



**WIGAN**  
**HOUSING DELIVERY TEST**  
**ACTION PLAN**

**August 2019**

# Wigan Council Housing Delivery Action Plan

## 1. Introduction

The 2018 update of the National Planning Policy Framework introduced an annual Housing Delivery Test for all local planning authorities. The test 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. It is calculated as:

$$\text{Housing Delivery Test (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total net completions over three-year period}}{\text{Total number of homes required over three-year period}}$$

For Wigan the adopted housing requirement of 1,000 net dwellings per year set out in the Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2013) is used for years 2015/16 and 2016/17, and the Local Housing Need figure of 898 net dwellings is used for 2017/18. A standard methodology for calculating local housing need was introduced in national planning guidance in 2018. In line with national policy, this superseded the adopted housing requirement when the Local Plan Core Strategy became over five years old. As a result, the Local Housing Need figure will be used for subsequent housing delivery test calculations until the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework is adopted, which will set a new housing requirement for the borough.

The Government published the results of the first Housing Delivery Test for the period 2015/16 – 2017/18 in February 2019. The results for Wigan are set out below.

Number of homes required			Total number of homes required	Number of homes delivered			Total number of homes delivered	Housing Delivery Test 2018
2015/16	2016/17	2017/18		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18		
1,000	1,000	898	2,898	639	817	948	2,404	83%

The consequences for failing the test are:

- If delivery has been less than 95%, the council should produce an action plan to address the shortfall.
- If delivery has been less than 85%, the council should include a 20% buffer when calculating its five-year housing land supply.
- If delivery has been less than 75% the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies (during a transitional period, the threshold is set at 25% for 2018 and 45% for 2019).

In Wigan Borough only 83% of the homes required over the period were delivered and as a result, the council must include a 20% buffer on its five-year housing land supply. The 20% buffer was applied when the council established its five-year housing land supply position as part of the 2019 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This can be read at [www.wigan.gov.uk/shlaa](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/shlaa).

## **2. Housing delivery action plan**

This section details the measures and programmes Wigan Council and partners are undertaking to accelerate housing delivery in the borough.

### **Re-integration of Wigan and Leigh Homes to Wigan Council**

In April 2017 the responsibility for the management of the council's housing stock returned to Wigan Council, with staff employed by Wigan and Leigh Homes transferring to the council. This has allowed the council to integrate housing services into its wider corporate priorities.

The former Wigan and Leigh Homes new build and asset management teams have been integrated into the Growth and Housing Service alongside the planning functions. As a consequence, there is an enhanced range of specialist skills across the service, enabling strong strategic awareness, insight into the development process and commercial understanding of development viability. The service has developed a new approach to asset management in the council's existing stock through capital investment and planned maintenance programmes. This has assisted the delivery of new homes across the borough, through direct delivery and working in partnership with other housing providers, the private sector and funding bodies.

### **Direct delivery programme**

Wigan Council has undertaken the direct delivery of affordable housing for rent since 2010 and as of June 2019, 422 units have been delivered.

During 2018/19 two schemes were completed, delivering a total of 49 new homes: a supported housing scheme for clients with autism at Mayfield Road, Orrell and bungalows at Anthorn Road, Winstanley. As of June 2019, there are five schemes on site, delivering a further 156 homes which are scheduled to be completed in the next two years. These include a development of 60 family homes that is due to be completed by the end of August 2019, and two further autism schemes at Hyndelle Lodge in Hindley and Ullswater Avenue, Golborne.

The schemes on site have a value of £22m and have been funded by the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with a £4m Homes England grant. Wigan Council has also taken a number of affordable properties from developers on private housing sites via section 106 agreements. Further investment of £25m is planned to March 2022 in the delivery of a further 182 units across four sites which are either in pre-application discussions or have planning applications currently pending determination.

The programme focuses on meeting gaps in the market and ensuring that the supply of council properties meets future need. This includes an estate regeneration programme and specialist and supported housing that has been developed in partnership with health and social care colleagues to meet identified needs for those needing long term support.

In response to the lifting of the HRA borrowing cap, further work is underway to agree an enhanced direct delivery programme. A report setting out the proposed enhanced programme will be presented to Cabinet later in the year for approval.

### **Brownfield Land Supply Group**

The council has a Brownfield Land Supply Group supported by a brownfield enabling fund that aims to prioritise resources to bring forward the development of brownfield land in order to meet the borough's housing needs. Using the SHLAA and local intelligence the council has been able to establish a database of stalled sites that has been assessed to show the likelihood of the sites coming forward for residential use. The council shares details of sites with prospective developers and signposts stakeholders to colleagues in planning and to finance opportunities such as the GMCA Housing Investment Fund. The group also has access to a fund that is helping it to identify sites that need extra help to bring them forward, such as looking at costs and appraisals and site investigations to de-risk some sites. The Council actively seeks to support developers to address barriers to bringing development forward on sustainable brownfield sites.

### **Active engagement with partner landowners to bring forward a number of strategic housing sites in the Borough**

The council has a new Housing Partnerships team that provides direct links between landowners and developers and a variety of opportunities in the borough, both on brownfield sites, strategic sites and more recently in our town centres. The Housing Partnerships team has recently worked with volume housebuilders, registered providers and landowners to facilitate development sites to come forward and more recently has begun an engagement process with small to medium sized builders active in the borough, in an attempt to put together a range of support to bring forward smaller sites. The council is active in promoting strategic sites with partners and has recently brought to the market a significant amount of land jointly with a landowner at Westleigh Waterfront in Leigh, with more opportunities to follow.

### **A clear focus on regeneration through the preparation of a Strategic Regeneration Framework for Wigan, developing one for Leigh and the development of a framework for the regeneration of the Borough's District Centres**

In January 2019 Wigan Council published a strategic regeneration framework for Wigan Town Centre to provide a single integrated plan for the redevelopment of the area. The framework identifies delivering town centre residential development as a strategic priority underpinning the vision for the town centre and identifies the interventions necessary to achieve this. A similar framework is being developed for Leigh and a development framework is also being developed for the borough's 13 district centres. Residential will feature strongly in both frameworks to diversify use and increase vitality and footfall in the town centre.

## **Actively pursuing external funding such as Housing Infrastructure Fund to accelerate the delivery of brownfield housing sites**

The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) is a government capital grant programme providing funding for new physical infrastructure necessary to support housing development. In May 2019 Wigan Council and Bolton Council submitted a joint bid for £186.3million of forward funding towards 17km of new roads connecting Junction 26 of the M6 motorway and Junction 5 of the M61 motorway. This will support the delivery of 12,960 homes, 8,918 of which are in Wigan, across the Wigan and Bolton Growth Corridor identified in the GMSF.

The council is also currently bidding for the government's Future High Streets Fund and Historic England's High Streets Heritage Action Zones fund, both of which will be used in part to support residential development in Wigan town centre. Wigan has been successful at the Expression of interest stage for the Future High Streets Fund.

## **Preparing an annual update of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

The Council will continue to prepare an annual update of the SHLAA to identify additional sites that are potentially suitable and available for housing development that could increase delivery rates, including public sector land and brownfield land. This includes engaging with key stakeholders to obtain up-to-date information on the build out of current sites, identify any barriers, and discuss how these can be addressed and promoting awareness of these sites to the wider development industry.

## **The progression of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), which will increase the supply of suitable land for homes**

Wigan Council is working in partnership with the nine other Greater Manchester councils to develop the GMSF, a new strategic plan for the city-region up to the year 2037. A draft of the GMSF, also known as the Greater Manchester's Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment, was consulted on in early 2019. Representations received during the consultation are currently being considered before the plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The plan is scheduled to be adopted in 2021.

The plan includes proposals to release two sites from the Green Belt for housing, on land at Mosley Common and West of Gibfield, with a total capacity for 1,900 homes. These sites were selected using strict site selection criteria to ensure that sites are in the most accessible and viable locations. The draft GMSF includes policies which aim to increase the density of new homes, increase the supply of affordable housing and encourage innovation in the design and development of new housing. It also identifies the Wigan and Bolton Growth Corridor as an area of significant residential development.

It will also set a new housing requirement for the borough. This figure will be higher than Wigan's Local Housing Need to reflect council's ambitions for growth.

### **3. Monitoring**

The council actively monitors the net housing completions in the borough as part of the preparation of the SHLAA and its submission to the Housing Flows Reconciliation return each year. It is confident that the measures outlined above will assist in boosting housing delivery in the years ahead in order to both address the shortfall in previous years demonstrated by its housing delivery test result and to meet its ambitious housing requirements that will be set in the GMSF. Indeed, housing completions for the year 2018/19 were 1,350, significantly above the borough's Local Housing Need for the same period.