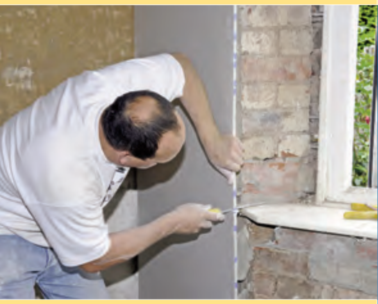
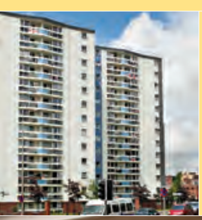
Sustainability Appraisal Appendix T4.6

Wigan
Council

LDF

WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY





Housing
Final Topic Paper 6

AUGUST 2011

Core Strategy Submission Version

Places Directorate
www.wigan.gov.uk/ldfcorestrategy

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ONE

Introduction

Purpose of this document

1.1 This is Topic Paper 6 on 'housing'. It is one of 13 topic papers that we have produced to help ensure that our Local Development Framework Core Strategy is properly backed by robust and credible evidence. The 13 topic papers are:

1. Health and recreation
2. Community safety and neighbourhood quality
3. Community development and involvement
4. Education and learning
5. Economy and employment
6. Housing
7. Retail and centres
8. Accessibility
9. Built environment and landscape
10. Wildlife habitats and species
11. Energy
12. Waste
13. Natural resources and pollution

1.2 Each topic paper provides a summary and analysis of the evidence which informs the Core Strategy and the Sustainability Appraisal. The evidence is set out in detail in a series of evidence reviews of the same name which sit alongside the topic papers. This topic paper focuses on the following policy:

- CP6 'Housing'.

1.3 We have combined the evidence gathering stages for both the Core Strategy and the Sustainability Appraisal, to streamline the documentation produced and avoid duplication. This has ensured that sustainable development is embedded in the process of producing the Core Strategy. This topic paper also sets out how we have engaged with the community and other stakeholders and established the legality and soundness of the policies. More details of this are set out in Section 9 'An assessment of legality and soundness'.

1.4 Each topic paper can be read in isolation but, inevitably, there are important related matters in other topic papers and evidence reviews. Key related topic areas for housing are:

- Built environment and landscape
- Energy
- Accessibility

1.5 Rather than preparing an additional report on 'climate change', we have considered this important theme within each topic paper. This is to make sure that it is not viewed as a 'stand alone' issue.

How the Local Development Framework will be used

1.6 The Local Development Framework is the planning strategy for the borough. The Core Strategy is the principal development plan document in our Local Development Framework. It sets out what development is needed for the next 10 -15 years, where this will go and how it can be achieved. For the most part the details will be determined in other policy documents that will make up the Local Development Framework. These will include an Allocations and Development Management Plan, area action plans and supplementary planning documents. All of these other documents will have to conform to the Core Strategy and be equally founded on a robust and credible evidence base.

1.7 We have to work with national and European legislation on Sustainability Appraisal and national and regional planning policy. Of particular importance to the housing topic area are Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) 'Housing' and the Regional Spatial Strategy, which is currently part of the development plan for the Borough but will be revoked once the Decentralisation and Localism Bill is enacted.

1.8 Demographic changes and a rising affordability problem have resulted in changes in need and demand and therefore a need to address the issues that arise from the existing residential offer. This requires a planning solution that adheres to national and regional aspirations for sustainable residential development and the creation of mixed communities.

It must also be responsive to the different needs, demands and aspirations of the borough's population. The Core Strategy aims to address these issues by helping to ensure there are sufficient new dwellings in the right locations and of the right mix in terms of types and tenure, including affordable housing and sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

1.9 The Local Development Framework can seek to provide planning policies that will facilitate the conditions needed to enable a flexible response to housing issues that will not only benefit local communities but also the economy and prosperity of the borough. This will need to be achieved in line with the principles of sustainable development, ensuring that economic, social and environmental objectives are secured together.

How the Sustainability Appraisal framework will be used

1.10 The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of strategies and policies in the documents that form the Local Development Framework. This has been done from the outset in preparing the Core Strategy to ensure that decisions are made that accord with sustainable development.

1.11 A framework of sustainability objectives has been used to test and ask questions of each approach considered in the Core Strategy. The appraisal process has a number of set stages that must be followed, but each stage has been revisited as new information became available.

1.12 This topic paper contains the information we have used to help us establish the issues for housing. This information has helped us to establish a set of sustainability objectives and sub-questions to tackle these issues, see Section 8 'Our sustainability framework'.

Viewing documents

All documents related to the Core Strategy are available to view on our website at: www.wigan.gov.uk/ldfcorestrategy.

Paper copies of the Core Strategy, Sustainability Appraisal and the 13 Topic Papers are also available at:

- All our public libraries (except the children's library)
- Wigan Town Hall*
- Wigan Life Centre, College Avenue, Wigan, WN1 1NJ*

** Until January 2012, after which documents will be available at The One Stop Shop, Wigan Life Centre, The Wiend, Wigan, WN1 1NH*

TWO

Key plans, policies and strategies reviewed

2.1 This section focuses on the most relevant published plans, policies and strategies for housing in Wigan Borough and draws out the key messages for the Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal. The key plans and strategies which provide support for policy CP6 and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from a housing perspective are:

National plans, policies and strategies

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)

With regard to housing development Planning Policy Statement 1 states that planning authorities should:

- Promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Ensure that the impact of development on the social fabric of communities is considered and taken into account;
- Seek to reduce social inequalities;
- Take into account the needs and broader interests of all the community, to secure a better quality of life for the community as a whole, including particular requirements relating to age, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability or income;
- Deliver safe, healthy and attractive places to live;
- Promote communities which are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free, whilst respecting the diverse needs of communities and the special needs of particular sectors of the community;
- Actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of transport links and focus development in existing centres and near to major public transport interchanges;

- Maximise outputs by using land efficiently, for example by building housing at higher densities where appropriate, mixed use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings.
- Planning should seek to ensure the provision of sufficient, good quality new homes (including an appropriate mix of housing and adequate levels of affordable housing) in suitable locations, whether through new development or the re-use of existing buildings. Vacant and underused previously developed land and buildings should be brought back into beneficial use to achieve the targets the Government has set for development on previously developed land.

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (June 2010)

The Government's key housing goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live.

Planning Policy Statement 3 states that the planning system should deliver:

- High quality housing that is well-designed and built to a high standard;
- A mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price to support a wide variety of households in all areas, both urban and rural;
- A sufficient quantity of housing taking into account need and demand and seeking to improve choice;
- Housing developments in suitable locations, which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure;
- A flexible, responsive supply of land - managed in a way that makes efficient and effective use of land, including re-use of previously-developed land, where appropriate.

Planning Policy Statement 3 has removed the minimum density requirement of 30 dwellings per hectare and allows Local Planning Authorities to set out a range of densities across the plan area. Domestic garden curtilage land has also been excluded from the definition of 'previously developed land'.

Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (2001)

With regard to housing, Planning Policy Guidance 13 states that planning authorities should:

- Actively manage the pattern of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport, and focus major generators of travel demand in city, town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges;
- Accommodate housing principally within existing urban areas, planning for increased intensity of development for both housing and other uses at locations which are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

2.2 Other key national plans, policies and strategies which provide support for policy CP6 and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from a housing perspective include:

- **Planning for Travelling Showpeople - Circular 04/2007:** The Circular gives good practice guidance and seeks the allocation of sites to make adequate provision for travelling showpeople in appropriate locations. It states that local authorities should provide criteria based policies or interim pitch allocations in their Local Development Framework.

- **Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites - Circular 01/2006:** Regional Spatial Strategies should take a strategic view of Gypsy and Traveller needs across the region and identify the number of pitches required (but not their location) for each local planning authority, in light of local authority Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments.

- **Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable (2007):** This paper sets out the Government's plans for three million new homes by 2020.

Regional / sub-regional plans, policies and strategies

North West of England Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)

The Regional Spatial Strategy forms part of the development plan for the borough, setting the context for our Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents. Policies with a particular relevance to housing include:

Policy DP2 Promote Sustainable Communities - It is important to ensure sustainable relationships and links are fostered between homes, workplaces and other services and facilities and improvements are made to the built environment.

Policy DP4 Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure - Priority should be given to developments that do not require major investment in new infrastructure, including transport, water supply and sewage. Where this is unavoidable development should be appropriately phased to coincide with new infrastructure provision.

The use of existing buildings (including conversion) within settlements, and previously developed land within settlements should be prioritised first; then infill opportunities in settlements second; then land well located in relation to housing, jobs, services and infrastructure third.

Policy DP6 Marry Opportunity and Need - Proximity and connectivity are two important spatial concepts to address social inclusion in its widest sense and promote regeneration.

Policy DP9 Reduce Emissions and Adapt to Climate Change - Measures to reduce emissions in terms of housing might include:

- Increasing urban density;
- Encouraging better built homes and energy efficiency, eco-friendly and adaptable buildings, with good thermal insulation, green roofs and micro-generation;
- Focusing substantial new development on locations where energy can be gained from decentralised supply systems.

Policy RDF1 Spatial Priorities - priorities for growth and development are:

- Regional centres;
- Inner areas surrounding the regional centres; and
- Towns / cities in the 3 city regions (of which Wigan is one).

In terms of development promoted in Wigan, this should be focused in and around the town centre. Emphasis should be placed on addressing regeneration and housing market renewal and restructuring.

Policy L2 Understanding Housing Markets - Strategic Housing Market Assessments should:

- Influence housing supply across all types, sizes, tenures and values to achieve a better match between supply and need (improve the quality of the Borough's housing stock and overcome increasing issues of affordability);
- Ensure the needs of the wider population are met, including disabled people, students, older people, black and minority ethnic communities and families with children, including single headed households.

Policy L3 Existing Housing and Housing Renewal - Vacancy rates should be reduced to 3% in the existing dwelling stock, through the increased re-use of suitable vacant housing; and where appropriate make the best use of the existing stock.

Policy L4 Regional Housing Provision -

- New homes should be encouraged to be built to Code for Sustainable Homes standards and the use of the Lifetime Homes standard should be promoted;
- New housing development must not have an adverse cumulative impact on the existing housing stock and market;
- Must ensure that the transport networks (including public transport, pedestrian and cycle) can accommodate additional demand generated by new housing;
- The proposed total maximum housing provision 2003-2021 for Wigan is 17,600 with an annual average rate of 978;
- At least 80% of the housing provision in Wigan should use brownfield land and buildings

Policy L5 Affordable Housing - Plans and strategies should set out requirements for affordable housing.

2.3 Other key regional or sub-regional plans, policies and strategies which provide support for policy CP6 and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from a housing perspective include:

- **Regional Housing Strategy for the North West (NW Housing Board, 2005):** **L**ooks to align housing with key strategies on the economy, planning, health, environment and transport to pave way for RS2010, and seeks to ensure public resources are used effectively to attract and complement private investment. Therefore driver behind the Strategy is to ensure the Region's housing offer supports sustained long term economic growth, inclusion and regeneration.

- **Making Housing Count (AGMA, 2005):** An analysis of housing markets and housing market change in the Manchester City Region undertaken by ECOTEC and forms part of the Making Housing Count Project.

- **Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (4NW, 2008):** The aim of the study was to prepare robust housing market assessments for each of the 27 housing market areas in the North West previously identified by 4NW, meeting the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) and following Communities and Local Government (CLG) good practice guidance.

Local plans, policies and strategies

Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006)

Housing policies are contained within Chapter 8 of the Unitary Development Plan. General policies G1A - Impact of Development on Amenity and G1B - Planning Obligations are also of relevance. There are policies on new housing sites (R1A); care homes for the elderly (R1C); housing design (R1D); open space in housing developments (R1E); sites for gypsies and showmen (R1F); conversions to dwellings (R1G) and affordable housing (R1H). It is proposed to replace all of these, except policy R1E, with policy CP6 but also policies CP10, 14 and 18 of the Core Strategy, as set out in Appendix A. Policies G1A and G1B are replaced by Core Strategy policies CP18 and 19.

Vision 2026 Wigan Housing Strategy (2009-2026)

The Council's Housing Strategy identifies a series of shorter wave challenges that require short term intervention and long term challenges that need sustained action.

The short wave challenges are:

1. Responding to the economic downturn
2. Neighbourhood issues and empty homes
3. Homelessness and support needs

The long term challenges are:

1. Meeting the need for additional housing
2. Improving the housing offer of neighbourhoods
3. Meeting the long term needs of specific groups, especially older people

2.4 Other local plans and strategies which provide support for policy CP6 and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from a housing perspective include:

- **Affordable Housing Strategy (2006 - 2010)** - The Strategy highlights the following priorities:
    - Ensure access to affordable homes
    - Fully understand the local housing market and its interaction with surrounding areas
    - Provide more affordable homes where they are needed most
    - Provide more accommodation for vulnerable groups
    - Utilise development opportunities to create more balanced housing markets
- **Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 (2008) -** The main objective of the Strategy is ‘to prevent homelessness by tackling the main causes within the Borough and to minimise the impact of its effects’. The key targets are:
    - 50% of homelessness is prevented or relieved through positive action (by 2013).

- 50% reduction in use of Temporary Accommodation (by end of 2010, using December 2004 baseline)
- End use of bed and breakfast in all but exceptional circumstances and even then for no longer than 6 weeks (by end 2010)

There are other relevant plans and strategies that contribute to the housing evidence base. These are summarised in our 'housing evidence review' which is available on our website.

THREE

Other key evidence reviewed

Key sources of information

3.1 This section brings together and analyses the key evidence relating to the housing topic area. It outlines key characteristics, trends, issues and opportunities and supports the policies relating to housing in the Core Strategy. It also gives an overview of the infrastructure, climate change considerations and a summary of stakeholder and community involvement.

3.2 The main sources of information used are:

Regional / Sub Regional

- Greater Manchester Forecasting Model - 2010 Update (September 2010)
- Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Update Report - May 2010)

Local

- Wigan's Changing Housing Markets (Wigan Council, 2005)
- Wigan House Condition Survey (Wigan Council, 2005)
- Older Persons' Housing Study - Summary Report (2005)
- Wigan's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2006)
- Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (Wigan Council, 2008)
- Affordable Housing Provision in New Residential Developments - A Guidance Note on the Implementation of the Policy (Wigan Council, 2007)
- Wigan Borough Housing Needs Survey (Wigan Council, 2008)
- Wigan Housing Needs and Demand Study (2008)
- Wigan Community Plan monitoring system (Wigan Borough Partnership)
- Vision 2026 - Wigan's Housing Strategy
- Wigan Borough Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - 2010 Update.

Other statistical evidence

- Census 2001 (Office of National Statistics)
- Household Projections, 2008 to 2033, England (Communities and Local Government, November 2010)

Background

3.3 Having access to affordable, quality homes is important to social and economic well-being and the health of children and families. It can also play a role in promoting economic growth; low rates of house building lead to a restriction of labour mobility which can, as a result, constrain productivity. Changes in demand due to changing demographics have resulted in the need to transform the housing stock. In addition, the focus on sustainable development means that we need to ensure that development is efficient and sustainable. The foundation of housing policy lies in the concept of sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities where people want to live and work. Sustainable design is also becoming more important because the way our homes are built and managed determines the impact we have on the environment.

Population and housing

3.4 The overall size and structure of Wigan's population is changing with implications for the delivery of housing in terms of size, type and tenure. Population changes over time as a result of three main factors:

- natural change - the number of births minus the number of deaths.
- domestic migration - those moving into an area from elsewhere in the UK minus those moving out to elsewhere in the UK.
- international migration - those moving into an area from outside the UK minus those moving out to live outside the UK.

3.5 The main provider of population projections is the Office of National Statistics. However, a number of other sources use these projections in modelled forecasts. The Regional Spatial Strategy and North West Development Agency used modelled regional forecasts. Wigan Council and its partners in the Association of Greater Manchester

Authorities has commissioned economic modelling from Oxford Economics for a number of years. This is known as the Greater Manchester Forecasting Model. It covers population, housing and the economy.

3.6 The latest Wigan Housing Needs and Demands Study (2008) used national population projections from 2004. As illustrated in Table 1 below, an increase in population of 17,500 (5.6%) was projected over the period 2004 - 2029.

	2004	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2029	Total change
Total population	303,900	305,200	308,800	313,300	317,500	320,400	321,400	
Change		+1,300	+3,600	+4,500	+4,200	+2,900	+1,000	+17,500
% change		+0.4	+1.2	+1.5	+1.3	+0.9	+0.3	+5.6

Table 1: Population Change in Wigan 2004-2029 (Housing Needs and Demand Study, 2008)

3.7 The age structure projected is also significantly different to the base date. Within the 20-29 age group (the age group from which most new households are formed), numbers increase steadily to 2016 (+4,500 or +13%) before falling by a similar amount (-4,400 or -11.2%) to 2026.

3.8 Within the 30-44 age range (the main economically active group) there is a large decrease of 4,600 (-6.7%) between 2006 and 2026. However, there is a larger reduction of 9,100 (-13.2%) in the first 10 years to 2016 before a rise of 4,500 from 2016 to 2016.

3.9 Within the 45-64 age-group there is an increase of 4,600 (+5.8%) between 2006 and 2026. Within the over 65 age group, there is an increase of 22,400 +48.5%.

3.10 The population forecasts in the Greater Manchester Forecasting Model (GMFM) are influenced by:

- observations of natural population change through births and deaths, domestic migration modelled as the result of the interaction of a variety of economic, including the index of multiple deprivation.
- housing vacancy rates.

- the age structure of the population.
- changes in net migration at the regional level, which itself is affected by relative unemployment, relative wages and relative house prices, and international migration, projected by applying estimated local shares of both inward and outward flows to forecasts of international migration at the regional level, which in turn are affected by overall flows into the UK, and by relative house prices and wages.

3.11 The 2010 Update forecasts an increase in the population of the borough of 16,000 for the period 2010 to 2026 as shown in Table 2 below:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Population	307,700	309,000	310,400	311,700	313,000	314,200
Change		+1,300	+1,400	+1,300	+1,300	+1,200
% Change		+0.4	+0.5	+0.4	+0.4	+0.4

	2016	2017	2018	2022	2026	Total Change
Total Population	315,300	316,400	317,400	321,000	323,700	
Change	+1,100	+1,100	+1,000	+3,600	+2,700	+16,000
% Change	+0.3	+0.3	+0.3	+1.1	+1.0	+5.1

Table 2: Population Forecast 2010 to 2026 (GMFM Update, September 2010)

Natural change

3.12 While estimates of population increase due to natural change have been revised downwards by the model update, the rate of natural increase remains strong and continues to be the main cause of population growth. Natural change in 2011 was forecast to be over +1,000 and to remain above +1,000 in each year through to 2017. From this time the rate of increase falls steadily year by year to +400 by 2026. Population growth is the main driver in household growth as recognised in the Government's own 'Household Projections, 2008 to 2033, England' (November 2010).

Domestic migration

3.13 The GMFM forecasts suggest stable domestic in-migration in the longer term for those of working age whilst out-migration to neighbouring areas decreases. Indeed, domestic migration is positive year by year so more move into Wigan from elsewhere in the UK than leave Wigan for elsewhere in the UK. Whilst the GMFM does not provide the origin details of domestic in-migrants, the pattern is likely to be similar to that provided in the local economic assessment based on 2007 updates of 2001 Census results. The increasing contribution of net domestic in-migration counters the reducing impact of natural change over time.

International migration

3.14 The impacts of international migration will lesson in terms of the effect on population change over time, but not to the extent that it will counter increases arising from natural change and domestic migration.

Ageing population

3.15 The Wigan Housing Needs and Demands Study (2008) and the GMFM Update (2010) both anticipate an ageing population. This is an issue nationally and arises from a fall in numbers of all age groups and both sexes up to around 59 years, and a significant rise in the number of people in all age groups above 65 years, as a result of people living longer.

3.16 Around 90% of older people in the UK live in their own home with one-half of the remainder living in sheltered accommodation and the other living in nursing/residential homes. Wigan's Housing Needs Survey (2003) and figures from the 2001 Census suggest that Wigan's older population matches this pattern. A range of evidence from both national and local research, including by Wigan Council has shown that the majority of older people would like to be supported to stay independent in their own home for as long as possible and that moving into a residential or nursing home is not a preferable option.

3.17 The Older Person's Housing Study (2005) showed that the largest proportions of older people live in the Hindley and Abram, Leigh, Standish and Aspull and Shevington, and Wigan townships. Wigan North in particular shows a high percentage of older people. The preference of older people to stay in their own home is complicated by a number of issues. When questioned by study facilitators, most older people chose other issues before housing as important to their quality of life. Issues concerning the environment, transport, access to amenities and services, feeling safe and not feeling lonely or isolated were given as the main concerns by older people. Although these are issues that are linked to housing, housing itself was not mentioned until prompted by the workshop facilitator. Thus if policies aimed at helping older people living in their own home are to be successful, measures aimed not just at housing, but at personal support, neighbourhood management and transport issues are needed.

3.18 Figures included in the Older Persons Housing Study (2005) showed a reasonably high demand for sheltered accommodation within the borough.

3.19 While the majority of older people in Wigan Borough seeking sheltered accommodation do so for medical reasons, other types of accommodation specifically designed for older people are becoming increasingly common elsewhere in the country. These include retirement villages and private sector retirement flats. Whilst this market has been relatively undeveloped in Wigan, due to relatively low incomes and the sense of attachment to current home and place, there have been a number of developments of high quality apartments in more affluent, outer areas of the borough, which have largely sold to older people. This indicates an increasing demand for such accommodation. This trend is likely to be important in the future as the proportion of older people who own their own home increases with time.

3.20 At the time of the last Census in 2001 there were 125,096 households in Wigan. Of these 34,639 (28%) were one person households and 17,433 (14%) were one person pensioner households. There were 12,950 (10%) lone parent households. Of these, 3,870 (3.1%) had two or more dependent children. There were also 16,618 households couples (married or co-habiting) who had two or more children.

Housing supply

3.21 The Regional Spatial Strategy sets out a requirement for 17,604 new houses in Wigan Borough in the period 2003-2021. This equates to an annual average rate of 978 new homes net of housing clearance replacements. The council is required to meet this annual housing target while the Regional Spatial Strategy remains in force.

3.22 A further target set regionally is the proportion of housing provision to use brownfield buildings and land. The Regional Spatial Strategy target for Wigan is for at least 80%, so there is a need to prioritise previously developed land for new build as well as re-using and converting old buildings and bringing empty homes back into use. Delivering housing on previously developed land generally also increases the proportion of the population who are closer to services, such as public transport and facilities, and contributes to patterns of sustainable development.

3.23 The current government has removed the regional planning tier and is progressing the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies through the Localism Bill currently before Parliament. A consequence of the revocation will be that individual councils will need to consider their own borough-wide housing requirements and build these into their development plans, as they will no longer be allocated targets from the regional tier. It is possible that regionally set housing and brownfield land targets will have gone by the time our Core Strategy is adopted. This will depend on the timetable for enacting that part of the Localism Bill.

3.24 The factors that combine to produce both population and housing forecasts can interact in complex ways and include:

- Population age-sex structures
- Household headship rates
- Survival factors
- Infant mortality
- Fertility rates
- Base numbers of dwellings
- Vacancy rates
- Demolition rates
- The age and sex structure of migrants.

3.25 The following table represents a comparison of various estimates of housing need in Wigan Borough from 2006 to 2030

	GMFM (2010 based)	Government (2006 based)	ONS (2006 based)	Regional Spatial Strategy
Total households	24,867	25,920	26,737	23,472
Annual average growth	1,036	1,080	1,114	978

Table 3: Comparison of GMFM, Government, ONS and Regional Housing Need Forecasts 2006 - 2030

3.26 In each of the above 4 forecasts, the annual average housing requirement for the borough is in the region of 1,000 units.

3.27 The Government has now produced revised estimates of household growth using 2008 projections for the period 2008 - 2033 (Household Projections, 2008 to 2033, England, November 2010). These indicate that there will be 20,500 fewer households nationally per year between 2008 and 2031. Yet, while lower household growth is forecast, there will still be an increase in England of 5.8 million (27%) households, equating to an increase of 232,000 households per year between 2008 and 2033. Government concludes that population growth continues to be the main driver of household growth, accounting for nearly three quarters of the increase in households between 2008 and 2033. It finds that one person households are projected to increase by 159,000 per year, equating to two-thirds of the increase in households.

3.28 Set against this national picture for England, Government's recently released 2008-based annual average household growth projections for Wigan are shown against the 2006 projections in the table below. Figures for neighbouring boroughs in Greater Manchester and Greater Manchester as a whole are also shown for comparison.

District	2006 projections, 2006-30 (units)	2008 projections, 2008-33 (units)	Change
Bolton	720	680	- 40
Bury	760	520	- 240
Manchester	3,760	2,960	- 800
Oldham	640	560	- 80
Rochdale	680	400	- 280
Salford	960	1,080	+ 120
Stockport	920	920	nil
Tameside	960	760	- 200
Trafford	1,120	1,040	- 80
Wigan	1,080	880	- 200
Greater Manchester	11,640	9,680	- 1,960

Table 4: Comparison of 2006 and 2008 Government annual average household growth figures

3.29 Table 4 indicates a significant decline in the Government's estimates of household growth for Greater Manchester, from 11,640 to 9,680 units annually, although the decline is distributed unevenly throughout the Greater Manchester districts. With the exceptions of Stockport and Salford, all authorities see a decline in the annual average number of households forecast.

3.30 The GMFM Update 2010 household growth forecasts present significant changes to the 2009 update forecasts. A comparison of the 2009 and 2010 forecasts is set out in Table 5 below. In contrast to the Government projections, the GMFM 2010 forecast is for household growth to increase rather than decline.

District	2009 base GM forecasts			Updated GMFM forecasts 2010			Change In annual supply (units)
	Change 2006 to 2030	Annual average growth	Proportion of GM supply (%)	Change 2006 to 2030	Annual average growth	Proportion of GM supply (%)	
Bolton	13,412	559	6.3	16,343	681	6.8	+122
Bury	15,754	656	7.3	16,241	677	6.7	+21
Manchester	60,791	2,533	28.3	67,379	2,807	27.9	+274
Oldham	11,739	489	5.5	14,667	611	6.1	+122
Rochdale	13,168	549	6.1	15,759	657	6.5	+108
Salford	18,050	752	8.4	21,448	894	8.9	+142
Stockport	19,635	818	9.2	21,666	903	9.0	+85
Tameside	19,828	826	9.2	21,992	916	9.1	+90
Trafford	17,104	713	8.0	21,379	891	8.8	+178
Wigan	25,028	1,043	11.7	24,868	1,036	10.3	-7
Greater Manchester	214,508	8,938	100.0	241,741	10,073	100.0	+1,135

Table 5: Comparison of 2009 GMFM baseline and updated 2010 GMFM household forecasts

3.31 Table 6 below compares the 2008 Government household growth forecasts for Wigan Borough with the updated 2010 GMFM forecast and the Regional Spatial Strategy annual average.

2008 Government Projections (2008-2033)	2010 GMFM Forecasts	RSS Annual Average
880	1,036	978

Table 6: Comparison of annual average Wigan Borough household growth forecasts

3.32 It is clear there will be differences between the various forecast models arising from assumptions that underpin each model and the way they are set up to process the complex interactions involved in population and household growth forecasting. However, in terms of Wigan's housing requirement there is relative convergence of the various data sources, suggesting that we will need to plan for around 1,000 units annually to the year 2026, net of clearance replacements.

3.33 The potential to deliver annual housing growth is affected by density considerations. The current level of density in new developments is generally between 30 and 50 units per hectare, as set out in clause (e) of Policy R1D of the Wigan Unitary Development Plan . However, revised guidance in PPS3 Housing, issued in June 2010, removed the national minimum density requirement, thereby allowing councils the flexibility to set a range of densities should they so wish.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

3.34 Our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is a key component of the evidence base for the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the need for more homes. These assessments are required by Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3). They must identify specific deliverable sites for the first five years of the plan period that are available for development, and further sites that can be delivered within the 6-10 year and 11-15 year periods. The primary role of the assessment is to identify sites with potential for housing, assess that potential and also assess when the sites are likely to be developed.

3.35 Our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010 Update was produced with the involvement of a range of stakeholders, including representatives from the development sector, landowners and their agents, as well as planning agents. The assessment takes account of physical site constraints but not housing planning policy constraints and uses a general density assumption of 30 dwellings per hectare or that capacity derived from actual extant planning permissions. Table 7 below summarises the position in the 2010 Update.

Time Band	No. of units (based on 30 dwellings per hectare and planning permissions)
0-5 years	7,487
6-10 years	15,889
11-15 years	2,159
15+ years	29
TOTAL	**25,564**

Table 7: Summary of housing supply (SHLAA 2010 Update)

3.36 From this assessment, sufficient capacity for new housing needs to be identified in line with the spatial strategy for the borough set out in the Core Strategy. This approach assumes the likelihood that the majority of presently safeguarded land within the 'east-west core' will be released from its safeguarded status and will be allocated for housing development in a subsequent development plan document. Certain sites and locations in the assessment are not in line with the spatial strategy, notably safeguarded land outside the 'east-west core'. This 'policy on' approach has revealed a supply of deliverable housing that will meet the council's requirement of around 1,000 dwellings per year over the next 15 years. It also demonstrates a 5-year supply of housing land.

	Units arising from brownfield sites	% of total arising from brownfield sites	Units arising from greenfield sites	% of total arising from greenfield sites	Total units arising
'East-west core'	10,183	78%	2,887	22%	13,070
Elsewhere	1,206	63%	736	37%	1,942
All housing	**11,389**	**76%**	**3,623**	**24%**	**15,012**

Table 8: Summary of total 'policy on' housing supply to 2026

3.37 Table 8 above, shows that 87% (13,070 units) of the policy-on supply will be within the 'east-west core', while 13% (1,942 units) will be elsewhere. This is consistent with Core Strategy housing policy CP6 which states that 'around 85%' of new housing will be focused within the 'east-west core'. The table also shows that 78% (10,183 units) of new dwellings within the 'east-west core' will be on brownfield land, consistent with policy CP6 which states there will be a concentration of 'around 75%' of new housing on previously developed land.

	Units arising from brownfield sites	% of total arising from brownfield sites	Units arising from greenfield sites	% of total arising from greenfield sites	Total units arising
'East-west core'	3,469	76%	1,099	24%	4,568
Elsewhere	1,005	100%	0	0%	1,005
All housing	**4,474**	**80%**	**1,099**	**20%**	**5,573**

Table 9: Summary of total 'policy on' 0 to 5 year housing supply (from SHLAA 2010 Update)

3.38 Table 9 above, shows that of the policy-on supply in the 0 to 5 year bracket 82% (4,568 units) will be within the 'east-west core', while 18% (1,005 units) will be outside it. This is consistent with Core Strategy housing policy CP6 which states that 'around 85%' of new housing will be focused within the 'east-west core'. The table also shows that 76% (3,469 units) of new dwellings within the 'east-west core' will be on brownfield land, consistent with policy CP6 which states there will be a concentration of 'around 75%' of new housing on previously developed land.

3.39 While the current economic downturn and currently depressed housing market mean that the borough is unlikely to deliver 1,000 units annually in the short term, housing completions are expected to increase from their 2010/11 rates during the first ten years of the plan period as conditions within the housing market improve. Supply in the middle part of the period is expected to increase significantly as major sites, particularly within the broad locations for new development, become available, and phasing mechanisms for these large sites, together with the identification of new sites through subsequent development plan documents will need to ensure continuation of appropriate supply into the later period.

Provision for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople

3.40 The 10 Greater Manchester councils commissioned Arc4 to carry out a study entitled 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Service Delivery Needs in Greater Manchester – 2007/8' which set out to inform a range of local strategies at district level across Greater Manchester. It looked at existing provision and need, and projected future need for gypsy and traveller pitches and travelling showpeople's plots to 2015.

District	Current Need (at 2007)	Projected Need	Pitch Supply	Total Shortfall (to 2015)
Bolton	46	3	7	42
Bury	46	4	5	45
Manchester	66	5	4	67
Oldham	24	2	0	26
Rochdale	54	4	7	51
Salford	44	3	8	39
Stockport	33	2	0	35
Tameside	16	1	0	17
Trafford	43	2	23	22
Wigan	45	3	34	14
TOTAL	416	29	64	381

Table 10: Pitch requirements for gypsies and travellers to 2015 (AGMA/Arc4)

District	Authorised plots	Current shortfall (at 2007)	Projected growth to 2015 (using Government model)	Total need to 2015
Bolton	88	44	30	74
Bury	22	5	5	10
Manchester	75	15	19	34
Salford	99	20	31	51
Tameside	38	7	11	18
Wigan	36	11	12	23
TOTAL	356	102	108	210

Table 11: Plot requirements for travelling showpeople to 2015 (AGMA/Arc4)

3.41 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (September 2008) includes a requirement for such an assessment. A partial review was carried out into such provision and an independent panel conducted an Examination in Public during March 2010. A Panel Report was subsequently completed but not published in light of the Government's stated intention to abolish Regional Strategies. As a result, the partial review was not completed and its findings were not issued formally. It does not form part of the planning system.

3.42 However, although not issued formally, the Panel Report contains further evidence of the scale of current provision and shortfalls in provision for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople. For each local authority in Greater Manchester, the Panel Report recommended an increase in the residential pitch requirement for gypsies and travellers for the period 2007-2016 by 5 pitches, with a corresponding decrease in transit pitches in each authority.

District	Current authorised provision in 2007	Minimum additional permanent residential pitches required 2007-16	Proposed provision of permanent residential pitches in 2016	Minimum additional formal transit pitches required 2007-16
Bolton	26	35	61	5
Bury	17	40	57	5
Wigan	34	35	69	5
Salford	31	35	66	5
Manchester	16	55	71	5
Oldham	0	20	20	5
Rochdale	27	45	72	5
Tameside	0	15	15	5
Stockport	0	30	30	5
Trafford	83	20	103	5
GM Sub Region	234	330	564	50

Table 12: NW Partial Review - Scale and distribution of gypsy and traveller pitch provision

3.43 In respect of travelling showpeople, the Panel Report recommends that provision needs to be made in the North West as a whole for at least 285 net additional plots over the period 2007 to 2016, cautioning that in so doing there should be no net loss in existing levels of provision. Beyond 2016 provision needs to be made for an annual compound increase in the regional total of plots, equating to at least 76 additional plots between 2016 and 2021. The proportion of the regional total to be accommodated in each district is the same as its share of the regional requirement for the period 2007 to 2016.

3.44 Whilst the Partial Review report illustrates demand for plots and pitches, it has been further overtaken by events. On 29 August 2010 the Government announced its intention to withdraw the existing planning circulars covering gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople. Government has now carried forward that intention by issuing a consultation document inviting representations on its proposal to withdraw circulars 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites and 04/2007: Planning for Travelling Showpeople.

3.45 The consultation considers the details of a proposed new, single Planning Policy Statement that will replace both circulars. Government believes that local planning authorities, and not unelected regional bodies, are best placed to know the needs of their communities. It therefore intends that local planning authorities will be given the freedom and responsibility to determine the right level of traveller site provision in their area in consultation with local communities. As such, it will be necessary for the council to establish and set a borough-wide pitch and plot requirement. Core Strategy policy CP6 'Housing' acknowledges this and we envisage this would be done as part of a future site allocations development plan document following adoption of the Core Strategy.

House types and tenure

3.46 The breakdown of house types at the time of the 2001 Census is shown in Table 13 below. It shows that three-quarters of properties are semi-detached and terraced, with detached properties accounting for under one-fifth. Flats and apartments account for less than 8% with the majority being 'purpose built'.

Accommodation type - household spaces		Wigan	
		Number	%
Detached		21,394	16.6
Semi-detached		59,981	46.5
Terraced		37,709	29.2
Flat, maisonette or apartment	Purpose built	7,891	6.1
	Converted	1,142	0.9
	In commercial building	920	0.7
Caravan or other temporary structure		96	0.1

Table 13: House types in Wigan Borough (Census, 2001)

3.47 Table 14, below compares the house type distribution in Wigan Borough with that of Greater Manchester and the North Western Housing Market Area within Greater Manchester. It is taken from the Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment - May 2010 update. Wigan clearly has a significantly higher proportion of semi-detached properties and a higher proportion of detached properties, with a corresponding lower proportion of terraced houses and flats, maisonette's or apartments. However, the borough has a lower proportion of detached dwellings when compared to the UK as a whole, which has 21% detached properties.

	Total households	Detached (%)	Semi-detached (%)	Terraced (%)	Flat, maisonette or apartment (%)
Wigan Borough	133,609	16.6	46.5	29.2	7.5
Greater Manchester	1,124,455	13.8	38.2	32.8	14.9
North Western Housing Market Area	425,120	14.8	39.4	32.5	13.1

Table 14: Comparison of house type distribution

3.48 In terms of tenure, nearly three-quarters of properties are owner occupied and nearly one in six are council rented - see Table 15.

Tenure	2008 Survey %	Number implied	Census 2001 %
Owner occupied	72.4	95,244	71.7
Private rented	5.7	7,518	5.3
Council rented	17.1	22,473	17.7
Housing Association rented	2.3	3,022	2.2
Shared ownership	0.1	196	0.4
Other	2.4	3,087	2.7
Total	100.0	131,540	100.0

Table 15: Tenure in Wigan Borough (Wigan Council, 2008)

3.49 There were 5,991 people on the waiting list for council and Housing Association housing in 2007/08. The number of council houses has reduced as a result of 'right to buy', with reductions of 806 dwellings in 2003/04 and 694 in 2004/05. There has been a slow down in re-lets generally with people not moving from tenancies as they cannot afford to buy. Table 16 below shows how numbers on the housing register have varied since 2002 along with the number of Council re-let properties.

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number on housing register	5,019	5,684	4,035	5,801	5,059	5,991
Number of council re-let properties	3,039	2,483	2,337	1,972	2,337	2,151
Overall demand applications per letting	1.65	2.29	1.73	2.94	2.16	2.78
Other social lettings	664	557	394	462	513	555

Table 16: Wigan's affordable housing demand and supply (Wigan Council, 2008)

Source: Wigan Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix, 2008

3.50 Over one-quarter of 'social rented' (Council and Housing Association) houses are in the town of Wigan itself. The wards with the highest percentage of households in socially rented dwellings are Norley, Newtown, Ince, and Whelley, which are in a crescent to the south of the town centre.

3.51 At 1 April 2008 there were 5,198 empty dwellings in the borough. Of these, more than half (2,914) were dwellings in the private sector empty for over 6 months.

Existing housing stock

3.52 Quality of place is increasingly important in economic decision making and the attraction and retention of skilled workers. Investing in the quality of the built environment has wider social, economic, environmental and health benefits and could potentially impact upon the economic competitiveness and growth and prosperity of the area. Well designed housing can achieve good neighbourhood environments making them safe, attractive and convenient.

3.53 Inner areas of the borough contain the vast majority of socially rented and cheaper older terraced housing stock and lack diversity of housing. Nine-tenths of council housing meets the decency standard and nearly three-quarters of vulnerable households living in the private sector lived in decent accommodation in 2005. The council has met the government's 'decency targets' for 2010 in both the public and private sectors. Decency targets are that the housing meets the statutory minimum fitness standard, is in a reasonable state of repair, has reasonably modern facilities and services and has a reasonable degree of comfort.

3.54 Almost one-third of housing in the Wigan and Leigh Townships was built before 1919, which is greater than the national average of 19% and the regional average of 21%.

House size

3.55 Table 17 shows the size of the dwellings in the borough in terms of number of bedrooms. Over four-fifths of the dwellings have two or three bedrooms.

Bedrooms	%	Number of dwellings
Bedsit	0.2	281
One	7.5	9,691
Two	28.8	37,374
Three	51.5	67,032
Four	10.9	14,202
Five or more	1.1	1,388
Total	100	129,968

Table 17: Size of dwellings (Wigan Borough Housing Needs Survey, 2008)

Household size

3.56 Table 18 below shows the size of households in the borough. There are more one person households than there are three person households and four person households. Together, one and two person households make up nearly two-thirds of all households. Given that less than two-fifths of dwellings are terraced or flats, and nearly two-thirds of dwellings have three bedrooms or more, significant numbers of smaller households are living in larger family type accommodation.

Number of people living in households	Number	%
One person	34,639	27.7
Two people	41,880	13.5
Three people	22,945	18.3
Four people	18,379	14.7
Five people	5,533	4.4
Six people	1,398	1.2
Total occupied spaces	125,096	100

Table 18: Number of people living in households (2001 Census)

3.57 The overall number of households is changing with implications for the delivery of housing and this will add to the requirement for more dwellings along with associated physical and social infrastructure. As illustrated in Table 19 below, a 15.4% increase in population over the period 2006-2026 was forecast by GMFM in December 2008. This forecast represents an increase of 20,000 households. However, the 2010 Update revised this figure downwards to an average of 1,036 units annually to 2026.

	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	Total Change
Total households	130,000	135,000	141,000	146,000	150,000	
Change		+5,000	+6,000	+5,000	+4,000	+20,000
% change		+3.8%	+4.4%	+3.5%	+2.7%	+15.4%

Table 19: Household change in Wigan 2006-2026 (Greater Manchester Forecasting Model, 2008)

3.58 Average household size is declining and the trend is forecast to continue to 2026 and beyond. This is influenced primarily by people living longer and remaining in their own home, people leaving the parental home and living independently before having a family later in life, and marital separations. Declining average household size contributes substantially to the increase the demand for new housing. It means that the number of households is increasing at a faster rate than the population. Table 20 illustrates the forecast change in household size in the borough compared to Greater Manchester and the North West.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2022	2027
Wigan Borough	2.29	2.28	2.28	2.26	2.25	2.24	2.24	2.23	2.22	2.18	2.13
Greater Manchester	2.31	2.30	2.29	2.29	2.28	2.27	2.26	2.26	2.25	2.22	2.18
North West England	2.30	2.29	2.28	2.27	2.26	2.26	2.25	2.24	2.23	2.20	2.16

Table 20: Comparison of average household size forecasts (GMFM, 2010)

Affordability

3.59 Affordable housing is provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market because of the discrepancy between income and housing costs (rent or sale). The average house price and level of sales by type from 2007 is set out in Table 21. It is taken from the Wigan Housing Needs and Demand Study 2008.

Property Type	Land Registry Average Price	Land Registry % of Sales
Terraced	£103,932	40.3
Semi-detached	£134,771	34.4
Detached	£218,053	15.1
Flats and Maisonettes	£125,575	10.2
All Properties	£134,025	100

Table 21: Average Wigan house prices and sales levels

3.60 The average house price for the borough in the fourth quarter of 2007 was £134,025 (Land Registry), which had risen by 80.7% since 2003. For 'entry level stock', the price of terraced properties had increased by 125.9% and flats and maisonettes by 125.4%. Table 22 below shows the average house price change in the borough by property type for the period September 2009 to September 2010. It is from the Wigan Housing Market Update, Issue 5.

	Terraced	Semi Detached	Detached	Flats
Sept 2009	£90,860	£120,756	£195,275	£94,635
March 2010	£93,178	£122,734	£214,065	£84,311
June 2010	£95,560	£127,382	£215,418	£86,015
Sept 2010	£93,845	£125,897	£213,638	£79,432
Quarterly change %	-1.8	-1.2	-0.8	-7.7
Half yearly change %	0.7	2.6	-0.2	-5.8
Annual change %	3.3	4.3	9.4	-16.1

Table 22: Average Wigan house price change by property type, Sept 09 - Sept 10

3.61 From the same source, at September 2010 Wigan had the lowest average value (£137,970) when compared to its neighbours, including St Helens (£139,268), Bolton (£140,504), Warrington (£205,516) and Chorley (£191,969). The Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update Report,May 2010 compared average house prices across Greater Manchester for the third quarter of 2009 - see Table 23 below. It shows that Wigan, in the North Western Housing Market Area, is one of the most affordable districts in Greater Manchester, with only Tameside, Rochdale and Oldham having lower average house prices.

District / Housing Market Area	Average price paid
Bolton	£143,484
Bury	£148,552
Manchester	£146,035
Oldham	£122,147
Rochdale	£120,459
Salford	£124,531
Stockport	£186,409
Tameside	£122,259
Trafford	£231,437
Wigan	£123,212
Central Manchester	£150,505
Central Greater Manchester	£167,334
Southern Greater Manchester	£187,960
North Eastern Greater Manchester	£121,622
North Western Greater Manchester	£134,945

Table 23: Average house prices in Greater Manchester and its Housing Market Areas - third quarter, 2009

3.62 Access to owner occupation is restricted by rising prices which exceed income inflation. The data in the Housing Needs and Demand Study 2008 indicates strongly that there is an affordability problem arising from the relationship between local incomes and the realistic supply of the cheapest stock available. In 2008 the (mean) gross wage of people living in Wigan rose to £22,052 (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS).

The Housing Needs Survey showed that the income levels of over four-fifths of new households who formed in the previous year were below the level needed to be able to buy, and two-thirds are unable to afford to rented privately.

3.63 A key indicator of affordability is the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile incomes. According to government figures the 2007 affordability index for Wigan was 5.61, slightly lower than for the North West and Greater Manchester. This is illustrated in Table 24 below.

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Wigan	4.53	4.96	5.45	5.61
Greater Manchester	4.18	4.88	5.57	5.93
North West	4.42	5.00	5.61	5.94

Table 24: Affordability index

3.64 If a multiplier of 3.5 is needed to secure a mortgage, i.e. a mortgage no greater than 3.5 x annual income, then a person on the average income would be able to afford a mortgage of £77,182. The total need for affordable housing was identified in the Housing Needs Study Update 2005 as 2,294 dwellings per annum. This was translated to an annual requirement of 106 net affordable homes per annum from 2005 to 2011, in a technical guidance note that accompanies our Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document. The 2008 Housing Needs and Demand Study identified that, after allowing for existing stock net re-let supply, there was a total annual affordable housing shortfall of 417 units. However, in January 2010 the overall annual affordable housing shortfall was recalculated taking into account a range of factors and current data. The revised was 277 units per annum, equating to 4,155 affordable housing units over a 15 year period.

3.65 The need for affordable housing varies across the borough. Table 25 shows the price of accessing the cheapest housing in a reasonable condition within each township, taken from the Wigan Housing Market Report 2006-2007.

	Autumn 2005	Income	Summer 2007	Income	% Increase
Ashton/Bryn	76,000	21,000	91,000	25,000	20
Atherton	74,000	20,000	82,000	22,000	11
Golborne/Lowton	77,000	21,000	88,000	24,000	14
Hindley/ Platt Bridge/Abram	61,000	17,000	77,000	21,000	29
Leigh	66,000	18,000	72,000	20,000	9
Orrell/Billinge/Winstanley	75,000	20,000	128,000	35,000	71
Standish/ Shevington / Aspull	94,000	26,000	107,000	29,000	14
Tyldesley	80,000	22,000	110,000	30,000	38
Wigan North	68,000	18,000	84,000	23,000	24
Wigan South	68,000	18,000	80,000	22,000	18

Table 25: Access into owner occupation based on 3.5 x income with 95% mortgage

3.66 The borough also suffers from a problem of concealed households. A concealed household is one living within a household but wanting to move to their own accommodation and form a separate household, for example, adult children living with their parents. This is an issue in Wigan related to the discussion above on house price and income ratios.

3.67 The ability of concealed households to access the owner occupied market is very limited. Fewer than one-sixth of of concealed households have incomes above £27,500. Only 3.3% have incomes above £40,000. The cheapest 1 bedroom flats in the borough require an income threshold of £21,000 (Housing Needs and Demand Study, 2008).

3.68 Whilst house prices have fallen from the peak of 2007, an overview of the Wigan's housing market for the period July to September 2010 shows that the average price of a residential property in Wigan has increased by 3% in the quarter to the end of September 2010 from the previous quarter, and 7% annually, to £137,970 (Wigan Housing Market Update Issue 5, 2010).

3.69 Higher value properties experienced the most growth. Lowest value properties showed the slowest growth overall, both annually (3.5%) and in the quarter (0%). However, there are signs that housing price growth may be flattening out, although this remains to be seen. Overall activity remains low since May 2010 with property counts from Hometrack and the Land Registry both falling.

3.70 Mortgage markets show lending is significantly below the levels at the peak of the ‘boom’ years in 2006 and 2007, as lending was down 60% compared to the peak of lending in 2007. The effects of government spending cuts are yet to be fully realised and this, coupled with increasing inflation, incomes rising at less than the rate of inflation, recent increases in VAT and continued poor access to mortgage finance suggest the housing market will remain suppressed for the foreseeable future.

3.71 Standish remains the highest value house price area in the borough and remains generally stable in terms of value. Other high value areas include the Orrell and Winstanley Township, Shevington, Aspull, Wigan Central and Lowton East.

3.72 Golborne and Lowton Township experienced high levels of price growth between September 2009 and September 2010. Golborne and Lowton West Ward experienced the highest price growth across the borough. Other wards showing high levels of growth of around 10% included Astley, Wigan Central and Bryn. Leigh West Ward continues to have the lowest average house prices in the borough (£78,575), followed by Ince (£81,121). These areas have also seen prices fall over the year, as have Abram, Worsley Mesnes, Pemberton and Orrell.

3.73 The outlying areas show the greatest affordability pressures and these are recognised as high value locations which have seen the biggest growth in prices. While affordability continues to be a problem in areas where house prices are lower, housing markets in the inner and outer areas are not in balance, giving rise to differential housing markets.

Broad locations for new housing development

3.74 In a currently depressed housing market, with limited access to mortgages and developer finance, and with little housebuilding activity, there is a need to consider ways in which the regeneration of the inner areas of the borough can still be secured, so that markets can be brought into a better state of balance and forecast housing need can be met. An approach is embodied in spatial policy SP4 'Broad locations for new development', whereby the majority of new housing would still be focused in the inner areas - the 'east-west core'. Considering current economic circumstances and the depressed housing market, it is likely that new housing will not be delivered in sufficient quantity to meet forecast average annual need in the shorter term, leading to an initial shortfall in terms of housing delivery. While greenfield sites are generally considered easier to develop, and are therefore more attractive to developers, previously developed sites generally involve higher development costs arising from inherent physical constraints or problems arising from past use. Previously developed sites are therefore generally perceived as less attractive to developers.

3.75 In these circumstances, Core Strategy policy SP4 provides for a broad location for new housing development in the East Lancashire Road corridor, outside of the 'east-west core'. The broad location consists of four site options that are greenfield sites, presently designated as safeguarded land in the adopted Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan. Development of one or more of these sites could come forward under a review of Safeguarded Land as part of a future development plan document.

3.76 The option sites benefit from good locations close to the A580 East Lancashire Road, giving ready access to Manchester and Liverpool city centres. The sites are greenfield in nature and this factor, coupled with their location, is likely to make them very attractive to housing developers. We envisage that one, or possibly more than one, of the option sites would be allocated for new housing. The candidate sites are considered suitable for lower density/higher value housing, as this form of development is presently under represented in the borough as a whole. We envisage there would be a high degree of market attractiveness and significant developer interest. It is reasonable therefore to assume such sites would be deliverable and they are each identified within our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Following the allocation of a site or sites, there is the potential for a proportion of the development value accrued to be used to fund infrastructure needed to secure housing development at broad locations and sites within the 'east-west core'.

Affordable Housing Viability Study

3.77 While Wigan Borough is one of the most affordable districts within the North West, with houses that are cheaper in relative terms, the problem of affordability needs to be addressed. National policy requires that we undertake an informed assessment of the economic viability of providing affordable housing, including the thresholds and proportions of affordable housing proposed. The council therefore commissioned an Affordable Housing Viability Study from the District Valuer in September 2010. This involved the financial appraisal of a number of potential residential sites across the borough to establish and determine the ability of development sites to support a level of affordable housing. The study uses a valuation and appraisal base date of 01 April 2010, with the aim of establishing a viable affordable housing target for Wigan's housing policies.

3.78 The methodology and study assumptions are set out in detail in the study document, which was initiated at a housing developer's workshop on 9 March 2010. Participating stakeholders included housebuilders, architects, planning agents and registered social landlords. The study used 20 real but 'anonymous' sites in the borough and development appraisals were produced for each site. The approach used was to determine the level of developer's profit on revenue after taking into account development costs, including the proposed affordable housing requirement, the likely income from sales and an appropriate value for site acquisition having regard to the market conditions and/or the existing and alternative use value of each site.

3.79 A level of profit on revenue of 18% on the market value element of the scheme was considered 'viable', reflecting the nature of the development and its associated risks. A profit of 15-18% was considered 'marginal' in terms of scheme viability. The study was carried out in a depressed housing market at a time of economic uncertainty. The results revealed that none of the sites were a viable proposition for affordable housing provision in the current market. However, a relative increase in margins was factored in, in order to be able to examine affordability outcomes in an improving market. The relative increases were 10% (110% margin) and 20% (120% margin).

3.80 The results of the increases in margins and their effect on site viability at different levels of affordable housing provision are summarised in Table 26.

	Margins at 100%	Margins at 110%					Margins at 120%				
Affordable housing content		**20%**	**25%**	**30%**	**40%**	**50%**	**20%**	**25%**	**30%**	**40%**	**50%**
No. of viable sites	0	10	8	4	0	0	15	14	13	12	5
No. of marginal sites	0	3	4	5	2	0	3	3	1	1	4
No. of sites not viable	20	7	8	11	18	20	2	3	6	7	11

Table 26: Developer margins and effect on viability (April 2010 base)

3.81 The District Valuer concluded that, while current market conditions are depressed, it would be reasonable to assume house price growth across the development plan period and to assume a developer margin of 110% within 3 to 4 years. It is therefore reasonable for the council to set an affordable housing contribution of 25% on the basis of an assumed margin of 110%, whereby 12 of the 20 sites tested were viable or marginal.

3.82 The District Valuer also recommends that development plan housing policies should allow for development sites to be considered on an individual scheme by scheme basis, with full viability appraisal if necessary.

Sustainable design

3.83 Sustainable design is becoming an increasingly important tool for tackling carbon dioxide emissions and reducing fuel poverty. Standards for new houses are set out nationally in the Code for Sustainable Homes, with an aspiration that all new dwellings will be 'zero carbon' by 2016. The code is currently voluntary, but it is likely to be mandatory in the future.

3.84 Energy efficiency ratings for council homes (single assessment process rating of 65) are relatively good (top quartile performance). Although energy efficiency ratings for private homes (56 in 2008) are not as high as for council homes, they are also significantly better than the national average for private homes (49 in 2006).

3.85 On average, 2.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide are released domestically per person in Wigan. Although this is lower than the national average of 2.6 tonnes, it is still very high in a global context of about 0.4 tonnes of CO_2 per person.

3.86 Whilst the Wigan House Condition Survey in 2005 showed dramatic reduction in the proportion of housing with poor insulation levels (26% in 2000 to 4% in 2005) it also showed that fuel poverty in the borough remains a major issue due to low incomes.

3.87 Further information on sustainable homes is set out in Topic Paper 9 'Built Environment and Landscape'.

Climate change considerations

3.88 How we prepare for climate change and reduce further greenhouse gas emissions is a major challenge. It requires changes to almost everything we do and must, therefore, be considered from many different perspectives. The issues that are particularly important for housing are set out below.

- Increased risk of flooding, particularly, for homes located in flood plains / associated insurance costs.
- 38% of carbon dioxide emissions in Wigan were domestic in 2008. This means that encouraging energy efficiency in Wigan's housing stock is important.
- Energy security and fuel poverty can be improved by shifting to low carbon sources of energy for homes and maximising efficiency.

Key community and stakeholder involvement

3.89 A number of 'key stakeholders' have an important role to play in the development of our approach to housing. By identifying and involving these key stakeholders from an early stage, we are able to establish a stronger evidence base and more sustainable policy options.

3.90 The following 'key stakeholders' have been identified:

- Wigan and Leigh Housing
- Home Builders Federation
- Registered Social Landlords
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Wigan Council's (joint) Development Management / Building Control Forum
- The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)
- Neighbouring councils
- Major developers and landowners
- Wigan Borough Partnership
- The Housing Developer's Forum
- Community groups, including townships and Community Networks
- The residents of the borough.

3.91 These key stakeholders have been involved at all stages of the Core Strategy's preparation including issues and options, preferred option, revised proposals and draft policies and proposed submission. Common themes raised during early rounds of consultation were:

- The need for more than an average of 1,000 units annually to 2026.
- The need to ensure an appropriate spatial distribution of new housing.
- The need for more affordable housing and a greater variety and mix of house types generally.
- The need to ensure that affordable housing requirements have regard to economic viability considerations.
- The need to address the needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople.

- The need to address the issue of empty properties.
- The need to consider sustainably located greenfield land in addition to brownfield sites for development.

3.92 At the proposed submission stage there were 22 representations on policy CP6 'Housing' including 5 in support. The remainder were almost exclusively from landowner and developer interests and many similar issues were raised. Although support was expressed for the strategy of concentrating most new housing development in the ‘east-west’ core, doubt was voiced over the ability to deliver sufficient housing within that area. As a consequence there are calls for greater flexibility to release more land for housing elsewhere, notably Standish. Conversely, a community group in Standish called for tighter restrictions on the amount of development allowed outside the east-west core.

3.93 There were some doubts expressed over the accuracy of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment evidence on which the capacity of areas to deliver new housing is based. Others considered that the housing target within the policy should be expressed as a minimum. More detail was also sought on the gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople element of the policy and greater flexibility is sought on the provision of affordable housing. We consider that the balance of this policy is correct. No changes are proposed.

3.94 There were 25 representations to the East Lancashire Road corridor sites of which 9 were supporting comments by landowners or developers. The main issues raised by objectors were about traffic, the impact on nearby residential areas and the impact on wildlife. Two further objections from developers opposed the proposal on the basis that the broad location should be in Standish. Additionally, St Helens Council is concerned that the policy would lead to priority being given to the development of greenfield sites in advance of the brownfield ones in the east-west core, whilst Salford Council is concerned over the impact of the proposal on the East Lancashire Road. No changes are proposed.

3.95 The council received no objections from other local authorities with regard to housing policy including the intended target of around 1,000 dwellings annually net of clearance replacements. Further information is available in our Consultation Reports.

Infrastructure audit

3.96 There are currently around 136,000 houses and other dwellings in the borough. There is a high proportion of terraced (29%) and semi-detached homes (47%) and relatively fewer detached homes (17%) and flats (7%). The majority of homes (58%) are medium sized properties with 5 or 6 rooms. Over four-fifths of dwellings in the borough are private housing. More than 90% of these are owner-occupied with the remainder being private rented. Most of the other homes are council rented with a small proportion rented from registered social landlords such as housing associations. The areas surrounding the town of Wigan have the highest proportion of social rented housing; Orrell, Billinge and Winstanley township has the lowest proportion.

Social Housing

3.97 The 2008 Housing Needs and Demand Study indicates 19.5% of the current housing stock is affordable housing (council rented, housing association rented or shared ownership), which implies a total of 25,691 units. Tables 27-29 below highlight the tenure to housing type split, number of bedrooms by tenure and adequacy by tenure of the current social housing stock.

Tenure	Detached		Semi-detached		Terraced		Flat / maisonette / bedsit		Total
Council rented	607	3%	10585	47%	5416	24%	5865	26%	22473
HA rented	118	4%	496	16%	577	19%	1831	61%	3022
Shared ownership	0	0%	47	24%	83	42%	66	34%	196

Table 27: Property type by tenure (Wigan Housing Needs and Demand Study, 2008)

Tenure	Bedsit	One	Two	Three	Four	Five+	Total
Council rented	0.3	27.6	29.3	41.4	1.4	0.0	100
HA rented	4.8	45.6	34.7	13.6	1.3	0.0	100
Shared Ownership	0.0	33.7	23.5	42.8	0.0	0.0	100

Table 28: Number of bedrooms by tenure (Housing Needs and Demand Study, 2008)

Tenure	% adequate
Council rented	80.0
Housing Association rented	85.8
Shared ownership	100.0

Table 29: Adequacy by tenure (Housing Needs and Demand Study, 2008)

Gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople

3.98 There are currently some 34 existing authorised pitches for gypsies and travellers. This can be compared to a shortfall of some 14 pitches for the period up to 2015, according to the Arc4 study of accommodation needs referred to previously in this topic paper.

3.99 Similarly, there are currently some 36 existing authorised pitches for travelling showmen in the borough whilst the Arc 4 study estimates a need for a further 23 pitches for the period up to 2015.

3.100 Preliminary work has commenced within the council on the identification of appropriate sites to meet the shortfalls of pitches for gypsies and travellers and plots for travelling showpeople. However it is intended that a forthcoming development plan document dealing with site allocations will carry forward this work comprehensively by both assessing the existing evidence on the need and demand for such plots and allocating appropriate sites to meet the outstanding need for pitches.

FOUR

Key messages

4.1 A number of key messages have been drawn from the evidence identified in sections 2 and 3. The table below identifies these and the most relevant source documents. These key messages have been addressed in the Core Strategy, particularly by policy CP6 and the housing elements of policies SP1, SP3 and SP4.

Message	Relevant evidence
The need for around 1,000 new dwellings per year to meet the borough's needs for new housing.	• Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, 2011 update • Greater Manchester Forecasting Model (annually) • Household Projections, 2008 to 2033, England (Government) • North West Regional Spatial Strategy, 2008
Need to create sustainable neighbourhoods and target scarce resources in deprived areas	• Wigan Economic Development Plan, 2005 • Wigan Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, 2005 • Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable, Government, 2007 • North West Regional Spatial Strategy, 2008 • Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, 2011 update
Brownfield development / re-use of vacant buildings must take precedence whilst ensuring sustainable patterns of growth.	• Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, 2011 update • North West Regional Spatial Strategy, 2008 • Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable, 2007
Need to identify sufficient land for new housing through an up-to-date	• North West Regional Spatial Strategy, 2008

Message	Relevant evidence
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.	• Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, 2011 update • Wigan Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (annually) • SHLAA Practice Guidance, Government, 2007
Need to provide a mix of housing sizes, type and tenures and affordability to meet the demands of new households.	• Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, 2011 update • Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable, 2007 • North West Regional Spatial Strategy, 2008 • Sustainable Communities: Homes for All, Government, 2005 • North West Regional Housing Strategy, 2008 • Wigan Housing Needs Survey Update, 2005 • Vision 2026 - Wigan Housing Strategy • Wigan Housing Needs and Demand Study 2008
Need to plan effectively for the specialist housing needs of vulnerable groups including extra-care housing and 'lifetime homes'.	• North West Regional Housing Strategy, 2008 • Sustainable Communities: Homes for All, 2005 • Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable, 2007 • Wigan Housing Needs Survey Update, 2005 • Older Persons' Housing Study, 2005
Need to identify sites to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople.	• Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, 2011 update • Greater Manchester Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment

Message	Relevant evidence
	• Circular 01/2006 - Gypsies and Travellers • Circular 04/2007 - Travelling Showpeople • Emerging government guidance following the 'Planning for Traveller Sites' consultation
Need to provide sufficient affordable homes to meet the needs of local people.	• Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, 2011 update • Wigan Affordable Housing Viability Study, 2010 • Greater Manchester Forecast Model (annually) • Wigan Housing Needs and Demand Study 2008 • Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2008 and update

FIVE

Main spatial planning issues identified

5.1 Set out below are the issues relating to housing which have been identified during preparation of the Core Strategy. Section 5 of the Draft Core Strategy lists the headline issues for the borough.

Issue H 1

Quality and choice are limited in neighbourhoods in central parts of the borough where there is a concentration of deprivation and poorer housing stock.

Issue H 2

The borough has an unbalanced housing market, with high demand and prices in outer areas including Standish, Aspull, Shevington, Orrell, Billinge, Lowton and Astley and lower demand and lower prices in inner areas. However, in recent years housing has become less affordable for more people in more parts of the borough. Relatively few new 'affordable' homes have been provided.

Issue H 3

The population of the borough is forecast to increase and to include a higher proportion of older people. This will add to the increasing trend toward smaller households and will lead to more demand for sheltered and extra care housing along with associated physical and social infrastructure.

Issue H 4

While the borough has a low vacancy rate in social rented housing, vacancies in the overall housing stock represent a wasted resource.

Issue H 5

There is a shortage of sites to meet the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople.

SIX

Main infrastructure issues identified

6.1 The infrastructure audit in section 3 sets out the current position in the borough. A number of key issues are identified below.

Issue H 6

The affordable housing sought by households wanting to move in the borough represents a demand for 3,307 units. Of this total, 2,073 are implied for council rented accommodation, 940 for Housing Association rented and 294 for shared ownership.

Issue H 7

1,231 concealed households are also looking for social housing. Nearly half of this demand is for one bed accommodation, with over one-third seeking two bed accommodation.

Issue H 8

The greatest requirement for affordable housing occurs in the outer areas of the borough including Orrell, Billinge, Winstanley, Shevington, Standish and Aspull. These areas account for almost half of the affordable housing requirement from moving households.

Issue H 9

There are shortfalls in the provision of pitches for gypsies and travellers and plots for travelling showpeople.

SEVEN

Main sustainability issues identified

7.1 We identified key issues for the sustainability appraisal to ensure that it is appropriately focused on what is most important and relevant for Wigan Borough. These helped to inform the sustainability appraisal framework. They are:

Issue H 10

Although amongst the most affordable in the country, homes in the borough are becoming less affordable compared to incomes.

Issue H 11

New dwellings must be sustainably designed and energy efficient and the existing stock must continue to be upgraded.

Issue H 12

Fuel poverty continues to be a major issue due to relatively low incomes in the borough.

Issue H 13

The contribution of housing to sustainable neighbourhoods needs to be supported by services and infrastructure.

EIGHT

Our sustainability framework

Sustainability objectives and criteria

8.1 The following sustainability objectives, appraisal criteria and monitoring indicators have been established as part of the framework for assessing the Core Strategy. The objectives have been developed to reflect:

- Government guidance on sustainability appraisal such as 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Development Plan Documents (2005)' and recognised frameworks such as the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit (North West Regional Assembly and other agencies).
- The key sustainability issues identified in this topic paper.
- Policy context and legal requirements.
- Feedback and suggestions from consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (which contained a draft set of objectives and criteria).

8.2 The Sustainability Appraisal is underpinned by 19 objectives. Objective 12 specifically relates to housing.

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / Sub-questions
Objective 12. To ensure access for all to good quality affordable housing that is sustainably designed, built and maintained.	Will it ensure a supply of well-planned affordable housing in all parts of the borough that meets the needs of all social groups and makes the borough more economically competitive?
	Will it increase the percentage of new and existing dwellings of "sustainable design"? (i.e. incorporating resource / energy / waste / water efficiency/ access for disabled, "secured by design" etc…..)
	Will it reduce homelessness and the proportion of unfit and vacant houses?

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / Sub-questions
	Will it ensure sustainable patterns of growth? (i.e close to existing infrastructure and public transport / brownfield development, access to employment)
	Will it help reduce fuel poverty?

Baseline position

Sustainability Objective 12: To ensure access for all to good quality, affordable housing that is sustainably designed, built and maintained.

Indicator	Wigan baseline	Wigan trends	Targets	Comparisons	Comments
Core Strategy Housing Indicators					
National indicator 154 - Net additional homes provided (total less clearance replacement)	N/A	Average annual housing completions for 5 year period (2003 - 08) equate to 1016 new dwellings per year	Average 978 additional homes per year	Not Available	Not Available
National indicator 155 - Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	N/A	14 new additional affordable homes were provided in year 2007/08	Tbc	Not Available	Not Available

Indicator	Wigan baseline	Wigan trends	Targets	Comparisons	Comments
National indicator 159 - Supply of ready to develop housing sites,	N/A	Borough has maintained a healthy 5-year supply of housing in recent years	Maintain a rolling 5-year supply of housing land	Not Available	Not Available
Core output indicator - New and converted dwellings on previously developed land	N/A	In year 2007/08 86% of completions were on previously developed land	At least 75% of new housing completions on previously developed land	Not Available	Not Available
Core output indicator - Net additional pitches for gypsies and travellers	34 authorised pitches in Borough	Not Available	Tbc	Not Available	Not Available
Core output indicator - Housing quality: 'Building for life' assessments	Not Available	Not Available	Tbc	Not Available	Not Available

Indicator	Wigan baseline	Wigan trends	Targets	Comparisons	Comments
Local indicator - New housing completions in the preferred spatial option area	N/A	N/A	Over 80% of all new housing completions	Not Available	Not Available
Local indicator - Density of new housing provision	Not Available	Average density reducing following the 'credit crunch.'PPS3 has now removed a minimum density requirement	Average density of 30 units per hectare	Not Available	Not Available
Local indicator - Provision of family housing	Not Available	Not Available	Tbc	Not Available	Not Available

Indicator	Wigan baseline	Wigan trends	Targets	Comparisons	Comments
Local indicator - Provision of sheltered / extra-care housing	Not Available	Not Available	Tbc	Not Available	Not Available
Local indicator - % new homes meeting our targets for the code for sustainable homes	Not Available	Not Available	Tbc	Not Available	Not Available
Sustainability Appraisal Housing Indicators					
% of private sector homes vacant more than 6 months.	2.17% (2007)	The % of private sector homes vacant more than 6 months has varied since 2003.	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Number of homeless presentations.	2,777 (2007)	There has been a decrease in the number of	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

Indicator	Wigan baseline	Wigan trends	Targets	Comparisons	Comments
		homeless presentations since the period 04/05			
% who consider they live in a decent home which they have chosen and can afford.	78% (2007)	There has been a decrease in satisfaction since the last 2 surveys (86% in 2005).	Target of 85%	Not Available	The result for 2006/07 is slightly below target.
Lower quartile house price to lower quartile income	5.75 (2007)	Significantly deteriorating in absolute terms, lower than regional figure but higher then national figure.	Not available	Wigan ranks 27th out of 373 local authority districts in England & Wales in terms of being most affordable.	Illustrates that Housing in Wigan is amongst the most affordable in the region and the country.

Indicator	Wigan baseline	Wigan trends	Targets	Comparisons	Comments
Energy efficiency rating of local authority dwellings (Average Single Assessment Process (SAP) rating)	A rating of 65 63 (2005)	Year on year increase since 2003 (a rating of 60)	Target of 66 for 2006	England - 55.3 (2005)	Much better than the national average. Wigan's 2007 SAP score (65) puts it in the top quartile for Comprehensive Performance Assessment purposes. However, there is little scope to increase the figure without further investment.
Energy efficiency rating of private sector homes (Average SAP rating)	A rating of 56 (2005)	Significant year on year improvement	Not Available	England – 46 (2005)	Energy efficiency ratings for private homes are good compared to the national position, but need continued improvement.
Properties with a Single Assessment Process rating of less than 30	1% (2005)	Not Available	Not Available	England – 10% (2005)	Wigan is significantly better than the national average.
% of Local Authority housing meeting the decency standard	88%	Major improvements as a result of	95% by 2010	National target of 95% by 2010	On target to meet the governments decent homes target by 2010.

Indicator	Wigan baseline	Wigan trends	Targets	Comparisons	Comments
		Arms Length Management Organisation investment.			
% of vulnerable people living in private housing that is decent.	73%	Not Available	76% by 2010	National target 76% by 2010	Currently above national target for 2010.

Data gaps and limitations

- Code for Sustainable Homes indicator - minimum level of the Code to be achieved will be defined in future policy.
- Estimate of Global CO_2 emissions from households was calculated crudely using the following sources:
    - The Global Carbon Project estimates that 7.9 billion tonnes of carbon were emitted into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide in 2005.
    - UN population estimates a global total of 6.5 billion in 2005.
    - Assumption that household emissions are a third of total emissions (based on UK experience).
    - (7.9 / 6.5) / 3 = 0.4 tonnes. This is a very rough estimate but illustrates the fact that UK emissions are high in a global context.

NINE

An assessment of legality and soundness

9.1 This Topic Paper provides a summary of the evidence required for our Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal. The policy in the Core Strategy that this Topic Paper serves is policy CP6 'Housing'. The purpose of this section is to show that we have produced our Core Strategy in line with legal requirements and this policy is 'sound'.

9.2 Some of the legal requirements are procedural and concern the Core Strategy as a whole rather than individual policies; these are covered in the Self Assessment of Soundness and Legal Compliance document that accompanies the Core Strategy. The 4 legal requirements that are specific to contents of the Core Strategy are:

- Community and stakeholder involvement
- Subject to sustainability appraisal
- Regard to the sustainable community strategy
- Conforms generally to the Regional Spatial Strategy

9.3 A further requirement is to have "regard to national policy" but this is also covered under a similar 'test of soundness'.

9.4 To be sound the Core Strategy must be **justified**, **effective** and **consistent with national policy**. Compliance with these tests of soundness is assessed against the following 6 'soundness' sub-headings:

- Founded on a robust and credible evidence base.
- The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.
- Deliverable, including:
    - Identifying what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount, type and distribution of development proposed for the borough.
    - Ensuring that there are no regulatory or national policy barriers to delivery.
    - Ensuring that partners who are essential to delivery are signed up to it.
    - Being coherent with the core strategies prepared by our neighbouring councils.

- Flexible.
- Able to be monitored.
- Consistent with national policy.

9.5 The remainder of this section sets out the case for policy CP6 against these 4 legal requirements and the tests of soundness.

Policy CP6 Housing

Community and stakeholder involvement

9.6 The community and key stakeholders including house builders, landowners and their agents, Wigan and Leigh Housing, registered social landlords, community groups including the borough's Township Forums and Community Networks, and the Homes and Communities Agency have all been involved at each stage of the Core Strategy's preparation. Their views and comments have been considered and have helped to shape the content and direction of policy CP6 and other policies where appropriate. Policy CP6 therefore complies fully with the Statement of Community Involvement in respect of who has been involved or consulted, and how and when consultation has taken place. Details of this involvement are set out in Section 3 of this Topic Paper and are also included in our Consultation Reports.

Subject to Sustainability Appraisal

9.7 Policy CP6 has been shaped by the outcomes of a robust sustainability appraisal that satisfies the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The appraisal process was founded on the collection of thorough baseline information about housing and key stakeholders were involved, including the council's Housing Strategy Team. The process informed the original choice of policy and subsequently tested it against sustainability principles and objectives. It was then further adapted to address sustainability issues and, as a result, is the most sustainable policy for Wigan Borough that we could reasonably include in the Core Strategy. The full details of the appraisal can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal Report (August 2011).

General conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy

9.8 Policy CP6 is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy as set out below:

- It promotes sustainable communities in accordance with policy DP2, by focusing the majority of new housing development in sustainable locations in the 'east-west core'. This is the part of the borough where most economic and social deprivation is concentrated. Policy CP6 will provide for a mix of house types and tenures, including affordable housing.
- It makes best use of existing resources and infrastructure in accordance with policy DP4, by locating the majority of new housing in the most sustainable locations with priority given to development on previously developed land, including the re-use and conversion of existing buildings.
- It marries opportunity and need in accordance with policy DP6, as it will promote regeneration and social inclusion through the creation of mixed communities and affordable housing in the most economically and socially deprived parts of the borough. It will also deliver infrastructure that will serve to benefit the wider borough as a whole.
- It accords with policy RDF1 as development is focused in and around the centre of the borough. Emphasis is placed on addressing regeneration in sustainable locations and the use of previously developed land.
- It accords with policy L2 as core policy development has been informed and is underpinned by a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other sources of housing related information.
- It accords with policy L3 as it promotes the re-use of vacant buildings for residential use and a reduction in the proportion of empty homes.
- It accords with policy L4 as it will allocate sufficient land to meet the borough's housing requirements each year to 2026.
- It accords with policy L5 as it sets out the threshold above which affordable housing provision will be required.

Regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy

9.9 Our sustainable community strategy 'Vision 2026' was produced in 2008 in line with the Core Strategy time frame. It identifies four priority areas and this policy is in line with one of them: Ambitious Communities

Founded on robust and credible evidence

9.10 Policy CP6 is founded on robust and credible evidence as shown in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this topic paper. This is backed up further by the separate housing evidence review document. The key sources of evidence which support policy CP6 are:

- Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing
- Wigan Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Wigan Affordable Housing Viability Study
- Greater Manchester Forecast Model
- Wigan Housing Market Updates
- Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment and update
- Wigan Housing Needs and Demand Study, 2008.

The most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternatives

9.11 Policy CP6 follows the preferred spatial approach in aiming to direct the majority of new housing within the 'east-west core' of the borough. The towns and other settlements within the 'east-west core' suffer the greatest economic and social deprivation and the approach in CP6 is to focus a critical mass of development in these locations where it is most needed. This will help to meet housing needs, regenerate neighbourhoods and strengthen weaker housing markets. The approach helps to best fulfil the council's objectives for housing.

9.12 There were 4 alternatives to the spatial approach used in policy CP6. Three of these involved focusing the majority of development in the east of the borough; the west of the borough; and the outer areas of the borough respectively. The fourth alternative proposed the dispersal of development across the borough.

9.13 None of the alternatives were considered the most sustainable option when tested against a range of social, economic and environmental sustainability objectives. The preferred spatial approach, the 'east-west core', also received the most support from the community and other key stakeholders on the basis that the inner areas had the greatest need.

9.14 The housing objectives set out in policy CP6 will be delivered by the council in conjunction with, variously, key stakeholders including landowners, developers, businesses, the voluntary sector, the Homes and Communities Agency, registered social landlords, groups representing gypsies and travellers, groups representing travelling showpeople, and applicants for planning permission.

Deliverable

9.15 The key messages identified in section 4 of this document indicate what needs to be addressed in the borough with regards to housing. To address these messages and deliver change and improvement in the borough, policy CP6 has indicated a set of key delivery items. These are set out in a table under the policy and include: Allocating sufficient land to meet housing land requirements; focusing around 85% of housing development in the 'east-west core'; reducing the proportion of empty homes and promoting the re-use of vacant buildings; and ensuring there is an appropriate mix of house types, sizes, tenures and affordability, specialist and extra-care housing.

9.16 In addition to Wigan Council, a number of organisations including the Homes and Communities Agency, businesses, developers and registered social landlords will play a crucial role in the delivery of this policy.

9.17 Neighbouring authorities have been involved at all stages of the policy's preparation. No representations have been received from neighbouring authorities relating to policy CP6, indicating that the policy is coherent with their Core Strategies.

9.18 There are no regulatory or national policy barriers to the delivery of the policy.

Flexible

9.19 Policy CP6 establishes a focus on what, where and how much new housing development and associated infrastructure will take place in the borough, but is not specific about how this will be achieved. The strategic nature of the policy provides direction to new housing development whilst retaining flexibility and, therefore, an ability to adapt to future changes during the plan period. The policy avoids being too rigid in terms of the annual housing requirement. Its has inbuilt flexibility and is expressed as a requirement for ‘around’ 1,000 dwellings annually to 2026. Similarly, in terms of affordable housing provision, policy CP6 is flexible and allows for such provision to be waived, reduced or deferred in the circumstances set out in the policy.

Able to be monitored

9.20 The means for monitoring this policy are set out in chapter 10 of the Draft Core Strategy: Proposed Submission version, specifically:

- 5 year housing supply
- Net additional new homes
- % of new homes within the east-west core
- % of new homes on previously developed land
- Level of empty homes
- Affordable homes delivered (gross)
- Net additional pitches for gypsies and travellers and plots for travelling showpeople.

Consistent with national policy

9.21 Policy CP6 is consistent with national policy, with regard to key documents:

- Planning Policy Statement 3 : Housing
- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.

TEN

Next steps

10.1 This is the final version of the topic paper summarising and analysing evidence on housing that we have gathered to inform our Core Strategy: Submission Version and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal.

10.2 Previous versions of each topic paper and evidence reviews are available from the 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Draft Core Strategy - Proposed Submission version' webpages for the Core Strategy, on our website at www.wigan.gov.uk/ldfcorestrategy. This is to provide a record of what evidence was available at each stage of Core Strategy preparation.

10.3 We may update this topic paper to inform a future development plan document or a review of the Core Strategy.

Emerging Evidence to look out for:

10.4 We will be updating our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment on an annual basis. This assessment helps to identify a sufficient land supply for new housing as required by Planning Policy Statement 3, enabling identification of an immediate 5 year supply. The assessment represents part of the evidence needed in order to inform the allocation of sites for housing and identify areas for future development.

LDF

WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY

Gillian Bishop
Corporate Director - Places Directorate
Wigan Council, PO Box 100, Wigan, WN1 3DS

Wigan Council

MCT11-497/AUG05-11