



**Wigan
Authority Monitoring
Report**

2021/22

January 2023

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Wigan Council produces an Authority Monitoring Report annually 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 This report covers the monitoring period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. It is structured around the following seven key themes which have informed preliminary engagement on a new Wigan Local Plan, undertaken in October-December 2022, relating to issues and opportunities:
- Homes
 - Jobs
 - Town and Local Centres
 - Transport
 - Places
 - Environment
 - People
- 1.3 Key statistics for the borough on each of the seven key themes are presented as infographics at the beginning of each section.
- 1.4 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).

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. At 1 April 2022, the council's programme for plan preparation was set out in the Wigan Local Development Scheme (July 2021) which provided a timetable for the preparation of the emerging Places for Everyone Plan, and a position statement on Neighbourhood Plans in the borough.
- 2.2 The Local Development Scheme has since been updated in September 2022, to also include a timetable for the preparation of a new Wigan Local Plan.

Places for Everyone Plan

- 2.3 The council is currently working in partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and eight other districts in Greater Manchester to prepare the Places for Everyone Plan (PfE Plan). On adoption, it will be the strategic development plan of the nine districts to 2037 and will provide a vision and a series of strategic thematic policies and site allocations for development across the sub-region.
- 2.4 In line with the timetable set in the Wigan Local Development Scheme, the PfE Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in February 2022 and, as at December 2022, is being examined with examination hearing sessions scheduled to run until March 2023. Details of the PfE Plan, including site specific information on the four proposed site allocations in the borough, can be viewed at www.wigan.gov.uk/placesforeveryone. Details of the independent examination can be viewed at www.hwa.uk.com/projects/gmca/.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.5 There is one adopted Neighbourhood Plan in the borough:
- Standish Neighbourhood Plan (adopted July 2019)
- 2.6 As at 31 March 2022, there were three other designated Neighbourhood Forums in the borough:
- Golborne and Lowton West Voice
 - Abram Communities Together
 - Leigh Central Forum
- 2.7 Further details on Neighbourhood Planning in the borough can be viewed on the [council's website](#).

Wigan Local Plan

- 2.8 As at December 2022, the Council is at a preliminary stage of preparing a new Local Plan for the borough. Upon adoption, the new Wigan Local Plan will supersede the [Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy \(2013\)](#) and the saved policies

within the [Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan \(2006\)](#). A new Policies Map will also be prepared replacing the existing 2006 version.

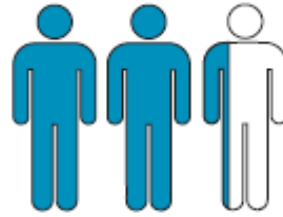
- 2.9 The new Wigan Local Plan was not referenced in the Local Development Scheme (June 2021), but a timetable for its preparation is set out in Table 1 of the Wigan Local Development Scheme (September 2022). This commits the council to preparing a pre-submission version of the Local Plan during the period October 2022 – December 2024, including periods of consultation on issues, options and draft policies, as necessary. In line with this, the council has undertaken the following engagement:
- **17 October – 11 December 2022:** ‘Planning for the Future to 2040’ 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.
 - **24 October – 11 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.
- 2.10 All responses received are being reviewed and will inform the preparation of the pre-submission version of the Local Plan. Further engagement at the pre-submission stage, in relation to options, preferred options, and draft policies etc will be publicised as necessary and included in updates to the Local Development Scheme.

3 Homes



1 in 5

The proportion of people over 64 in Wigan Borough. By 2040 this is projected to increase to 1 in 4



2.3

The average number of people per household



Over half

of Wigan Borough's homes have 3 bedrooms



The average house price is 5.7 times higher than typical earnings – cheaper than the national average

848

The number of new homes needed annually to meet Wigan Borough's housing need

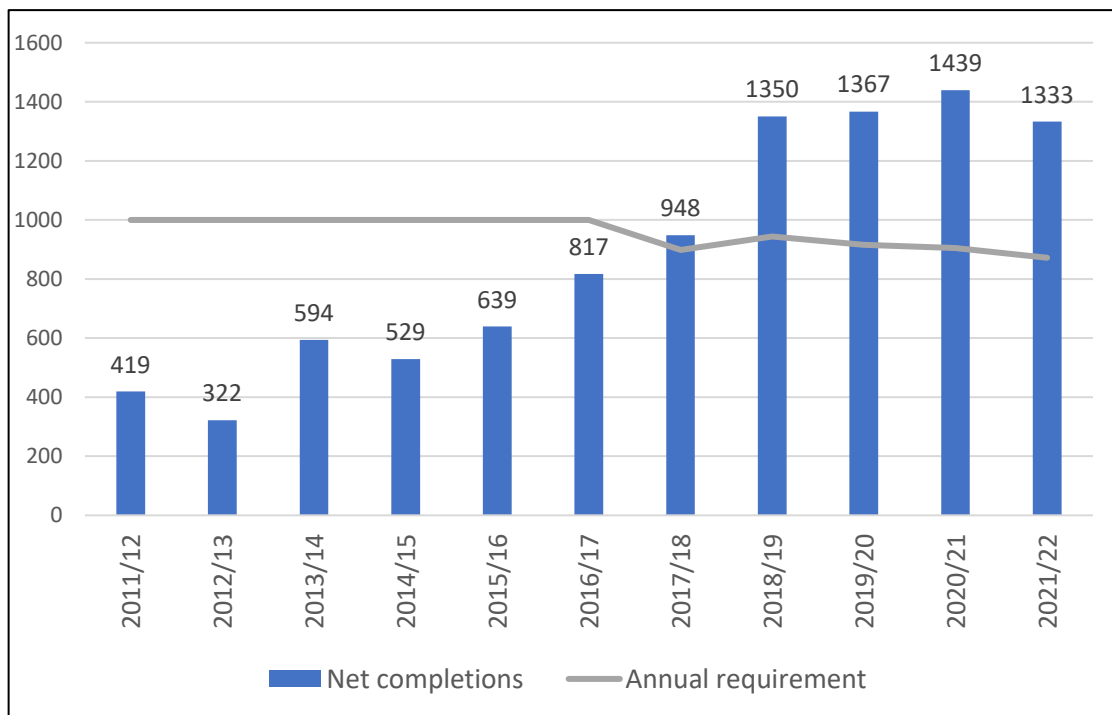


275% increase in the number of households renting privately since 2001

Housing completions

- 3.1 In 2018 the Government introduced a standardised methodology for calculating housing need, which identifies a minimum annual housing need figure for each local planning authority known as a Local Housing Need (LHN) figure. The LHN figure, which is recalculated annually, replaces housing requirement figures set in adopted development plans where plans are over 5 years old.
- 3.2 As a result, the housing requirement in Wigan for the period 2011-17 was 1,000 net housing completions per year, in line with Policy CP6 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 2013), but then set by the standardised methodology since 2018 which has identified an LHN of 898 homes in 2017/18, 944 homes in 2018/19, 916 homes in 2019/20, 905 homes in 2020/21 and 872 homes in 2021/22 (as shown by the grey line in Figure 3.1).
- 3.3 As shown in Figure 3.1, net annual completions in the borough have been in excess of the LHN since 2018/19, but were substantially below both the LHN and the relevant Development Plan target in the years before that.

Figure 3.1: Net housing completions (2011-22)



Source: Wigan Council

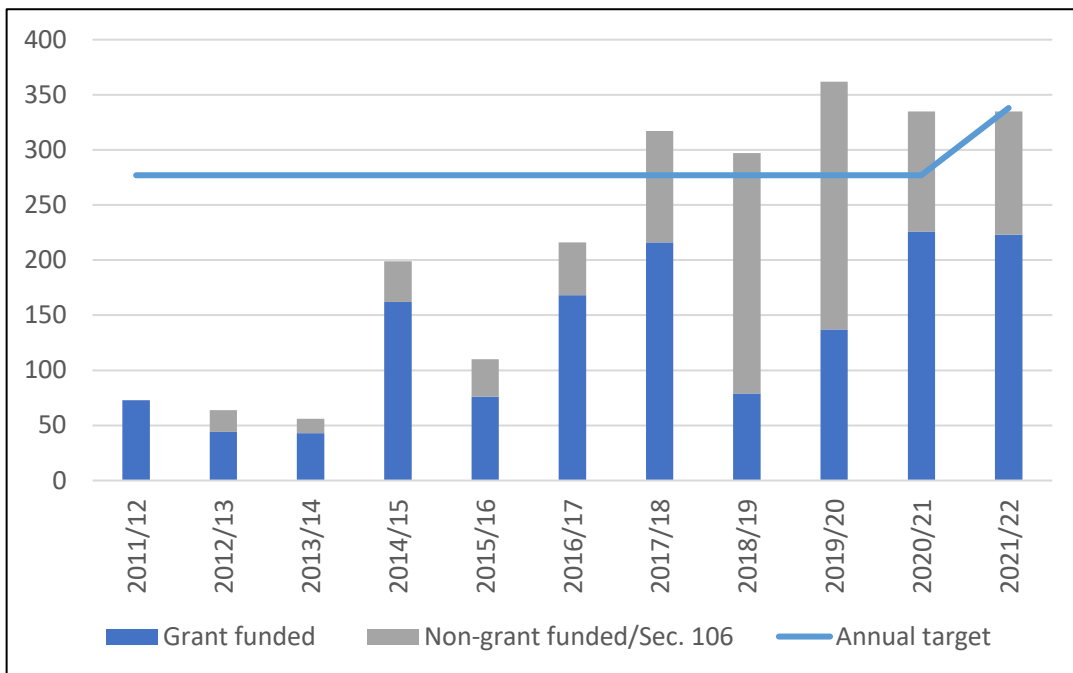
Housing Delivery Test

- 3.4 The Government also 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.
- 3.5 In January 2022, completions over this period met or exceeded housing requirements (adjusted by the Government for 2019/20 and 2020/21 to reflect the impact of Covid-19). This means that the Council is only required to apply a 5% buffer when calculating its five-year housing land supply.

Affordable housing completions

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 The 2020 Wigan Housing Needs Assessment identifies a need for 338 net additional affordable homes per annum in the borough from 2021/22. This exceeds the target for an annual average of 277 affordable homes set in the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy for the period 2011-21 as shown by the pale blue line in Figure 3.2.
- 3.8 In 2021/22, 335 affordable homes were delivered in the borough, just 3 units short of the annual need. Two-thirds of these (223 homes) were grant funded, with the remaining 112 homes secured through Section 106 agreement.
- 3.9 As shown in Figure 3.2, affordable housing delivery in the borough consistently 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 each year from 2017-2021.
- 3.10 In total, 2,365 affordable homes have been delivered since April 2011, which equates to an average of 215 per year. Three-fifths (61%) of these have been grant funded, including homes delivered directly by the council. Since 2017/18, 766 affordable homes have been delivered through Section 106 agreements, with 112 homes delivered in 2021/22. This has coincided with high delivery rates of new homes in Standish, Golborne, Lowton, and Astley, where the policy requirement for 25% of homes to be affordable has proven to be viable and has been secured.

Figure 3.2: Affordable homes delivered in the borough



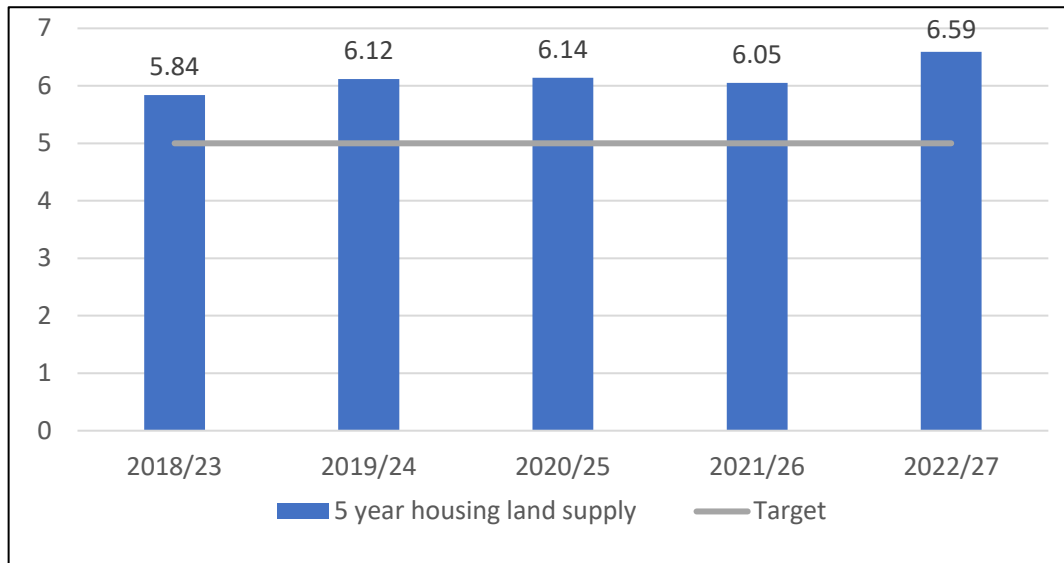
Source: Wigan Council

- 3.11 The council builds a wide range of homes itself but with a focus on specialist and supported housing. It completed 17 homes in 2021/22, funded from the Housing Revenue Account and Homes England grant. These are included as grant funded schemes in Figure 3.2. The council also works with a number of registered providers to deliver a programme funded through grant from Homes England. In 2021/22 this resulted in the delivery of 206 affordable homes.
- 3.12 The ability of the council to meet its affordable housing target is dependent on a number of issues, including the availability of grant funding and the success of the council and registered providers in securing it, and the council's ability to secure Section 106 agreements with developers on sites where the full 25% target is viable.

5-year housing land supply position

- 3.13 Figure 3.3 shows that the Council can demonstrate a 6.59-year deliverable supply for the period 2022-27 and has been able to demonstrate a five-year supply consistently since 2018. This has coincided with higher net completion rates, but it is also in part due to a reduced annual housing requirement, from 1,000 homes (as determined in the Core Strategy) to 848 homes in 2022/23, as determined by the standardised methodology for calculating local housing need. Details on 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

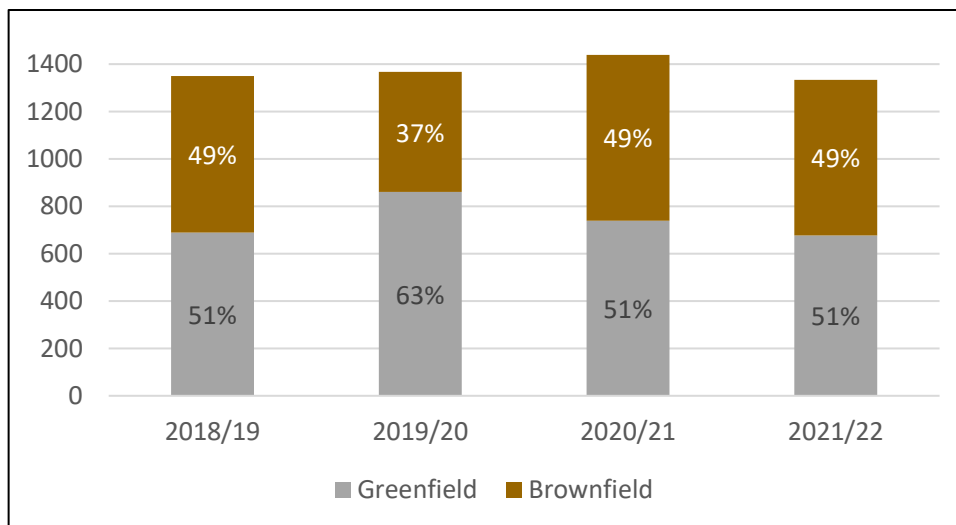


Source: Wigan Council

Proportion of new housing development on brownfield sites

- 3.14 As shown in Figure 3.4, in three of the last four years, around half of the number of homes built annually in the borough have been on brownfield sites. This has been achieved through high levels of completions on sites such as land at Bickershaw Colliery; the site of AG Barr in Atherton; land at Calder Drive in Platt Bridge; and the former Hovis Bakery on Cale Lane.
- 3.15 The exception was in 2019/20, when just over one-third of new homes were built on brownfield land. This coincided with high numbers of greenfield completions in locations including Astley / Mosley Common, Golborne / Lowton and Standish.

Figure 3.4: Percentage of new homes on brownfield sites

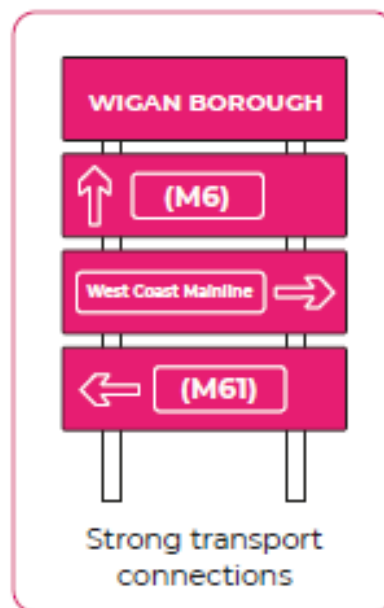
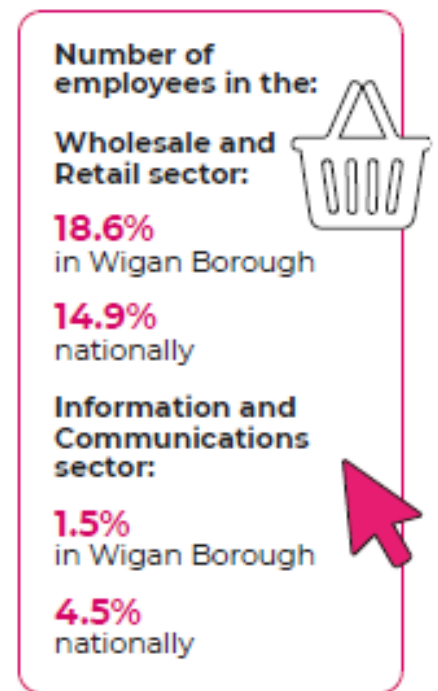


Source: Wigan Council

Provision for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people

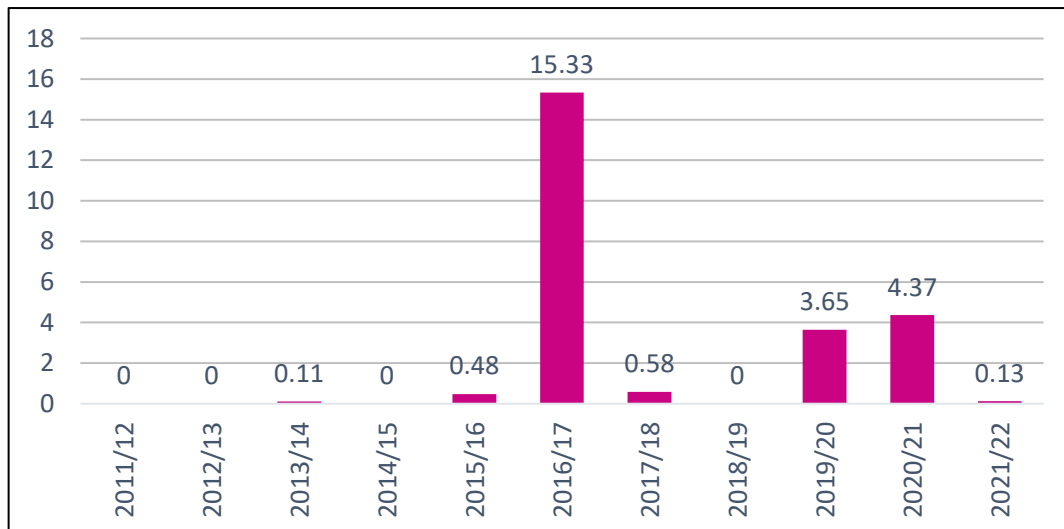
- 3.16 The Greater Manchester Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment Update 2018 identifies a need for an additional 6 gypsy pitches and 17 travelling showpeople plots to meet needs in the borough for the period 2017-22, an additional 2 pitches and 1 plot to meet needs to 2027, and then an additional 2 pitches and 8 plots to meet needs to 2036.
- 3.17 The council cannot currently identify an available supply of additional gypsy pitches, though negotiations are progressing to secure the extension of the existing traveller site at Little Lane, Wigan, which should meet the need to 2036.
- 3.18 The need for additional travelling showpeople plots will be predominantly addressed at a new site at Moss Hall Farm, Seaman Way, Ince where 24 plots are currently being developed. These plots have replaced 10 plots at Presbyterian Fold in Hindley which has planning permission for housing, equating to a net increase of 14 plots in the borough. As such, there is a shortfall of 3 plots against the need to 2022, and a further 9 plots are needed to meet needs to 2036.

4 Jobs



Employment land take up (hectares)

- 4.1 In order to compete successfully at the national and regional level for investment and jobs, 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 24.65 hectares taken up during the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2022, equating to just 2.24 hectares per year.
- 4.2 Whilst low take-up rate from 2009 to around 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 factor.
- 4.3 **Figure 4.1:** Employment land take up (hectares) (2011-22)



Source: Wigan Council

- 4.4 The high take-up rate in 2016/17 comprised 1.98 hectares 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 predominantly occupied land previously occupied by Georgia Pacific, which was destroyed by fire in 2011. Within 5 years of the fire, the site was cleared, sold, planning permission applied for and granted, and development completed, demonstrating that good quality sites are quickly developed when they become available in the borough.
- 4.5 Employment take-up in the borough is anticipated to improve in the short 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).

Loss of employment land to non-employment uses

- 4.6 As shown in Figure 4.2, 13.96 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 2021 and 31 March 2022. This contributes to an overall loss of 76.51 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, 2021-2022

Site ref:	Planning ref:	Site Name	Emp. land lost (ha)	New use
EM1A 10	A/17/83702	Parr Bridge Works, Mosley Common Road, Tyldesley	1.6	Housing
EM1A 24	A/11/75748	Land at Frog Lane / Field Street, Wigan	1.73	Housing
EM1A 24	A/20/89753	Land at Whitworth Way, Woodhouse Lane, Wigan	0.58	Retail (Lidl)
EM1A 30	A/21/91969	Former Pemberton Colliery (North)	10.05	Housing
Total			13.96	

Source: Wigan Council

- 4.7 Outside of designated Primary Employment Areas, a further 6.61 hectares of employment land has been lost to non-employment uses since 2011 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 three of these schemes were for housing.
- 4.8 Figure 4.2 only includes sites with full permission or with reserved matters approval which are built or where development has started. Figure 4.3 identifies an additional 5.61 hectares with permission for non-employment uses, on sites where development, as at April 2022, had not yet started.

Figure 4.3: Unimplemented extant planning permissions for non-employment uses within Primary Employment Areas (April 2022)

PEA ref:	Planning ref:	Site Name	Employment land lost (ha)	New use
EM1A 27	A/21/90730	Bradley Hall Industrial Estate, Standish	5.61	Housing
Total			5.61	

Source: Wigan Council

4.9 Figure 4.4 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 contributes to this. The new Wigan Local Plan will address the need to identify a suitable suite of employment sites that meet occupiers' needs going forward.

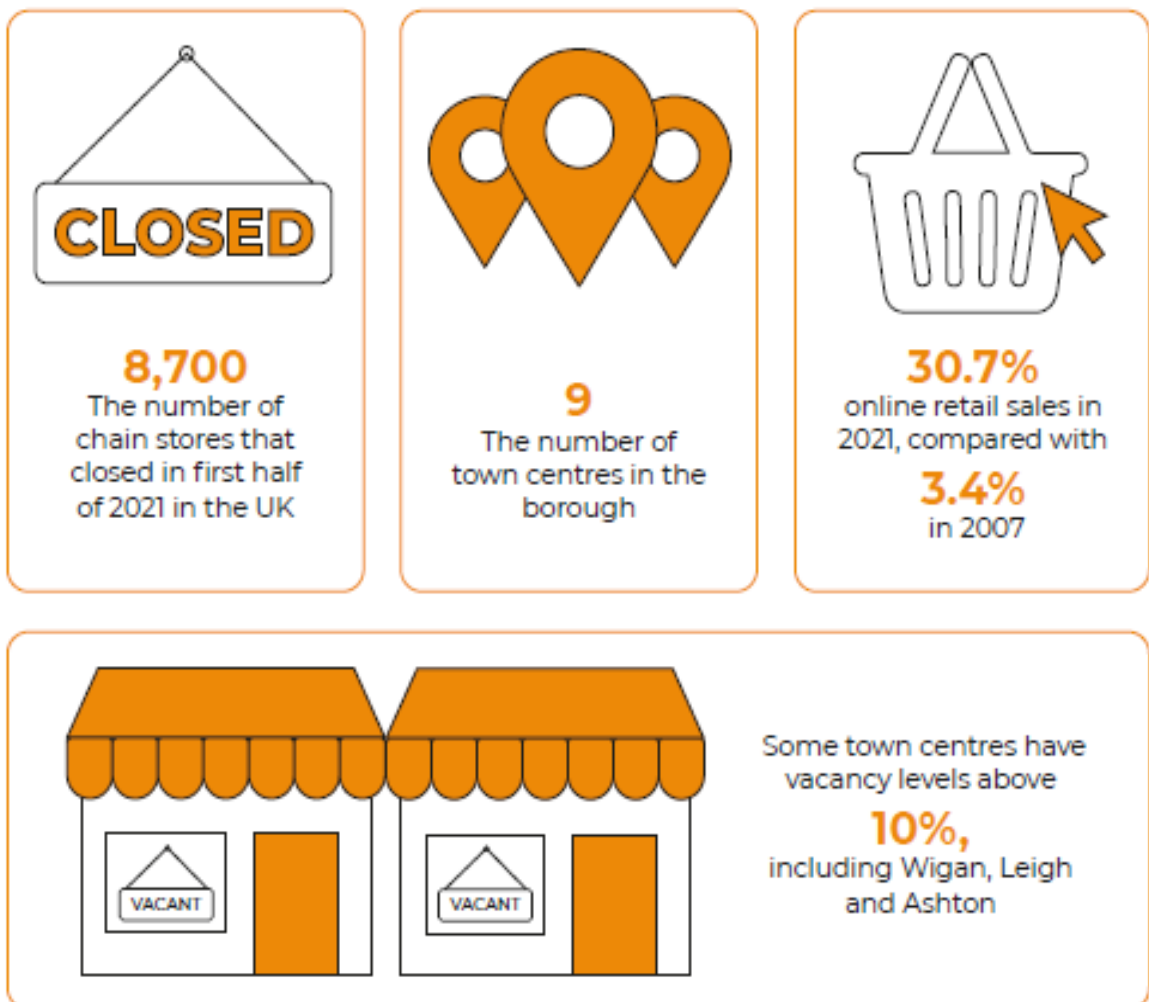
Figure 4.4 Summary of employment land lost in the period April 2011 - April 2022 (hectares)

Employment land lost	Implemented	Unimplemented extant permissions	Total
Within Primary Employment Areas	76.51	5.61	82.12
Outside Primary Employment Areas	6.61	0	6.61
Total	83.12	5.61	88.73

Source: Wigan Council

5 Town centres

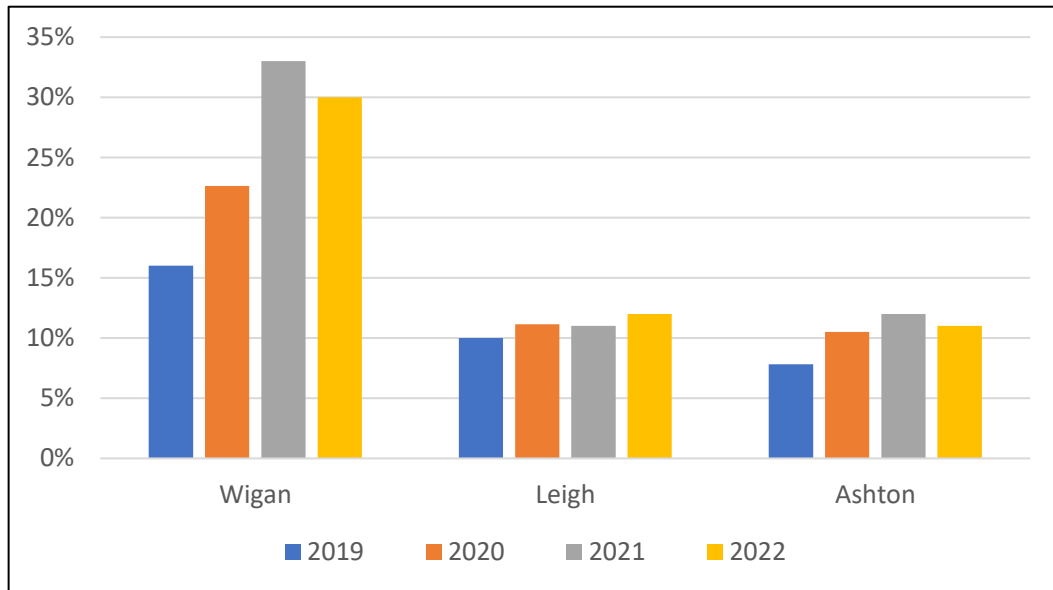
- 5.1 Changes in the retail sector and consumer behaviour, notably the rise of online shopping, has reduced demand for high street retail space nationally. This trend was present prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but has inevitably grown exponentially during these unprecedented times of public lockdown. Online shopping is now at an all-time high with many households choosing to do both their food and non-food shopping online.
- 5.2 The long term impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on town centre retail is a particular concern both nationally and locally. It is unlikely that the notable change in consumer behaviour, with the dramatic increase in online spending, will ever be reversed to pre-pandemic levels, so it is important that our town centres evolve accordingly, including a wider offer of uses where appropriate, in order to attract customers.



Vacancies in town centres

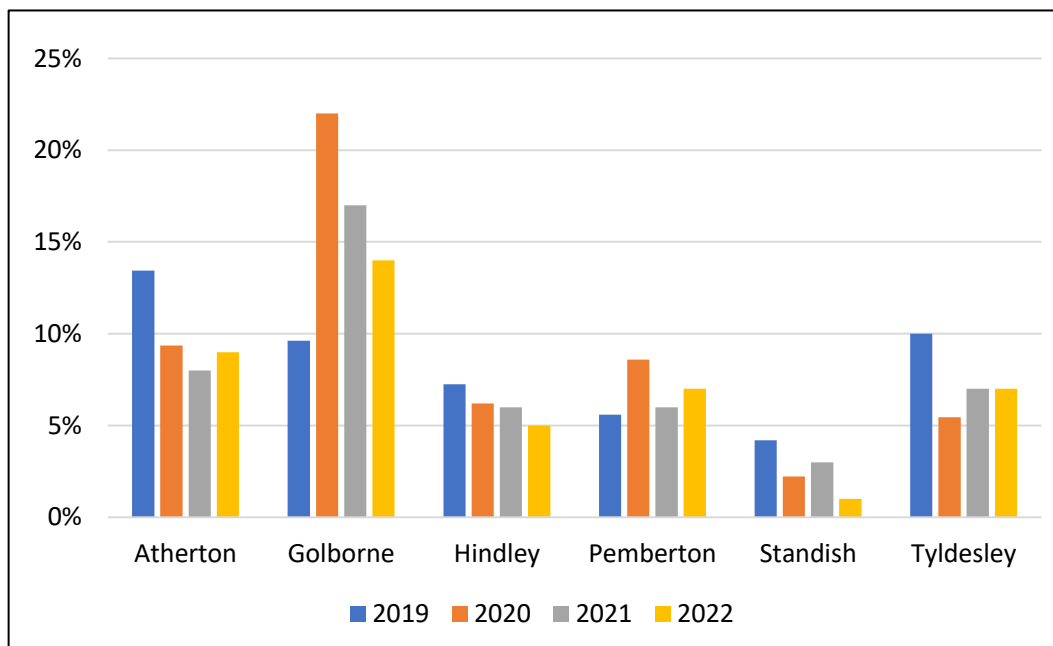
- 5.3 The vacancy rates for each of the borough's town centres for the period 2019-2022 are shown in Figures 4.5 and 4.6. It should be noted that the surveys are undertaken annually in September, therefore the 2022 data is from September 2022 which is outside the 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 monitoring period of this report.

Figure 4.5: Percentage of vacant floorspace in the borough's main town centres



Source: Wigan Council

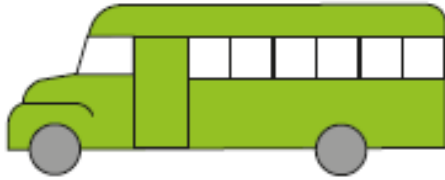
Figure 4.6: Percentage of vacant floorspace in other town centres



Source: Wigan Council

- 5.4 These illustrate that vacancy rates increased marginally in Atherton, Pemberton, and Leigh; remained the same in Tyldesley; and reduced in all other centres compared to 2021 rates.
- 5.5 The most notable change in vacancy levels has been seen in Golborne town centre, which has decreased from 22% to 17% in 2021, and a further reduction to 14% in 2022. However, vacancy levels still remain high in Golborne town centre (second only to Wigan) with 16 vacant units and almost 1,300 sqm of vacant floorspace, primarily on Heath Street and High Street.
- 5.6 Wigan town centre has consistently had the highest vacancy rate of all centres in the borough over the past 10 years, but its vacancy rate has been skewed in recent years by particularly high levels of vacancy at The Galleries and Marketgate shopping centres ahead of their scheduled demolition and redevelopment.
- 5.7 The late Summer 2022 survey will reflect the closure of the Marketgate Centre and the progressive closure of The Galleries ahead of demolition starting in Autumn 2022. When a shop unit is no longer available to occupy ahead of redevelopment, it is no longer recorded as a vacant unit. As such, vacancy rates in Wigan town centre are likely to reduce notably in the next version of the AMR.
- 5.8 The redevelopment of both these centres is at the heart of regeneration proposals for Wigan town centre which will consolidate retail space and diversify town centre uses to other sectors, including a hotel, leisure and entertainment uses and 464 new homes.

6 Transport



Over the last 30 years bus journeys across England (outside London) have fallen by over 40%



0.3%

of residents cycle to work at least 3 times per week



Over 50% of car journeys in the borough are under 2 miles



23%

of households do not have a car



14%

The increase in vehicle miles in Wigan Borough since 2013

Bus and rail service use

- 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 and 2021.

Figure 6.1: Trips into Wigan Town Centre, AM peak (07:30 - 09:30), 2011-2021

Mode	Proportion of trips				% change			
	2011	2019	2020	2021	2011-19	2019-20	2020-21	2011-21
Bus	25%	23%	17%	24%	-2%	-6%	7%	-1%
Rail	11%	8%	10%	6%	-3%	2%	-4%	-5%
Walk	26%	31%	32%	30%	5%	1%	-2%	4%
Cycle	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Car	37%	38%	40%	39%	1%	2%	-1%	2%
Total trips	9,481	9,155	8,377	6,104	-326	-778	-2,273	-3,377
					-3%	-8%	-27%	-36%

Source: TfGM Highways Forecasting and Analytical Service

- 6.2 These timeframes allow an assessment on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on travel patterns and behaviours into Wigan town centre 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.
- 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. However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on bus and rail service use into Wigan town centre is much 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 (2019-21)

Mode	2019-20	2020-21	2019-21
Bus	-32%	3%	-30%
Rail	14%	-56%	-50%
Walk	-6%	-32%	-35%
Car	-4%	-29%	-32%
Total trips	-778	-2,273	-3,051
	-8%	-27%	-33%

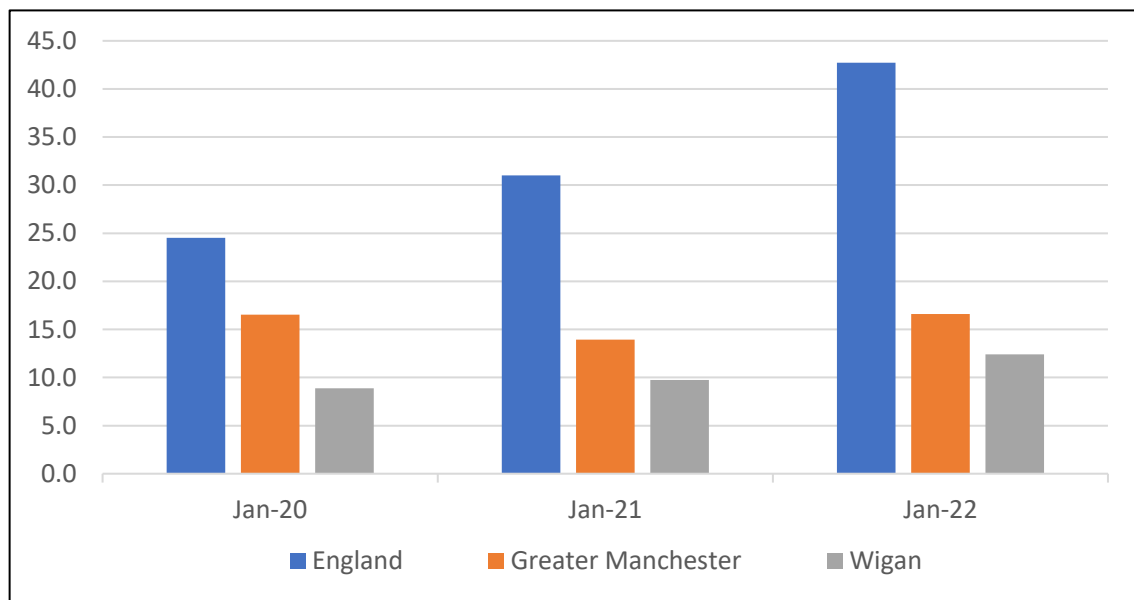
Source: Wigan Council calculations based on data from TfGM Highways Forecasting and Analytical Service (shown in Figure 6.1)

- 6.4 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. This equates to a reduction of around 640 trips by bus and 370 trips by rail.
- 6.5 The number of trips on foot and by car also fell by around one third, equating to a reduction of around 1,000 and 1,100 trips respectively.

Number of publicly accessible electric vehicle charge points

- 6.6 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 and Greater Manchester is currently much lower than the national average.

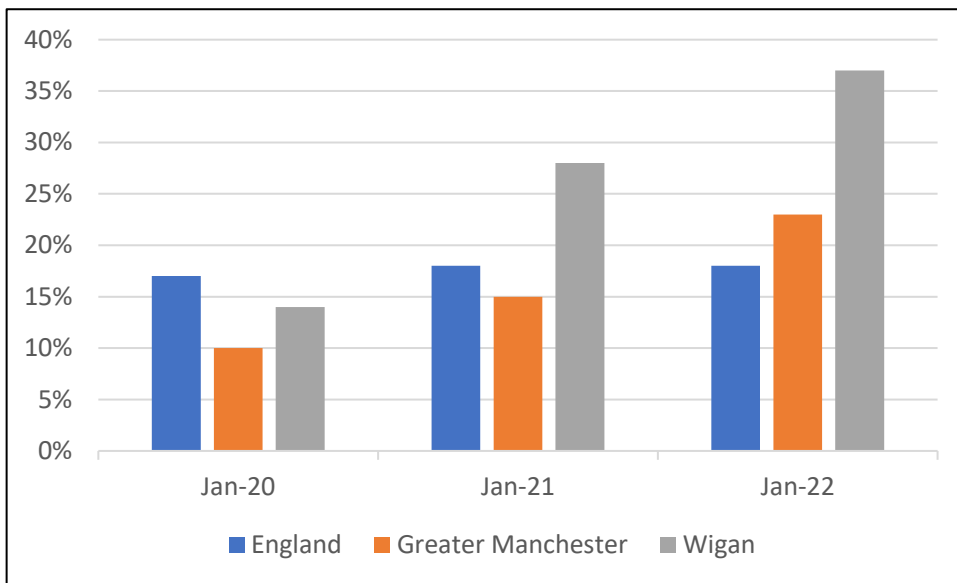
Figure 6.3: Number of EV charge points per 100,000 population



Source: Department for Transport

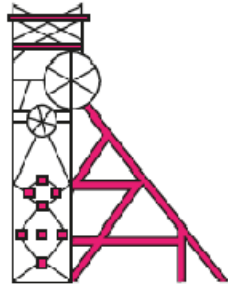
- 6.7 The Council adopted a [Development and Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document](#) in April 2021 which requires the provision of EV charge points (with smart charging functionality) on all new residential developments and on a range of other uses, including employment, retail, community, leisure, 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 more in line with national averages.
- 6.8 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.
- 6.9 As shown in Figure 6.4, the borough does have a much higher proportion of rapid chargers (37%) than both the Greater Manchester (23%) and the national average (18%).

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



Source: Department for Transport

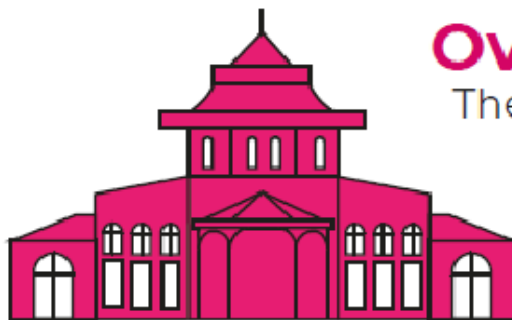
7 Places



12
Nationally
important
ancient
monuments



23
Conservation areas



Over 500
The number of
listed
buildings in
Wigan
Borough

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 2011, and shows 6 buildings, one place of worship and two conservation areas currently at risk. These include the same 6 buildings and the 1 conservation area that were at risk in 2011.

Figure 7.1: Heritage at Risk Register, Wigan Borough

Year	Type of entry			Total
	Building or Structure	Place of Worship	Conservation Area	
2011	6	0	1	7
2012	6	0	2	8
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

Source: Wigan Council

- 7.3 The nine 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)
 - Church of St. Catherine, Scholes (Grade II)
 - Leigh Bridge Conservation Area
 - Tyldesley Town Centre Conservation Area

8 Environment

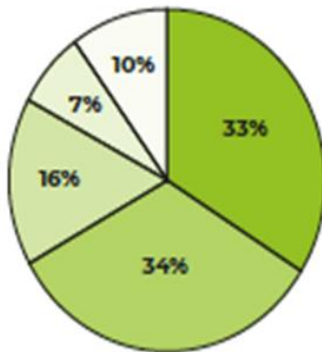


40.3°C

The highest temperature recorded in the UK in 2022

1.7°C

The average temperature increase in Wigan Borough since 1979



Emissions in the borough:

34% domestic

7% commercial

33% transport

10% other

16% industry



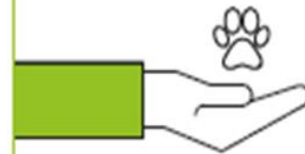
2019

Wigan Council declared a climate emergency



3rd October 2022

The Flashes of Wigan and Leigh formally declared a National Nature Reserve (NNR)



Over 1,800

hectares of the borough (around 10%) is designated for wildlife protection

Green Belt land lost to development

- 8.1 There have been no alterations to the boundaries of the Green Belt in the borough since the Green Belt was established in the early 1980s. Since 2011, the vast majority of development within it has been limited infilling or the redevelopment of brownfield sites, in accordance with national planning policy and the Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 8.2 As shown in Figure 8.1, two major development proposals have been approved in the Green Belt since 2018 as, following detailed assessment, it was considered 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.

8.3 Figure 8.1: 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 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 Wigan 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.
- 8.5 To ensure that there is a sufficient supply of land for housing and employment across nine Greater Manchester districts, the Places for Everyone Plan proposes to redraw the boundaries of the Green Belt for the first time since the early 1980s. The submitted plan includes the release of three Green Belt sites in Wigan (including land at M6 Junction 25, referred to above) and the creation of additional Green Belt at six locations in the borough.

Changes in area of designated ecological sites

- 8.6 As at 2018, there were 93 Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) covering a combined area of 1,589 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 has impacted on surveying and led to a delay in the publication of the 2019, 2020 and 2021 data. This section will be updated in future reports when more recent data is received.

8.7 Figure 8.2 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 8.2: Quality and quantity of SBIs in the borough

	2011	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of SBIs					
Grade A	36	36	36	36	36
Grade B	29	31	31	31	31
Grade C	27	24	24	26	26
Total	92	91	91	93	93
Area of SBIs (ha)					
Grade A	1,115	1,104	1,096	1,094	1,091
Grade B	348	359	359	359	359
Grade C	139	126	126	139	139
Total	1,602	1,589	1,581	1,593	1,589

Source: Wigan Council

8.8 This shows that the overall number of SBIs in the borough increased by one during the period 2011-2018, with an increase of two of district importance and the reduction of one with local importance. Despite this, there has been a reduction of 13 hectares within this timeframe.

8.9 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.

8.10 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).

8.11 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

- 8.12 Figure 8.3 sets out estimated annual levels of greenhouse gases emitted from traffic and railways in the borough in the period 2011-20¹. The Local Plan Core Strategy sets a target for a reduction over time.
- 8.13 The data shows that emissions reduced by 7.5 kilo tonnes over the period 2011-19 with reductions particularly on A Roads. Emissions on minor roads have increased in this timeframe.
- 8.14 The data also shows that emissions from traffic reduced markedly in 2020, by over 80 kilo tonnes on 2019 rates, primarily as a result of reduced rates of travel during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 8.3: Greenhouse gas emission estimates (2011-20) – kilo tonnes

Year	Road transport				Diesel Rail-ways	Transport Other	Transport Total
	A Roads	Motor-ways	Minor roads	Road transport total			
2011	188.4	138.6	179.6	506.6	6.7	7.3	520.6
2012	182.1	139.6	178.7	500.3	6.8	7.2	514.3
2013	173.8	137.6	180.1	491.5	6.9	7.5	505.9
2014	172.7	137.7	186.2	496.6	7.1	7.6	511.2
2015	175.4	141.3	189.8	506.5	6.8	7.8	521.2
2016	173.3	145.3	193.8	512.4	6.7	7.9	527.0
2017	166.7	144.4	196.3	507.4	6.6	8.2	522.2
2018	156.3	139.4	204.1	499.8	6.2	8.5	514.5
2019	149.5	135.5	212.8	497.8	6.5	8.8	513.1
2020	121.4	114.4	184.5	420.3	5.1	7.6	433.0

Source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Annual greenhouse gas emissions in the borough by sector

- 8.15 The strategic objective set in the Local Plan Core Strategy for energy is to strengthen our energy infrastructure and minimise emissions of greenhouse gases.
- 8.16 In 2019 Wigan Council declared a climate emergency and a target to reach net zero by 2038. The council also adopted an Outline Climate Change Strategy in August 2020 setting out how the 2038 net zero target will be reached and how progress will be monitored. These developments supersede the initial aims of this policy, and it is felt that the key environmental performance indicators around carbon emissions across the borough are a more important monitor of progress on low carbon development.

¹ Data on greenhouse gas emissions for 2021 and 2022 have not yet been released by national government

8.17 Figure 8.4 shows annual greenhouse gas emission estimates (kilo tonnes) in the borough from 2013, when the Core Strategy was adopted, to 2020 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.

Figure 8.4: Annual greenhouse gas emissions in the borough by sector

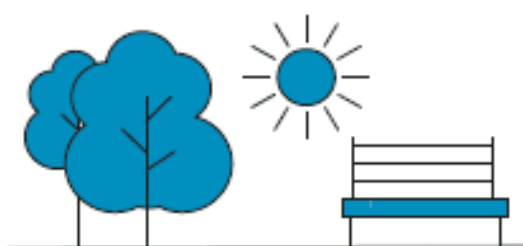
Calendar Year	Greenhouse gas emissions by sector				
	Industry	Commercial	Public Sector	Domestic	Transport
2013	298.4	197.4	58.3	638.0	505.9
2014	273.4	171.0	50.4	537.7	511.2
2015	260.1	154.6	45.9	527.1	521.2
2016	241.1	124.4	39.9	494.9	527.0
2017	236.0	112.7	36.5	471.3	522.2
2018	233.8	106.0	34.9	464.9	514.5
2019	204.8	98.3	32.2	453.5	513.1
2020	210.3	89.9	30.1	438.8	433.0

Source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

9 People



93.2%
of pupils were offered places at their
first-choice primary school



70%
of the borough is open
greenspace



Life expectancy (yrs)

77.9 years for men	79.6 years for men
81.2 years for women	83.2 years for women
Wigan Borough	Nationally



62%
of adults in the
borough are
physically active,
lower than the
regional and
national average
of 65% and 66%
respectively



68.7%
of borough
residents are
overweight

Percentage of applicable schemes supported by a Health Impact Assessment

- 9.1 Policy CP1 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 2022 onwards and will be reported 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 assesses the value and quality of open space within the borough across various typologies.
- 9.5 A total of 33.36 hectares of open space has been approved for other land uses throughout the borough since April 2013 at a total of 36 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 open space lost 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 to residential development (0.94ha) from 3 applications. 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 2021/22

Planning Ref:	Address	Open Space Type	Area lost (ha)	Proposed new use
A/21/92090	Land north of Barracks Road, Bickershaw	Natural / semi natural greenspace	0.19	Residential
A/18/85947	Land at M6 Junction 25, Wigan	Woodland	0.72	Employment
A/21/90945	Open land north east of 73 Samuel Street, Atherton	Natural / semi natural greenspace	0.03	Residential

Source: Wigan Council

Community Asset Transfers

- 9.8 In response to financial challenges facing local government over recent years, the council has transferred a number of community buildings (plus land and other assets) into the ownership of the community, through Community Asset Transfers. Under lease, this gives community groups the responsibility for running, managing and maintaining community assets, including all the associated costs.
- 9.9 Under community control many vital facilities have gained a new lease of life, with community groups able to access funding and resources not available to the council, allowing them to invest and improve what they are able to offer to local people. Without this involvement the council would simply not be able to afford to keep all of these assets running.
- 9.10 There have been 32 successful transfers to community ownership since 2011 including 20 community buildings, 5 playing pitches, 2 allotments, a bowling green, an office/stores, a play garden, and a museum. As shown in Figure 9.2, this includes three community facilities that have been transferred during the monitoring period.

Figure 9.2: Community Asset Transfers (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022)

Asset	Tenant/Licensee/Operator	Asset type
Lowton Youth & Community Centre, Newton Road, Lowton	Lowton Community Hub Limited	Community building
Astley Green Colliery Museum	The Red Rose Steam Society Limited	Museum
Montrose Skills Hub, Wigan	Fur Clemt CIC	Community buildings

Source: Wigan Council