

# **Wigan Local Development Framework Core Strategy**

## **Sustainability appraisal of the strategic spatial options**

**Interim Report - Version 2**  
**January , 2009**

### **Contents**

|             |   |              |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| <b>1.0</b>  | <b>Introduction</b>                         | <b>1</b>     |
| <b>2.0</b>  | <b>Methods</b>                              | <b>1</b>     |
| 2.1         | Who did the sustainability appraisal?       | 1            |
| 2.2         | The Community appraisal workshop            | 2            |
| <b>3.0</b>  | <b>Appraisal Results - Spatial Option 1</b> | <b>3-7</b>   |
| <b>4.0</b>  | <b>Appraisal Results - Spatial Option 2</b> | <b>8-12</b>  |
| <b>5.0</b>  | <b>Appraisal Results - Spatial Option 3</b> | <b>13-17</b> |
| <b>6.0</b>  | <b>Appraisal Results - Spatial Option 4</b> | <b>18-23</b> |
| <b>7.0</b>  | <b>Appraisal Results - Spatial Option 5</b> | <b>24-28</b> |
| <b>8.0</b>  | <b>‘Best’ and ‘worst’</b>                   | <b>29</b>    |
| <b>9.0</b>  | <b>Limitations of the appraisal results</b> | <b>30</b>    |
| <b>10.0</b> | <b>What happened next?</b>                  | <b>30</b>    |
| <b>11.0</b> | <b>Consultation and involvement</b>         | <b>31</b>    |

## 1.0 Introduction

Sustainability appraisal is a way of checking our plans and proposals to see what effect they might have on the environment, economy and our general quality of life.

To make sure we are concentrating on the most important issues, we collected lots of evidence. This information helped us to set up a sustainability checklist (which consists of 18 objectives).

By checking our plans and proposals against each objective in the checklist we were able to make them more sustainable. We could also compare the different options to see which performed best against the various sustainability objectives. We compared five spatial options for how we should focus and locate future development in the Borough. This helped us to understand what impacts each could have on sustainability if these general approaches were followed.

**Option 1:** Focus development on the east of the Borough.

**Option 2:** Focus development on the west of the Borough.

**Option 3:** Focus development on outer parts of the Borough.

**Option 4:** Focus development in inner parts of the Borough.

**Option 5:** Dispersed development across the Borough.

## 2.0 Methods

The diagrams that follow (in the results section) show the positive and negative impacts of each of these five spatial options against all 18 sustainability objectives. The more green blocks there are, the more positive the impacts are in relation to that sustainability objective. The more red blocks there are, the more negative the impacts are for that sustainability objective. There is a guide to the right of each diagram explaining just how positive or negative the impacts are.

At this stage it was not possible for us to accurately determine the full impacts of each option, because they could have differed depending upon the type of development and how it was implemented. We made some assumptions about the type and quality of development; generally adopting a precautionary approach in determining the likely impacts.

This appraisal helped to outline what effects each option would be likely to have on the sustainability objectives. It did not make the decision as to what approach we would follow, but helped us to pick the best parts of different options to achieve the best balance against the objectives (*and helped shape the details of policies for the type of development and how it is implemented to ensure that it is sustainable*).

### 2.1 Who did the sustainability appraisal?

The sustainability appraisal process was coordinated and completed by the council's sustainability officer with support from members of the council's Sustainability Team and Planning Policy Team.

However, many more people were involved in carrying out the sustainability appraisal of the five spatial options. We asked for input from a range of council officers and partner organisations that have experience and knowledge in specific aspects of sustainability. For example, for the health objective, we involved members of the NHS Primary Care Trust in the appraisal of the five options; for the community safety objective we involved officers from the council's Community Safety Team.

We sought further involvement from these participants, as well as encouraging more people to get involved in the process as it progressed.

## 2.2 Community appraisal workshop

We also held a sustainability appraisal workshop where we invited community representatives to carry out a more simplified sustainability appraisal of the five spatial options. This provided us with a cross reference against the results we had gathered from the 'formal' sustainability appraisal and it also offered us a different perspective (a 'community view').

The workshop was organised and delivered by the council's Sustainability Team. Five community representatives attended the event. Whilst we acknowledge that the attendees were not fully representative of the community, they were nevertheless able to represent the views of a diverse section of the Wigan population. They also had knowledge and interest in specific areas of sustainability.

At the event we gave an introduction to sustainability and a brief overview of the Local Development Framework; explaining the process and the five spatial options that we would be appraising. We also provided a summary of some of the borough's environmental, social and economic characteristics and the key issues that we established through the scoping report. This took the form of maps, statistics and summarising statements, and was intended to help the community representatives understand the existing baseline position. We referred to this information throughout the workshop to help determine what the impacts of the spatial options might be with a degree of supporting evidence.

We then asked the community representatives to identify the social, environmental and economic impacts of each spatial option. Due to time constraints, it was agreed during the workshop session to focus on the issues that were of most concern to the attendees. These were:

- Transport
- Business / jobs / employment
- Housing and communities
- Built heritage
- Climate Change
- Landscapes and countryside
- Biodiversity / wildlife.

The results we gathered from this workshop have been incorporated into the 'formal' sustainability appraisal report, and were taken into consideration.

In many instances, the issues identified from the community workshop were very similar to those identified through the 'formal' appraisal process. However, in some instances there were differences, which have been highlighted.

We have recorded the comments from the workshop alongside the formal appraisal commentary for each spatial option. However, the scores have not been influenced by community workshop comments as they are not necessarily supported by hard evidence. They do however, provide a useful check on our assessments and have prompted us to check our findings where there are notable differences of opinion about the impacts that the spatial options would have.

### Further information

This interim appraisal report should be read in conjunction with the [Core Strategy Issues and Options Report](#). For more information about sustainability appraisal please visit our website ([www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk))

This is where we have put any other sustainability appraisal documents, for example, our [scoping report](#), which contains our evidence and more detail about the methods we are using for the appraisal process.

The focus of this option is the townships of Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley and Astley and the eastern extents of Golborne and Lowton and Hindley and Abram townships. This area would accommodate around 75% of the new housing and employment development, which equates to around 300 hectares of housing development and up to 125 hectares of employment development.

The map displays the ward boundaries for Wigan and its surrounding areas. The wards are labeled as follows:

- Standish
- Shevington
- Aspull/Haigh
- Wigan
- Ince
- Orrell
- Billinge
- Pemberton
- Hindley
- Atherton
- Platt Bridge
- Tyldesley
- Leigh
- Ashton in Makerfield
- Golborne

A large blue oval highlights the central area, which includes the wards of Wigan, Ince, Hindley, Atherton, Tyldesley, Leigh, and Platt Bridge.

## How 'sustainable' is this option?

- 3

- There could be major positive impacts on community safety and health in the east of the borough, where we know these are particular issues. These positive impacts would slightly outweigh the fact that deprived communities in the west of the borough would not benefit as much from development.

### How does it compare with the other options?

This option has fewer positive impacts than option 4 and the negatives are more pronounced, although it is better for the borough's wildlife habitats and for air quality than option 4. However, this option is much more 'sustainable' than option 3 (outer), which has far fewer positive and far more negative impacts. This option has very similar impacts to option 2 (focus on the west), although it performs slightly better against some social objectives such as health and community safety.

### Detailed appraisal commentary against each sustainability objective (Option 1)

**1. Biodiversity** - Substantial development could have a detrimental impact on wildlife habitats and corridors in the east (*such as Astley and Bedford Mosses and Pennington Flash*). However, the proposed Greenheart regional park should help to enhance existing wildlife habitats and there would be excellent access from Leigh and Atherton. There would also be less pressure on wildlife habitats and biodiversity in the west of the borough.

**Comments from community workshop:** The impacts identified were similar to those outlined above: *"There could be increased pressure on wildlife habitats in the east (which could potentially break up an important wildlife corridor). But it would help protect biodiversity on the west of the borough."*

**2. Air quality** - Focused development in existing centres such as Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley is likely to result in increased traffic and congestion along routes to and from these areas. There could also be a general movement from west to east which would also increase congestion. This could impact upon some residents living close to main roads by worsening air quality. Alternative transport is not strong in this part of the borough (lack of rail links) so high levels of car use could persist or worsen unless there were significant improvements to infrastructure. However, focusing development in the east might relieve some of the congestion problems in the west of the borough, which has a higher number of people living close to main roads.

**3. Soil and minerals** - Soil quality may be maintained through increased development on previously developed land. However if there are not enough Brownfield sites quality may fall due to increased Greenfield development. The majority of the borough's best and most versatile agricultural land is located on the fringes of the east. However, it is unlikely this area will be developed. Known mineral reserves may well be sterilised by development. This will have to be determined and taken into account.

**4. Water** - There are existing identified flood risks from rivers, surface and ground water flooding. Development could have an adverse impact on the Glaze catchment and potentially effect areas downstream. There are opportunities (through capturing development values) to make use of the borough's water resources for business, tourism and recreation purposes (as part of the Greenheart Regional Park). This would need to be done in a sensitive way though.

**5. Landscapes** - Focusing development on the east would help to tackle two of the three remaining large areas of dereliction (which are in the Leigh area) by providing opportunities for development-led reclamation and regeneration. Focus on existing urban areas for development would also help to improve the interface between built environment and landscape. Although landscape and open space would be unaffected by development in the west, there could be damage to landscape quality and open space in the east if the amount and location of development is not carefully considered.

## Option 1 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**6. Built environment** - There are greater opportunities in the east (through available derelict land) to create new communities with sustainable identities by adopting modern design and construction methods. Local centres in the east have lost their character, so there would be an opportunity to reclaim cultural identity via the buildings and townscapes. There could be increased pressure on the historic environment in the east (for example Leigh, Tyldesley and Atherton town centres) but development can also be an opportunity through regeneration. Although development in the east could be of benefit to the built environment, it needs to be managed and controlled to ensure a positive impact. The type and quality of development will also determine impacts on the built environment, but we do not have enough detail at this stage to make accurate predictions. This needs to be considered at later stages of appraisal.

**7. Community Safety** - In revitalising deprived communities in the east and creating high quality and viable environments, crime and anti-social behaviour should be reduced. Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley town centres could also be made more welcoming, attractive and safe, depending on the mix of uses and quality of development. Leigh is the residual crime hotspot within the whole borough, with an endemic and chronic offending and drug using population, which drives this hotspot. Therefore, regeneration activity targeted here is likely to impact on a positive crime reduction outcome. In many cases the regeneration of basic infrastructure and housing would go some way to addressing some of the risk factors that generate criminality. Similar issues occur in a more dispersed way in the west, but these areas would be unlikely to benefit from development.

**8. Neighbourhood quality** - Development has the opportunity to enhance the character of the local environment with improvements in the public realm and the development of built structures of the highest design quality. A focus on the east could benefit existing neighbourhoods in and around Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley, some of which are of poor environmental quality. However, the achievement of positive outcomes will depend on the type and quality of development. These issues need to be considered in more detail at the preferred options stage. Communities in the west of the borough would not benefit as much from development activities if there was a focus on the east.

**9. Waste** - Focusing development in the east would increase the amount of waste generated in that area, but it need not be managed there. It is difficult to determine the impacts against waste objectives with any certainty at this stage.

**10. Health** - The east is poorly served compared to the rest of the borough in terms of health facilities (Wigan Borough Health Surveys), therefore development could have a positive impact if facilities and infrastructure were improved. Focused development may also enhance economic prosperity in the east. If the development was of a high quality with the right mix of uses, health and life expectancy should improve, particularly in those areas in the east with the highest health deprivation. However, due to poor transport links in this part of the borough, access to services and employment is more likely to be by car (which is not good for active lifestyles, social inclusion and local air quality). Therefore, public transport improvements would be necessary. The west of the borough is less likely to benefit from the positive aspects of development.

**11. Recreation** - There would be increased scope to meet shortfalls in the provision of open space and play facilities in the east of the borough (particularly in Leigh, Tyldesley, Bickershaw and Lowton) although too much development in the wrong locations could increase shortfalls in provision. There may also be increased opportunities to improve the cultural and leisure offer of Leigh, attracting visitors and influencing people to stay local more often.

## Option 1 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**12. Housing** - The housing market is relatively strong in Tyldesley and Astley (fringe of Manchester) but weaker in most other parts of the east. The market in these areas would need a boost (local employment generators). If it was there could be capacity to meet a high proportion of the borough's overall housing needs and substantially extend the range and choice of high quality housing, including 'affordable housing'. It could also assist in the regeneration of the considerable amount of older housing, particularly in Leigh. However it would be unlikely that at least 80% of new housing would be secured on Brownfield land. Residential development without employment opportunities could also result in localised housing market collapse in the more deprived areas. A focus on the east may also lead to restrained supply on the west of the borough, which could increase affordability problems there. There is a lack of mid-range housing in the east at present, therefore development needs to provide for this shortfall to ensure a vibrant housing market there. A lack of strategic transport links in the east could make it more difficult to regenerate and attract investment to this area though.

**Comments from community workshop:** The following impacts were identified for this option:

*"This option would create better housing in the east but excludes the west. It is not politically viable."*

**13. Education and learning** - It could improve educational achievement and the level of qualifications and skills in the adult population in the east of the borough, particularly in the areas that are most deprived in terms of education skills and training. Skills and training could be matched for work in the Manchester City region. Leigh College could have an important role and there may be a need to extend school provision. However, skills levels overall could remain a problem because areas in the west would not benefit much from focused development in the east.

**14. Community development** - It would help inequality and multiple deprivation in the east of the borough, including in some areas where it is most acute. It could also help to improve exchanges between communities and build cohesion. Communities in the west would not have the same opportunity to benefit from development, potentially creating bigger inequalities, unrest and tensions. To have a positive impact development needs to lead to good local job opportunities; good quality, affordable homes; environmental improvements and more accessible services for all. It is also important that communities are engaged and well-supported so that capacity for achievement and fulfilment within those communities is enhanced.

**15. Energy** - The East uses the least amount of domestic and industrial electricity and gas in the borough. It also has a high proportion of people without access to a vehicle. It has by far the lowest industrial/commercial use of electricity and gas in the borough at around half compared to other options. It has the lowest use of gas of all the options. New energy infrastructure may need to be provided to support new development of all types.

The energy efficiency of the built environment is dependant upon the type, form and specific design and construction of development, which is difficult to determine from the information provided at this stage. However, development *per se* is generally associated with greater energy consumption. Ultimately, the energy performance of buildings will be determined by building regulations and PPS1, although there are opportunities to exceed national standards on certain sites (for example the Bickershaw development). There are significant gaps in the evidence base at this stage that do not allow us to determine which spatial options would provide the best opportunities for renewable energy. We need to take account of PPS1 Supplement: Planning and Climate Change, which suggests studies should be undertaken to identify broad areas and specific sites that have potential for renewable energy production. Therefore, we need to carry out a detailed assessment of renewable energy potential in the borough to inform the preferred options.



## Option 1 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**16. Accessibility** - Measures to enhance bus travel and increase bus use could be secured and implemented as part of development proposals. It would also support the Leigh Guided Busway. The only rail stations are in the north and north-west of Atherton so, unless a good 'park and ride' scheme could be introduced, only development in those areas would help to increase rail use. Focusing development on the east of the borough could increase traffic congestion at junctions, particularly with the A580 East Lancashire Road and A579 Atherleigh Way. It could also lead to increased traffic noise and pollution in town centres. However, it would need to be supported by substantial new infrastructure to provide alternative means of travel - including the Guided Busway - and divert essential traffic. Development could only be permitted if this infrastructure was secured. It could also secure substantial gains for walking and cycling in the east, as these elements should be integral to the design and layout of development.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified were similar to those outlined above:

*"Potential to increase congestion. Problems travelling from east to west. No rail service in Leigh either".*

**17. Sustainable economy** - Could make Leigh a hub for office development, which would support a knowledge economy. Clusters of environmental technologies and services could be achieved due to the capacity available through this option. However, at this stage we are unable to determine the viability of those sites in terms of marketability for knowledge economy sectors. It is difficult to determine what business practices would be adopted at this stage. However, our emerging policy framework helps to ensure that sustainable business practices are implemented (Supplementary planning documents for development and air quality, development and protected species and travel plans). Focus on the east could improve standards of living and reduce inequalities in that area. However, the same opportunities for areas in the west would be limited. There may also be particular skills shortages in the east to support local employment in a knowledge economy.

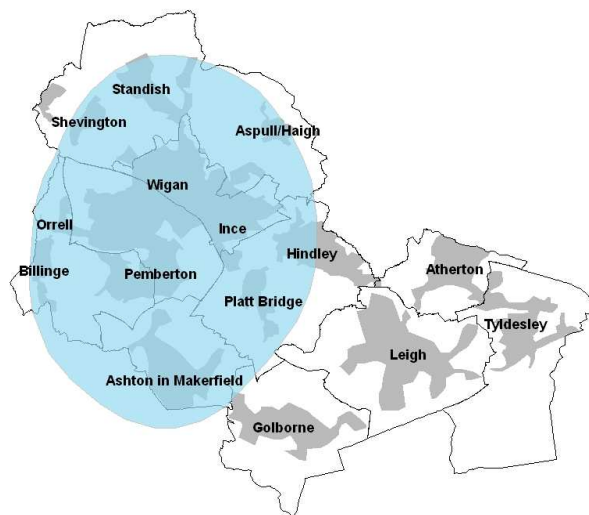
**18. Economy and employment** - There is good capacity for focused development with a number of sites that would be attractive to businesses, particularly safeguarded land. There are also several existing primary employment areas that are to be retained or have been identified as suitable for modernisation; giving opportunity for land and premises that meet modern business needs. Provided that the employment opportunities brought by new business match local skills, it could help tackle worklessness in this part of the borough (particularly in Leigh). Due to the proximity of the east of the Borough to the Salford / Manchester regional centre there is access to further job opportunities too, although the borough already has high level of out-commuting. However, focus of employment in the east could be detrimental to the west of the Borough.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified were similar to those outlined above, but there were some additional comments made at the workshop too:

*"Better opportunities to attract spill-over job opportunities from the Manchester / Salford centre. (Mixed use development here could be particularly beneficial for that reason as it would support access to jobs and services locally). Access to any spill-over jobs would be less for those in the west though (But, the economy is thought to be stronger in the west anyway and public transport links to the regional centre are stronger too)."*



The main reason for considering this option is that Wigan is the largest town in the borough. While it is more distant from the rest of the Manchester city region, there are good rail connections to the regional centre and good rail and motorway links to the Liverpool and central Lancashire city regions, and further afield on main 'west coast' routes. The town is also already a significant sub-regional economic hub in its own right.

[illegible]

- This option would not have a particularly positive impact on the borough's 'natural' environment, but any negative impacts on the environment would only be moderate. It is possible that some wildlife habitats and other environmental 'resources' such as soil, water and landscapes could be adversely affected in the west of the borough, but areas in the east would be under less pressure.
- It is also possible that the character of the built (historic) environment in the west could be eroded, although there also good opportunities for regeneration-led development in this part of the borough.
- There are major positive impacts against economic objectives, as Wigan has a number of attractive sites for business growth, and could become a hub for office development; supporting a knowledge - based economy. Provided that the employment opportunities brought by new business matched local skills, it could help tackle worklessness and increase prosperity in this part of the borough. As a result there could be moderate-to-major positive impacts on social inclusion in the west (*where there a large concentrations of deprived communities*). However, deprived communities in the east would not benefit from the positive aspects of development as much and could become further isolated; which would have negative impacts across the range of social and economic objectives.

- This option could lead to greater levels of traffic and congestion in areas that already suffer, such as Wigan town centre. As there are higher concentrations of people living near to main roads, there could be an adverse effect on human health due to poorer air quality. However, there are better rail and public transport links and greater scope to reduce car use in the west of the borough. Focusing development in the west might also relieve some of the congestion problems in the east.

### How does it compare with the other options?

- On balance this is not as 'sustainable' as spatial option 4 (focus on inner areas) which has more positive and fewer negative impacts in total. However, it does have fewer negative and more positive impacts than option 3 (focus on outer areas). Although it has slightly more negatives than option 5 (dispersed development) it is far more positive on balance. This option has a similar impact to option 1 (focus on the east).

### Detailed appraisal commentary against each sustainability objective (Option 2)

**1. Biodiversity** - Substantial development in the west could have a detrimental impact on the habitats in the western side of the borough including the Wigan Flashes. However, the proposed Greenheart regional park should improve habitats and there would be excellent access from Wigan, Aston and Hindley. There would also be less pressure on wildlife habitats in the east of the borough (such as Astley and Bedford mosses which are of European importance).

**Comments from community workshop:** The impacts identified were very similar to those outlined above:

*"There could be increased pressure on wildlife habitats in the west. But it would help protect biodiversity on the east of the borough (including an important wildlife corridor)"*

**2. Air quality** - Focused development in the west of the borough could lead to greater levels of traffic and congestion into areas that already suffer, such as Wigan town centre. As there are higher concentrations of people living near to main roads, there could be an adverse effect on human health due to poorer air quality. However, there are better rail links and greater scope to reduce car use in the west of the borough. Focusing development in the west might also relieve some of the congestion problems in the east.

**3. Soil and minerals** - Soil quality may be maintained through increased development on previously developed land. However if there are not enough Brownfield sites quality may fall due to increased Greenfield development. Pockets of agricultural land could be affected although this is unlikely. Known mineral reserves may well be sterilised by development. This will have to be determined and taken into account.

**4. Water** - There are existing identified flood risks from rivers, surface and ground water flooding in Wigan. Development could impact on the Douglas catchment and potentially effect areas downstream. Focused development in this area could require the sequential and exception tests being applied. There are opportunities (through capturing development values) to make use of the borough's water resources for business, tourism and recreation purposes (as part of the Greenheart Regional Park). This would need to be done in a sensitive way though. The use of water in a sustainable / efficient way would need to be secured through design / layout and does not really differ between the five spatial options. These 'thematic' issues need to be considered, although they are influenced by national and regional policy.

## Option 2 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**5. Landscapes** - Focus on existing urban areas for development would help to improve the interface between the built environment and landscape. It would also help to tackle dereliction by providing opportunities for development-led reclamation and regeneration. Although landscape and open space would be unaffected by development in the east, there could be damage to landscape quality and open space in the west if the amount and location of development is not carefully considered.

**6. Built environment** - The built environment has a higher density and the opportunities to create new distinctive identities / communities are limited because development opportunities are likely to be more fragmented (due to smaller in-fill sites spread over a larger area). The cumulative effect of this could erode established character. There could also be increased pressure on the historic environment in the west (for example Pemberton, Orrell, Ashton and Wigan) but development can also be an opportunity through regeneration. Although development in the west could be of benefit to the built environment, it needs to be managed and controlled to ensure a positive impact.

**7. Community Safety** - In revitalising deprived communities in the west and creating high quality and viable environments, crime and anti-social behaviour should be reduced. Wigan, Ashton, Hindley and Platt Bridge centres could also be made more welcoming, attractive and safe, depending on the mix of uses and quality of development. The west (particularly south of Wigan town centre) contains a concentration of crime and offenders. Therefore, regeneration activity targeted here is likely to impact on a positive crime reduction outcome. In many cases the regeneration of basic infrastructure and housing would go some way to addressing some of the risk factors that generate criminality. However, similar issues occur more markedly in the east, but communities there would not be likely to benefit from development.

**8. Neighbourhood quality** - Development has the opportunity to enhance the character of the local environment with improvements in the public realm and the development of built structures of the highest design quality. A focus on the west could benefit existing neighbourhoods in and around Wigan, Ashton, Pemberton and Ince, some of which are of poor environmental quality. However, the achievement of positive outcomes will depend on the type and quality of development. These issues need to be considered in more detail at the preferred options stage. Communities in the east of the borough would not benefit as much from development activities if there was a focus on the west.

**9. Waste** – Focusing development in the west would increase the amount of waste generated in that area, but it need not be managed there. It is difficult to determine the impacts against waste objectives with any certainty at this stage.

**10. Health** - Focused development may enhance economic prosperity in the west. If the development was of a high quality with the right mix of uses, health and life expectancy should improve, particularly in those areas in the west with the highest health deprivation. However, focused development in Ashton and Wigan town centre could worsen existing air quality issues in those areas. There are already good health care facilities in the west of the borough with good capacity for further development; although access to these is an issue from some communities. Whilst life opportunities could be improved for communities in the west, some communities in the east could become further disadvantaged and they already suffer from poorer access to services.

**11. Recreation** - There would be increased scope to meet shortfalls in the provision of open space and play facilities in the west of the borough (particularly in Appley Bridge, Winstanley and west Wigan) although too much development in the wrong locations could increase shortfalls in provision. There may be increased opportunities to enhance the cultural and leisure offer in Wigan, but Leigh would not benefit as much from development and regeneration.

## Option 2 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**12. Housing** - The housing market is relatively strong in Standish, parts of Wigan and Ashton but weaker in other parts of Wigan, Hindley and Platt Bridge. The market in these areas would need a boost. If it was there could be capacity to meet a high proportion of the borough's overall housing needs and substantially extend the range and choice of high quality housing, including 'affordable housing'. It could also assist in the regeneration of the considerable amount of older housing, especially in Wigan. However it could be that in excess of 20% of new housing would have to be delivered on 'greenfield' brownfield land. The west is mostly areas of high demand with some pockets of low demand. The west also has better transport links, which would be more attractive to new residents and developers. However, there appears to be more community resistance to development in parts of the West. Residents in the east may also suffer due to an increased disparity in house prices between the east and west. This could affect patterns of migration within the borough.

**Comments from community workshop:** The following impacts were identified for this option:

*"This option would create better housing in the west but excludes the east. It is not politically viable."*

**13. Education and learning** - It could improve educational achievement and the level of qualifications and skills in the adult population in the west of the borough, including in a majority of areas that are most deprived in terms of education skills and training. Skills and training could be matched for work in the Manchester, Liverpool and central Lancashire city regions. Wigan, St John Rigby RC and Winstanley colleges could all have an important role and there may be a need to extend school provision. Skills and qualification levels in the east of the borough could remain poor if we focused on the west.

**14. Community development** - It would help inequality and multiple deprivation in the west of the borough, including a majority of the areas where it is most acute. It could also help to improve exchanges between communities and build cohesion. Communities in the east would not have the same opportunity to benefit from development, potentially creating bigger inequalities, unrest and tensions. To have a positive impact development needs to lead to good local job opportunities; good quality, affordable homes; environmental improvements and more accessible services for all. It is also important that communities are engaged and well-supported so that capacity for achievement and fulfilment within those communities is enhanced.

**15. Energy** – This area has a relatively low proportion of people without access to a vehicle. Industrial/commercial use is dominated by a small pocket in the Marsh Green/Kitt Green area where there are large factories and industrial units. New development would have to take into account the energy infrastructure that already exists and the intensity of energy use in the area. Disruption to supply could severely impact on current high energy users.

The energy efficiency of the built environment is dependant upon the type, form and specific design and construction of development, which is difficult to determine from the information provided at this stage. However, development *per se* is generally associated with greater energy consumption. Ultimately, the energy performance of buildings will be determined by building regulations and PPS1, although there are opportunities to exceed national standards on certain sites. There are significant gaps in the evidence base at this stage that do not allow us to determine which spatial options would provide the best opportunities for renewable energy. We need to take account of PPS1 Supplement: Planning and Climate Change, which suggests studies should be undertaken to identify broad areas and specific sites that have potential for renewable energy production. Therefore, we need to carry out a detailed assessment of renewable energy potential in the borough to inform the preferred options.

## Option 2 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**16. Accessibility** - Measures to enhance bus and rail travel, increase bus and rail use and improve interchange could be secured and implemented as part of development proposals, especially in Wigan. It would support the proposed Wigan transport hub and improved bus links from Ashton to Newton-le-Willows. These would facilitate commuting by public transport to work in the Manchester and Liverpool regional centres, Preston, Warrington and St Helens. Focusing development on the west of the borough could increase traffic congestion, particularly on the A49 north-south and A577 east-west routes and at M6 motorway junctions. It could also lead to increased traffic noise and pollution in town centres. However, it would need to be supported by substantial new infrastructure, including the A49 Westwood Link Road and the Wigan Inner Relief Road, to facilitate improvements for sustainable means of travel and to divert essential traffic. Development could only be permitted if this infrastructure was secured. It could also secure substantial gains for walking and cycling in the west, as these elements should be integral to the design and layout of development.

**Comments from community workshop:** The impacts identified at the workshop were quite similar to some of those outlined above:

*“Potential to increase congestion. Problems travelling from east to west too. However, existing public transport links are quite good in the west”.*

**17. Sustainable economy** - Could make Wigan a hub for office development, which would support a knowledge economy. Clusters of environmental technologies and services could be achieved due to the capacity available through this option. And we know that sites such as Westwood & Pemberton are viable locations for knowledge economy sectors. It is difficult to determine what business practices would be adopted at this stage. However, our emerging policy framework helps to ensure that sustainable business practices are implemented (Supplementary planning documents for development and air quality, development and protected species and travel plans). Focus on the west could improve standards of living and reduce inequalities in that area. However, the same opportunities for areas in the east would be limited. There may also be skills shortages in the east to support local employment in a knowledge economy.

**18. Economy and employment** - There is capacity for focused development. There are some sites that are attractive to businesses, with some safeguarded land in Bryn and possibly Standish. There are also several existing primary employment areas that are to be retained or have been identified as suitable for modernisation; giving opportunity for land and premises that meet modern business needs. There is a nucleus of primary employment areas at Westwood Park, Pemberton Park, Wallgate and Wigan Pier with additional potential in the Eastern Gateway to develop Wigan south-central as a location for regional significant economic development. This option makes the optimum use of Wigan as a hub for office development and sustainable transport. Provided that the employment opportunities brought by new business match local skills, it could help tackle worklessness in this part of the borough. Further job opportunities would be accessible in each of the city regions, although levels of out-commuting are already high. However, the option could limit potential of the east of the borough for providing economic development, which is less established.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified at the workshop were similar to some of those outlined above:

*“Less opportunity of ‘spill-over’ jobs being created in the borough on the fringes of the regional centre; although public transport access to Manchester is good. However, it is thought that there is a stronger economy in the west, which could be built upon (particularly office based development in Wigan town centre). It would be detrimental to economic prosperity in the east of the borough though and reduce opportunities to improve public transport infrastructure in the east.”*



The focus of this option would be the townships of Standish, Aspull and Shevington; Orrell, Billinge and Winstanley; Ashton and Bryn; and Golborne and Lowton; the south of Leigh and Astley. These areas would accommodate around 75% of the new housing and employment development, which equates to around 300 hectares of housing development and up to 125 hectares of employment development. The balance of development would be in the inner area of the borough.

A map of Wigan divided into wards. The wards are labeled as follows: Standish, Shevington, Aspall/Haigh, Wigan, Orrell, Billinge, Ince, Hindley, Atherton, Platt Bridge, Tyldesley, Leigh, Ashton in Makerfield, and Golborne. Some wards are shaded light blue (Standish, Shevington, Aspall/Haigh, Orrell, Billinge, Tyldesley), some are grey (Wigan, Ince, Hindley, Atherton, Leigh, Golborne), and others are white (Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Ashton in Makerfield).

### How 'sustainable' is this spatial option?

- 13



- It could help to alleviate air quality issues by drawing traffic away from inner areas, although conversely, it could create more problems due to increased car traffic and development close to existing air quality management areas. It may also reduce pressure on wildlife habitats and corridors which run through the centre of the borough. However, access to the Greenheart Regional Park would be poor and opportunities for habitat enhancement reduced. There would also be a moderate-to-major negative impact on the borough's soil and mineral resources, and flood risk would be increased.

### How does it compare with the other spatial options?

- On balance this is the least 'sustainable' spatial option; it results in many more negative impacts than any other option and has fewer positive impacts in total than the other four options. It only performs marginally better than spatial options 1, 2 and 4 in terms of air quality.

### Detailed appraisal commentary against each sustainability objective (Option 3)

**1. Biodiversity** - Substantial development in Astley could have a detrimental impact in part of Astley and Bedford mosses within the Manchester Mosses Special Area for Conservation. Development could also have an impact on other wildlife habitats in these areas (including SSSIs and SBIs). Development in shevington could have an adverse impact on pockets of ancient woodland. The areas are remote from the proposed Greenheart regional park, meaning access would be poor and opportunities for enhancement may be reduced. However, there would be less pressure on important habitats and wildlife corridors in the central spine of the borough, which could be particularly important given the increased pressures on biodiversity that climate change poses.

**Comments from community workshop:** The impacts identified at the workshop were similar to those outlined above. Additional comments were as follows:

*"In some instances there are also better opportunities to enhance the habitats in outer areas (which are not of great quality)".*

**2. Air quality** - This could reduce congestion in inner parts of the borough if services and employment were provided in outer-areas and accessed by local people. However, there would be a greater reliance on private car use due to the lack of rail and bus links in most of the outer areas. Increased use of the M6 and A580 is likely which could also reduce pressure on main roads throughout the borough and move the source of pollution (vehicles) away from the receptor (people). However, caution would need to be taken to ensure that residential development was not located too close to the motorway, A580 and other major routes (because this could increase exposure to poor air quality in existing air quality management areas). Increased travel to and between the outer areas from within the borough could also have an adverse impact upon air quality on some of the boroughs major roads.

**3. Soil and minerals** - It is likely that soil quality will be reduced due to increased greenfield development as well as possible losses of the boroughs best and most versatile agricultural land if the development required exceeded the brownfield capacity in that area. Would not provide a focus for tackling contaminated land overall. Known mineral reserves may well be sterilised by development. This will have to be determined and taken into account.

### Option 3 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**4. Water** - Development is possible on Greenfield in safeguarded and greenbelt allocations. This could increase runoff, potentially leading to greater flood risk and poorer water quality both within and outside the borough. Development within catchment areas (Glaze brook catchment) could increase contribution to and exposure to flood risk. The use of water in a sustainable / efficient way would need to be secured through design / layout and does not really differ between the five spatial options. These 'thematic' issues need to be considered, although they are influenced by national and regional policy. There are fewer opportunities to make use of the borough's water resources for business, tourism and recreation purposes (as part of the Greenheart Regional Park).

**Comments from community workshop:** The following impacts were identified:

*"Increased land-take would affect drainage patterns and increase flood risk".*

**5. Landscapes** - This would not help in derelict land reclamation since most of the derelict land is not in the outer areas. It is also likely to detract from landscape quality and built environment / landscape interface by promoting primarily greenfield development on the edge of the urban area. There would probably be increased pressure on large areas of the countryside, with a loss of open space, landscape character and distinctiveness.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified were similar to those outlined above. However, some additional issues were raised:

*"There would be a very negative impact on greenspace and open countryside. A lot of the countryside is not of high quality, so it could become even more degraded with focused development in outer areas. Greater loss of land would also reduce capacity for carbon dioxide absorption from vegetation and soils."*

**6. Built environment** - Focused development in the outer areas could have a detrimental impact on the identity and character of historically small and widespread communities. Increased density in these areas would erode existing character. There would be fewer opportunities for sustainable design than in other parts of the borough because the existing communities are small and widespread.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified were similar to those outlined above. However, some additional issues were raised:

*"There would be a loss of heritage / local distinctiveness in the outer areas". "Lower density living has been associated with higher emissions of greenhouse gases. The need for new infrastructure and materials uses energy, raw materials and other resources (embedded co2). This option could also reduce pressure for development in the built-up town centres, which could be positive for adaptation to climate change".*

**7. Community Safety** - This option could improve the quality of the environment in outer areas helping to reduce crime and anti social behaviour. However, these issues are not generally as pronounced compared to more deprived areas elsewhere in the Borough. Critically, there would be less opportunities for unemployed residents in deprived communities (who may be bordering criminality) to access employment (which can act as a protective factor and contribute to overall crime reduction). Therefore, this option is likely to widen the inequality gap between the most deprived areas and more affluent parts of the borough. This option is also more likely to attract cross border crime in any housing development. Therefore it would be critical that any estate development was subject to clear accredited secure by design practice (layout, build, lighting etc.).

**8. Neighbourhood quality** - Development has the opportunity to enhance the character of the local environment with improvements in the public realm and the development of built structures of the highest design quality. This option could enhance existing communities in the outer parts of the borough. However, these areas are generally of better quality than those in 'inner areas', and this could reinforce current trends.

### Option 3 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**9. Waste** - Focusing development in the outer areas would increase the amount of waste generated in that area, but it need not be managed there. It is difficult to determine the impacts against waste objectives with any certainty at this stage.

**10. Health** - Focused development in the outer parts of the borough could lead to increased levels of car use, leading to congestion and air quality issues. Although the outer areas could benefit from development by creating more prosperous and viable communities, a loss of amenity space is also possible. This option is also likely to further exclude deprived communities (that are concentrated in the heart of the borough) and increase 'gaps' in health. Although health deprivation is relatively low in the outer areas, healthcare facilities are generally more distant. Substantial development (with significant population growth) may need to be accompanied by enhanced provision.

**11. Recreation** - There would be increased scope to meet shortfalls in the provision of open space and play facilities in the outer areas (particularly in the far west and the far east) although too much development in the wrong locations could increase shortfalls in provision. Focused development in the outer areas would not benefit as strongly from the opportunities for recreation offered by the Greenheart Regional Park, although there would probably be less development pressure on green and open space in the inner areas. There may be increased opportunities to enhance the cultural and leisure offer in Ashton, but the main centres would not benefit as much from development and regeneration.

**12. Housing** - Most sites in outer areas would be very attractive to commercial house-builders. There could be capacity to meet a high proportion of the borough's overall housing needs and substantially extend the range and choice of high quality housing in the outer areas, including 'affordable housing' where it is most needed. However it would be very unlikely that at least 80% of new housing would be secured on Brownfield land, with densities also likely to be lower than 40 dwellings per hectare. In addition, it would be likely that a lot of the housing supply would be taken by people working elsewhere, as it would be highly accessible, particularly by car. This could inflate prices, meaning that homes would not stay 'affordable' without over-development or control of the affordable element. There could also be migration from the inner core of the borough which would have an adverse impact on many of the boroughs deprived communities. It would also be difficult to cater for non-car demand. There could also be a lot of local resistance for development.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified were similar to those outlined above:

*"This option would not help to break-up tenure on deprived council estates (which would help tackle deprivation). Although some residents could be drawn to the outer areas if there was affordable housing there, this could lead to further problems in the most deprived communities of the borough".*

**13. Education and learning** - It could improve educational achievement and the level of qualifications and skills in the adult population, although not in areas that are most deprived in terms of education skills and training. There may be a need to extend school provision in the outer areas but there could be additional surplus school places in central areas.

**14. Community development** -Communities could become more vibrant and cohesive in the outer parts of the borough, which would be particularly beneficial to the relatively small 'pockets' of deprivation in some outer areas. However, the majority of the most deprived communities in the Borough are likely to become more isolated and unable to benefit from development. It could also lead to greater concentrations of minority groups (race, class, age) in deprived areas and widen existing inequalities.

**15. Energy** - This option contains the highest current energy use within the borough and that is dominated by the highest domestic energy use. However, it is comparatively low when considered per person. It also has the lowest industrial/commercial energy use. This option has the highest car ownership levels. New development would have to take into account the energy infrastructure, especially new industrial/commercial development.

The energy efficiency of the built environment is dependant upon the type, form and specific design and construction of development, which is difficult to determine from the information provided at this stage. However, development *per se* is generally associated with greater energy consumption. Ultimately, the energy performance of buildings will be determined by building regulations and PPS1, although there are opportunities to exceed national standards on certain sites (for example the Bickershaw development). There are significant gaps in the evidence base at this stage that do not allow us to determine which spatial options would provide the best opportunities for renewable energy. We need to take account of PPS1 Supplement: Planning and Climate Change, which suggests studies should be undertaken to identify broad areas and specific sites that have potential for renewable energy production. Therefore, we need to carry out a detailed assessment of renewable energy potential in the borough to inform the preferred options.

**Comments from the community workshop:** The following perceived impacts were identified at the workshop: *“Potentially better for renewable energy generation and sustainably designed places, as there are fewer of the constraints that heavily built up areas present”. “There could be less opportunity for decentralised energy supply.”*

**16. Accessibility** - Existing bus service patterns tend to operate ‘radially’, to and from Wigan and Leigh centres. With development focused around the edges of the borough it would be difficult to serve efficiently by public transport. New orbital services would be required. Only Bryn, Orrell and Shevington (Gathurst) are served by rail and services are relatively poor. Traffic congestion would increase substantially on routes to and from the motorways and A580 East Lancashire Road the borough and within the borough itself. It could also lead to increased traffic noise and pollution on those routes. Gains could be secured for walking and cycling in the outer areas, with a focus on short journeys to local centres, although development opportunities would be widely dispersed.

**Comments from the community workshop:** *“Focusing on the edges could encourage further out-commuting, and would also increase car travel. But there is potential to reduce congestion in the borough centres. It would discourage use of public transport. There would be an associated increase in greenhouse gas emissions.”*

**17. Sustainable economy** - Could provide good opportunities for 'clusters' of knowledge economy sectors around the edges of the Borough. A recent example of this is office developments at Stonecross Park (Golborne). However, this option is likely to increase inequalities as it would probably provide employment for people living outside the Borough rather than those in deprived areas. It is difficult to determine what business practices would be adopted at this stage. However, our emerging policy framework helps to ensure that sustainable business practices are implemented (Supplementary planning documents for development and air quality, development and protected species and travel plans).

**18. Economy and employment** - This option would provide the least capacity for focused development. However, the sites would be very attractive to businesses due to direct access to motorway networks and the A580. Therefore, levels of investment are likely to be high. There are existing primary employment areas providing scope for land and premises for modern business uses. However, it is likely that many of the jobs will be taken by people who live outside the Borough. The option provides good access to the city regions, although this would probably be by car and levels of out commuting are already very high.

**Comments from the community workshop:** The issues identified at the workshop were similar to those outlined above: *“This option would be very attractive to business as these are prime locations. It may help people from deprived areas into jobs, if they match local skills. But this means they would have to be low skilled / manual / industry etc... However, a knowledge based economy (which is what we are aiming for) is likely to exclude people in our deprived areas from accessing new jobs in the short term. Access to jobs across the borough may be more difficult too”.*



The focus of this option would be the towns of Wigan, Hindley and Platt Bridge together with the northern parts of Leigh and the west of Atherton. This area would accommodate around 75% of the new housing and employment development, which equates to around 300 hectares of housing development and up to 125 hectares of employment development.

### How 'sustainable' is this spatial option?

- 18

- There is also the potential for major negative impacts on the borough's wildlife habitats if development is not appropriate and sensitive; although opportunities for enhancement are equally possible.

### How does it compare with the other spatial options?

- On balance this is the most 'sustainable' spatial option; it has many more positive impacts than any of the other options across the range of sustainability objectives (particularly social and economic), and has fewer negative impacts in total. However, it does not perform much better or worse against some of the environmental objectives than options 1, 2 and 5. Notably, this option could have the worst impact on the borough's wildlife habitats than any other option. However, the potential to have a very positive impact on biodiversity is equally as high.

### Detailed appraisal commentary against each sustainability objective (Option 4)

**1. Biodiversity** - Substantial development in inner areas could have a very detrimental impact on some of the borough's most important wildlife habitat sites. It could also have a detrimental impact on the Pennington Flash, Wigan Flashes and associated wildlife corridors (fragmentation and disturbance). However, the proposed Greenheart regional park includes these areas and could actually help to enhance these wildlife habitats provided that development was of the highest quality.

**Comments from the community workshop:** The impacts identified at the workshop were similar to those outlined above, although some additional points were raised:

*"There could be increased pressure on wildlife habitats in the inner areas. However, there is greater potential for brownfield development in the inner areas, which would reduce this pressure. This option would also help to protect biodiversity in the outer parts of the borough". "But there could also be a loss of biodiversity from inner urban areas."*

**2. Air quality** - This could increase traffic and congestion on routes to and from the inner areas, and within the area itself. This could have a negative impact on air quality along existing roads, affecting the health of some residents and pedestrians. The type of development will also determine the impact on air quality, but we are unable to determine these at this stage. Conversely, development in the inner areas presents better opportunities to encourage improvements to and increased use of public transport, cycling and walking networks.

**3. Soil and minerals** - Soil quality may be maintained through increased development on previously developed land. However if there are not enough Brownfield sites quality may fall due to increased Greenfield development. Could also enable and increase opportunities to remediate areas of contaminated land in this area. Known mineral reserves may well be sterilised by development. This will have to be determined and taken into account.

**4. Water** - There are existing identified flood risks from rivers, surface and ground water flooding in Wigan. Development could impact on the Douglas and Glaze catchments and potentially effect areas downstream. Focused development in this area could require the sequential and exception tests being applied. There are good opportunities (through capturing development values) to make use of the borough's water resources for business, tourism and recreation purposes (as part of the Greenheart Regional Park). This would need to be done in a sensitive way though. The use of water in a sustainable / efficient way would need to be secured through design / layout and does not really differ between the five spatial options. These 'thematic' issues need to be considered, although they are influenced by national and regional policy.

**Comments from community workshop:** The following impacts were identified:

*"Development in denser areas could increase adverse climate change impacts such as localised flooding".*



## Option 4 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**5. Landscapes** - Likely to help tackle dereliction by providing opportunities for development-led reclamation and regeneration on the two major sites in the east and on smaller sites in the inner areas. However, could damage landscape quality if the amount and location of development is not carefully considered in central area of the borough. Likely to leave countryside and open land in outer areas of borough unaffected by development. But could detract from countryside and open land in central areas of borough by using it for development.

**Comments from community workshop:** The impacts identified were similar to those outlined above: *“There is more potential for development on brownfield land in the inner areas, which would also reduce the embedded greenhouse gases required for new development. It would also relieve pressure on the countryside in the outer areas “.*

**6. Built environment** - There are greater opportunities in the inner areas (through available derelict land) to create new communities with sustainable identities by adopting modern design and construction methods. There could be increased pressure on the historic environment in parts of the east and west. However, development can also be an opportunity through regeneration, particularly in the central core, where the built environment is degraded in parts and identity is fragmented and weak. This area also contains a historic core of towns, where much of the borough's heritage is located.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified were similar to those outlined above: *“There are concentrations of the borough's important built heritage in the inner areas (town centres in particular), which could be degraded by inappropriate development. Conversely, they could be exploited positively with appropriate development.”*

**7. Community Safety** - In revitalising deprived communities in the inner areas and creating high quality and viable environments, crime and anti-social behaviour should also be reduced. Wigan, Atherton, Hindley & Pemberton town centres and Platt Bridge and Ince local centres could be made more welcoming, attractive and safe, depending upon the mix of uses and quality of development. We know that there are a disproportionate number of offenders resident in these inner areas that are known to the criminal justice system. It is also known that purposeful activity, education training and employment, along with accommodation are the key components to long term criminal desistance strategies. Investment in these areas could include opportunities targeted at these groups. A successful approach here is potentially the biggest contributor to overall crime reduction in the borough.

**8. Neighbourhood quality** - Development has the opportunity to enhance the character of the local environment with improvements in the public realm and the development of built structures of the highest design quality. Focus on the inner areas could enhance the quality of the most of the borough's most deprived neighbourhoods, some of which have poor quality environments. However, the achievement of positive outcomes will depend on the type and quality of development. These issues need to be considered in more detail at the preferred options stage.

**9. Waste** - Focusing development in the inner areas would increase the amount of waste generated in that area, but it need not be managed there. It is difficult to determine the impacts against waste objectives with any certainty at this stage.

**10. Health** - Focused development may enhance economic prosperity in the heart of the borough. If the development was of a high quality with the right mix of uses, health and life expectancy should improve, particularly in those areas with the highest health deprivation. Because the inner areas contain the majority of the borough's deprived communities, this option is most likely to reduce health inequalities in the borough. But it is vital that development improves the quality of life for those in deprived communities (through access to jobs, housing and better facilities and high quality environments). There are good opportunities to improve access to greenspace through the Greenheart Regional Park (access to greenspace is thought to improve mental health and wellbeing). However, there may be air quality issues through the central part of the borough, which could affect physical and mental health.

## Option 4 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**11. Recreation** - There would be increased scope to meet shortfalls in the provision of open space, play, sport and recreation facilities in Leigh, Bickershaw, Hindley and south and west Wigan in particular, although too much development in the wrong locations could increase the shortfalls in provision. Focused development in this area could also improve access to greenspace and for interaction with wildlife through the Greenheart Regional Park, which will span most of the 'inner-area'. However, development needs to be environmentally sensitive or it could be very detrimental. There is also a need for development to enhance opportunities for walking and cycling as part of everyday life and provide more opportunities for people to participate in sport and physical recreation. Development in the inner areas of the borough would mean that such opportunities were close to the main centres of population. There would also be better opportunities to build upon cultural assets and leisure facilities, that are mostly located in and around Wigan and Leigh town centres.

**12. Housing** - The housing market is relatively weak in most parts of the inner area (mostly low value / high density) and would need a boost, including through substantial new infrastructure and environmental improvements. If this happened there could be capacity to meet a high proportion of the borough's overall housing needs and substantially extend the range and choice of high quality housing in inner areas, including the delivery of 'affordable housing'. It could also assist in the regeneration of the considerable amount of older housing stock that exists in the inner areas, including Wigan, Ince and Leigh. Overall the value of housing land could release a considerable amount of untapped potential in the inner areas. Also more scope for high-density development and improvements.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified at the workshop were similar to those outlined above:

*"Focusing housing in the deprived areas (breaking-up tenure) could have a positive impact on deprived communities. High quality development, such as at Trencherfield Mill / Salford Quays is also possible. It could also concentrate higher income earners onto the railway system."*

**13. Education and learning** - It could improve educational achievement and the level of qualifications and skills in the adult population, in inner areas that are most deprived in terms of education skills and training. Skills and training could be matched to opportunities for work in the borough and in the Manchester, Liverpool and central Lancashire city regions. Wigan and Leigh College, St John Rigby and Winstanley Colleges would have an important role and there may be a need to extend school provision in inner areas.

**14. Community development** - Inequality and multiple deprivation could be tackled in inner areas, where it is most acute. It could also help to improve exchanges between community groups and build cohesion. Minority groups could be better off as a result of this option. To have a positive impact development needs to lead to good local job opportunities; good quality, affordable homes; environmental improvements and more accessible services for all. It is also important that communities are engaged and well-supported so that capacity for achievement and fulfilment within those communities is enhanced. Not all communities in the borough would benefit, including some smaller pockets of deprivation that are not in the inner areas.

## Option 4 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**15. Energy** - This area has the lowest vehicle ownership levels. It is responsible for the highest energy use within the industrial/commercial sector but the lowest in the domestic sector. Industrial/commercial use is dominated by a small pocket in Wigan Town Centre. Energy use per person is the highest in the borough by a small degree. New development would potentially increase the energy intensiveness of this area's industrial/commercial sector.

The energy efficiency of the built environment is dependant upon the type, form and specific design and construction of development, which is difficult to determine from the information provided at this stage. However, development per se is generally associated with greater energy consumption. Ultimately, the energy performance of buildings will be determined by building regulations and PPS1, although there are opportunities to exceed national standards on certain sites (for example the Bickershaw development). There are significant gaps in the evidence base at this stage that does not allow us to determine accurately which spatial options would provide the best opportunities for renewable energy. We need to take account of PPS1 Supplement: Planning and Climate Change, which suggests studies should be undertaken to identify broad areas and specific sites that have potential for renewable energy production. Therefore, we need to carry out a detailed assessment of renewable energy potential in the borough to inform the preferred options.

**Comments from the community workshop:** The following perceived impacts were identified at the workshop. *“Higher density development could reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, there is less potential to incorporate certain renewable energy technologies and to design for efficiency in densely built-up areas.”*

**16. Accessibility** - Measures to enhance bus and rail travel, increase bus and rail use and improve interchange could be secured and implemented as part of development proposals, as the inner area is relatively well served, especially in Wigan. It would also support the Leigh Guided Busway. All these measures will improve commuting options to the regional centre and Warrington, St Helens, Preston and Liverpool by public transport. Focusing development on the inner areas of the borough could increase traffic congestion, particularly on routes through the area and on all routes leading to and from the borough. However, it would need to be supported by substantial new infrastructure to provide alternative means of travel and divert essential traffic. Development could only be permitted if this infrastructure was secured. It could also secure substantial gains for walking and cycling, as these elements should be integral to the design and layout of development.

**Comments from the community workshop:** Some impacts identified were very similar to those outlined above. *“Could encourage the use and the improvement of public transport. Could also encourage more walking and cycling.” “There could be less need to travel, and better public transport links, which would help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”*

**17. Sustainable economy** - Could make Wigan a hub for office development, which would support a knowledge economy. Clusters of environmental technologies and services could be achieved due to the capacity available through this option. And we know that sites such as Westwood & Pemberton are viable locations for knowledge economy sectors. It is difficult to determine what business practices would be adopted at this stage. However, our emerging policy framework helps to ensure that sustainable business practices are implemented (Supplementary planning documents for development and air quality, development and protected species and travel plans). Focus on the inner areas would also provide opportunities to reduce inequalities, as many of the boroughs most-deprived communities are located here. However, it is important that we tackle any skills shortage issues if deprived communities are to get the most out of development.

## Option 4 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**18. Economy and employment** - There is good capacity for focused development with a number of sites that would be attractive to businesses. There are also several existing primary employment areas that are to be retained or have been identified as suitable for modernisation; giving opportunity for land and premises that meet modern business needs. This option makes the optimum use of Wigan as a hub for office development and sustainable transport but also provides opportunities for Leigh. If the employment opportunities brought by new business match local skills, it could also help tackle worklessness in the most deprived parts of the Borough. Further job opportunities would be accessible in each of the city regions, although levels of out-commuting are already high.

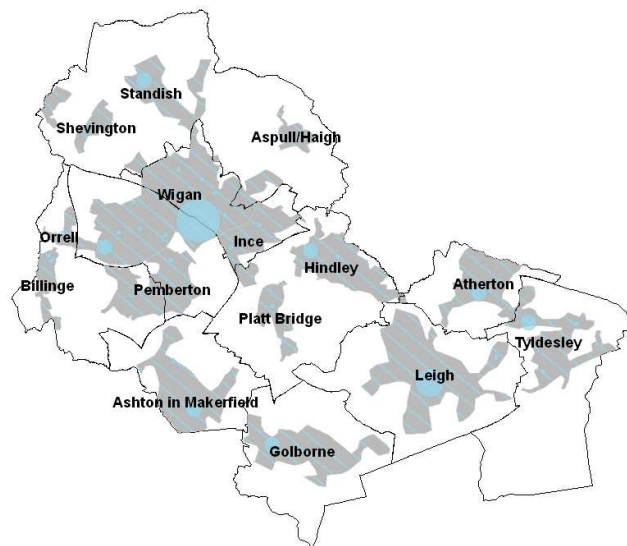
**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified at the workshop were similar to those outlined for objectives 17 and 18 above:

*“Traffic congestion problems could make this option unattractive to manufacturing-type businesses that rely on road transport. However, knowledge based economy would be well served because there are sites for focused redevelopment and public transport links are good. There is also better potential for regenerating the borough’s deprived communities, and therefore greater chance to address the skills gap. But, inequalities could widen if development does not directly benefit the local communities”*

## 7.0 Spatial option 5: Dispersed development across the borough

This option would not focus strongly on any one town but would have a 'dispersed focus' across the towns of Wigan, Leigh, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Atherton, Hindley, Tyldesley, Golborne, Standish and Platt Bridge as well as smaller settlements. There would be little affect to areas outside of the borough.

The main reason for considering this option is that by dispersing development across the borough, in particular, the nine towns, the adverse impact of development would be similarly dispersed.

[illegible]

## How 'sustainable' is this option?

- This option is likely to have a negative impact on the economy, because the beneficial effects of development would be diluted and the prospects for business development would be stifled.
- There would also be little positive impact on social inclusion, because development would not be targeted in the areas it is most appropriate or where the greatest positive benefits to society would be anticipated. Therefore, current deprivation trends would be likely to continue or in some cases get worse. Although there would be a major positive impact on recreation opportunities locally, there would be moderately negative impacts on health, social cohesion and community safety objectives.
- Although there would be minor adverse impacts on soil, minerals and water quality, there would be major positive impacts on the borough's wildlife habitats as they would be under less pressure from development.
- Air quality issues in the borough could also be reduced if jobs and services were provided in local centres. However, it would be difficult to secure development on this basis and access to and from the different parts of the borough would remain poor with little opportunity for improvement.
- The borough's built environment and landscapes could suffer moderately due to a lack of regeneration where it is most needed, and a loss of local distinctiveness due to areas becoming standardised.



## How does it compare with the other spatial options?

- On balance, this option has less pronounced impacts than any of the other spatial options across most aspects of sustainability.
- The positive impacts that this option does have are mostly minor or moderate, and much less than any of the other options (apart from option 4 'outer areas'). Notably, option 5 only has minor or moderate positive impacts for the economic objectives, whilst all the other spatial objectives have a major positive impact in this area. However, option 5 does perform better than any of the others against the biodiversity objective.
- This option performs much worse than options 1, 2 & 4 against social objectives, but better than 3.

## Detailed appraisal commentary against each sustainability objective (Option 5)

**1. Biodiversity** - Dispersed development could have a reduced impact on many wildlife habitats. However, there would be reduced scope for facilitating the creation of substantial new habitats. There would be good access to the proposed Greenheart regional park for some communities but not others.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified were similar to those outlined above: *"Would reduce pressure on most of the borough's wildlife habitats and corridors. Would also allow better consideration of local circumstances, and get people involved / closer to wildlife".*

**2. Air quality** - Keeping services and employment local could reduce the need to travel throughout the borough, which would help to improve air quality along existing main roads in the borough (where air quality problems are most prevalent). However, this relies upon jobs and services being made available in each area, and being accessed by local people; which is currently undeliverable as this would be an unattractive option to potential developers. It would also be very difficult to secure infrastructure improvements and access to and from the different parts of the borough would be difficult to improve. Therefore, it could be 'more of the same' and the borough's congestion (and air quality) issues would continue or worsen without large investment in mitigation and/or adaptation.

**3. Soil and minerals** - Soil quality could be maintained through increased development on previously developed land. However if there are not enough Brownfield sites quality may fall due to increased Greenfield development. This option could also enable and increase opportunities to remediate areas of contaminated land across the borough, although the effects would be diluted. It is unlikely to have an impact on the borough's agricultural land. Known mineral reserves may well be sterilised by development.

**4. Water** - There are existing identified flood risks from rivers, surface and ground water flooding. Development across the district could have an adverse impact on all the catchments in the borough and potentially effect areas downstream. There are diluted opportunities to make use of the borough's water resources for business, tourism and recreation purposes. The use of water in a sustainable / efficient way would need to be secured through design / layout and does not really differ between the five spatial options. These 'thematic' issues need to be considered, although they are influenced by national and regional policy.

**5. Landscapes** - Likely to be little impact on countryside and open spaces, with possibly some loss of open land on the edge of settlements. However, would not help in derelict land reclamation and is likely to detract from landscape quality and built environment/ landscape interface by promoting development on the edge of the urban area. Would also detract from the opportunity to provide development-led reclamation and regeneration in the centre of the borough by taking the focus of development away from this area.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified were similar to those outlined above: *"It is more likely that the countryside and existing landscapes would not be affected as much by development. However, it is more likely that green / open space within built-up areas would be lost."*



## Option 5 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**6. Built environment** - This would do little to strengthen the townscapes of the borough. There would not be enough local distinctiveness as development could become homogenous. The opportunities for sustainable design could also be limited to improvement of the existing building stock and on a small scale. Existing conditions are likely to remain unchanged as this option does not tackle the issues where they are most acute.

**Comments from community workshop:** Some of the impacts identified were similar to those outlined above:

*“This option has the potential to have the most damaging effect on local heritage and communities across the borough (although this would not be as severe as focused development), because development is likely to be ‘infill’ on small sites. However, some areas in need of a ‘face-lift’ could be improved.”*

**7. Community Safety** - The benefit of development would be diluted and could add to existing problems as it would effectively be 'more of the same'. An untargeted approach would not contribute towards addressing the causes of crime in the same way as a focused approach. It is therefore likely to contribute to a growing gap between deprived and average areas in conflict with one of the key drivers of Wigan's Local Area Agreement.

**8. Neighbourhood quality** - Development has the opportunity to enhance the character of the local environment with improvements in the public realm and the development of built structures of the highest design quality. This option could enhance neighbourhood quality in all communities across the borough, although the effects would be diluted. A dispersed approach would not necessarily focus on the areas of greatest need, nor areas with the best regeneration opportunities.

**9. Waste** – Dispersing development across the borough would increase the amount of waste generated across the borough, but it need not be managed in any particular location. It is difficult to determine the impacts against waste objectives with any certainty at this stage.

**10. Health** - This option does not focus on the areas of greatest need, rather it would promote the continuation of the status quo. Any positive impacts from development would probably be diluted, but so would any negatives. Infrastructure improvements could be more difficult to secure due to a lack of focus. However, this option does allow a certain degree of flexibility in reacting to health deprivation and access issues as they arise, and recreation opportunities could be kept more local.

**11. Recreation** - There would be scope to meet shortfalls in the provision of sports pitches, play facilities and green space where there is the most need, such as in Golborne and Lowton and Orrell, Billinge and Winstanley Townships, although development in the wrong locations could increase shortfalls in provision. Opportunities to enhance walking, cycling and participation in sports and physical recreation would be diluted. Access to green space would probably be more focused locally within existing communities.

## Option 5 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**12. Housing** - The housing market is strong in some parts of the borough, notably outer areas, but weaker in other parts, notably inner areas. In order to 'spread' development effectively the market in those areas would need a boost. If this happened there would be capacity to meet the borough's housing needs and substantially extend the range and choice of high quality housing across the borough, including 'affordable housing' where it is most needed. There should be capacity for at least 80% of new housing on Brownfield land. However, the main positive impacts arising from development would be diluted. Would make it more difficult to focus regeneration in particular areas, and may only encourage more profitable developments (which may not address regeneration issues).

**Comments from the community workshop:** The discussions at the workshop did not really reflect the impacts outlined above. The community representatives saw this option as slightly more positive than the 'formal' appraisal results suggest.

*"Better potential to develop mixed use developments where people access services and employment locally. Also, promotes regeneration of existing housing stock which is positive. More flexible and able to adapt to changing needs than focused development"*

**13. Education and learning** - It could help to improve educational achievement and the level of qualifications and skills in the adult population across the borough, but it would not necessarily be focused on areas that are most deprived in terms of education, skills and training, although facilities could be improved. There would also be an opportunity to match skills to opportunities for work in the city regions.

**14. Community development** - The effect on tackling inequalities and multiple deprivation would be spread equally but diluted. It would also be likely to reinforce existing inequalities between more affluent areas and deprived areas.

**15. Energy** - This would be very much carry on as usual and may make little difference from current energy demand patterns without investment in sustainable energy provision. However, development could be encouraged in those areas where the infrastructure exists and to achieve a balance across the borough. Small-scale local employment opportunities are more likely with this option, which would give more scope for on-site energy provision,

The energy efficiency of the built environment is dependant upon the type, form and specific design and construction of development, which is difficult to determine from the information provided at this stage. However, development per se is generally associated with greater energy consumption. Ultimately, the energy performance of buildings will be determined by building regulations and PPS1, although there are opportunities to exceed national standards on certain sites (for example the Bickershaw development). There are significant gaps in the evidence base at this stage that do not allow us to determine which spatial options would provide the best opportunities for renewable energy. We need to take account of PPS1 Supplement: Planning and Climate Change, which suggests studies should be undertaken to identify broad areas and specific sites that have potential for renewable energy production. Therefore, we need to carry out a detailed assessment of renewable energy potential in the borough to inform the preferred options. A dispersed approach may limit the potential for large-scale renewable energy schemes, as they may not be viable at this level or in certain locations (although retrofit solutions could become more common). However, there may be greater potential to exploit micro-renewables e.g. solar) and passive solar design for much of the existing stock. It could also help to secure energy equally and locally across the borough.

**Comments from the community workshop:** The following perceived impacts were identified at the workshop: *"If a tailored approach was taken, this option has the potential to site developments where they would be best placed to cope with climate change and have a lesser contribution towards greenhouse gas emissions. However, it may be difficult to gain the economies of scale needed to support renewable and decentralised supplies of energy."*

## Option 5 – Detailed appraisal commentary (continued...)

**16. Accessibility** - Each town has bus connections to Wigan or Leigh but not necessarily to each other. Measures to enhance bus travel and increase bus use could be secured and implemented as part of development, but investment would be spread over a wide area. Opportunities to improve interchange would be limited. The benefit of the Leigh Guided Busway would also be diluted. Not all areas are served by rail. Dispersed development would increase traffic congestion on all routes to/from motorway junctions, the A580 East Lancashire Road and town centres. Traffic noise and pollution issues would be exacerbated. It could secure some gains for walking and cycling but, again, the impact of dispersed development would be diluted.

**Comments from the community workshop:** The discussions at the workshop did not really reflect the impacts outlined above. The community representatives saw this option as more positive than the 'formal' appraisal results suggest.

*"Would lessen the need for travel, if jobs and services were provided locally."*

**17. Sustainable economy** - Likely to restrict development of knowledge economy 'clusters' as the option requires an even spread of development rather than a focused approach, which businesses are likely to find more attractive. Smaller developments would be likely, which may not provide the same employment opportunities for local people. This could mean that existing inequalities persist or widen. However, there could be some opportunities to develop small scale, local employment opportunities and to promote sustainable live-work environments. Such small-scale developments could also give more scope for on-site energy provision.

**18. Economy and employment** - This option provides maximum capacity for development. Sites closer to the edge of the borough would be most attractive. This option makes use of all the existing primary employment areas that are to be retained or have been identified as suitable for modernisation; giving opportunity for land and premises that meet modern business needs. However, this option would not provide focused development. This would not help to achieve the step-change needed towards a modern economy. And it would dilute opportunities to address worklessness as new development would probably not be located in the areas that need it most. This would be unattractive to developers.

**Comments from the community workshop:** The discussions at the workshop partly reflected the impacts outlined above. The community representatives saw this option as slightly more positive than the 'formal' appraisal results suggest.

*"A lack of focus makes this option less attractive to businesses, with fewer opportunities for business clusters. However, this would ensure that job opportunities were taken locally. It could also be tailored to the specific needs of different communities".*

## 8.0 'Best' and 'worse' (a comparative summary of the options)

The table below outlines the 'best' and 'worse' scoring options for each sustainability objective.

Each option is ranked on the basis of the positives minus the negatives. 1 is the 'best', 5 is the 'worst'.

For example, option 1 scores 4 positives and 2 negatives against health, so it is 2 positive overall.

Where the overall score is equal between options, the option with the bigger negative impacts is assumed to be more negative in line with the precautionary principle. (For example, if option 1 scores three negatives and five positives against air quality it is two positive overall. If option 2 scores 2 positives and zero negatives for air quality, it is two positive overall as well. However, option 1 is the 'worse' in line with the precautionary principle.). Where two options score exactly the same, then they are both ranked the same.

This is a crude assessment to outline overall trends in the assessment scores, and should be treated as such. To draw out the strengths and weaknesses of each option they should be assessed in closer detail. This is important, because some options that perform badly could have a bigger potential for improvement (through mitigation) so that they became 'better' than other options (with less potential for mitigation). In addition, this ranking exercise does not illustrate the differences in impact magnitude between each option and each objective does not necessarily carry equal weight. Furthermore, the scores against waste and energy objectives have not been determined for the spatial options. Nevertheless, it is still a useful comparative tool.

|                        | Spatial options |     |     |     |     |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Objective              | 1               | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |
| Biodiversity           | 2.5             | 2.5 | 4   | 5   | 1   |
| Air quality            | 3.5             | 5   | 1.5 | 3.5 | 1.5 |
| Soil and minerals      | 3.5             | 3.5 | 5   | 1   | 2   |
| Water                  | 2.5             | 2.5 | 5   | 1   | 4   |
| Landscapes             | 1               | 3   | 5   | 2   | 4   |
| Built environment      | 2               | 3   | 5   | 1   | 4   |
| Community safety       | 2               | 3   | 5   | 1   | 4   |
| Neighbourhood quality  | 2.5             | 2.5 | 5   | 1   | 4   |
| Waste                  | ?               | ?   | ?   | ?   | ?   |
| Health                 | 2               | 3   | 5   | 1   | 4   |
| Recreation             | 3.5             | 3.5 | 5   | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| Housing                | 2.5             | 2.5 | 5   | 1   | 4   |
| Education              | 4               | 3   | 5   | 1   | 2   |
| Community              | 3               | 2   | 5   | 1   | 4   |
| Energy                 | ?               | ?   | ?   | ?   | ?   |
| Accessibility          | 2.5             | 2.5 | 4.5 | 1   | 4.5 |
| Sustainable economy    | 3               | 1.5 | 4   | 1.5 | 5   |
| Economy and employment | 2.5             | 2.5 | 4   | 1   | 5   |

Even from this crude assessment it is very clear that option 3 (focus on outer areas) is generally the worst performing against many aspects of sustainability.

Option 4 (focus on inner areas) generally performs the best against nearly all the different aspects of sustainability. It would be recommended that it formed a substantial part of the preferred option. However, it performs quite poorly for biodiversity and air quality, which must be taken into account (although this may be tackled through mitigation).

Options 1 and 2 are somewhere in between the 'best' and 'worst' scoring for most sustainability objectives with the exception of landscapes (option one is the best), sustainable economy (option 2 is joint best) and air quality (option 2 is the 'worst').

The dispersed option (option 5) performs the best against biodiversity and recreation objectives, yet it performs the worst against accessibility and both 'economic' objectives. It also performs second worse across most of the other sustainability objectives.

## 9.0 Limitations of the appraisal results

Wherever possible, the sustainability appraisal impacts were identified on the basis of strong evidence and reference to the baseline position. However, there is still an amount of subjectivity that must be borne in mind when interpreting the results. The impact scores were also determined by a range of different people, and one person's definition of a 'major impact' may differ from another's. To ensure as much consistency as possible, a review of the impacts and scores was undertaken by the council's sustainability team after the individual appraisal sessions had taken place.

Due to uncertainties and a lack of evidence, we were not confident that we could fully determine the implications of the five spatial options against our energy and waste objectives. For example, it would be misleading to compare one spatial option as more positive than another in terms of energy efficiency or for renewable energy provision, because we do not have the evidence to support this yet. Therefore, we have not determined 'impact scores' for the five spatial options against the waste and energy objectives. However, we have still made comments about the general implications of each spatial option against these objectives.

We explored these issues in greater detail at preferred options stage and also through consideration of various thematic options for tackling issues such as renewable energy provision and waste management.

Thematic options tackle issues that do not have a spatial dimension or could have a spatial dimension but not necessarily in line with the spatial options. For example, there are various options for how we could meet our renewable energy targets, and different options for achieving energy efficient buildings; but these are not likely to differ greatly for the five spatial options.

Although our appraisal is sufficiently thorough, we are aware that the process is somewhat subjective, and we may revise our assessment in light of new evidence and/or consultation responses.

## 10.0 What happened next?

This interim sustainability appraisal report was available to view and comment on alongside the 'Core Strategy: Issues and Options for community and stakeholder involvement' in February/March, 2008. Any comments received were taken into consideration and incorporated into a final sustainability appraisal report. This can be viewed on our website.

Along with consultation responses, the results from this interim report were also taken into consideration as the preferred spatial options for the borough were being developed.

Further sustainability appraisal work was undertaken as the Core Strategy progressed. This included:

- An assessment of a range of [thematic options](#). These are options to tackle objectives that do not have a spatial dimension or could have spatial dimension but not necessarily in line with the spatial options. For example, there are various options for how we could meet our renewable energy targets, and different options for managing waste.
- Detailed appraisal of the preferred option(s) and identification of mitigation / enhancement measures.
- Identification of a monitoring framework.
- Preparation of a full Sustainability Appraisal Report and non-technical summary that meets the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.
- A Habitats Regulations Assessment of the preferred option(s).

## 11.0 Consultation and involvement

At this stage of the appraisal we had already consulted with a wide range of stakeholders about our approach to sustainability appraisal. Further details about whom we consulted with, the responses and suggestions we received, and the methods we have used so far can all be found in our [Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report](#).

For the appraisal of the spatial options we held a sustainability appraisal workshop (on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008) to involve a number of community representatives more directly in the process. This proved a useful and rewarding exercise for both ourselves and the community representatives who attended.

These workshops were also supported by general consultation with the wider community through the use of our website and libraries.

We also consulted with the three statutory consultation bodies in England (in-line with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive), our partner agencies, and other organisations via email, face-to-face meetings, telephone and post.

### Further information

For further information about sustainability appraisal and to download other supporting documents (such as the scoping report) please visit our website at: [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk)

From here click on 'Planning' and scroll down to 'Local Development Framework', then click on 'sustainability appraisal'.