



**Wigan**♥  
**Council**

# **Wigan Authority Monitoring Report**

**2022-24**

**April 2025**

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Wigan Council produces an Authority Monitoring Report to monitor progress with local plan preparation and the performance of policies within the borough's development plan, in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), hereafter referred to as the Regulations.
- 1.2 The last Authority Monitoring Report was published in January 2022 covering the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. This report covers both the monitoring period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 and 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024. It is structured around the following seven key themes which form the basis of our emerging Wigan Borough Local Plan:
- Homes
  - Jobs
  - Town and Local Centres
  - Transport
  - Places
  - Environment
  - People
- 1.3 In accordance with the Regulations, relevant indicators within these themes will be monitored and reported on annually. Regular monitoring will enable the council to assess the effectiveness and continuing relevance of policies within the development plan, which will be used as evidence for the council's Local Plan review. A number of these indicators are measured against targets set out in a monitoring framework in Section 10 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy (2013).
- 1.4 The Annual Monitoring Report for the Places for Everyone Plan is available as a separate accompanying document. This assesses the performance of the Places for Everyone Plan against the indicators and policy outcomes in its monitoring framework, which are set out in Tables 12.1 to 12.7 of the Plan.

## **2 Local plan preparation**

- 2.1 National planning practice guidance requires councils to publish information at least annually that shows progress with local plan preparation. The Council's latest Local Development Scheme was prepared in February 2025. This provides a timetable for the preparation of a new Wigan Borough Local Plan, and a position statement on Neighbourhood Plans in the borough.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

- 2.2 There are two adopted Neighbourhood Plan in the borough:
- Standish Neighbourhood Plan (adopted July 2019)
  - Golborne and Lowton West Neighbourhood Plan (adopted July 2023)
- 2.3 In addition, the Abram Neighbourhood Plan was approved at Referendum on 30 January 2025 and is scheduled to be formally adopted by the Council in May 2025.
- 2.4 As at April 2025, there are four designated Neighbourhood Forums in the borough:
- Standish Voice
  - Golborne and Lowton West Neighbourhood Forum
  - Abram Communities Together
  - Leigh Central Forum
- 2.5 Leigh Central Forum is designated until April 2027. Initial work on a Neighbourhood Plan for Leigh town centre and environs has stalled, and it is not now anticipated that a Neighbourhood Plan will be produced.
- 2.6 Further details on Neighbourhood Planning in the borough can be viewed on the [council's website](#).

### **Wigan Borough Local Plan**

- 2.7 As at April 2025, the Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the borough. Upon adoption, the new Wigan Borough Local Plan will supersede remaining policies in both the [Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy \(2013\)](#) and the [Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan \(2006\)](#). A revised Policies Map is also being prepared along the Local Plan.
- 2.8 As part of its preparation to date, the council has undertaken the following engagement on the Local Plan:

- **October – December 2022:** Specific and general consultation bodies were notified that the council is preparing a new Local Plan and were invited to make representations about what it ought to contain. Engagement with local residents and key stakeholders on key 'issues and opportunities' for the borough. This engagement was widely publicised and comprised an online questionnaire on the 7 key themes covered in this report, attracting 1,413 responses.
- **October – December 2023:** Engagement with local residents, key stakeholders and specific and general consultation bodies on 'Options and Preferences'. Informed by what people told us at the Issues and Opportunities consultation stage, this set out, and invited comments on, our preferred policy approach. This was widely publicised and attracted nearly 1,000 individual responses. There were a series of workshops across the borough for residents to discuss proposals with planning officers during the consultation period.

2.9 Consultation on an initial draft of the Local Plan is planned to commence in late April 2025.

2.10 The timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan is set out in Figure 2.1 below:

**Figure 2.1:** Timetable for the preparation of the Wigan Borough Local Plan

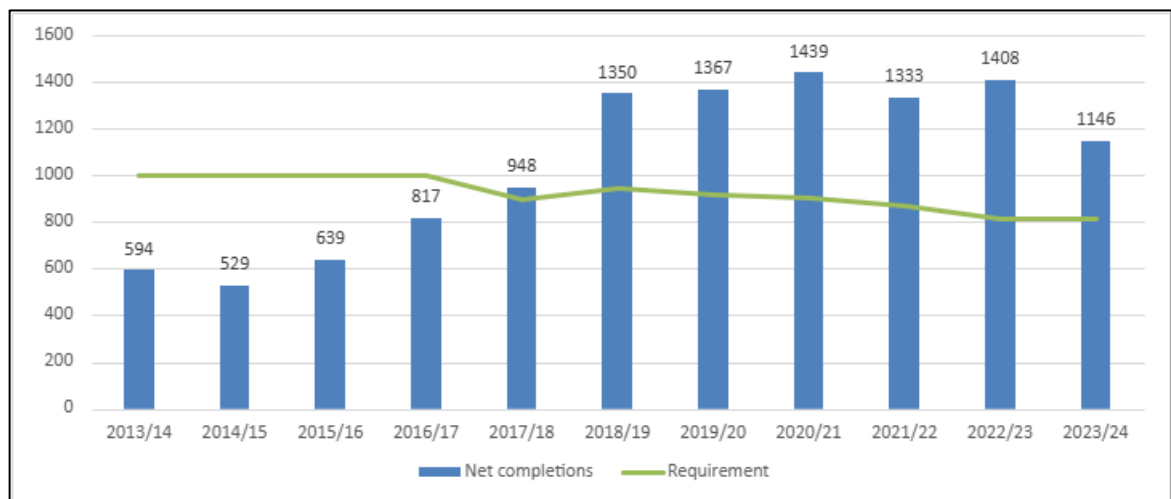
Stage	Date
Preparing the pre-submission version of the local plan (Regulation 18)	October 2022 – December 2025
Consultation on Publication Plan (Regulation 19)	January 2026
Submission	May 2026
Examination	Summer / Autumn 2026
Adoption	January 2027

### 3 Homes

#### Housing completions

- 3.1 The borough's current housing requirement is set out in the Places for Everyone Plan. This requires an average of 972 homes per annum (net) to be delivered over the period 2022-39, which equates to 16,527 homes over the plan period. 814 homes per annum are required from 2022-25, 972 homes per annum from 2025-30 and 1,025 homes per annum from 2030-39.
- 3.2 As shown in Figure 3.1, net annual completions in the borough have exceeded requirements since 2017/18 but were below them in previous years.

**Figure 3.1:** Net housing completions (2013-24)



Source: Wigan Council

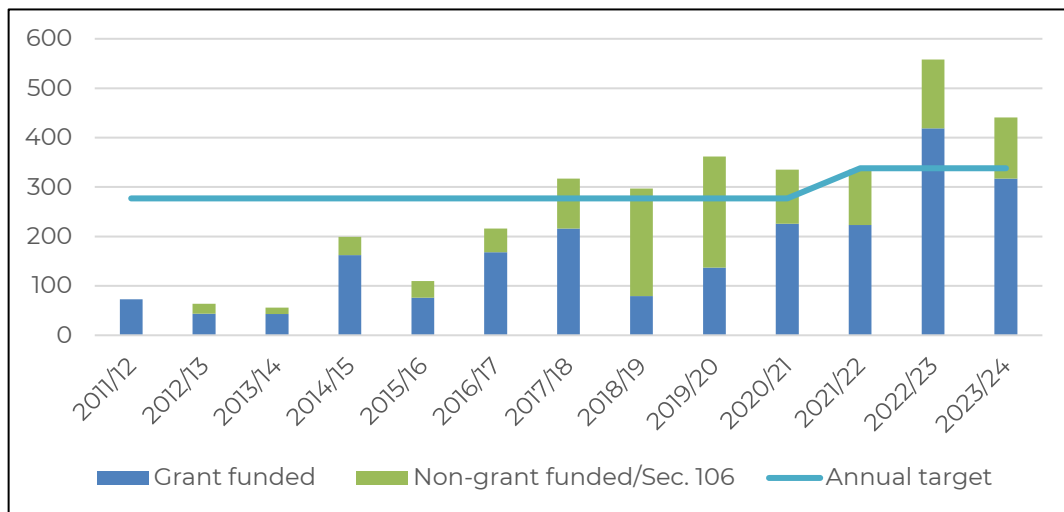
#### Housing Delivery Test

- 3.3 The Government introduced an annual Housing Delivery Test in 2018. This sets out a standard measure to compare the delivery of homes over the previous three financial years against the number of homes required during that period.
- 3.4 Wigan Borough scored 180% in the 2023 Housing Delivery Test, which looks back over the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. This means that the Council is only required to apply a 5% buffer when calculating its five-year housing land supply.

## **Affordable housing completions**

- 3.5 Affordable housing is delivered either directly by the council or by registered providers. Registered providers receive grant funding to build new homes or receive new homes from housing developers as part of planning obligations (Section 106 agreements). Section 106 agreements are secured as part of planning permissions for new housing, in line with Policy CP6 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy, which requires 25% of homes on private developments of ten or more units to be affordable, subject to viability. The preference is for these to be offered to registered providers for a mix of affordable rent and shared ownership.
- 3.6 The 2024 Wigan Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) identifies a need for 283 net additional affordable homes per annum in the borough, which is lower than the figure of 338 per annum in the 2020 LHNA.
- 3.7 In 2023/24, 441 affordable homes were delivered in the borough, which exceeds the identified annual need. 317 of these homes were grant funded, 107 were secured through Section 106 agreements and 17 were secured through other arrangements with the private sector.
- 3.8 As shown in Figure 3.2, affordable housing delivery in the borough fell short of annual targets from 2011-17. This was primarily a result of the national economic downturn with lower housing delivery rates resulting in low levels of affordable homes delivered through Section 106 agreements. Affordable housing delivery has, however, picked up in the borough from 2017, with the annual target being exceeded most years from 2017-2024.
- 3.9 In total, 3,363 affordable homes have been delivered since April 2011, which equates to an average of 259 per year. Around 65% of these have been grant funded, including homes delivered directly by the council, with the remainder delivered largely through S106 agreements.

**Figure 3.2:** Affordable homes delivered in the borough

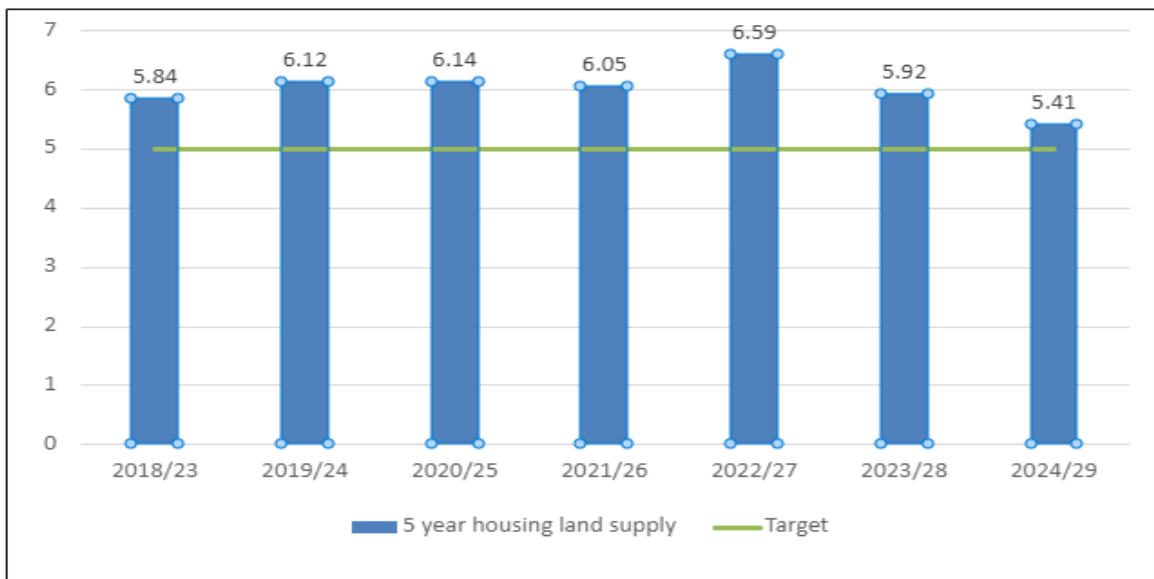


Source: Wigan Council

### Five-year housing land supply position

- 3.10 Figure 3.3 shows that the Council can demonstrate a 5.41-year deliverable housing land supply for the period 2024-29 in relation to phased housing requirements set by the Places for Everyone Plan and has been able to demonstrate a five-year supply consistently since 2018. Details of the sites which make up the borough's 5-year housing supply can be found in the [Wigan Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#).

**Figure 3.3:** Five-year housing land supply position in Wigan Borough



Source: Wigan Council



### Proportion of new housing development on brownfield sites

- 3.11 As shown in Figure 3.4, around half of the homes built annually in the borough over the period 2018-24 have been on brownfield sites, with the figure increasing to over 50% during the past two years.

**Figure 3.4:** Percentage of new homes on brownfield sites

Year	Net completions	Greenfield	Brownfield	%
2018/19	1,350	689	662	49%
2019/20	1,367	860	507	37%
2020/21	1,439	739	700	49%
2021/22	1,333	677	656	49%
2022/23	1,408	631	777	55%
2023/24	1,146	493	653	57%
2018-24	8,043	4,089	3,955	49%

Source: Wigan Council

### Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

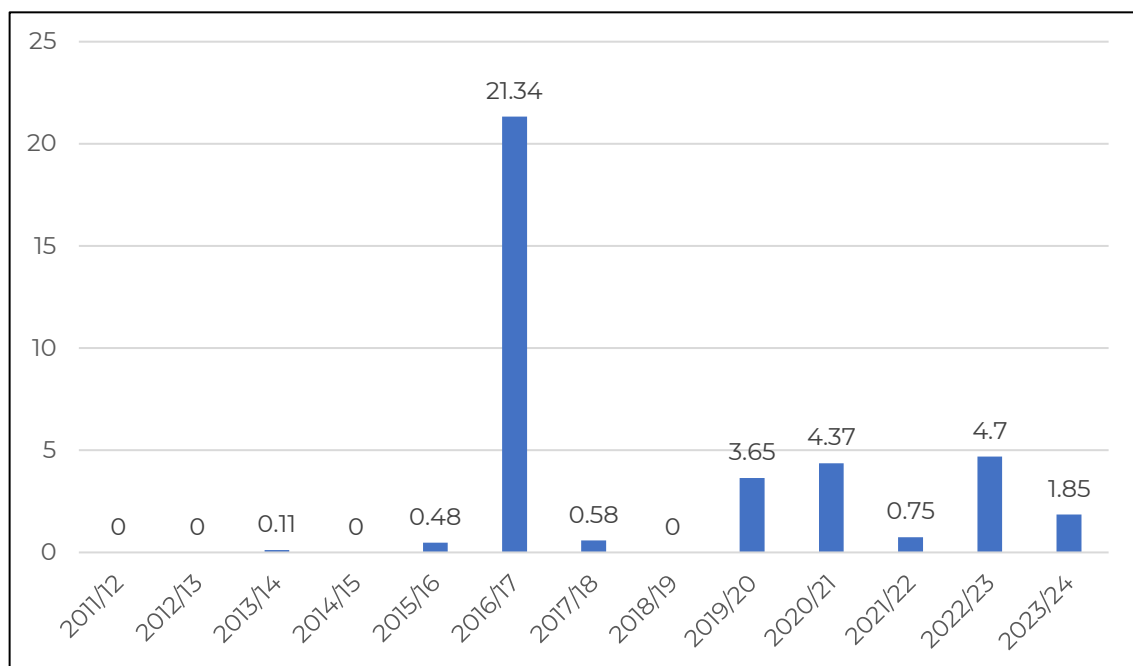
- 3.12 The Greater Manchester Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2024) identifies a need for an additional 6 pitches to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers in the borough for the period 2023-28, and an additional 12 pitches for the period 2028-41. The Council intends to address this need through the emerging Wigan Borough Local Plan.
- 3.13 The Wigan Local Housing Needs Assessment identifies sufficient capacity on existing yards in the borough to meet the needs of travelling showpeople over the period of the new Local Plan.

## 4 Jobs

### Employment land take-up

- 4.1 The Local Plan Core Strategy identified a need for new employment sites of the right quality in the borough to attract, maintain and grow businesses. Policy CP5 commits to make provision for around 200 hectares of new employment land to meet needs to 2026, equating to around 13.33 hectares per annum. However, as shown in Figure 4.1, take up has been significantly below this with only 37.83 hectares taken up during the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2024, equating to just 2.91 hectares per year.
- 4.2 Whilst the low take-up rate from 2009 to 2015 was primarily dictated by the international recession, which had a major impact on investment nationally and particularly across towns in the north of England, the limited supply of good quality larger deliverable sites in the borough has also been a significant factor.

**Figure 4.1:** Employment land take up (hectares) (2011-2024)



Source: Wigan Council

- 4.3 The higher take-up rate in 2016/17 comprised 7.99 hectares (previously recorded as 1.98ha) at Westwood Park, developed as part of the relocation of Nice Pak's manufacturing plant from Hindley Green, and 13.35 hectares spread across three plots at South Lancashire Industrial Estate, developed for three warehouses occupied by Bunzl plc, Poundland and Compagne Fruitiere. These warehouses predominantly occupy land that was used previously by Georgia

Pacific, whose warehouse was destroyed by a fire in 2011. Within 5 years of the fire, the site was cleared, sold, and redeveloped, demonstrating that good quality sites are taken quickly when they become available.

- 4.4 In 2022/23 the site of the former Morrisons superstore in Ince (4.7ha) was redeveloped for B2/B8 uses. The employment take-up in 2023/24 comprised five industrial units at Worthington Business Park; offices and ancillary facilities at Denebrook Court, Leigh; and the change of use from a gym to B2/B8/E(g) uses at Chapel Lane, Wigan.
- 4.5 Employment take-up in the borough is anticipated to improve in the short- medium term following the approval of 133,966 sqm of high-quality employment floorspace on land at M6 Junction 25 in July 2021 (planning reference A/18/85947). This will comprise eight B8 units, of which two have full planning permission (27,871 sqm) and the remaining 6 have outline planning permission (106,095 sqm). A recently issued certificate of lawful development (A/24/97738/LUCP) confirms that development has commenced on site.
- 4.6 Additionally, 6 further sites totalling 124,949 sqm have permission for employment uses (some of which are subject to condition discharges), including land at:
- Chaddock Lane, Astley
  - Hindley Green Business Park, Leigh Road
  - Plot 3 Makerfield Way, Ince
  - Plot 2 Martland Park and Heinz, Wigan
  - Plots 2 and 3 Warrington Road, Hawkley
  - Part of South Lancashire Industrial Estate extension, Ashton-in-Makerfield.

### **Loss of employment land to non-employment uses**

- 4.7 As shown in Figure 4.2, 9.27 hectares of employment land within the borough's 35 designated Primary Employment Areas (as designated in Policy EM1A of the 2006 Wigan Unitary Development Plan) were lost to non-employment uses between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2024. This contributes to an overall loss of 85.78 hectares of employment land within Primary Employment Areas since 2011, with the vast majority being for housing.

**Figure 4.2:** Employment land within Primary Employment Areas lost to non-employment uses, 2022-2024

Site ref:	Planning ref:	Site Name	Emp. land lost (ha)	New use
<b>2022-23</b>				
EM1A.27	A/21/90730	Bradley Lane Standish	5.61	Housing
EM1A.8	A/21/92089	Unit 4 Green Fold Court Green Fold Way Leigh	0.10	Class E(g) gymnasium
Sub-total			5.71	
<b>2023-24</b>				
EM1A.17	A/23/95287	Former Enterprise House, Seaman Way, Ince	3.56	Housing
Sub-total			3.56	
<b>Total 2022-24</b>			<b>9.27</b>	

Source: Wigan Council

- 4.8 Figure 4.2 only includes sites with full permission or with reserved matters approval which are built or where development has started. There are only two sites (totalling 0.45 hectares) with permission for non-employment uses within Primary Employment Areas where development had not yet started as at April 2024.
- 4.9 Outside of designated Primary Employment Areas, an additional 0.41<sup>1</sup> hectares of employment uses have been lost between April 2022 and March 2024, making a total of 7.02 hectares of employment land has been lost to non-employment uses since 2011. This included land at the former Bispham Hall Brick and Terracotta Works in Orrell; Howe Bridge Mill in Atherton; and on land to the rear of Moss Industrial Estate in Lowton - all of these schemes were for housing. There are also three sites (totalling 0.39 hectares) with permission for non-employment uses where development had not yet started as at April 2024.
- 4.10 Figure 4.3 presents a summary of employment land losses since 2011, with the majority lost for housing. Proposals for housing or other uses are often supported by compelling evidence that sites are either unviable for the continued employment use, or that there is a proven lack of demand. Poor accessibility to the motorway network and/or the outdated condition of existing sites or accommodation often contribute to this. The emerging Wigan Borough Local Plan will

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<sup>1</sup> Includes the permitted development of office to 48 residential apartments

address the need to identify a suitable suite of employment sites that meet occupiers' needs going forward.

**Figure 4.3** Summary of employment land lost in the period April 2011 - April 2024 (hectares)

Employment land lost	Implemented	Unimplemented extant permissions	Total
Within Primary Employment Areas	85.81	0.45	86.26
Outside Primary Employment Areas	7.02	0.39	7.41
Total	92.83	0.84	93.67

Source: Wigan Council

- 4.10 In addition, the redevelopment for a major mixed-use development at Eckersley Mills, Wigan (A/23/95983) is largely covered by a hybrid planning application comprising: full planning application for the demolition of mills 1 and 2; change of use to Class E (Commercial, Business and Service); roller rink (Sui Generis); and offices. Outline planning application for the erection of 5 blocks to include 817 residential units (Class C3); a hotel of up 120 bedrooms (Class C1); commercial floor space (Class E); and ancillary facilities. This was approved with conditions in March 2024. Construction on the change of use to a food hall and offices and apartments in two separate mills has commenced.

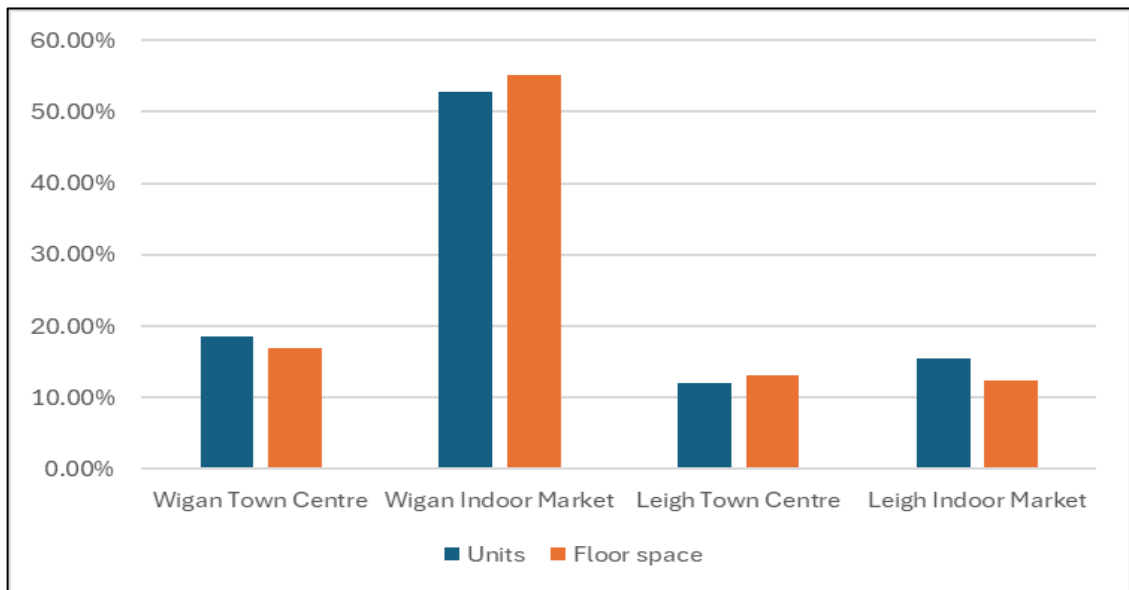
## **5 Town centres**

- 5.1 The retail sector through 2022-24 has continued to see turmoil with over 137 major UK retailers going out of business and a total of 4,175 chain stores closing including Carpet Right, The Body Shop, and Homebase. Recovery post-Covid for retailing has been significantly hampered by cost of living rises with food and energy prices forcing households to economise and thus curtailing consumer spend. Internet shopping has also fallen, standing at 26.7% of consumer spend in 2024 compared to 30.7% in 2021.
- 5.2 Town centres are increasingly looking to evolve with a focus on leisure activities including food and drink outlets, gyms, children's soft play, events, and opportunities for tourism where possible. To support these activities, investment in the buildings and surrounding infrastructure is needed, including improved access by walking, wheeling and cycling, and better public transport. National and local funding has been increasingly targeted at town centres for these types of improvements, including in Wigan, Leigh and Ashton town centres.

### **Vacancies in town centres**

- 5.3 Up to 2024 the Council monitored vacancy rates for units and floor space in town centres through an annual on-foot survey that considered only ground floor uses. From 2024 the Council will be using business data from its Destin system to identify the number of retail and commercial properties, floorspace, and vacancies. As part of this approach, the indoor markets for Wigan and Leigh town centres have been separated out. Figure 5.1 shows the vacancy rates in Wigan and Leigh town centres with separate figures for the market halls.
- 5.4 The figures show that Wigan town centre still has the highest vacancy rates at 18.5% for units and 16.9% for floorspace. Wigan Market Hall is showing rates of vacancy of over 50%, though this can be attributed to the current redevelopment of the former Galleries and Marketgate shopping centre area, which will include a new market hall.

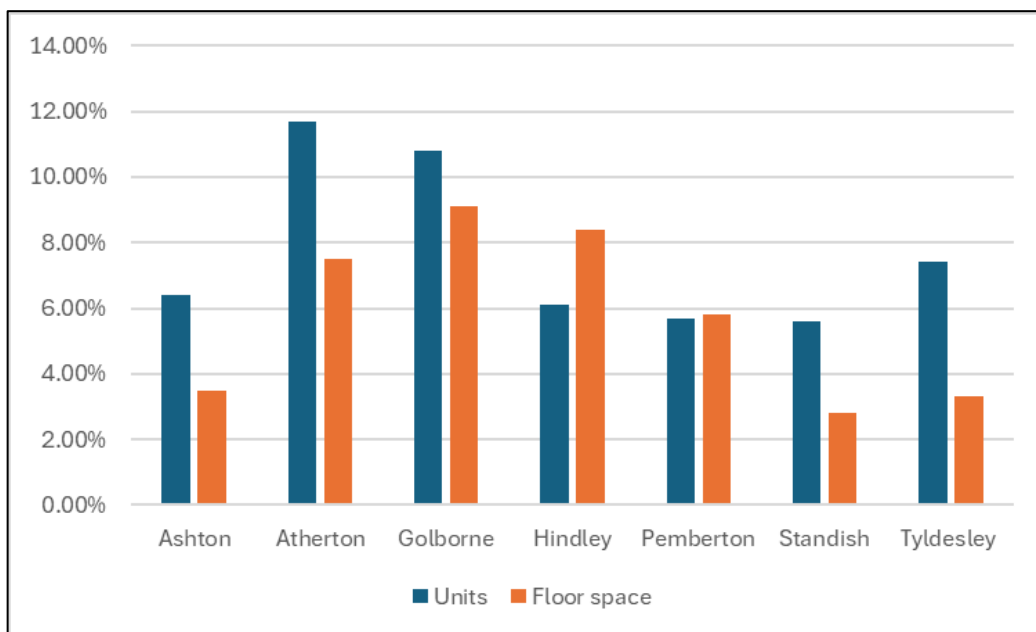
**Figure 5.1:** Percentage of vacant floorspace in Wigan and Leigh town centres (2024)



Source: Wigan Council

- 5.5 Leigh town centre is showing vacancy rates at 12% for units and 13.2% for floorspace for the town centre while the market hall is showing higher rates with units at 15.4% but a lower rate for floorspace at 12.4%.
- 5.6 Figure 5.2 shows the vacancy rates for units and floorspace in the borough's other town centres in 2024.

**Figure 5.2:** Percentage of vacant floorspace in other town centres



Source: Wigan Council

- 5.7 The town centres showing the highest vacancy rates are Atherton with units at 11.7% and floorspace 7.5%, and Golborne at 10.8% for units and 9.1% for floorspace. The difference in the rates of unit and floorspace vacancy as seen with Atherton is often down to a greater number of smaller units being vacant.
- 5.8 Standish, Tyldesley and Ashton are also showing a higher number of vacant units, with rates at 5.6%, 7.4% and 6.4% respectively, while their floorspace vacancy rates are 2.8%, 3.3% and 3.5%. Again, this indicates that it is smaller units that are vacant, which are a feature of these town centres.
- 5.9 Pemberton shows vacancy rates for units at 5.7% and 5.8% for floorspace, whilst Hindley shows a vacancy rate of 6.1% and 8.4% for floorspace.



## 6 Transport

### Bus and rail services

- 6.1 Figure 6.1 shows the proportion of trips by different modes into Wigan town centre during the AM peak in 2011, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

**Figure 6.1:** Trips into Wigan Town Centre, AM peak (07:30 - 09:30), 2011-2022

Mode	Proportion of trips					% Change				
	2011	2019	2020	2021	2022	2011-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2011-22
<b>Bus</b>	25%	23%	17%	24%	23%	-2%	-6%	7%	-1%	-2%
<b>Rail</b>	11%	8%	10%	6%	9%	-3%	2%	-4%	3%	-2%
<b>Walk</b>	26%	31%	32%	30%	30%	5%	1%	-2%	0%	4%
<b>Cycle</b>	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
<b>Car</b>	37%	38%	40%	39%	37%	1%	2%	-1%	-2%	0%
<b>Total trips</b>	9,481	9,155	8,377	6,104	6,778	-326	-778	-2,273	674	-2,703
						-3%	-8%	-27%	11%	-29%

Source: TfGM Highways Forecasting and Analytical Service

- 6.2 These timeframes allow an assessment of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on travel patterns and behaviours during 2020 and 2021. The 2020 surveys were undertaken during the Covid-19 outbreak. The 2021 surveys were undertaken when there was no lockdown in place and educational establishments had reopened, however, higher education had partially moved online, and homeworking was advised where possible. The data for 2022 allows an initial insight into how travel behaviours have changed post-pandemic.
- 6.3 Unsurprisingly, Figure 6.1 shows a notable reduction in the number of trips into Wigan town centre during 2019/20 (-8%) and 2020/21 (-27%). As a proportion, it shows a 6% reduction in bus use in 2019/20 and a 4% reduction in rail use in 2020/21. It also shows that between 2021 to 2022, there has been a decrease in both bus and rail travel, with both modes showing a 2% decrease. It must be noted that walking has increased by 4%, which could show people were opting to walk into the centre as opposed to using public transport. 2021 – 2022 is also the first year since 2019 where we see a slight uplift in total trips into the town centre by 11% compared to 2021.
- 6.4 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on bus and rail service use into Wigan town centre is better shown in Figure 6.2 which shows actual change by mode rather than proportional change.

**Figure 6.2:** Percentage change by mode of trip into Wigan town centre

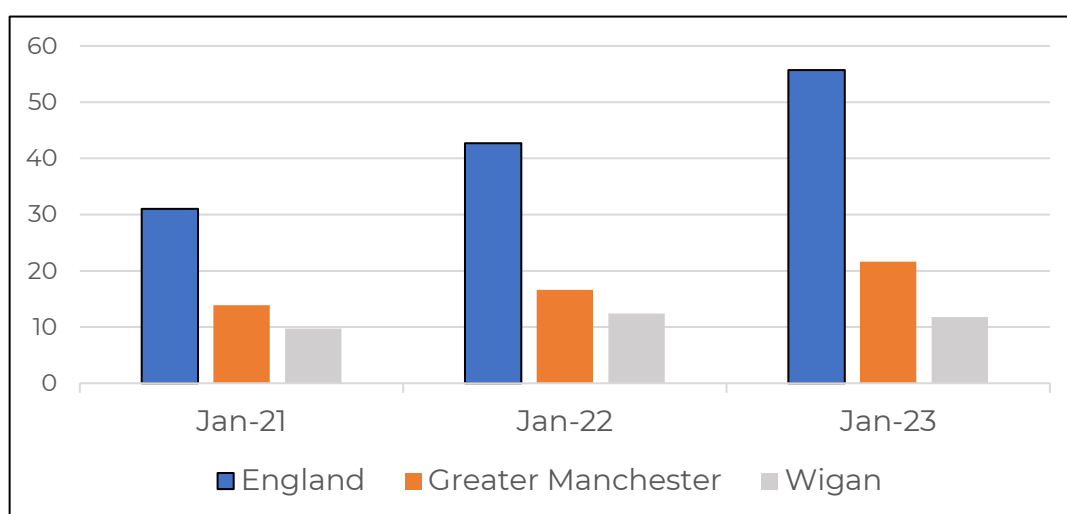
Mode	2019-20	2020-21	2021-2022
Bus	-32%	3%	17%
Rail	14%	-56%	58%
Walk	-6%	-32%	11%
Car	-4%	-29%	4%
Total trips	-778	-2,273	674
	-8%	-27%	11%

Source: Wigan Council calculations based on data from TfGM Highways Forecasting and Analytical Service (shown in Figure 6.1). Please note numbers are subject to rounding error.

- 6.5 Figure 6.2 shows that trips into Wigan town centre by bus and rail reduced significantly in the period 2019-21, by 30% and 50% respectively. However, this changes between 2021-22, with rail rebounding by 58%, bus by 17%, and walking by 11%. This equates to 220 more rail passengers and 227 more bus passengers.
- 6.6 The number of trips on foot and by car also increased by around 11% and 4%, equating to an increase of around 203 and 101 trips respectively.

### Number of publicly accessible electric vehicle charge points

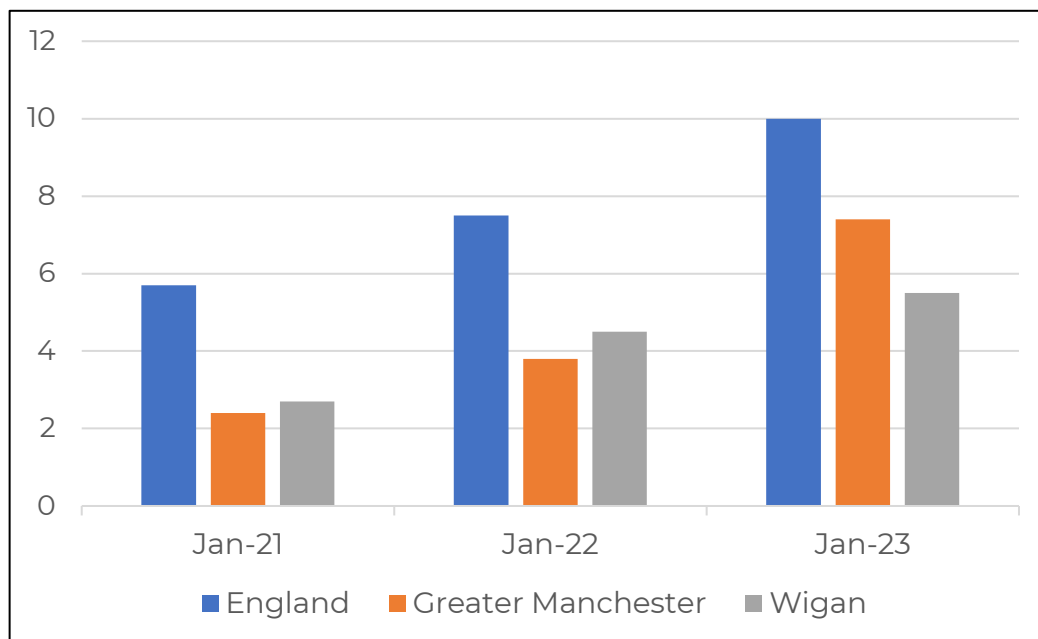
- 6.7 Data from the Department for Transport shows that the number of electric vehicle (EV) charge points per 100,000 population is steadily increasing nationally, as set out in Figure 6.3. However, the level in Wigan Borough and Greater Manchester is currently much lower than the national average. In the borough, there has been a decrease from 12.4 to 11.8 EV charge points per 100,000 between 2022 and 2023.

**Figure 6.3:** Number of EV charge points per 100,000 population

Source: Department for Transport

- 6.8 The Council adopted a [Development and Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document](#) in April 2021 which requires the provision of EV charge points (with smart charging functionality) on all new residential developments and on a range of other uses, including employment, retail, community, leisure, medical or health facilities, and on commercial car parks, unless it is not practicable, in line with set minimum requirements. As such, the number of EV charge points per 100,000 population is anticipated to rise in the short to medium term and become more in line with national averages going forward.
- 6.9 The Council has started to monitor the number of EV charge points approved as part of new development proposals and this will be reported on in subsequent Authority Monitoring Reports.
- 6.10 As shown in Figure 6.4, the borough had a higher proportion of rapid chargers in January 2022 compared to Greater Manchester's average. In January 2023, the borough has increased its offering from 4.5 to 5.5 per 100,000 people, showing continued growth in rapid charging provisions.

**Figure 6.4:** Percentage of EV charge points that are rapid chargers



Source: Department for Transport

## 7 Places

### Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas on Heritage Risk Register

- 7.1 Historic England, the Government's statutory advisor for heritage, publishes its Heritage at Risk Register on an annual basis. This covers Grade I and II\* listed buildings and Grade II listed places of worship, as well as Conservation Areas across the country. The register identifies heritage assets that are at risk of losing their significance due to their deterioration and/or neglect.
- 7.2 Figure 7.1 identifies the number of entries on the Register in Wigan Borough annually since 2013, and shows 6 buildings, two places of worship and two conservation areas currently at risk. These include the same 6 buildings and the 2 conservation areas that were at risk in 2013.
- 7.3 The Grade II Queen's Hall Methodist Mission on Market Street in Wigan was added to the Register in 2023/24. Concern around its condition relate to its turret which has suffered structural movement, deterioration of ironwork, loss of terracotta detailing and excessive vegetation. Surveys have been undertaken and small-scale holding repairs are planned, whilst funding is sought for the large-scale repair works that are needed.

**Figure 7.1:** Heritage at Risk Register, Wigan Borough

Year	Type of entry			Total
	Building or Structure	Place of Worship	Conservation Area	
2013	6	0	2	8
2014	6	1	2	9
2015	6	3	2	11
2016	6	2	2	10
2017	6	2	2	10
2018	6	1	2	9
2019	6	1	2	9
2020	6	1	2	9
2021	6	1	2	9
2022	6	1	2	9
2023	6	2	2	10

Source: Wigan Council

- 7.4 The ten heritage assets currently considered to be at risk in the borough are:

- Leigh Spinners Mill (Grade II\*)
- Haigh Hall Park Gateway and Lodges, Wigan Lane (Grade II\*)
- Barn and stable to east of Winstanley Hall and two attached gateways (Grade II\*)
- Winstanley Hall (Grade II\*)
- Haigh Hall (Grade II\*)
- Headgear at Astley Green Colliery (Grade II and Scheduled Ancient Monument)
- Queen's Hall Methodist Mission, Market Street, Wigan (Grade II)
- Church of St. Catherine, Scholes (Grade II)
- Leigh Bridge Conservation Area
- Tyldesley Town Centre Conservation Area

- 7.5 Leigh Spinners Mill is in a process of reassessment and realignment after a few years of disruption. A bid for funding is being prepared and commercial opportunities for the upper floors of the second mill are being explored to complement the community, independent and startup uses that Mill 1 is geared towards.
- 7.6 Conversion works are underway to the lodges at Haigh Hall Park Gateway and Lodges and Phase 1 works to Haigh Hall to make the site weatherproof are almost complete with an anticipated end date of June 2025.
- 7.7 The Mining Museum at Astley Green Colliery are preparing a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for some enabling works and repair to the engine house in preparation for a capital bid for the headgear in 2028-29.
- 7.8 Queen's Hall Methodist Mission have submitted their bid for capital works programme that if successful will run from 2025-2030.
- 7.9 Tyldesley Town Centre Conservation Area has improved, there has been concentrated funding from Historic England through Heritage Action Zones and supported by UKSPF.

## 8 Environment

### Green Belt land lost to development

- 8.1 To ensure that there is a sufficient supply of land for housing and employment across nine Greater Manchester districts, including Wigan, the boundary of Greater Manchester's Green Belt was redrawn for the first time since the early 1980s through the Places for Everyone Plan, adopted in March 2024. The allocation of three sites for housing and/or employment development in Wigan Borough, alongside a small Green Belt addition, resulted in a loss of 175 hectares of Green Belt land, equating to a 1.6% reduction in the borough's Green Belt. This is set out in Figure 8.1.

**Figure 8.1:** Changes to the Green Belt in Wigan Borough

	Hectares
Green Belt (pre-PfE Plan adoption)	10,658
Green Belt loss: Site allocation at M6 Junction 25, Wigan	-62.54
Green Belt loss: Site allocation at West of Gibfield	-49.03
Green Belt loss: Site allocation at North of Mosley Common	-64.58
GB addition: land at Fir Tree Street, Ince	0.8
Existing Green Belt	10,483

- 8.2 Since 2013, the vast majority of development within the Green Belt has been limited infilling or the redevelopment of brownfield sites, in accordance with national planning policy and the adopted development plan.
- 8.3 As shown in Figure 8.2, two major development proposals have been approved in the Green Belt since 2018 as it was considered, following detailed assessment, that the level of benefits that they would bring constituted 'very special circumstances', which significantly outweighed Green Belt harm and any other harm, in line with national planning policy.

**Figure 8.2:** Major development approved in the Green Belt

Planning Ref	Site address	Proposed development	Site area (hectares)	Date approved
A/17/83702	Former site of Maxilead Metals, Mosley Common	Residential-led mixed use development	3.19	May 2018
A/18/85947	Land at M6 Junction 25, Wigan	High quality employment development comprising 133,966 sqm of employment floorspace	54.41	June 2021

Source: Wigan Council

- 8.4 The residential-led development on the former Maxilead Metals site is now complete. The proposed employment development on land at M6 Junction 25 in Wigan was approved following call-in by the Secretary of State and a subsequent Public Inquiry. The development, which will comprise 8 units, will help to address a pressing need in the borough and the wider North-West for high quality warehousing and distribution development, in a location that optimises access to the M6 and the wider strategic road network. As set out in Figure 8.2 above, these sites are now no longer within the Green Belt following the adoption of the Places for Everyone Plan in March 2024.

### Changes in area of designated ecological sites

- 8.5 As at 2021, there were 94 Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) covering a combined area of 1,608 hectares in the borough. A sample of Wigan's SBIs is reviewed annually by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) in line with their Service Level Agreement, which requires each SBI to be resurveyed at least once every 10 years. The review of SBIs is reported in the year following the survey season, however the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on surveying and led to a delay in the publication of the 2019, 2020 and 2021 data which is now available. Figure 8.3 summarises the quality and quantity of SBIs in the borough, and how this has changed since 2011. The grading of sites is defined as follows:

- Grade A - of Regional or County Importance
- Grade B - of District Importance
- Grade C - of importance within the locality at a sub-district level.

**Figure 8.3:** Quality and quantity of SBIs in the borough

	2011	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Number of SBIs</b>								
Grade A	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	37
Grade B	29	31	31	31	31	32	32	32
Grade C	27	24	24	26	26	25	25	25
Total	92	91	91	93	93	93	93	94
<b>Area of SBIs (ha)</b>								
Grade A	1,115	1,104	1,096	1,094	1,091	1,089	1,091	1,094
Grade B	348	359	359	359	359	362	362	386
Grade C	139	126	126	139	139	128	128	129
Total	1,602	1,589	1,581	1,593	1,589	1,580	1,581	1,609

Source: Wigan Council

- 8.6 This shows that the overall number of SBIs in the borough increased by two during the period 2011-2021, with an increase of three of district importance and one of regional or county importance. Despite this, there has been a reduction of 13 hectares within this timeframe.
- 8.7 Since 31 March 2022, The Flashes of Wigan and Leigh was formally designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) in October 2022, in recognition of the area's natural beauty and significant ecological importance. The NNR comprises a number of precious wetland habitats across a number of sites with a total land area of 738.21 hectares. It is managed by Forestry England, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, and Wigan Council.
- 8.8 Prior to the designation of the NNR, there were 9 Local Nature Reserves in the borough totalling 379.08 hectares. The NNR replaces 6 of these, resulting in 3 remaining Local Nature Reserves at Kirkless (28.1 hectares), Borsdane Wood (24.5 hectares) and Greenslate Meadows (9.65 hectares).
- 8.9 There has been no change to Special Areas of Conservation or SSSIs within this monitoring period.

### **Number of tonnes of greenhouse gases emitted annually from traffic**

- 8.10 Figure 8.4 sets out estimated annual levels of greenhouse gases emitted from traffic and railways in the borough in the period 2011-



2022<sup>2</sup>. The Local Plan Core Strategy sets a target for a reduction over time.

- 8.11 The data shows that emissions from transport reduced by 78.5 kilo tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (kt CO<sub>2</sub>e) (-15%) over the period 2011-22 with reductions particularly on A Roads (-20%). Emissions on motorways were down by 8% in the same period, while minor roads decreased by 16%.

**Figure 8.4:** Greenhouse gas emission estimates (2011-22) – kt CO<sub>2</sub>e

Year	Road transport				Diesel Railwa ys	Transport Other	Transport Total
	A Roads	Motor- ways	Minor roads	Road total			
2011	171.6	131.6	185.1	508.4	6.9	13.3	528.6
2012	164.3	131.5	186.7	502	7	12.5	521.5
2013	159.6	130.7	186.3	495.4	7.1	11.8	514.3
2014	161	131.7	188.5	500.7	7.2	12.2	520.1
2015	161.8	135.6	192.5	509.4	7	12.5	528.9
2016	160.7	139.7	195.6	514.6	6.9	11.8	533.3
2017	155	139.6	196	509.1	6.8	11.7	527.6
2018	148.4	135.8	198.9	501.5	6.4	12	519.9
2019	145	133	203.7	501.2	6.7	12.7	520.6
2020	119.3	113.4	172	421.1	5.3	11.2	437.6
2021	136.6	123.2	158.9	436.4	5.7	12.1	454.2
2022	136.7	120	155.2	429.9	5.4	12.6	447.9

Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

### Annual greenhouse gas emissions in the borough by sector

- 8.12 The strategic objective set for energy in the Local Plan Core Strategy is to strengthen our energy infrastructure and minimise emissions of greenhouse gases.
- 8.13 In 2019, Wigan Council declared a climate emergency and a target to reach net zero by 2038. The council adopted its Outline Climate Change Strategy in 2020 which sets out how the 2038 net zero target will be reached and how progress will be monitored. These developments supersede the initial aims of the Core Strategy and the monitoring indicators set in the new Climate Change Strategy will be a more important monitor of progress on low carbon development going forward.

<sup>2</sup> Data on greenhouse gas emissions for 2021 and 2022 have not yet been released by national government

- 8.14 Figure 8.5 shows annual greenhouse gas emission estimates (kt CO<sub>2</sub>e) in the borough from 2013, when the Core Strategy was adopted, to 2022 across the industrial, commercial, public and domestic sectors. It demonstrates that despite ongoing development and an increasing population in the borough, greenhouse gas emissions continue to decrease in every sector.

**Figure 8.5:** Annual greenhouse gas emissions in the borough by sector

Calendar Year	Greenhouse gas emissions by sector				
	Industry	Commercial	Public Sector	Domestic	Transport
2013	302.3	204.5	69.2	642.4	495.4
2014	274	179.9	60.1	541.9	500.7
2015	257.6	157.2	55.2	534.7	509.4
2016	228	134.3	48.6	494	514.6
2017	224.4	120.8	46.3	477.7	509.1
2018	226	125.8	43.7	476.4	501.5
2019	199.2	117.1	37.9	460.7	501.2
2020	201.8	108.7	36.2	446.3	421.1
2021	218	115.6	38.7	456.6	436.4
2022	203.8	110.7	35.4	390	429.9

Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

## 9 People

### **Percentage of applicable schemes supported by a Health Impact Assessment**

- 9.1 Policy JP-P6 of the Places for Everyone Plan requires a Health Impact Assessment to be submitted in support of all development proposals for which an Environmental Impact Assessment is required, or other proposals where the council considers that a Health Impact Assessment is needed, showing, as far as is reasonable, how the proposals will impact positively on health and wellbeing. The Planning for Health Supplementary Planning Document, adopted in April 2022, provides clear and consistent guidance on how Health Impact Assessments should be undertaken in support of development proposal in Wigan Borough.
- 9.2 This indicator will be monitored from April 2025 and will be reported on in subsequent Authority Monitoring Reports.

### **Loss of sport, recreation and informal open space to other uses**

- 9.3 The Local Plan Core Strategy sets a target of no net loss of sport, recreation and informal open space to other uses, except where compliant with policy details.
- 9.4 The council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment (2017) assesses the value and quality of open space within the borough across various typologies. A new Open Space Report is currently being prepared and will supersede the 2017 assessment once published.
- 9.5 A total of 36.6 hectares of open space has been approved for other land uses throughout the borough since April 2013 across a total of 43 sites. This does not include open spaces that will be replaced with equal or better provision elsewhere in the borough in accordance with Policy CP2.
- 9.6 Around half of the open space lost to, or committed for, development since 2013 are natural / semi natural greenspace or amenity greenspace. These losses are generally small and on the edge of much larger areas. The borough has an abundance of natural / semi-natural greenspace largely as a legacy of the borough's mining and industrial past, and pockets of amenity greenspace. Consequently, this is of varying quality and value, with the loss of some low value areas to other uses deemed appropriate, as set out in Policy CP2, where there is comparable or better quality open space provision in the vicinity.
- 9.7 Figure 9.1 includes only schemes with full planning permission or reserved matters approval during the monitoring year. It shows that

there has been a loss of open space (2.96ha) from 6 applications, 4 of these (2.68ha) were for residential development. Previous monitoring reports also recorded outline permissions, but these are no longer included as it can result in double counting.

**Figure 9.1:** Amount of open space approved for other uses in 2022-24

Planning Ref:	Address	Open Space Type	Area lost (ha)	Proposed new use
A/21/92473	Land at Wigan Enterprise Park, Seaman Way, Ince	Sports club and football pitches	1.42	Residential
A/21/92617	Land at the intersection of Billinge Road and Foundry Lane, Wigan	Natural / semi natural greenspace	0.23	Highway
A/22/93684	Land to the side of 5 Priory Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield	Amenity greenspace	0.11	Residential
A/22/94090	Former Shevington Community Primary School, Miles Lane, Shevington	School playing field	0.112	Residential – extra care
A/22/94381/CU	Land adjacent St Michaels Church of England Primary School, Leigh Road, Atherton	Amenity greenspace	0.05	School – natural area
A/22/93614	Land at Derby Street, Woodville Road, Ince-In-Makerfield	Playing field	1.04	Residential

Source: Wigan Council