local shops and offices within the town centre. Work is programmed to start in 2017.

2.9 The east of the borough will also be better connected from early 2016 through the new busway linking Leigh to Manchester, through Tyldesley. It will improve access to jobs in Manchester and Salford and will potentially make Leigh a more attractive location for employment uses.

The regional position

2.10 Wigan Borough is on the edge of the Manchester City Region, but its economic and social links to the city region are important. However, as set out above, the borough's employment market and travel to work areas stretch beyond the Manchester City Region, to include employment opportunities and access to markets within Merseyside (the Liverpool City Region), Central Lancashire and Warrington / Cheshire.

2.11 The Manchester City Region is the UK's strongest economic centre outside London and the South East and accounts for two-fifths of the North West's total economic output. Being a major draw for employment, Greater Manchester is forecast to be the major growth location for jobs in the next decade. The potential for further growth within the city region, including Wigan, is set out within the Greater Manchester Strategy, Stronger Together, published in 2013.

2.12 Within the North-west region, there are a number of major developments which take advantage of their accessible locations with good access to the regions motorway network. These include:

- Omega, Warrington - a large mixed use development of around 233 hectares adjacent to Junction 8 of the M62 motorway. The development includes a number of large scale logistics operators, such as Brakes Foods, and is expected to provide up to 24,000 jobs once completed;
- Matrix, Buckshaw Village, Chorley – An 80 acre mixed use development, including a business park already providing over 1 million square feet of warehousing and office accommodation. Occupiers include a major distribution depot for Waitrose;
- Logistics North – An 85.8 hectare development site on a former colliery site adjacent to Junction 4 of the M61 motorway. The site covers part of Bolton, Salford and Wigan boroughs and includes up to 400,000 square metres of industrial / manufacturing floorspace. Future occupiers will include a major distribution depot for discount retailer, Aldi;
- Parkside, Newton-le-Willows - a proposed rail freight interchange and distribution depot that would provide employment opportunities for Wigan Borough residents;
- Proposed developments at Liverpool Docks and Wirral Waters are also potentially important for the borough. The proposed M58 Link Road will provide direct access from sites within Wigan to Liverpool Docks, opening up trade opportunities;
- Port Salford – A proposed new inland port facility served by road, rail and short sea shipping with a distribution park at Barton, close to the M60 motorway. Proposals include up to 153,000 square

metres of new warehousing facilities providing up to 4,000 jobs; and

- Heywood Distribution Park, near Rochdale, close to the M66 and M62, where investment firm Harbert Management Corporation has started the speculative development of two further warehouse and distribution units totalling 212,830 sq. ft.

2.13 These developments are large scale and will have a positive impact on the wider economy of the individual borough and potentially across the North-west region.

3. Key policies, plans and strategies

National Planning Policy Framework

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in both plan making and decision making. In doing so, the planning system should support economic development by ensuring sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation.

3.2 To help achieve this, local authorities should set out a clear economic vision and strategy for the area, which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.

3.3 They should set criteria, or identify specific sites, for local investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period.

National Planning Practice Guidance

3.4 The Government's online Planning Practice Guidance provides supports the NPPF. It includes up to date advice on preparing Employment Land Reviews. This states that plan makers should liaise closely with the business community to understand their current and potential future requirements and the current market. The review should also consider:

- The recent pattern of employment land supply and loss to other uses.
- Market intelligence, from local data and discussions with developers and property agents, recent surveys of business needs or engagement with business and economic forums.
- Market signals, such as levels and changes in rental values, and differentials between land values in different uses.
- Public information on employment land and premises required.
- Information held by other public sector bodies and utilities in relation to infrastructure constraints.
- The existing stock of employment land, though it is important to recognise that existing stock may not reflect the future needs of businesses. Recent statistics on take-up of sites should be considered at this stage, along with other primary and secondary data sources to gain an understanding of the spatial implications of 'revealed demand' for employment land.
- The locational and premises requirements of particular types of businesses.
- Identification of oversupply and evidence of market failure, for example, physical or ownership constraints that prevent the employment site being used effectively, which could be evidenced by unfulfilled requirements from business, yet developers are not prepared to build premises at the prevailing market rents.

The Northern Powerhouse

3.5 The Northern Powerhouse was launched by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in June 2014. The aim is to transform Northern growth and rebalance the country's economy to establish the North as a global powerhouse to counter the economic weight of London. Major improvements between the cities of the North are seen as a central element of achieving the Northern Powerhouse. The vision for North is for a vibrant growing economy, acting as a magnet for inward investment, allowing the North's talent pool to become more mobile, allowing companies to access the widest pool of people and skills they need to grow and connecting businesses to each other to make them more efficient.

3.6 Greater Manchester, including Wigan is well placed to take a leading role in driving the Northern Powerhouse forward.

The North West Economic Plan

3.7 In January 2015, the Prime Minister and Chancellor set out a long-term economic plan for the North West, supporting the delivery of the Northern Powerhouse. The plan is designed to achieve an £18bn real terms increase in the size of the North West economy, by 2030. The plan focuses on the following six points:

- To increase the long term growth rate of the North West to at least the forecast growth rate of the whole UK.
- To raise the employment rate in the North West to that of the UK average.
- To deliver the largest ever and most sustained investment in the long-term transport infrastructure of the North West.
- To make the North West a global centre of outstanding scientific innovation, with a particular focus on material science, biomedicine, supercomputing and energy with major investments in the excellent universities and NHS teaching hospitals of the region, and making sure the energy resources are used to the benefit of local people.
- To raise the quality of life in the North West by supporting its great cultural and sporting strengths, building new homes, nurturing the rural environment and improving education outcomes in the region's schools so over 75,000 more pupils attend outstanding schools.
- To give greater power and voice to the great cities and counties of the North West.

The Greater Manchester Strategy 2013–2020: Stronger Together

3.8 The Greater Manchester Strategy sets out the vision and a programme of action for the city region to drive sustainable growth and deliver prosperity for all. It aims to create an environment that fosters economic growth and makes Greater Manchester an investment destination of choice. It also emphasises the need for a market facing investment strategy that will help the councils work with the private sector and create a wider portfolio of desirable sites.

3.9 The strategy goes on to say “We will identify the land required for the development of flexible and cost efficient commercial and industrial space in desirable locations, supported by an effective infrastructure. A cohesive, structured and evidenced approach to attracting and growing businesses with the greatest growth potential will be adopted alongside working with Greater Manchester’s firms to help them expand into markets and sectors where we have comparative advantages”.

Manchester Independent Economic Review

3.10 The Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) was commissioned to provide a detailed and rigorous assessment of the state and future potential of Manchester’s wider economy. The review panel commissioned seven strands of analysis which, when combined, provided a detailed study of the economy of the Manchester City Region. It was published in April 2009.

3.11 The report’s recommendations focused on the resources that are already available within the area, such as skills, transport and governance. The key finding is that the City region’s size and potential make it the prime candidate outside London and the South-east for growth in the long term.

Greater Manchester Manufacturing Strategy

3.12 The Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership published a Manufacturing Strategy for Greater Manchester in March 2015. This strategy illustrates the strength and importance of the manufacturing sector across the city region and sets out a clear vision and strategic objectives to retain and strengthen this. The vision is for “An SME-driven manufacturing sector where GVA has grown by over 30% by 2023 and mirrors our edgy, curious and creative attitude in its exploitation of new technologies and process innovation, and in doing so, takes full advantage of our world-leading research in advanced materials and our growing digital skills pool.”

3.13 The strategic objectives within the strategy are:

- To develop strong leadership within the manufacturing sector to ensure it is best placed to respond to the transformative changes that the sector will see over the next decade.
- To promote and enhance the sector’s profile to attract a future workforce into a productive career in manufacturing.
- To build a multi skilled adaptable workforce that is able to embrace change and take advantage of new market opportunities.
- To create the necessary collaborative and supportive environment to drive sector investment, exporting and growth.

- To ensure that the necessary sites and energy, transport and digital infrastructure are in place to support the growth of the sector.

The Local Plan

3.14 Wigan's Local Plan Core Strategy sets out the spatial planning strategy and local planning policy framework for employment land provision. It identifies a key mixed-use strategic site at Northleigh, and a number of broad locations that are suitable for mixed use development, including employment. These are:

- South of Hindley
- East of Atherton
- Landgate, Ashton-in-Makerfield.

3.15 Policy CP5 in the Core Strategy recognises the need to bring forward a range of employment sites of the right quality to attract, maintain and grow businesses. It recognises that for Wigan to compete successfully for jobs over the next 10-20 years, new employment sites of the right quality, and in the right location, will be required. It establishes a requirement for approximately 200 hectares (gross) of employment land from 2011 to 2026.

3.16 At 13-14 hectares per year this requirement is in excess of recent take up rates. However, take-up has been severely undermined by the recession, although it is also reflective of a shortage of quality site options in the available supply.

3.17 The requirement further reflects the wider objectives of the council and the Core Strategy to improve the economic performance of the borough.

3.18 Policy CP5 also seeks to safeguard existing employment sites and buildings that are capable of continuing to meet the needs of employment uses.

3.19 Saved Unitary Development Plan (Unitary Development Plan) policies EM1A and EM1B set out the detailed criteria for new development (and the potential for other uses) within designated Primary Employment Areas and other employment areas. A Supplementary Planning Document on the Re-use of Employment Land for non-Employment Uses, produced in April 2006, provides further guidance for developers.

3.20 The council is preparing an Allocations and Development Management Local Plan to deliver the strategic objectives and policies in the Core Strategy. It will allocate and designate land and provide detailed planning policies that will replace the existing 'saved' policies in the Unitary Development Plan.

3.21 The council is proposing that UDP policies EM1A and EM1B be replaced by a single policy that covers all employment sites in the Allocations and Development Management Local Plan. The reasoning is that policy EM1A has been found to be too strict in its application in many instances since the UDP was adopted in 2006. Policy EM1A protects land in Primary Employment Areas for employment development only, apart from small scale non-employment uses or when sites are on the fringe.

3.22 It many cases it has been demonstrated that it is not viable to retain sites for employment uses through refurbishment or rebuild, either in whole or in part. This may be due to a lack of demand for such premises in the location and/or the costs involved.

3.23 For non-designated sites, policy EM1B does allow the release of employment land to other uses where there are demonstrable reasons such as demand, costs and viability. As a result the council has considered a number of planning applications for non-employment uses in Primary Employment Areas against the less strict policy EM1B.

3.24 To reflect this experience, a single combined policy is proposed but this effectively lowers the bar for designating employment areas. As such those employment clusters that warrant a form of protection to remain in employment use are proposed for designation but, rather than as 'Primary Employment Areas', just as 'Employment Areas'. Policy EM2 in the draft Allocations and Development Management Local Plan refers.

Wigan Transport Strategy

3.25 The council has produced a Transport Strategy for Wigan to 2026, which sets out the borough's transport issues and highlights how they will be addressed. The strategy sits alongside the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy.

Wigan Economic Prospectus

3.26 The Economic Prospectus was launched at the Wigan Business Expo in October 2015. It delivers a clear message that the council is ambitious and committed to grow Wigan's economy, create jobs and attract investment, create wealth and prosperity for local people and communities and to promote Wigan as a key location for employment and for people to make their home. The prospectus is being delivered under four themes::

- Enabling growth by growing the economy, businesses and creating jobs.
- Creating skills for success by equipping local people to take advantage of work opportunities in and around the borough and create better lives for themselves and their families through employment.
- Connecting Infrastructure by ensuring the right connections are in place to support Wigan's ambitions for economic growth.
- Creating great places and communities by building pride and belief in Wigan as the borough of choice to live and enjoy an excellent quality of life.

3.27 The launch of the prospectus is timely with plans to grow the economy of the Greater Manchester City Region which Wigan will play a major part in through the devolution deal for Greater Manchester, the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the Government's plans for the Northern Powerhouse.

4 Local economic profile

4.1 Wigan Borough has around 321,000 residents, with the main populations concentrated in and around the town of Wigan, in the north-west, and Leigh in the east. With just over 9,000 companies there is a wide variety of industries and employment sectors accounting for 9.6% of the total business base in Greater Manchester. This makes Wigan the fourth largest district in Greater Manchester in terms of its business base. This should continue as the proportion of business start-ups at 10.5% of current stock, is larger than the figure for closing businesses at 7%, by VAT de-registrations.

4.2 The key employment sectors in the borough are:

- Wholesale & retail trade (including motor trades and personal services): this is the largest private sector employing just over 20,000 people, or 19.5% of total employment.
- Transport & storage (including logistics): employs over 7,000 people, or 6.5% of total employment.
- Business, financial & professional services: this is the second largest sector employing around 16,200 people, of which more than 8,500 work in business services. This sector is forecast to have the highest job growth though to 2033 (Greater Manchester Forecasting Model, 2014).
- Manufacturing (including food and drink, and textiles): this is also an important sector employing 13,600 people, but it is forecast to lose a further 3,600 jobs by 2033.
- ICT digital, creative / digital / new media and environmental technologies: the borough has a small proportion of jobs in these key growth sectors but they are forecast to grow, with 2,200 new jobs through to 2033.

4.3 Table 1 overleaf illustrates the nature and type of businesses in the borough at 2014.

Table 1 - Number and size of businesses in Wigan Borough by sector and employment numbers

Wigan Industries	Total Businesses	Micro (0 - 9)	Small (10-49)	Medium sized (50-249)	Large (250+)
1 : Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	120	120	0	0	0
2 : Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D & E)	70	50	20	0	0
3 : Manufacturing(C)	650	475	135	35	5
4 : Construction (F)	1,180	1,075	90	15	0
5 : Motor trades (Part G)	385	345	40	0	0
6 : Wholesale (Part G)	420	315	100	5	0
7 : Retail (Part G)	1,165	905	230	20	10
8 : Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	475	400	55	15	5
9 : Accommodation & food services (I)	560	430	115	15	0
10 : Information & communication (J)	420	385	35	0	0
11 : Financial & insurance (K)	175	140	35	0	0
12 : Property (L)	290	260	25	5	0
13 :Professional, scientific & technical (M)	1,195	1,120	65	10	0
14 : Business administration & support services (N)	595	495	65	25	10
15 : Public administration & defence (O)	35	10	10	10	5
16 : Education (P)	250	100	100	50	0
17 : Health (Q)	535	310	180	45	0
18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T & U)	650	565	75	10	0
Totals	**9,170**	**7,500**	**1,375**	**260**	**35**

Source: Nomis - UK Business Counts - Local units 2014

Jobs Density

4.4 The number of jobs available in the borough is low compared to the number of residents of working age. The density of jobs per resident of working age is only 0.55 (ONS job density 2013). This is lower than all other Greater Manchester districts except Tameside, the North West and the UK as a whole. This is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Jobs Density (2013)

Area	Jobs density	Total jobs
United Kingdom	0.79	32,488,000
North West	0.77	3,476,000
Greater Manchester	0.77	1,344,000
Trafford	1.02	148,000
Manchester	1.05	382,000
Salford	0.82	129,000
Stockport	0.77	137,000
Bolton	0.67	118,000
Bury	0.64	75,000
Oldham	0.62	88,000
Rochdale	0.58	78,000
Tameside	0.54	76,000
Wigan	0.55	113,000

Source: ONS job density & total jobs, 2013

Location of jobs and employees

4.5 Of the 114,000 jobs in Wigan Borough (2014 figures, GMFM), 81,500 are occupied by people who live in the borough, meaning that around 32,500 are occupied by in-commuters. Around 60,578 (43%) residents commute out of the borough for work. This is the second highest level of out-commuting in Greater Manchester. The levels of net out-commuting are forecast to continue through to 2026 and beyond.

4.6 The reasons for the high levels of out commuting are related to the borough's location between, and close to, the key employment locations of central Manchester / Salford, Liverpool, Warrington and Preston, as well as other towns such as Bolton and St Helens. Although there are far higher numbers of borough residents in work compared to the number of jobs in the borough, this most probably also explains why around one-quarter of those jobs are occupied by people who live outside the borough. Clearly, however, total number of jobs is a significant factor, as is the breadth of job opportunities and the levels of pay available compared to other key locations.

4.7 Table 3 below shows the workplace destination of Wigan's residents in employment. It can be seen that Manchester and Bolton are the main destination for out-commuters but, while around 24% commute to other locations within Greater Manchester, around 18% commute to locations outside of Greater Manchester.

Table 3 – Workplace destination of Wigan residents in employment.

Workplace destination	No. of residents aged 16-74 in employment	%
Wigan	81,550	57.4
Manchester	10,885	7.4
Bolton	9,240	6.3
Salford	6,721	4.6
Warrington	6,329	4.3
St Helens	4,065	2.8
Trafford	3,158	2.1
West Lancashire	2,496	1.7
Liverpool	2,005	1.4
Oldham	1,075	0.7
Rochdale	998	0.7
Stockport	917	0.6
Bury	775	0.5
Others	11,924	8.1
Total out-commuters	62,593	42.6
Total living and working in Wigan	81,550	57.4

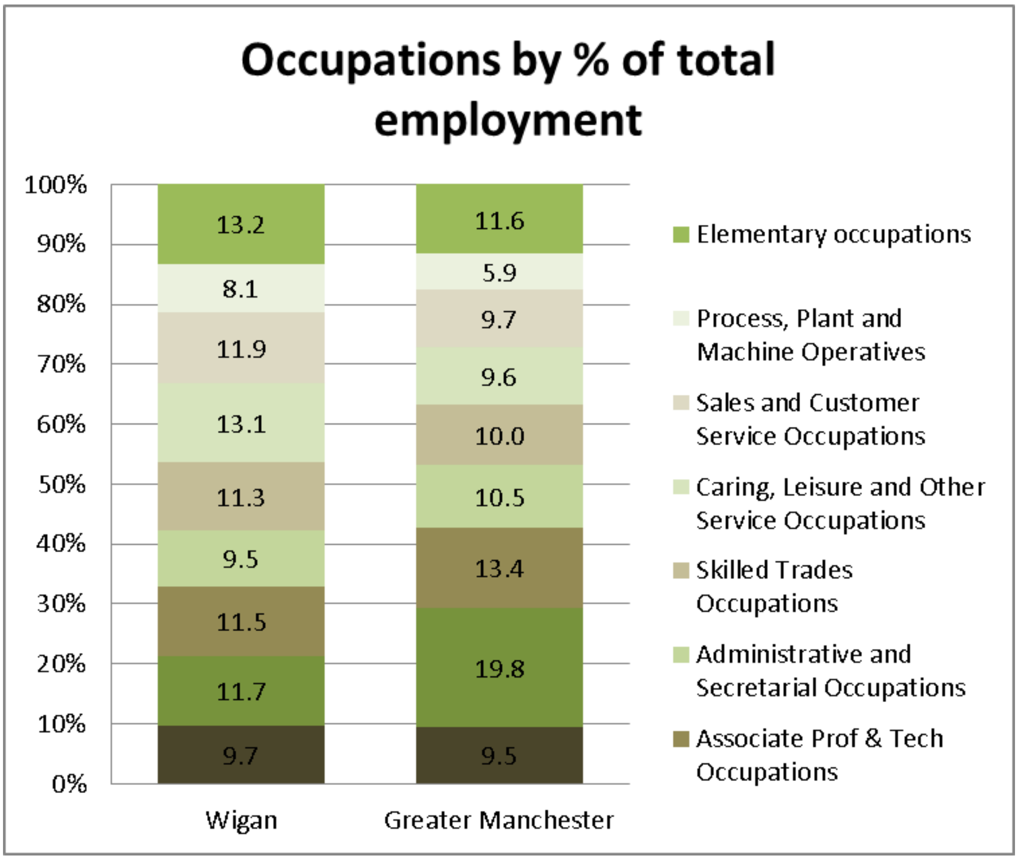
Source: ONS Annual Population Survey commuter flows, Local Authorities in Great Britain, 2011

4.8 The main areas where the borough draws in workers from are St Helens (3,927) and Bolton (3,448).

Occupations

4.9 Wigan Borough has a higher percentage of residents working in manufacturing, skilled trades, caring, leisure and other services, process plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations, compared with other areas of Greater Manchester. However, the borough has below the Greater Manchester average of residents in professional and associated professional and technical sectors. Table 4 illustrates.

Table 4 – Occupations of Wigan Residents in comparison to Greater Manchester by percentage of total employment.



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, January 2014–December 2014

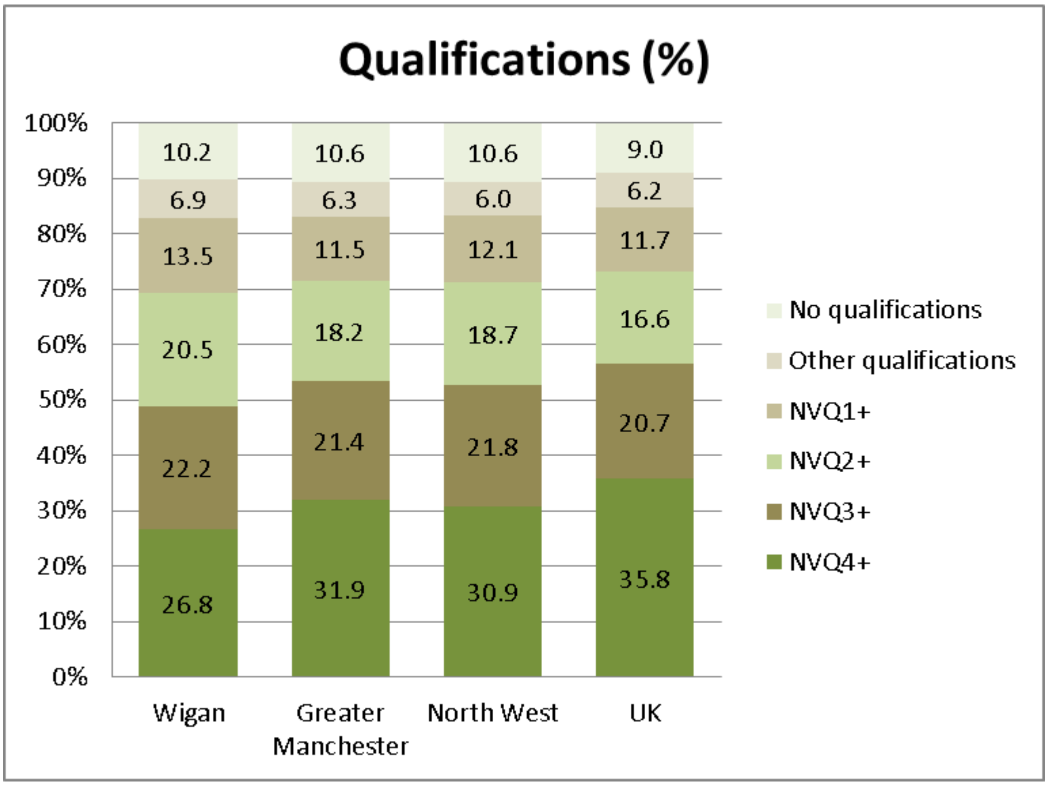
Skills

4.10 Wigan Borough has a similar percentage of working age residents with no qualifications at 10.2%, to both Greater Manchester and the North West but, overall, has higher percentages of people qualified to NVQ level 1, 2 and 3 and a lower percentage of residents with NVQ4+ (degree level equivalent) than Greater Manchester, the North West and the UK. Table 5 overleaf illustrates.

4.11 The New Economy Deep Dive Skills Report provides detailed information across employment sectors and the extent to which the skills supply system is likely to meet the needs of employers. The research shows rising skills requirements across all sectors – including those that have traditionally not required high skills, such as logistics and construction. Half of jobs in Greater Manchester to 2022 will require the equivalent of NVQ Level 3 skills (broadly equivalent to 'A' levels) and a quarter will require NVQ Level 4 (broadly equivalent to a first degree).

4.12 These figures are a major challenge for the borough if it is to compete economically and give residents the best life chances in terms of careers and incomes. To address this, the council has a number of programmes to increase the skills and qualifications in the borough.

Table 5 – Skills profile of working age residents, 2014



Source: Nomis Annual Population Survey January 2014 – December 2014

Earnings

4.13 The average gross earnings for people living in the borough are £60.00 per week higher than those working in the borough. On average, people working in Manchester earn £105.10 more per week than people working in Wigan. The average amount paid by jobs within the borough is also lower than the averages for Greater Manchester, the Northwest and England and Wales. Table 6 sets out the figures. The gaps in income are further indicative of the lower quality of jobs on offer within the borough generally.

Table 6 – Comparison of median gross weekly pay (all employees)

Wigan (Workplace)	Wigan (Residents)	City of Manchester (Workplace)	Greater Manchester (Workplace)	North West (Workplace)	England and Wales (Workplace)
£421.90	£481.90	£527.00	£481.80	£482.50	£520.30

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Resident and Workplace Analysis, January 2014–December 2014

Unemployment

4.14 JSA claimant count records the number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and National Insurance credits at Job Centre Plus local offices. This is not an official measure of unemployment, but is the only indicative statistic available for areas smaller than Local Authorities.

4.15 Unemployment as recorded by JSA claimant count has declined locally from over 3 times the national average in the 1980s to just below the national average now. In 2007 it was only 2.17%. It rose to 4.58% in 2012 then has continued to fall, with last year's unemployment figures at 1.84%[1] (Source: Nomis). The relatively low levels of unemployment are considered to result from the borough retaining the level of employment that it has, the success of people competing for jobs elsewhere and relatively high levels of residents claiming incapacity benefit as opposed to job seekers allowance.

Economic Inactivity

4.16 Economic inactivity is a definition used to describe people of working age who are not in work but do not satisfy all of the criteria for unemployment. This includes those who want a job but who have not been seeking work in the last four weeks; those who want a job and are seeking work but are not available to start; and those who do not want a job. 39,000 people in the borough are classified as economically inactive, which is 22.6% of the working age population. Table 7 below shows the numbers and percentages by various age groups. It can be seen that Wigan's percentage of economically inactive population is lower than Greater Manchester, the North West and the UK in all age groups, except for 25-34 in the North West. The high number of 16-24 age groups is mainly students who are not actively seeking work.

Table 7 - Economic inactivity in Wigan Borough, 2014

	Age Range	aged 16-64	aged 16-19	aged 20-24	aged 25-34	aged 35-49	aged 50-64
Wigan							
	Economically Inactive	39,000	6,700	2,600	7,000	7,200	15,500
	Population by age group	201,600	12,600	20,600	46,400	64,800	57,100
	% Inactive	19.4	53.2	12.8	15.1	11.1	27.2
GM							
	Economically Inactive	442,700	74,000	57,400	67,500	89,300	154,500
	Population by age group	1,753,100	134,500	205,700	397,700	547,500	467,700
	% Inactive	25.2	55.0	27.9	17.0	16.3	33.0
NW							
	Economically Inactive	9,271,600	1,692,800	1,159,000	1,295,200	1,734,700	3,390,000
	Population by age group	40,626,600	3,036,200	4,276,400	8,680,600	12,928,800	11,704,600
	% Inactive	22.8	55.8	27.1	14.9	13.4	29.0
UK							
	Economically Inactive	1,137,800	194,200	127,400	152,300	217,800	446,100
	Population by age group	4,486,000	345,300	489,300	917,900	1,408,900	1,324,500
	% Inactive	25.4	56.3	26.0	16.6	15.5	33.7

Source: Nomis Annual Population Survey, 2014

[1] The current figures from the Job Centre do not include Universal Credit claimants. These figures cannot currently be included.

4.17 By contrast, 13,700 people are unemployed, which is 8.9% of the working age population. This includes all people looking for work, not just those claiming JSA as covered in paragraph 4.13. The definition of unemployment covers people who are not in employment but want a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next fortnight, or, those who are out of work and have accepted a job which they are waiting to start in the next fortnight.

Areas of Deprivation

4.18 The Local Plan Core Strategy identifies that Multiple Deprivation is deep and widespread within the borough and levels are significantly higher than the national average. The measure of deprivation used by government agencies is the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The most recent release of the Index in November 2015 indicates that while there have been some improvements relatively, deprivation remains concentrated within the inner areas of the borough with smaller pockets of deprivation also within the outer areas.

4.19 Within the borough, levels of car ownership vary greatly. For example, within the Ince Ward 44% of households do not own a car, which is significantly higher than the boroughwide, regional and national averages.

4.20 The high levels of deprivation within parts of the borough, and varying levels of car ownership influence the need for a range of accessible local employment sites across the borough.

5 Market overview

5.1 A number of studies have helped to provide an overview of the current employment market in the borough. These studies look at Wigan's role within the wider regional and sub-regional market, and the more specific local employment market. They include:

- New Economy – Employment Trends and Land Requirements in Wigan Borough to 2026 and beyond, June 2014.
- Parkinson Commercial – Wigan Employment Land Study – Independent Market Assessment, November 2014.

5.2 The council's Economic Development and Property Teams have advised on the numbers and types of enquiries received for employment land and premises within the borough. This has helped to provide a picture of the local employment market and demand for various uses.

5.3 The council has published a Business Accommodation and Land Survey 2015 to gain a more detailed understanding of the accommodation and location needs of various types and sizes of business that are located inside and outside the borough. The survey was launched in October 2015 to coincide with the consultation on the Allocations and Development Management Local Plan.

New Economy – Employment Trends and Land Requirements in Wigan Borough to 2026 and beyond, June 2014

5.4 This New Economy report provides a summary of consultation with local agents and enquiries received through the Greater Manchester inward investment agency, MIDAS.

5.5 New Economy carried out a series of consultations with property agents and developers as part of a Greater Manchester land supply review in 2013. From a Wigan perspective, the main findings were:

- The importance of the M6 was highlighted during the consultations. Wigan's position on the motorway network means there may be future opportunities within the logistics sector.
- With evolution in the sector and foreseeable changes to world trading patterns, including the impact of the widening of the Panama Canal and the development of deeper water container berths at the Port of Liverpool, there will be opportunities across the North West, with Wigan well placed.
- Demand in the logistics market appears strong, driven by the growth in online retail which has generated requirements for space in the region of 100,000-500,000 sq. ft. Agents believe that demand will continue to be predominantly focused on large sites with motorway access within 1-2 miles, notably to the M6 and M62.

5.6 MIDAS keeps a database of enquires (historical and current) and it provides an indication as to the types of property that potential inward investors to Wigan have required over the last 10 years. The main findings from this are:

- The majority of enquiries do not just focus on Wigan; most will look at the whole of GM when considering their options;
- Where Wigan has been considered by investors over the last 10 years, industrial / warehousing has been a common requirement, generally in the range 10,000-50,000 sq.ft. Where specific districts have been identified, Wigan has often been mentioned along with the likes of Oldham and Rochdale.
- Where there have been enquiries for office space in Wigan, requirements have tended to be in the range 5,000-10,000 sq.ft. There have also been enquiries for smaller managed workspace accommodation in the range 500-2,500 sq.ft.

Parkinson Commercial – Wigan Employment Land Study – Independent Market Assessment, November 2014.

5.7 Local agents Parkinson Commercial were commissioned to provide an overview of the local employment land and property market at the present time. Their key findings were:

- The industrial sector is of mixed character with some prime industrial accommodation tending to be close to good motorway infrastructure, whilst in contrast, the secondary industrial stock tends to be in traditional industrial locations and densely populated areas.
- The emergence of an office market in Wigan has been limited to edge-of-town schemes.
- Many new build office and industrial schemes came on stream at the start of the economic recession 6-7 years ago. Since then the industrial sector has fared better than the office sector as, although rental values have fallen significantly in some cases, demand has been retained. For both, however, rental levels are somewhat below where they need to be to promote speculative development.
- Small scale business units of less than 5,000 sq.ft have performed relatively well with recent new build schemes reflecting this trend.
- There is a significant over supply of office accommodation and rental values have plummeted. However small scale quality office provision sub 3,000 sq.ft has proved popular at Pemberton Business Park. The proposed Regus development at Martland Mill will also provide small scale office accommodation.
- Many employment sites are in locations which may not now be concurrent with employment site requirements. Location is the primary driver, whether it is for warehouse and distribution, manufacturing or offices. Transport and infrastructure (utilities, broadband) are key. Other supporting factors are affordability, the availability of amenities, surrounding land uses and the quality of the environment.

- There is a gap in the current employment land offer in terms of the availability of larger scale sites that are directly accessible from the motorway network, primarily the M6. Recent development and regeneration in areas such as Warrington, Chorley and Bolton has outstripped that in Wigan simply because of the availability of large scale, accessible, employment sites attractive to investors, developers and employers.

5.8 Parkinson Commercial's report also independently assessed individual employment sites across the borough. However we do not agree with all of the report's findings in this respect.

Enquiries with Wigan Council's Economic Development and Property Teams

5.8 As of December 2014, the council has directly received 588 enquiries for commercial / industrial property in the last three years, either through the Property Finder website service or by direct contact on the telephone. In the same period, 296 commercial / industrial property transactions (either let or sold) were notified. This evidence would suggest that there is some demand for commercial / industrial premises in the borough that is incapable of being met by the current portfolio of commercial / industrial properties.

5.9 A number of smaller Enterprise Centre developments have proved extremely popular and provide valuable 'start up' units for local businesses. Examples include Sovereign Enterprise Centre, Wigan, which has 23 fully let business units (B1/B2/B8), with 40 additional businesses requiring a business unit and a total number of enquiries received of over 90 from November 2014 to February 2015. Similarly, 27 slightly larger industrial units for more established businesses at Cinnamon Brow, Ince are fully let with a steady stream of enquiries at around 4 per month.

5.10 Wigan has a relatively stable business base compared to similar areas in the North West. Whilst it has the lowest start up rate, business closures are also the lowest and are lower than the number of start-ups. This could be evidence of a lack of suitable employment sites. The area with the highest business start-up rate is Warrington, which has significant areas of employment land. Table 8 sets out the figures.

Table 8 - Business start-ups and closures

District	Business start-ups per 10,000 population, 2013	Business closures per 10,000 population, 2013
Warrington	53.39	36.08
Manchester	58.61	39.83
Preston	46.97	36.41
Blackpool	44.92	36.03
Bolton	49.27	33.92
Blackburn	46.13	29.51
Birkenhead	43.71	26.85
Rochdale	42.67	29.70
Liverpool	43.06	25.28
Burnley	39.83	28.25
Wigan	39.57	26.43

Source: Centre for Cities report, 2013

Key issues, problems and challenges identified under Stage 1

5.11 The assessment of Wigan's current economic base and profile has highlighted a number of issues which are relevant to the provision of employment land within the borough, which are:

- The need to develop the borough's knowledge economy, which is under-represented. There are a small proportion of jobs in key growth sectors including IT, media and creative industries.
- Wigan has a relatively low wage economy indicative that the quality of jobs on offer is lower in terms of skills, pay and prospects.
- The high levels of out commuting also reflect the quality and range of jobs on offer within the borough, with many residents travelling to other areas such as Manchester or Warrington for employment.
- Linked to the above, the borough has a low job density compared to most other districts in Greater Manchester.
- The borough still has a number of pockets of deprivation with higher levels of unemployment. These are focussed around the inner areas of the borough.
- Despite improvements in recent times, the borough still has a lower skills profile with fewer people educated to degree level and above average levels of people with no qualifications.

5.12 Consequently, the borough faces the following challenges:

- There is a need to broaden the range of employment opportunities, to provide more opportunities locally for residents.
- Reducing the level of out commuting would provide additional economic benefits, through increased retail and leisure spend.
- Continuing to improve the level of skills is important in ensuring that Wigan is able to capitalise on potential opportunities in emerging

sectors. The New Economy 2013 sector deep dives suggest that skills provision will need to be developed to meets specific industry needs.

5.13 The market overview and analysis of needs and market trends also highlights a number of issues which are relevant to the provision of employment land within the borough, including:

- The recent take up of employment land has been very low, as a result of the recession but also due to the quality and location of sites available.
- There is potential market demand across a range of sectors but a lack of suitable sites and premises to meet requirements. Wigan is missing out on investment opportunities.
- Demand in the logistics sector appears strong, with future changes likely to increase demand. There are particular requirements for larger space with good motorway access.
- Improved access to the motorway network from employment sites is a priority for local businesses.
- There is a strong local demand for small to medium scale, competitively priced units for new start-up businesses, and existing businesses that need larger premises to accommodate growth.
- As a result of changes to manufacturing processes and more efficient ways of working, the overall level of manufacturing employment and floorspace is expected to decline but there remains a need to provide the right sites for manufacturers to cater for modernisation and expansion.

5.14 Consequently the borough faces the following challenges:

- There is a need to provide a range of sites that will meet the future demands of local, regional, national and international employers in order for Wigan to be competitive.
- There are opportunities in the logistics sector arising from Wigan’s location on the motorway network, but the borough needs to be able to take advantage of these opportunities by offering suitable large sites that will be attractive to logistic sector investment.
- Opportunities for employment development arising from improved east-west transport links in the borough need to be maximised.

Stage 2: Creating a picture of future requirements

6. Employment land needs

6.1 Employment land needs are informed by economic modelling, past take-up rates and local intelligence. They have traditionally been established in terms of the quantity of land needed. Quantity remains a key factor but the quality of land is also important.

The Local Plan Core Strategy

6.2 As stated in section 3, the Local Plan Core Strategy establishes a requirement for approximately 200 hectares (gross) of employment land within the borough, for the period 2011-2026.

6.3 However, the Core Strategy also identifies that employment sites need to be of the right quality in terms of location, accommodation provision and supporting infrastructure, to attract, maintain and grow businesses. Quantity is not sufficient on its own.

The Greater Manchester Forecasting Model

6.4 Forecasts of changes in industrial, warehousing and office floorspace can be taken from the Greater Manchester Forecasting Model (GMFM), for each district in Greater Manchester, including Wigan. It does this from forecasts for job numbers across different economic sectors, estimating the proportion of these jobs that will require different types of floorspace, and then using standard job densities to translate this into the amount of industrial, warehousing and office floorspace required. The forecasting model is updated regularly; the latest release was in November 2014.

6.5 Using the GMFM 2014, the projected employment figures by sector in Wigan Borough over the local plan period from 2011 to 2026 are shown in Table 9 overleaf. The public sector is forecast to continue to be the biggest employer but will see the second largest reduction in employees. All other sectors are forecast to increase in employment except for primary manufacturing. The biggest increases are forecast for business, financial and professional services.

6.6 Based on the employment forecasts, Table 10 shows the forecast net change in floorspace requirements. There are increases in net commercial floorspace for offices and warehousing and a decrease in manufacturing floorspace. New Economy's report on Employment Trends and Land Requirements in Wigan Borough to 2026 and beyond (June 2014), comments that the decline in manufacturing employment and floorspace reflects the trend for Greater Manchester and the UK. The report also notes that the manufacturing sector is becoming more capital intensive and that the average employment size of manufacturers is getting smaller.

Table 9 - Employment figures by business sectors in Wigan Borough, 2011–2026

	Total employment figures for Wigan						%Change
	2011	**2013**	**2014**	**2018**	**2022**	**2026**	**2011 - 2026**
Primary industries	1, 300	1, 400	1, 500	1, 400	1, 400	1, 400	**7.69%**
Construction (including Civil Engineering)	9, 300	8, 900	9, 000	9, 500	9, 700	9, 900	**6.45%**
Manufacturing	11, 400	11, 900	12, 200	11, 600	10, 900	10, 100	**-11.40%**
Transport & storage (including postal)	6, 000	5, 500	5, 700	6, 100	6, 300	6, 300	**5.00%**
Wholesale and retail trade	18, 000	17, 400	17, 900	18, 100	18, 400	18, 400	**2.22%**
Business, financial and professional services	13, 700	15, 200	16, 200	17, 900	18, 700	19, 200	**40.14%**
Cultural and creative	10, 900	10, 000	10, 200	11, 100	11, 500	11, 700	**7.33%**
Science and R&D (excluding manufacturing)	500	1, 400	1, 600	1,600	1,600	1, 500	**200.00%**
Public sector	25, 200	25, 300	25, 800	24, 600	24, 500	24, 500	**-2.77%**
Total	**96, 300**	**97, 100**	**100, 100**	**102, 000**	**102, 900**	**103, 000**	**6.95%**

Source: GMFM – Oxford Economics – December 2014, New Economy defined business sectors

Table 10: Forecasted net commercial floorspace change in Wigan, 2011-2026 (based on employment forecasts)

	Floorspace (thousands sq.m.) per year															
Sector	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**220**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Industrial (B1c/B2)	607	572	611	620	621	617	613	608	603	598	593	587	581	575	568	561
Warehouse (B8)	396	397	362	375	381	385	389	391	392	394	394	395	395	395	394	394
Office (B1a/b)	264	280	299	318	326	329	332	335	337	339	340	342	343	344	345	345

Source: GMFM – Oxford Economics – December 2014

6.7 However, whilst manufacturing is forecast to have a reduction in employees, it is also forecast to have the third highest GVA over the period and will remain an important part of the borough's economy and employment.

6.8 A major caveat of these forecasts is that, significantly, they are for net land requirements. They do not take into account the need for replacement and modern floorspace, which drives much of the development of new industrial buildings and warehousing. There is no simple way of taking this into account beyond using past take-up rates in one form or another.

6.9 The New Economy report also stated that the change in net floor space requirements forecasted by the GMFM cannot be compared with requirements produced as part of employment land studies, which focus more on gross requirements. Nevertheless, they are still of help to show how the estimated change in employment will translate into land requirements.

6.10 Furthermore, Parkinson Commercial notes that accommodation that will be lost is likely to be older urban stock suffering from poor accessibility and other infrastructure. Therefore, losses of manufacturing accommodation do not necessarily translate straight to a need for less land.

Past development rates of employment land

6.11 As noted previously, past development rates of employment land are an important component in considering future demand but recent take-up has been depressed by the recession and issues with supply. This is shown clearly in Table 11 below.

Table 11 –Employment land take-up rates in Wigan Borough, 2004 – 2014

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Take up (ha)	6.06	16.38	19.76	4.7	4.68	0	0	1.54	0	0	2.81

Source: Wigan Council 2015

6.12 From 2005 – 2008, the average take-up rate was 11.38 hectares per annum. From 2009 to 2014 there was very little take up of employment land. However, the figures for 2014 indicate that this position is changing.

6.13 Although the take up of new employment land has been negligible in recent years, there has been a significant amount of employment development which has involved the recycling or replacement of existing floorspace. Table 12: Annual employment completions, shows the amount of employment floorspace built within the borough in recent years. It includes employment development completions on any land regardless of whether it is in a Primary Employment Area, an undesignated cluster or elsewhere. A number of major new employment proposals are now underway, including a manufacturing plant for Nice Pak at Westwood Park, Wigan, in the region of 34,500 sq.m floorspace and a regional distribution centre for Poundland at South Lancashire Industrial Estate, Ashton, at approximately 31,000 sq.m floorspace. These major developments show increasing confidence within the area and improvements in market conditions.

Table 12: Annual employment completions - Wigan Borough

	Floorspace (sqm)	**2004 /05**	**2005 /06**	**2006 /07**	**2007 /08**	**2008 /09**	**2009 /10**	**2010 /11**	**2011 /12**	**2012 /13**	**2013 /14**
Wigan	B1a/b	7,051	4,309	13,021	2,614	23,007	1,058	533	7,093	2,897	1,200
	B1c/B2/B8	12,284	22,324	20,275	6,108	9,623	7,901	3,761	5,606	1,471	1,460
	Mixed				9,283	5,874	2,656	6,817	865	18,638	15,168

Source - Wigan Council 2015

6.14 Although employment land reviews usually include a wide range of economic information, the methodology that is used for forecasting future employment land requirements often relies on some form of extrapolation of past development rates. This is a simplistic approach but there is no established methodology for translating other economic evidence into an employment land requirement.

6.15 There are two main drawbacks to using past development rates. The first relates to whether they are representative of what may happen in the future. This is particularly an issue at the current time as the development monitoring period to be extrapolated includes both the height of an economic boom and the most prolonged recession in decades, with ongoing uncertainties about economic growth being sustained. Economic peaks and troughs can be expected in the period to 2026 and beyond, but a central question is how these will compare to what has gone before.

6.16 The second key drawback is that past development rates may have been dampened by the availability of suitable development land. As a result, simply extrapolating past rates forward could build in a continued undersupply into the future. It is therefore important to consider past development rates in combination with other potential indicators of demand.

6.17 In Wigan's case, the evidence from MIDAS, New Economy, Parkinson Commercial and the council's own Economic Development and Skills Service indicates that past development rates and trends are not a true reflection of demand, and that they have been seriously constrained by supply, in particular, the quality of sites and their attractiveness to the commercial market. In this situation it is not appropriate to base any assessment of employment land on a simple forward projection of past development rates, but a number of other factors must be considered.

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

6.18 The council is working with the nine other councils of Greater Manchester to develop a new spatial framework for the city region. This is still at a relatively early stage but the latest work has now been published for consultation from 9 November to 11 January 2016. The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework will be a strategic plan for Greater Manchester through to 2035. It will support the city-region to make the most of its towns and neighbourhoods and support development to benefit local people.

6.19 Initial work on the requirements for industrial / warehousing and office floorspace between 2014 and 2035 for the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework concluded that:

- For new industrial and warehousing floorspace, it may be appropriate to plan for 4,250, 000 square metres of gross floorspace across Greater Manchester.
- For new office floorspace, it may be appropriate to plan for 2,448,000 square metres of gross floor space across Greater Manchester.

6.20 Further work will need to be needed to determine the appropriate distribution of these requirements across Greater Manchester. Locations along the M60, M62, M6, M61 and M56, including Manchester Airport, are likely to be the most appropriate for new industrial and warehousing development. Manchester City Centre, Salford Quays, Manchester Airport, the Trafford Centre and town centres, including Wigan town centre, are likely to be the most appropriate locations for new office development.

6.21 The employment land requirements for Wigan Borough will need to be considered in more detail once they are available.

Local intelligence

6.22 The outcome of consultations with property agents and developers as part of a Greater Manchester Land Supply review in 2013 is summarised in Section 5.

6.23 Parkinson Commercial’s report supports many of New Economy’s findings. Their key conclusions and recommendations are:

- Wigan appears to be a lower priority as a location for larger scale inward investors than many other areas in the region. In these cases, employers and developers are generally looking for highly accessible locations with good access to the motorway network.
- Wigan does not take appropriate advantage of its strategic location on the M6 and, to a lesser extent, the A580 and M58. The borough

is losing out to competitors due to poor connectivity from existing employment sites.

- Whilst there are a number of successful employment sites, such as South Lancashire Industrial Estate, these are generally not able to meet future demand for warehousing / distribution, office and manufacturing uses. New employment sites at accessible locations will be needed.
- The internal transport infrastructure within the borough is a significant constraint. The provision of an improved east-west connection is vitally important and will help employment sites to attract some of the latent and emerging demand.

7 Employment land supply

Introduction

7.1 This section provides a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the current portfolio of employment land in the borough. It includes details of the methodology used for undertaking the qualitative appraisal and a summary of the findings.

7.2 The assessment focused on three main classifications of area or site:

- **Primary Employment Areas** – Currently, there are 35 of these areas designated through saved policy EM1A in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan. Many are wholly, or almost wholly, developed but have still been subject to full appraisal. For the purposes of the assessment, they have been subdivided into sub-zones to capture differences in the built character across those areas, where applicable. This approach is consistent with the 2007 Employment Land Review.
- **Employment Clusters** – 27 other employment clusters were identified for appraisal. These areas are not designated within the adopted development plan but comprise existing employment uses / areas of varying quality. The assessment considered if any of these sites were suitable for formal designation within the proposed Allocations and Development Management Local Plan. As with the Primary Employment Areas, the clusters have been sub-divided into sub-zones where applicable. This approach is also consistent with the 2007 review.
- **Safeguarded land and other potential employment sites** – To explore the potential for new employment land allocations, a number of other sites have also been assessed as part of the review. These include land within the Broad Locations for New Development designated in the Local Plan Core Strategy and remaining areas of Safeguarded Land that are not identified for housing development. 10 such areas were assessed, as follows:
    1. Land south of Leopold Street, Pemberton – unallocated site on the fringe of Primary Employment Area EM1A 29.
    2. Land east of Stone Cross Lane, Lowton – an area of Safeguarded Land south of land with outline planning permission for 400 homes.
    3. Land at Pocket Nook, Lowton – part of a larger area of Safeguarded Land, some of which will be needed for housing development in line with the Core Strategy.
    4. Land at North Leigh Park – part of a key strategic site allocated under policy SP3 of the Core Strategy, and with outline planning permission for a mixed-use development including employment uses.

5. Land at Almond Brook Road, Standish – part of a larger area of Safeguarded Land the majority of which has outline planning permission for 600 homes.
6. Land at Rectory Lane, Standish - part of a larger area of Safeguarded Land, much of which has outline planning permission for 500 homes.
7. Land at Smiths Lane, Bickershaw – an area of Safeguarded Land to the east of Bickershaw and south of Primary Employment Area EM1A 14.
8. Land at South of Hindley – part of a larger area of Safeguarded Land identified as a Broad Location for New Development under policy SP4 in the Core Strategy, including employment development.
9. Land East of Wigan Road, Landgate, Ashton-in-Makerfield – an area of Safeguarded Land identified as a Broad Location for New Development under policy SP4 in the Core Strategy, including employment development. The majority of the site has outline planning permission for mixed use development. The remainder of the site is proposed as an employment land allocation.
10. East of Atherton – part of a larger area of Safeguarded Land identified as a Broad Location for New Development, under policy SP4 in the Core Strategy, including an element of employment development.

7.3 As there are a number of options for additional employment land, for the most part being safeguarded land, we have not reviewed options in the Green Belt.

Recent releases of employment land

7.4 As Parkinson Commercial has highlighted, many employment sites in the borough are in locations which may not now be concurrent with employment site requirements. Since the first Employment Land Review in 2007, a number of designated employment sites have been lost (or effectively lost) to other uses, principally housing. In these cases, the landowners or developers have demonstrated that reuse or redevelopment for full employment use was not viable and that alternative uses would be necessary to deliver development. These sites include:

- Westwood Park – planning permission for mixed use development has reduced the amount of employment land available.
- Parsonage, Leigh – planning permissions for retail and residential development has reduced the amount of employment land available.
- Pemberton Colliery – planning permission for residential development on a portion of the site has reduced the area available for employment uses.

- Bridgewater (north), Leigh – the site has been redeveloped for edge-of-centre retail and leisure uses.
- Bridgewater (south), Leigh - the site has had planning permission for a housing-led mixed use redevelopment scheme, which would significantly reduce the amount of employment land available.
- Frog Lane, Wigan – Older industrial stock within a predominantly residential area that is not considered suitable for future employment use.
- Bradley Lane, Standish – Planning consent has been granted for 150 new homes on part of the industrial estate. This will help to support the upgrading of the remaining part of the estate; and
- Other smaller portions of employment land have been lost at Stone Cross Park, Golborne and Moss Industrial Estate, Lowton.

7.5 These approvals and alternative developments have significantly reduced the amount of existing and proposed employment land and premises within current Primary Employment Areas, from 790 hectares to 705 hectares.

7.6 Tables 13 and 14 provide a summary of existing employment land within the Primary Employment Areas and Clusters and recommendations, following a detailed site assessment.

Site assessment methodology

7.7 Each site and sub-site assessment involved a combination of site visits and desktop assessments covering the following range of factors:

- Commercial viability
- Local market conditions
- Quality of site
- Quality of wider environment
- Strategic access and catchment
- Environmental sustainability
- Other policy considerations.

7.8 The site appraisal work was carried out by a multi-disciplinary in-house team involving:

- Planning Policy and Projects
- Economic Development and Skills
- Property
- Transport Strategy.

7.9 The site assessments of existing Primary Employment Areas and Clusters were carried out during the spring and summer of 2014, whilst the assessments of potential new sites were carried out in late 2014/ early 2015. All sites were assessed using the same methodology and broad criteria as those used in the 2007 Employment Land Review.

7.10 The findings of the site assessments have been independently verified by local agents, Parkinson Commercial. The company is an established commercial agency with a working knowledge of the local property market. In addition to providing a local market overview, the main purpose of their commission was to assist the council in its assessment of current employment land provision. The purpose was to validate, or provide objective reasoning to, the council's assessment of sites. As mentioned in Chapter 5, we do not accept all of Parkinson Commercial's findings.

Site assessment of Primary Employment Areas

7.11 Table 17, within Appendix A to this report, provides the individual assessment scores for the 35 Primary Employment Areas. They are then grouped into top third, middle third and lower third scoring categories.

7.12 The location with the highest score of 151.2 out of a possible 175 is EM1A Stone Cross Park, Golborne. This reflects the modern nature of the site, premises and infrastructure and its visibility and accessibility to the A580, which make this site attractive to the market. Other relatively high scoring sites are Martland Park, Wigan and the South Lancashire Industrial Estate, Ashton-in-Makerfield.

7.13 The lowest scoring sites include the Bridgewater Business Park, Leigh and Richmond Hill Industrial Estate, Pemberton. These scores reflect the outdated or obsolete nature of their industrial buildings, poorer site infrastructure and, for Bridgewater Business Park, its location which is less favourable than other sites.

Site assessment of Employment Clusters

7.14 Table 18, within Appendix B to this report, provides the individual assessment scores for the 27 employment clusters. They are also then grouped into top third, middle third and lower third scoring categories.

7.15 The cluster with the highest score of 149.7 out of a possible 175 was Bridgeman Terrace, Wigan, which is a popular, established office district within a pleasant, park side environment on the edge of Wigan town centre. Other top third clusters include the Hewitt Business Park, Orrell and Darby Lane, Hindley. Although these sites are smaller than the established Primary Employment Areas, they provide good quality, relatively modern accommodation for the local employment market.

7.16 Lower scoring sites include Lower Green Lane, Tyldesley; Bickershaw Lane, Abram; and Bolton House Road, Bickershaw. These are historic low amenity employment areas that owe their existence to past activities, notably mining.

Site assessment of other potential sites

7.17 Table 16 provides a summary of the assessment of the eight areas considered as potential employment sites.

7.18 The lowest scoring sites are the areas of safeguarded land at Almond Brook and Rectory Lane, Standish. Although adjacent sites have proved popular with housing developers, the residential nature of the local area and local access issues mean that these sites are less suitable for employment development.

7.19 Employment development on the Landgate site has the benefit of a recent planning permission, and is included as part of the borough's employment land supply. As part of the assessment it has scored in the middle third of the sites considered.

7.20 The site with the highest score of 129.5 is Pocket Nook Lane, Lowton. This site is adjacent to the A580 East Lancashire Road and would be attractive to the commercial market. It scores highly in the Commercial Viability section, which reflects its visibility from, and accessibility to, the Primary Route Network. The nearby site at East of Stone Cross Lane, Lowton also scored highly in the assessment for similar reasons. However, this site is not considered suitable for employment use due to its relationship with existing and proposed housing and resultant accessibility issues.

7.21 The Pocket Nook Lane site would enable the Local Plan Core Strategy requirement for around 200 hectares of employment land to be met. This requirement remains appropriate for the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

Recommendations - Primary Employment Areas

7.22 Table 13 overleaf summarises the recommendations for the Primary Employment Areas, based on the appraisal findings. In summary, it is recommended that:

- 29 areas should be retained as designated Employment Areas, either in whole or with minor changes to their boundaries to reflect planning permissions to other types of development, or for other reasons, under a single employment site policy in the Allocations and Development Management Local Plan. As previously discussed under the Local Plan sub heading in section 3, the proposed single employment site policy would effectively combine the existing 'saved' UDP policies EM1A and EM1B.
- Of these 29 areas, modernisation is required at 4 to ensure their long term future as employment areas.
- 3 areas should be substantially reduced in size to reflect planning permissions for other uses, notably housing and retail development. These are Parsonage andBridgewater in Leigh; and Bradley Lane in Standish.
- Part of one area – Westwood Park, Wigan - should be reallocated as a major site for mixed uses site in line with the planning permission in 2015, which will include an element of employment development alongside residential uses.
- Within two areas – South Lancashire Industrial Estate, Ashton and Chaddock Lane, Astley - the undeveloped parts should be proposed as separate employment land allocations by virtue of the size of undeveloped sites.

7.23 From the land currently designated as Primary Employment Areas, 574.4 hectares is already developed for employment uses. This leaves

123.75 hectares of land in these areas that is undeveloped but available for employment development.

Table 13: Summary of Primary Employment Areas and recommendations

Ref.	Site name	Site area (ha)	Constraints	Amended site area in employ-ment use (ha)	Remaining area to be developed for employment use (ha)	Recommended actions
EM1A 1	Stone Cross Park, Golborne	31.56	Partly within Flood Zone 3	31.14	0	Retain most of area – release housing site 0.43ha adjacent to 94 Stone Cross Lane North
EM1A 2	Golborne Enterprise Park	3.99	Within Critical Drainage Area	3.23	0	Retain most of area - release sub-site 1, 0.28ha (heath centre)
EM1A 3	Bridge Street, Golborne	7.26	Within Critical Drainage Area	3.68	0	Retain
EM1A 4	Newton Road, Lowton	7.10	Within Critical Drainage Area (CDA)	7.10	0	Retain
EM1A 5	Moss Industrial Estate, Lowton	19.94	Within CDA	17.54	1.91	Retain most of area – release 2.4ha. now redeveloped for housing
EM1A 6	Parsonage Leigh	23.58	Partly within Flood Zone 3	7.32	1.82	Reduce boundary to include AB World Foods and part of Cluster 25. Release remaining land to housing and retail development in line with planning permissions.
EM1A 7	Bridgewater, Leigh	15.26	Partly within CDA	6.70	2.02	Reduce the designation to cover only part of Bridgewater Business Park. Include the area north of the canal redeveloped for retail and leisure as part of the town centre and re-designate the majority of the area south of the canal for housing, with both part of the proposed regeneration priority area.
EM1A 8	Hope Carr / Leigh Commerce Park, Leigh	33.48	SBI	29.89	6.69	Retain – extend boundary to include land at the south west corner with planning permission for employment uses
EM1A 9	Chaddock Lane, Astley	41.55	Within CDA	24.53	13.37	Retain developed part as an employment area. Allocate the

						undeveloped land for employment development releasing part for housing development.
EM1A 10	Parr Brow, Tyldesley	7.35	Within CDA	7.35	0	Retain and modernise
EM1A 11	Chanters Industrial Estate, Hindsford	11.40	-	11.40	0	Retain
EM1A 12	Gibfield, Atherton	30.03	SBI on site	22.40	3.44	Retain - amend boundary in line with planning permission (Barr site & adjacent land for housing and employment uses)
EM1A 14	West of Leigh Road, Hindley Green	52.41	SBI on site and adjacent	30.57	6.97	Retain and extend boundary westwards up to green belt boundary
EM1A 15	Swan Lane, Hindley Green	29.51	-	22.92	6.63	Retain
EM1A 16	Makerfield Way, Ince	24.09	SBI adjacent	17.47	4.50	Retain with minor boundary changes
EM1A 17	Wigan Enterprise Park, Ince	12.85	Partly within Flood Zone 3, and area of high surface water flooding	7.75	5.12	Retain and modernise
EM1A 18	Dobson Park Industrial Estate, Ince	13.75	Area of high surface water flooding	13.75	0	Retain
EM1A 19	Rosebridge, Ince	8.45	Partly within area of high surface water flooding and CDA	5.19	0	Retain most of area, with partial release for residential development at site of Bulldog Tools
EM1A 20	Westwood Park, Wigan	32.08	Area of high surface water flooding and partly within CDA	9.91	4.8	Re-designate most of the area as a major site for mixed-use development, including employment uses
EM1A 21	Wigan Pier Business Park / Riverside, Wigan	5.56	Within Flood Zone 3 and CDA	5.56	0	Retain with minor boundary change
EM1A 22	Chapel Lane, Wigan	7.13	Partly within Flood Zone 3, area of high surface water flooding and CDA	6.70	0.44	Retain
EM1A 23	Wallgate, Wigan	17.29	Within CDA	17.29	0	Retain
EM1A 24	Springfield and Miry Lane, Wigan	32.28	Part within CDA	23.00	2.05	Retain, modernise and amend boundary north of the railway for housing
EM1A	Martland Park	100.4	Area of high	85.87	7.04	Retain with minor

25	and Heinz, Wigan		surface water flooding and partly within CDA			change to southern boundary
EM1A 26	Gidlow Lane, Beech Hill	6.72	Within CDA	6.69	0	Retain
EM1A 27	Bradley Lane, Standish	28.51	Area of high surface water flooding	22.12	1.07	Retain most of area – release site with planning permission for housing development.
EM1A 28	Richmond Hill Industrial Estate, Pemberton	2.21	Within CDA	1.77	0.45	Retain and modernise
EM1A 29	Lamberhead Industrial Estate, Pemberton	18.00	Within CDA	16.13	0.58	Retain
EM1A 30	Pemberton Colliery	20.23	Area of high surface water flooding and within CDA	2.86	14.42	Retain developed part (Smithy Court and Beecham Court) as an employment area. Allocate the undeveloped land for employment development, extending it northwards to the railway. Releasing part to the south to reflect housing development.
EM1A 31	Warrington Road Industrial Estate, Wigan	8.34	Area of high surface water flooding and within CDA	8.34	0	Retain
EM1A 32	Warrington Road, Hawkley	13.67	Area of high surface water flooding and partly within CDA	10.02	3.64	Retain
EM1A 33	Wheatlea Industrial Estate, Wigan	20.48	Area of high surface water flooding	20.48	0	Retain with minor boundary change on eastern side to reflect retail use.
EM1A 34	Haselmere and Land Gate, Bryn	8.09	Within CDA	8.09	0	Retain with minor boundary change at eastern end
EM1A 35	Park Brook Wigan Road, Bryn	3.16	Within CDA	3.11	0	Retain
EM1A 36	South Lancashire Industrial Estate, Ashton	91.05	Area of high surface water flooding and partly within CDA	56.61	36.79	Retain with minor boundary changes along Bryn Road to include properties and allocate extension land for employment development
	TOTAL	**790.1**		**574.48**	**123.75**	

Recommendations – Employment Clusters

7.24 Table 14 below summarises the recommendations for the Employment Clusters, based on the appraisal findings. In summary, it is recommended that:

- 8 clusters in their entirety should be designated, along with the majority of the Primary Employment Areas, as Employment Areas under a single employment site policy in the Allocations and Development Management Local Plan because they are established and well occupied employment site.
- 12 clusters should wholly remain un-designated due to their condition, location and constraints, a number being in the Green Belt, thereby severely limiting the opportunities for substantive redevelopment, particularly when there are few existing buildings.
- Two clusters at Queen Street/ Caroline Street, Pottery Road, Wigan and Warrington Lane/ Road, Wigan (Richard Street) should be part designated for mixed use regeneration to reflect recent planning permissions for non-employment uses and future mixed use regeneration priorities.
- Two clusters, at Howe Bridge Mill and Town's Yard, Hindley have planning permission for housing and will not be subject to future Employment Land Review.
- Part of one cluster at Greenbank Industrial Estate, Hindley Green should be designated as an Employment Area because it is an established employment site. The remainder of the cluster will not be subject to future employment land review because it has been developed for retail use. .
- Two clusters at Moat House Street, Ince and Kirkhall Lane / Victoria Street, Leigh should be partly designated as Employment Areas because they are established employment locations, with the Leigh cluster having potential to provide expansion land for an adjacent business.

7.25 These recommendations will result in a further 49.25 hectares of designated employment areas. However, as they are established sites they do not add to the supply of land available for employment development.

7.26 Designating 8 clusters and part of a further 4 as Employment Areas will acknowledge their importance for employment development through their identification on the Policies Map. In reality, however, the policy protection for employment areas will be similar to that in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan for non designated employment land.

Table 14: Summary of Employment Clusters and Recommendations

Employment cluster	Constraints / comment	Site area (ha)	Recommended actions

1. Bridgeman Terrace, Wigan		1.01	Remains undesignated – attractive park side office accommodation in historic terraces, but is an edge-of-centre location adjacent to residential properties.
2. Bickershaw Lane, Abram	Green Belt	2.89	Remains undesignated – constrained by Green Belt
4. Albert Colliery Estate and Bolton House Road, Bickershaw	Green Belt	8.33	Remains undesignated – constrained by Green Belt
5. Kirkless Estate, Cale Lane, Aspull	Grade II listed canal bridge and lock flight, access issues and likely contamination	16.18	Designate as an Employment Area – well occupied site valuable for low amenity uses
6. Queen Street/ Caroline Street, Pottery Road, Wigan		23.98	Part include within the proposed Wigan Pier Quarter Regeneration Priority Area and part remains undesignated
7. Johnson Street, Howe Bridge	Site constrained by overhead power	1.95	Designate as an Employment Area – established employment site for a range of employment uses
8. Cemetery Road, Ince		11	Remains undesignated – constrained by access and nearby residential properties
9. Sites off Darby Lane / Wigan Road, Hindley		1.26	Designate as an Employment Area – well established employment area for a range of employment uses
10. English Street, Leigh		2.59	Remains undesignated – mixed use area including residential properties
11. Howe Bridge Mill, Flapper Fold Lane / Rosedale Avenue, Atherton	Planning consent for residential development, site cleared	3.37	Released for residential development due to type and condition of premises
12. Harvey Court, Harvey Lane, Golborne		4.67	Designate as an Employment Area – established employment area including some modern units
13. Leyland Mill Lane, Wigan	Green Belt and within Flood Zones 2 and 3	2.09	Remains undesignated – constrained by Green Belt, access and adjacent residential properties
15. Lower Green Lane, Tyldesley	Green Belt	3.91	Remains undesignated – constrained by Green Belt
16. Bolton Road, Atherton	Partly within Flood Zone 3	4.59	Remains undesignated – some poor quality stock and constrained by existing nearby housing
17. Firsdale Industrial Estate, Nangreaves Street, Leigh		2.99	Designate as an Employment Area – Established employment site supporting a range of employment uses
18. Moat House Street, Ince		1.48	Designate part, north of

			Manchester Road, as an Employment Area – established employment site, former industrial improvement area
19. Mort Lane, Tyldesley	Green Belt	1.62	Remains undesignated – constrained by Green Belt
20. Platt Fold Street, Leigh		5.18	Edge of centre location - Partly designate as area for commercial and residential development adjacent to guided busway terminus
21. Hindley Business Centre, Platt Lane, Hindley		1.28	Designate as Employment Area – affordable flexible starter units
22. Prescott Street, Wigan		1.34	Remains undesignated – small site, constrained by nearby housing
23. Warrington Lane / Road, Wigan (Richard Street)		14.37	Include part within the proposed Eastern Gateway mixed use designation and part as an Employment Area - established, well occupied area (4.87 has)
25. Kirkhall Lane, Victoria Street, Leigh		2.94	Part designate as an Employment Area. Established employment site supporting a range of uses with potential for expansion of AB World Foods.
26. Welch Hill Mill ,Welch Hill Street, Leigh		0.84	Remains undesignated – mixed use area, constrained by access and nearby housing
27. Wigan Road, Golborne		6.21	Designate as an Employment Area – established well occupied employment site
28. Towns Yard, Wigan Road, Hindley	Planning Consent for residential development, under construction	1.83	No longer in employment use
29. Hewitt Business Park, Winstanley Road, Orrell		0.93	Designate as an Employment Area – well occupied workshop and warehouse starter units, good quality accommodation
30. Greenbank Industrial Estate, Atherton Road, Hindley		2.28	Part redeveloped for retail, designate remainder as an Employment Area – established employment site supporting a range of uses (1.85 has)

Employment land supply

7.27 Table 15 below shows the current available employment land supply within the borough. It comprises available land within existing Primary

Employment Areas and other areas of land identified as being suitable for employment purposes. These include land within broad locations for new development and North Leigh Park Strategic Site designated in the Local Plan Core Strategy. The broad locations are now proposed as Major Sites in the Initial Draft Allocations and Development Management Plan. The first column of Table 15 refers to the existing UDP site references. The site references that are proposed in the Initial Draft Allocations and Development Management Plan are in brackets.

Table 15: Wigan Borough employment land supply, 2015

UDP ref. (ADMPL ref.)	Site	Area (ha)
EM1A 5 (EM2.13)	Moss Industrial Estate, Lowton (3 sub sites)	1.91
EM1A 6 (EM2.21)	Parsonage, Leigh	1.82
EM1A 7 (EM2.22)	Bridgewater, Leigh	2.02
EM1A 8 (EM2.23)	Hope Carr / Leigh Commerce Park	6.69
EM1A 9 (EM1.5)	Chaddock Lane, Astley	13.37
EM1A 12 (EM2.7)	Gibfield, Atherton	3.44
EM1A 14 (EM2.16)	West of Leigh Road, Hindley	6.97
EM1A 15 (EM2.17)	Swan Lane, Hindley Green (4 sub sites)	6.63
EM1A 16 (EM2.27)	Makerfield Way, Ince (3 sub sites)	4.50
EM1A 17 (EM2.28)	Wigan Enterprise Park	5.12
EM1A 20 (MS5.1)	Westwood , Wigan	4.80
EM1A 22 (EM2.37)	Chapel Lane, Wigan	0.44
EM1A 24 (EM2.39)	Miry Lane, Wigan	2.05
EM1A 25 (EM2.40)	Martland Park, Wigan (3 sub sites)	7.04
EM1A 27 (EM2.26)	Bradley Hall Trading Estate, Standish	1.07
EM1A 28 (EM2.41)	Richmond Hill, Pemberton (2 sub sites)	0.45
EM1A 29 (EM2.42)	Lamberhead Industrial Estate, Wigan	0.58
EM1A 30 (EM1.2)	Pemberton Colliery, Wigan	14.42
EM1A 32 (EM2.45)	Warrington Road, Hawkley (3 sub sites)	3.64
EM1A 36 (EM1.4 and EM2.3)	South Lancashire Industrial Estate, Stubshaw Cross (2 sub sites)	36.79
SP3 (Core Strategy)	Northleigh	8.00
(MS3)	East of Atherton	9.00

(MS1)	South of Hindley	12.00
(MS5.2 and EM1.3)	Landgate, Bryn	7.49
	Total employment land supply	**160.24**

7.28 All employment sites are potentially deliverable within the Allocations and Development Management Local Plan period. North Leigh Park, Westwood Park and a large part of Landgate have outline planning permission with masterplans for mixed used schemes including employment development. The council and other landowners are in the early stages of developing a masterplan for South of Hindley and a development framework has been produced for East of Atherton.

7.29 Since 2011, 4.35 hectares of employment land have been developed in the Primary Employment Areas, reducing the employment land requirement to around 196 hectares to 2026. Table 15 shows that there is a significant shortfall of around 35 hectares in the current available supply.

Stage 3: Identifying a 'new' portfolio of sites

8 Potential new sites to meet shortfall

8.1 If we are to address the shortfall of 35 hectares of employment land, there is a need to look at the other potential options from the Safeguarded Land and unallocated sites identified in Section 7.2. Table 16 below summarises these different options and the findings of the option appraisal.

Table 16 – Summary of Additional Site Options Appraisal

Site		Commercial Attractiveness	Environmental Quality	Strategic Access	Constraints
Land south of Leopold Street, Pemberton		High – accessible site linked to existing employment area	Good	Good – future M58 link road	No major constraints
E of Stone Cross Lane, Lowton		High	Very good – attractive site	Adjacent to A580 but access to the site is through residential areas	Housing / permitted housing development on three sides, constraining access
Pocket Nook, Lowton		Very high	Very good – attractive site	Very good – accessible from A579 close to A580	Housing and likely housing development to the north
Almond Brook Road, Standish		Low – would be a small, isolated employment site, unsuitable for large scale employment uses	Good – attractive greenfield site, but close to housing	Poor – accessed through housing estates	Poor access / proximity of adjacent housing
Rectory Lane, Standish		Low – would be an isolated employment site close to new housing and unsuitable for large scale employment uses	Good – attractive greenfield site, but close to housing	Poor – accessed through housing estates	Poor access / proximity of adjacent housing
Smith's Lane, Bickershaw		Low – not a priority location for employment development in addition to that already identified in the Hindley / north Leigh area	Reasonable	Poor – access would be difficult	Some constraints, including existing sports facility

Landgate		High– part of wider mixed use scheme	Generally good – large area of open land	Good – close to M6 corridor.	No major constraints. Local access improvements secured as part of the planning permission
East of Atherton		Medium – part of larger development opportunity	Generally good – large area of open land	Can be accessed through existing employment site	Some constraints, but can be overcome

Source: Wigan Council

8.2 After consideration of the additional site options summarised in Table 16, the most attractive option for additional provision is at Pocket Nook, Lowton, where at least 38 hectares of employment land could be provided. This site is adjacent to the A580 and will be highly visible from this major transport route. It is expected to be very attractive to the commercial market and suitable for a range of employment uses and it has the potential to significantly boost the borough's economy.

8.3 Although the nearby site at East of Stone Cross Lane was also considered as a potential employment land option, access into this land is heavily constrained by residential and proposed residential development to the north, east, west and part of the south of the site. Consequently this land is not appropriate for large scale employment development.

8.4 Land south of Leopold Street is also identified as an appropriate extension of the existing employment area at Lamberhead Industrial Estate, Pemberton. It is recommended that it be included in the future employment land supply. It totals 2.04 hectares. The future construction of the M58 link road will provide direct access to the motorway network and will make this site more attractive to the commercial market, although the site would be split in two by proposed link road.

8.5 It is anticipated that the addition of these sites will provide an additional 40.04 hectares of employment land to the existing supply of 160.24 hectares, resulting in a total employment land supply of 200.28 hectares.

Summary of employment land demand and supply

8.6 The analysis of existing and potential employment areas and sites has highlighted a number of issues which are relevant to the provision of employment land within the borough:

- The quality of existing Primary Employment Areas is mixed - a number of existing sites require substantial modernisation to ensure their long term future for employment use.

- The quality of the Employment Clusters is also mixed. The accommodation at some is poor quality and needs modernisation. Other clusters provide more suitable accommodation and would benefit from being designated as Employment Areas to acknowledge the contribution they make to the borough's economy.
- A considerable amount of both allocated and unallocated employment land has been lost to alternative uses since 2007.
- The analysis of current known employment land supply shows that we have a considerable shortfall against the Core Strategy requirement and identified needs as part of the council's economic objectives. As such we have to look at other potential sites including Safeguarded Land.

8.7 As such there are a number of challenges for the borough:

- There is a need to safeguard the employment role and function of existing sites which are suitable for continued use and which are capable of meeting a range of current and future needs. As previously referred to, we proposed to combine UPD Policies EM1A and EM1B into a single policy in the Initial Draft Allocations and Development Management Local Plan. This is to ensure that employment land and premises are retained unless there is a good, evidenced reason why it is no longer appropriate to do so, against one of the clauses in the policy.
- The Allocations Plan will need to designate new sites to meet the shortfall in the supply of employment land. New sites need to be large enough and close to the motorway network to attract investment from the logistics and manufacturing sectors. This will enable the borough to capitalise on its strategic location along the M6 Corridor and to compete with neighbouring authorities.

9 Conclusions

9.1 A key challenge for Wigan’s Allocations and Development Management Local Plan is to match the need for employment land with the available supply. The Local Plan Core Strategy recognises that there is a need to bring forward a range of employment sites of the right quality and in the right locations to provide employment opportunities, focussed on key sectors, including logistics / distribution, digital information and communications technology and environmental technologies.

9.2 The availability and suitability of employment land is not the only factor that influences the economic performance of the borough, but it is a key factor.

9.3 The high level of out-commuting for employment is an established feature, and reflects the borough’s location between the major employment areas of Manchester / Salford, Liverpool, Warrington and Preston / Central Lancashire. This means that associated economic benefits to the borough, including retail and leisure spend, are reduced. . Many of the out commuters do so by road which has significant impacts on congestion and air quality. It is unlikely that this position can be significantly altered in the next 10–15 years. However, there is potential to ‘claw back’ some of this out-commuting by the provision of a wider range of employment sites and to create more sustainable patterns of employment within the area.

9.4 At a regional level, the Greater Manchester Strategy sets out the agenda for the continued growth of the Greater Manchester Economy. If Wigan is to play its part in this growth, it must have a range of employment sites to help meet the key strategic objectives of creating the right conditions for growth and for supporting businesses.

9.5 The emerging Greater Manchester Spatial Framework will identify the appropriate scale and distribution of new employment floorspace in Greater Manchester through to 2035. Work is underway on this new strategic local plan. It will provide up to date evidence on employment land requirements across the city region, including Wigan.

9.6 The Local Plan Core Strategy sets out the requirement for employment land provision of approximately 200 hectares between 2011 and 2026. As part of the Core Strategy consideration, the inspector accepted the need for this figure to ensure that Wigan is able to compete successfully at the national and regional level for jobs over the next 10-20 years.

9.7 Evidence from New Economy, Parkinson Commercial and the council clearly demonstrates that there is strong demand for a range of employment sites from a range of sources. Recent large-scale employment development, including those at Omega in Warrington, Buckshaw Village in Chorley and Logistics North in Bolton, as well as currently at Westwood and the South Lancs Industrial Estate in the borough, illustrate that the right size and type of employment sites, in the right locations, will attract commercial development and occupiers.

9.8 There are a number of other factors which support the Core Strategy position:

- Wigan is forecast to have an increasingly skilled workforce that will require a range of employment sites to meet local needs.
- There is a strong, ready demand for business start-up units.
- The significant access improvements set out within the council's Transport Strategy, will raise the profile of Wigan as a potential area for employment and investment.
- The development of HS2 will better connect the borough to markets and key centres of employment, including London and the European mainland.
- The Core Strategy sets out the requirement for an average of at least 1,000 net additional dwellings per year over the plan period. This significant housing growth, which is above recent development levels, will increase employment demand in the borough.

9.9 From the assessment of current employment sites, it is clear that the quality of the existing employment offer is mixed. The borough has good employment sites that are well occupied and where investment and improvement has taken place. In particular, Stone Cross Park at Golborne provides high quality, accommodation that is well connected to the Primary Route Network and has been able to attract larger 'regional' distribution uses. Sites such as Moss Industrial Estate, Lowton and South Lancashire Industrial Estate, Ashton are popular employment areas that primarily meet the needs of sub-regional and local employers. At a smaller scale, new good quality units at Cinnamon Brow, Makerfield Way, Ince and Sovereign Road, Wigan have proved very popular with smaller and medium sized businesses.

9.10 A number of the older, largely unplanned employment sites, particularly some of the unallocated 'clusters', are of poor quality and are displaying signs of obsolescence. Nevertheless they do provide low amenity accommodation for some local businesses. Some clusters provide more modern and attractive accommodation.

9.11 It is proposed that some of the cluster are designated as part of the new Employment Areas in the Allocations and Development Management Local Plan, to acknowledge their value for employment.

9.12 The analysis of employment supply has identified a total of 160.24 hectares of suitable and available employment land, which could be delivered over the plan period. These are sites within existing employment areas or within the broad locations for development identified within the Core Strategy. There is a shortfall of 35 hectares against the Core Strategy requirement for 200 hectares, taking into consideration that 4.35 hectares of employment land have been provided since 2011.

9.13 These areas represent a mix of site sizes and characteristics that will to a large extent meet the needs of local employers and occupiers. Proposed accessibility improvements outlined within the Transport Strategy will significantly improve the accessibility and attractiveness of a number of these areas, including Pemberton Colliery, Westwood Park, Lamberhead Industrial Estate, Wigan Enterprise Park, South of Hindley and North Leigh Park.

9.14 However, the evidence gathered has identified a requirement for employment sites with particular characteristics that are not currently available within the borough. In particular, there is a requirement for high profile larger sites with good transport connections to the motorway network that are attractive to the market. These sites need to be 'development ready' with no significant constraints and with certainty provided through a planning consent or development plan allocation. These areas could be suitable for logistics, manufacturing and/or office uses.

9.15 From the assessment of other potential site options, Pocket Nook Lane, Lowton and Land to the South of Leopold Street, Pemberton appear suitable to meet this identified requirement. These sites would add a further 40.04 hectares to the supply of employment land in the borough, bringing the total supply to 200.28 hectares. This represents a surplus of approximately 4 hectares above the Core Strategy target of 200 hectares taking into considering that 4.35 hectares of employment that has been developed previously. The small surplus will provide a buffer to accommodate unforeseen changes in the supply of employment land such as changes to developable site areas pending more detailed work.

9.16 As well as addressing the 'qualitative' shortfall in our employment land offer, inclusion of these sites will also address the quantitative shortfall of employment land across the borough.

9.17 In conclusion, there is a need to increase the quality and quantity of jobs within the borough, to boost Wigan's economic performance and to ensure the borough can be more competitive within the region. Currently, Wigan's employment offer does not take advantage of its strategic location and proximity to the motorway network.

9.18 The portfolio of employment land from existing identified sites will be able to meet a large part of Wigan's requirement for employment land, particularly to serve local employment needs. However, with the growing influence of Manchester in the service and media industries, Liverpool's planned Atlantic Gateway and the major developments within competing towns such as Omega at Warrington, Buckshaw Village in Chorley and Logistics North in Bolton, Wigan faces the real possibility of being left behind its competitors in its economic growth. The potential to attract new national and international companies to provide the growth of good quality sustainable jobs will be increasingly challenging unless new land opportunities can be realised.

10 Monitoring

10.1 The 2015 Employment Land Review provides the baseline position for the amount, quality and availability of employment land within the borough for the Allocations and Development Management Local Plan. It also provides an assessment of current demand for employment land and an analysis of market trends.

10.2 The availability of employment land will be monitored on an annual basis to ensure that there is an up to date assessment of land supply.

10.3 The loss of employment land or premises to alternative uses, including housing and shops will also be monitored.

10.4 It is intended that all employment sites will be visited and assessed as part of a 5 year rolling programme, with 20% of sites being reviewed annually.

10.5 Regular assessments of employment land demand and need will also be undertaken to ensure that the sites available within the borough are capable of meeting the requirements of the market.

List of Figures and Tables

Appendix A – Primary Employment Area Scores

TABLE 17: SUMMARY SCORES FOR PRIMARY EMPLOYMENT SITES

	Commercial Viability	Local Market Conditions	Quality of Site	Quality of Wider Environment	Strategic Access & Catchment	Environment Sustainability	Other Policy Considerations	Summary Market Scoring	Summary Policy / Sustainability Scoring	Overall Totals	**Overall Percentage Scores**
EM1A 1 Stone Cross Park	17.2	14.4	48.1	9.8	15	25.7	21	79.7	71.5	151.2	**81.7**
EM1A 2 Golborne Enterprise Park	16.4	13	45.3	9	16	30	19	74.7	74	148.7	**80.4**
EM1A 3 Bridge Street Golborne	15	12	45	7.7	15.3	28	19.3	72	70.3	142.3	**76.9**
EM1A 4 Newton Road Lowton	15	10.8	46.8	4.8	14.8	29	17	72.6	65.6	138.2	**74.7**
EM1A 5 Moss Industrial Estate	16.8	12.8	44.3	6.1	15	26	19	73.9	66.1	140	**75.7**
EM1A 6 Parsonage Leigh	9.6	10.8	30.4	8.4	15	26.4	18.8	50.8	68.6	119.4	**64.5**
EM1A 7 Bridgewater Leigh	12	12	39	8	17	29	20	63	74	137	**73.1**
EM1A 8 Hope Carr/Leigh Commerce Park Leigh	14.9	11	48.1	6.1	16.4	27.9	19	74	69.4	143.4	**77.5**
EM1A 9 Chaddock Lane Astley	8.1	7	45.7	5.9	16	27	20	60.8	68.9	129.7	**70.1**
EM1A 10 Parr Brow Tyldesley	10	9	45.9	5.1	15.4	23.1	15.4	64.9	59	123.9	**67.0**
EM1A 11 Chanters Industrial Estate Hindsford	16	12	48	8	15.9	31	19	76	73.9	149.9	**81.0**
EM1A 12 Gibfield Atherton	10.5	9.6	41.3	6.2	11.2	30.9	20	61.4	68.3	129.7	**70.1**
EM1A 14 West of Leigh Road Hindley Green	12	16	49	8	17	28	21	77	74	151	**81.6**
EM1A 15 Swan Lane Hindley Green	12.9	11	44.1	7.5	14	31	19	68	71.5	139.5	**75.4**
EM1A 16 Makerfield Way Ince	12.7	14.1	36.6	6.7	14	31.3	18	63.4	70	133.4	**72.1**
EM1A 17 Wigan Enterprise Park Ince	12.8	11.2	40.4	7	13.2	24.6	18	64.4	62.8	127.2	**68.8**
EM1A 18 Dobson Park Ind Estate Ince	12.5	12	46.5	6.5	15	32.5	17	71	71	142	**76.8**
EM1A 19 Rosebridge Ince	12.5	12.7	45.7	6.7	12.2	34	17	70.9	69.9	140.8	**76.1**
EM1A 20 Westwood Park Wigan	7.5	9.3	35.6	9.1	12	30.3	22	52.4	73.4	125.8	**68.0**
EM1A 21 Wigan Pier Business Park/ Riverside Wigan	12.4	12.6	48.3	7.4	15.3	29.4	18	73.3	70.1	143.4	**77.5**
EM1A 22 Chapel Lane Wigan	12	10	39.8	9.1	16.2	28	18.6	61.8	71.9	133.7	**72.3**
EM1A 23 Wallgate Wigan	12.4	8.6	47.1	9	18.4	32.5	20.3	68.1	80.2	148.3	**80.2**
EM1A 24 Springfield and Miry Lane Wigan	10.3	10.4	46.1	4	11.8	31.8	19.8	66.8	67.4	134.2	**72.5**
EM1A 25 Martland Park and Heinz Wigan	13.6	16.3	45.4	6.5	14.5	30.9	23	75.3	74.9	150.2	**81.2**
EM1A 26 Gidlow Lane Beech Hill	17	12	47	6	14	30	21	76	71	147	**79.5**
EM1A 27 Bradley Lane Standish	13.3	12.1	42.7	7.3	13.9	25.5	18	68.1	64.7	132.8	**71.8**
EM1A 28 Richmond Hill Ind Estate Pemberton	10.9	9.9	38.3	5.1	15	33.3	14.3	59.1	67.7	126.8	**68.5**
EM1A 29 Lamberhead Ind Estate Pemberton	10.6	12.4	44.2	6.8	14	32.4	19	67.2	72.2	139.4	**75.4**
EM1A 30 Pemberton Colliery	14.5	12.5	36	6	18	26.5	23	63	73.5	136.5	**73.8**
EM1A 31 Warrington Road Ind Estate Wigan	14	10.9	43.3	4.8	16	32	17	68.2	69.8	138	**74.6**
EM1A 32 Warrington Road Hawkley	15.8	12	37.6	7.8	16.2	27.2	20	65.4	71.2	136.6	**73.8**
EM1A 33 Wheatlea Ind Estate Wigan	12	8.5	44.5	8.3	17	28	20	65	73.3	138.3	**74.8**

EM1A 34 Haslemere and Land Gate Bryn	15	12.7	45.7		5.7	16.7	30	14.2		73.4	66.6	140	**75.7**
EM1A 35 Park Brook Wigan Road Bryn	17	11	46		6	15	27	22		74	70	144	**77.8**
EM1A 36 South Lancashire Ind Estate Ashton	17.3	12.5	47.2		6.9	12	27.9	18.4		77	65.2	142.2	**76.9**

Top Third	
Middle Third	
Lower Third	

Appendix B - Cluster Scores

TABLE 18: SUMMARY SCORES FOR EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS

	Commercial Viability	Local Market Conditions	Quality of Site	Quality of Wider Environment	Strategic Access & Catchment	Environment Sustainability	Other Policy Considerations	Summary Market Scoring	Summary Policy/Sustainability Scoring	Overall Totals	**Overall Percentage Scores**
Cluster 1 Bridgeman Terrace Wigan	14.7	15	49	9	16	31	15	78.7	71	149.7	**80.9**
Cluster 2 Bickershaw Lane Abram	10	9	45	5	16	27	10	64	58	122	**65.9**
Cluster 4 Albert Colliery Estate and Bolton House Road	10	9	40	6	13	27	10	59	56	115	**62.2**
Cluster 5 Kirklees Estate Cale Lane Aspull	14	15.3	41	6	12.3	28	13	70.3	59.3	129.6	**70.1**
Cluster 6 Queen Street/Caroline Street Wigan	10.8	13.3	44.9	8	19.1	26	20	69	73.1	142.1	**76.8**
Cluster 7 Johnson Street Tyldesley	12	10.8	44.6	5.2	13	32	11	67.4	61.2	128.6	**69.5**
Cluster 8 Cemetery Road Ince	11	11	33	5	11	31	11	55	58	113	**61.1**
Cluster 9 Sites off Darby Lane/Wigan Road	15.2	13	45.7	9.8	17	32	13	73.9	71.8	145.7	**78.8**
Cluster 10 English Street Leigh	9	7.6	45	7.6	13	27	16	61.6	63.6	125.2	**67.7**
Cluster 11 Howe Bridge Mill, Flapper Fold Lane/Rosedale Avenue Atherton	10	12	45	4	12	31	14	67	61	128	**69.2**
Cluster 12 Harvey Court Harvey Lane Golborne	15	10.8	44.3	7	11.8	29	14	70.1	61.8	131.9	**71.3**
Cluster 13 Leyland Mill Lane Wigan	15	12	41.5	4	12	20	10	68.5	46	114.5	**61.9**
Cluster 15 Lower Green Lane Tyldesley	9.4	7	43	4	11.6	29	9	59.4	53.6	113	**61.1**
Cluster 16 Bolton Road Atherton	13.8	13	43.5	4.8	14	25	16	70.3	59.8	130.1	**70.3**
Cluster 17 Firsdale Ind Estate Nengreaves Street Leigh	10	10	42	4.8	10	33	15	62	62.8	124.8	**67.5**
Cluster 18 Moat House Street Ince	11	9	45.7	5.3	14	33	21	65.7	73.3	139	**75.1**
Cluster 19 Mort Lane Tyldesley	10	12	37	6	13	26	10	59	55	114	**61.6**
Cluster 20 Platt Fold Street Leigh	9.6	11.8	41.4	7.8	15	32	15	62.8	69.8	132.6	**71.7**
Cluster 21 Hindley Business Centre Platt Lane Hindley	13	11.1	46.4	8	12.1	28	14	70.5	62.1	132.6	**71.7**
Cluster 22 Prescott Street Wigan	14	9.3	36.7	9	13	33	16	60	71	131	**70.8**
Cluster 23 Warrington Lane /Road Wigan	12.9	9.3	41.3	8.3	14	30.1	18	63.5	70.4	133.9	**72.4**
Cluster 25 Victoria Business Park Victoria Lane Leigh	16.9	13.2	43.2	7.2	14.6	31	16	73.3	68.8	142.1	**76.8**
Cluster 26 Welch Hill Mill Welch Hill Street Leigh	9.5	8	43	6	15	30	13	60.5	64	124.5	**67.3**
Cluster 27 Wigan Road Golborne	17	13	46	4.5	14	28	12	76	58.5	134.5	**72.7**
Cluster 28 Towns Yard Wigan Road Hindley	11	5	48	8	14	31	13	64	66	130	**70.3**
Cluster 29 Hewitt Business Park Winstanley Road Orrell	14.5	12	46	6	14	28	13	72.5	61	133.5	**72.2**
Cluster 30 Greenbank Ind Estate Atherton Road Hindley	13.3	12.7	47.3	8.3	14	30	13	73.3	65.3	138.6	**74.9**

Top Third	
Middle Third	
Lower Third	