



LDF



WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY



Accessibility Final Topic Paper 8

AUGUST 2011

Core Strategy Submission Version



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ONE

Introduction

Purpose of this document

1.1 This is Topic Paper 8 on Accessibility. 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 policy CP7 'Accessibility'.

1.3 By combining the evidence gathering stages for both the Core Strategy and the Sustainability Appraisal, we can streamline the documentation produced and avoid duplication. It helps us to ensure that sustainable development is embedded in the process of producing the Core Strategy. It 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. The key related topic papers for accessibility are:

- Health and recreation
- Education and learning
- Economy and employment
- Housing
- Retail and centres
- Built environment and landscape
- Energy
- Waste
- Natural resources and pollution

1.5 Rather than preparing additional reports on 'climate change' we have considered this important theme in 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 site allocations plans, 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 accessibility are Planning Policy Guidance note 13 'Transport' 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 Wigan suffers from poor transport infrastructure, congestion and slow journey times. The Draft Core Strategy provides planning policies that will improve accessibility to key destinations for people and goods both within and outside the borough. It promotes the delivery of major transport interventions and accessibility improvements while seeking to make the best use of existing transport infrastructure. This will be achieved through developing and implementing a Transport Strategy for the borough 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

1.9 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.

1.10 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.

1.11 This topic paper contains the information we have used to help us establish the issues for accessibility. 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)

Viewing documents

- Wigan Town Hall*
- Wigan Life Centre, College Avenue, Wigan, WN1 1NJ*

** Until January 2012, when 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 accessibility in Wigan Borough and draws out the key messages for the Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal. The key plans, policies and strategies which provide support for policy CP7 and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from an accessibility perspective include:

National plans, policies and strategies

Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (2001)

This sets out to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional and local level to:

1. Promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and moving freight
2. Promote accessibility for jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and
3. Reduce the need to travel, especially by car

This means local authorities need to:

- Manage patterns of urban growth to maximise use of public transport, focusing major generators of travel demand and high density development near to public transport interchanges and high quality corridors that offer a realistic choice of access by public transport, walking and cycling
- Promote mixed use sites
- Ensure the needs of disabled people as pedestrians, public transport users and motorists are taken into account
- Protect sites and routes critical in developing future infrastructure to widen transport choices for passengers and freight
- Ensure design of transport infrastructure and facilities considers issues of road safety and personal security

- Promote access to services and facilities by means other than the car, home working, flexible working and use parking policies to promote sustainable transport choices
- Work in partnership with other private and public sector agencies to deliver transport solutions and investment.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Sustainable Development (2005)

This sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It recognises transport is a key issue in sustainability in terms of:

- Ensuring the provision of sufficient good quality new homes in suitable locations that reduce the need to travel
- Taking into account environmental issues of air quality and pollution from transport
- Ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.

Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 (2008)

This outlines the central role of the planning system in delivering our response to climate change. In transport terms this means delivering patterns of urban growth which reduce the need to travel, especially by car and the contribution transport can make towards reducing emissions.

2.2 Other key national plans, policies and strategies which provide support for policy CP7 and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from an accessibility perspective include:

- **Local Transport Act (2008)** - This strengthened the role of Passenger Transport Executives/Authorities, reformed the bus sector and enabled road user charging plans outside London. It looked at important areas of public transport like local bus services and set out proposals for a more consistent approach to local transport planning. It planned to reform the existing laws on road pricing schemes for local

authorities who wish to have schemes in their areas and establishes Integrated Transport Authorities.

Regional / sub-regional plans and strategies

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

The Regional Spatial Strategy forms part of our Local Development Framework, setting the context for our Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents as well as the Local Transport Plan (see below). Regional transport policies aim to achieve the same shared vision of sustainable development and include the region's priorities for transport investment and management. Policies of particular relevance to accessibility in Wigan include:

Policy DP1 Spatial Principles - Managing travel demand, reducing the need to travel and increasing accessibility are principles that underpin the regional spatial strategy.

Policy DP2 Promote Sustainable Communities - Ensure that public services and facilities are conveniently located close to the people they serve and are genuinely accessible by public transport; and promote physical exercise including through opportunities to walk and cycle.

Policy DP4 Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure - Priority should be given to developments in locations that do not require major investment in new infrastructure, including transport.

Policy DP5 Manage Travel Demand; Reduce the Need to Travel, and Increase Accessibility - Development should be located so as to reduce the need to travel; a shift to more sustainable modes of travel for both people and freight should be secured; an integrated approach should be encouraged; and road safety improved.

Policy DP6 Marry Opportunity and Need - Priority should be given to linking areas of economic opportunity with areas in greatest need of economic, social and physical restructuring and regeneration.

Policy DP7 Promote Environmental Quality - Environmental quality should be protected and enhanced, including by assessing the potential impacts of managing traffic growth and mitigating the impacts of road traffic on air quality, noise and health.

. Wigan is highlighted as a key interchange of regional importance.

Policy RDF1 Spatial Priorities - sets out the regional spatial priorities for growth at points where transport networks connect and where public transport accessibility is good.

Policy DP9 Reduce Emissions and Adapt to Climate Change - Measures to reduce emissions might include reducing traffic growth and promoting walking, cycling and public transport.

Policy W1 Strengthening the Regional Economy - Ensure safe, reliable and effective operation of the region's transport networks and infrastructure.

Policy MCR1 Manchester City Region Priorities - Support interventions necessary to achieve a significant improvement in the sub-region's economic performance; including the enhancement of public transport links; improve the city region's internal and external transport links; and develop the role of Wigan as a regional public transport gateway.

Policy MCR4 Northern Part of the Manchester City Region - Secure necessary infrastructure improvements to help the area compete more effectively.

Chapter 8 of the Regional Spatial Strategy '**Transport in the North West - Connecting People and Places**' forms the Regional Transport Strategy. It aims to improve significantly the quality and provision of public transport and promote a more structured and managed approach to managing and selectively improving the region's highway network. The main policies of relevance to Wigan are:

Policy RT1 Integrated Transport Networks - Examine transport problems on a multi-modal basis and identify opportunities for improved integration of public transport.

Policy RT2 Managing Travel Demand - Reduce congestion and car borne trips and reallocate road space in favour of walking, cycling and bus measures alongside parking control and enforcement.

Policy RT3 Public Transport Framework - Enhance and improve bus and rail services.

Policy RT4 Management of the Highway Network - Includes improving road safety, reducing traffic growth and maintaining a high quality environment.

Policy RT7 Freight Transport - Support and improve the movement of freight and transfer to rail where possible.

Policy RT9 Walking and Cycling - Increase participation in these activities for environmental, congestion and personal health benefits.

Policy RT10 Priorities for Transport Management and Investment - Will be determined by the availability of Regional Funding Allowance, Transport Innovation Fund, local funding and contributions secured from developers and other sources.

2.3 Other key regional or sub-regional plans, policies and strategies which provide support for policy CP7 and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from an accessibility perspective include:

- **Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 3 - 2011/12 onwards (Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority, 2011)** - The third Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan provides a clear set of investment priorities and complementary activities that support the maximum economic potential economic growth in Greater Manchester, whilst also acknowledging the need for lower carbon travel patterns.
- **North West Route Utilisation Strategy (Network Rail, 2007)** - The strategy provides a 10-year framework for the development of the railway infrastructure to meet the reasonable demands of passengers and freight in the region. It examines the role of the railway in supporting the local, regional and national economies, especially in the light of the growth in jobs in the region and identifies gaps in provision.

Local plans, policies and strategies

Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006)

Some accessibility policies, contained within Chapter 10 of the Unitary Development Plan are being replaced by policy CP7, Accessibility in the Draft Core Strategy, and CP7 and CP10 in the case of A1R - Highway access, new development. The exceptions are: policies A1G 'Physical improvements to the bus network'; A1H 'Leigh, Ellenbrook, Manchester public transport corridor'; A1J 'Rail infrastructure'; A1K 'Integration of Wigan rail stations'; A1M 'Freight, new development'; A1N 'Strategic route network'; A1P 'Major highway schemes'; and A1S 'Parking in new development'. These will remain in force until they are replaced by policies in other development plan documents that form part of the Local Development Framework.

2.4 Other local plans, policies and strategies which provide support for policy CP7 and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from an accessibility perspective include:

- **Strategic Transport Route Assessment Plan (Wigan Council 2010)** - This Strategic Transport Route Assessment Plan outlines the approach to be adopted in identifying causes of congestion and proposes potential interventions with the aim of achieving improved travel performance on the network. This will be conducted by a process of detailed assessment, monitoring and review. The rationale for this Plan is to establish criteria with the ultimate aim of keeping traffic moving, reducing journey times and improving journey reliability.

THREE

Other key evidence reviewed

Key sources of information

3.1 This section brings together and analyses the key evidence relating to accessibility. It outlines key characteristics, trends, issues and opportunities and supports policy CP7 on accessibility in the Core Strategy. It also gives an overview of the infrastructure and climate change considerations and a summary of stakeholder and community involvement related to accessibility issues.

3.2 The main sources of information used are:

National

- Local Transport Act (Department for Transport, 2008)
- Smarter Choices; Changing the way we travel (Department for Transport, 2004)
- Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003)

Regional

- Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 3 (Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority, 2010)
- Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy (Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority, 2005)

Local

- Wigan Local Development Framework Transport Modelling (Greater Manchester Transportation Unit 2010 / 2011)
- Transport Infrastructure Options Assessment (Wigan Council Engineering Consultancy, 2010)
- Wigan Congestion Study (Greater Manchester Transportation Unit, 2010)
- Transport Statistics in Wigan 2009 (Greater Manchester Transportation Unit, 2010)
- Wigan's Information System of Dynamic Online Maps (WISDOM)

Background / overview

3.3 The transport network in Wigan is a result of the borough's geography and economic history. The borough has long been a major crossroads and contains, or is close to, major national and regional north-south and east-west links. Internally, however, it developed as a series of small mining towns linked by a rural road pattern and fragmented by numerous rail and canal links. This has determined much of our current position and the network is largely unsuitable to serve modern transport needs.

Congestion

3.4 Although the congestion problems in Wigan are widely recognised by borough residents and visitors, the Greater Manchester Transportation Unit produced a report in December 2010 indicating that congestion in Wigan is no worse than in any other council area in Greater Manchester. However, in Wigan, a minor incident on a classified road such as roadworks or a vehicle breakdown often has a disproportionate effect on journey time reliability. Peak time congestion is predictable, but the unpredictability of other incidents results in the perception that congestion continues for much of the day.

3.5 According to the transportation unit, in the morning peak period (07:00 - 09:30) average traffic speeds of 18.8 mph across Wigan Borough are similar to those observed in Bolton (18.6mph) but slightly faster than for Greater Manchester as a whole (17.4 mph). During the evening peak period (15:30 - 18:30) average traffic speeds of 18.0 mph across Wigan borough are similar to those observed in Bolton (17.9 mph) but slightly faster than for Greater Manchester (16.9 mph) as a whole.

3.6 The Wigan Congestion Study, also of 2010, found that in the morning peak period (07:00 - 09:30) numerous locations suffered from severe congestion where average speeds were below 10 mph. The locations that have average speeds below 10mph for the longest time (1.5 - 2.0 hours) were:

- All roads approaching Hindley town centre
- Roads approaching the A580 at Lane Head, Lowton.

3.7 The B5238 approaching Wigan town centre from New Springs / Scholes; the B5239 from Aspull approaching the junction with Hall Lane; the A577 Mosley Common approaching the A580 East Lancashire Road; and the A572 Chaddock Lane, Astley approaching the A580 East Lancashire Road, also have average speeds below 10 mph for a significant length (1 hour) of time.

3.8 Parts of the road network in Higher Ince, Abram, Poolstock, Pemberton and the Firs Lane / Twist Lane area of Leigh also have average speeds below 10 mph but for a shorter length (0.5 hours) of time.

3.9 In the evening peak period (15:30 - 18:30) the locations that had average speeds below 10 mph for the longest time (2.0 - 2.5 hours) were:

- A579/A572/B5207 northbound approaching the A580 at Lane Head, Lowton
- Roads approaching Hindley town centre from the north, south and west
- A579 Atherleigh Way northbound approaching Twist Lane and extending to Kirkhall Lane
- A572 Twist Lane westbound approaching Atherleigh Way
- A58 and A573 southbound through Platt Bridge
- Roads approaching Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre from the south, east and west
- A5209 and B5239, approaching Standish traffic signals
- A577 Orrell Road, eastbound between M6 and Fleet Street
- Various short stretches of road around Wigan town centre
- A572/B5215 northbound through Leigh town centre.

3.10 The B5238 Poolstock/Chapel Lane, southbound approaching Pool Street, A573 Warrington Road, northbound approaching the A580 and the A49 Caroline Street, Wallgate and Pottery Road outbound from Wigan town centre also have average speeds below 10 mph for a significant length (1.5 hours) of time.

3.11 Other parts of the road network in Poolstock, Atherleigh Way in Leigh, Woodhouse Lane in Wigan and through Leigh town centre also have average speeds below 10mph but for a shorter length (0.5 hours) of time.

3.12 In the short term by continuing to roll out the delivery of the Strategic Route Assessment Plan, the provision of low cost, small scale solutions that reduce congestion for all traffic at identified locations can be undertaken whilst ensuring value for money.

3.13 However, if we want to reverse the detrimental effects of congestion on communities, the local environment, economy and well-being of residents in the long term, a significant shift away from driving to walking, cycling and using public transport will be essential.

3.14 There is a need to ensure that when success has been achieved in reducing the impact of congestion, that the available road space does not automatically generate further congestion levels through other people reverting back to car use.

Transport infrastructure options assessment and transport modelling

3.15 In 2009/10 work undertaken by the council's highway design engineers focused on new highway infrastructure schemes that could mitigate the potential detrimental effect of future development proposed within the Core Strategy, in particular that associated with the key strategic sites then proposed (Core Strategy: Preferred Options, June 2009). Existing highway infrastructure scheme proposals within the current Unitary Development Plan were also considered.

3.16 The assessment provided cost estimates of each potential scheme with constraints and land ownerships taken into account in addition to highway design assumptions. The estimated cost of each individual scheme is given in Table 3.1.

3.17 In tandem with the options assessment work, our transport modelling work undertaken by the Greater Manchester Transportation Unit, determined those parts of the transport network that will incur unacceptable levels of stress if all the development proposed in the Core Strategy and by adjacent districts is implemented.

3.18 Numerous combinations of the new highway infrastructure schemes have been modelled in order to assess what positive impact they would have upon the transport network. After a long sifting process three final preferred combinations were modelled in order to assess their impact, namely options 3, 3A and 3B. These are also indicated in Table 3.1.

Ref No	Scheme Description	Estimated Cost (£M)	Option 3	Option 3A	Option 3B
1	A577 Ormskirk Road - Spring Road Link	5.692	y	y	y
2	Spring Road, Walthew House Lane, Challenge Way & Stadium Way Improvement	1.724	y	y	y
3	Wigan Inner Relief Route	25.661	y	y	y
4	A49 Wallgate / Pottery Road Gyratory Diversion (Saddle Link Road)	10.705	y	y	y
5	M6 Junction 26 - A571 Billinge Road Link (Wigan South Central Link Road)	8.445			
6	A571 Billinge Road - A49 Warrington Road Link (Pemberton Colliery Link Road)	1.385	y	y	y
7	A49 Warrington Road - Chapel Lane Link (A49 Diversion including Wigan Town Centre Link Road)	23.270	y	y	y
8	Wigan Town Centre Link Road - A573 Warrington Road Link	13.333	y		
9	A573 Warrington Road Diversion	2.065	y		
10	A573 Warrington Road - A58 Liverpool Road Link	10.859	y		
11	A58 Liverpool - A578 Leigh Road Link	8.984	y	y	y

Ref No	Scheme Description	Estimated Cost (£M)	Option 3	Option 3A	Option 3B
12	A578 Leigh Road - A579 Atherleigh Way	8.800	y		y
13	A58 Liverpool Road - Bickershaw Link	5.818			
14	Bickershaw - A578 Leigh Road Link	5.364			
15	A578 Leigh Road - A577 Corner Lane Link	2.905		y	
17	A579 Atherleigh Way - A578 Twist Lane Link	5.102	y		
18	A579 Atherleigh Way - A578 Wigan Road Link (Parsonage Link Road)	5.126	y	y	y
19	A579 Bolton Road - A577 Tyldesley Road Link	5.203	y	y	y
20	A572 Chaddock Lane - A577 Mosley Common Road Link	3.798	y	y	y
21	A49 Wigan Rd - A58 Bolton Road Link (southern alignment)	6.550	y	y	y
22	A49 Wigan Road (M6 Junction 25) - A58 Bolton Road Link (northern alignment)	12.588			
	Total cost of option (£M)		136.955	101.273	105.596

Table 3.1 Transport infrastructure schemes, cost estimates and option combinations, 2009/10

3.19 The individual impact upon the performance of the transport network in 2026 from each of the three options was compared against a network which had no new transport infrastructure at all in 2026. All of the development proposed in the Core Strategy and in adjacent districts was assumed to be in place. The results from the modelling revealed that:

- Option 3 reduces travel time across the road network by 6.8% (am peak) and by 6.2% (pm peak)
- Option 3A reduces travel time across the road network by 3.8% (am peak) and by 3.3% (pm peak)
- Option 3B reduces travel time across the road network by 5.0% (am peak) and by 3.8% (pm peak)

3.20 Option 3 represents the highest cost investment strategy but only offers marginally better user benefits than either of the other two options, which themselves offer only modest reductions in travel time comparison to a network with no new infrastructure in 2026. Additionally, none of the three options examined restored the network performance back to 2011 levels.

3.21 Whilst the building of roads in certain parts of the borough might be desirable, evidence from this transport modelling and infrastructure options work indicates that major road building schemes across the whole of the borough, akin to Option 3, do not deliver the ultimate solution in terms of benefits. There is also little prospect of funding being available to enable their delivery within the lifetime of the Core Strategy.

3.22 In 2011 the transportation unit undertook further transport modelling work with respect to the key strategic site and broad locations for new development across the borough now proposed (Core Strategy: Revised Proposals and Draft Policies, October 2010). However, in agreement with the Highways Agency and in recognition that evidence of the future is only reasonably certain within a relatively short time period, the transport impacts of development were only modelled to 2016, alongside committed transport schemes. A primary aim of the work was to identify first-order highway impacts, but also to identify locational influences on mode split.

3.23 Clearly, by 2016 the amount of development anticipated on the sites is limited. The anticipated growth in general background traffic over the five-year period is expected to increase total travel time by all vehicles on the road network by 19-23%, and total travel distance by 12-15%. Adding the proposed development sites and locations has a small additional impact, further increasing total travel time and total travel distance by up to 0.5%. The amount of time spent by vehicles in queues is also expected to increase, but only by a small amount. The analysis demonstrates that the traffic generated would cause some deterioration in the operation of a number of junctions in the vicinity of the sites, but that the volumes of traffic generated would not be sufficient to cause wider congestion and capacity problems.

3.24 The majority of the sites identified are reliant on bus services that radiate out on routes to/from Wigan and Leigh town centres. The only exception to this is the Pemberton Colliery site, which is also served by Pemberton rail station, giving access to rail services between Wigan and Kirby (plus connections to Liverpool). Although there is a relatively good network of bus services operating on the main routes across the Wigan borough, some of the sites have poor public transport linkages to the borough's town centres.

3.25 With the exception of the Parsonage site, the remaining sites are expected to generate low numbers of public transport trips. The public transport catchment areas for the sites are largely restricted to Wigan Borough and the analysis demonstrates that there would be few new public transport trips to/from areas outside the district. Measures to encourage greater public transport usage at these sites and a detailed examination of any potential capacity issues related to increased passenger numbers, will be addressed as part of the site specific travel plans developed as the sites are brought forward.

Reducing travel by car

3.26 Wigan has the longest commuting journeys of any district in Greater Manchester at 15.6 km average distance (Greater Manchester Transportation Unit, 2006). 2001 Census data records that nearly 90% of Wigan residents travel to work as either a car driver (77.9%) or passenger (11.6%). Reducing car trips, especially at peak times will therefore have a significant impact on levels of congestion.

3.27 Census figures also reveal that 48.1% of Wigan residents travel less than 5 km to work; 35.4% travel 5-20 km; with the remaining 16.6% having no fixed place of work or travelling over 20 km. As the majority of trips are local in nature there is great potential to move these from car to walking, cycling and public transport.

3.28 The Local Transport Plan highlights the benefits of assisting people and organisations with reducing travel needs, using tools such as Travel Plans and School Travel Plans. The council produced a Travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document in June 2007 to help guide developers through the process.

3.29 There are currently 69 workplace, 1 church and 5 residential travel plans at various stages of development across the borough. School travel plans are mentioned below. Work on smarter choices, to encourage travel without using a car, is essential to help tackle congestion.

Bus services

3.30 Bus use in Wigan is declining and is the lowest in Greater Manchester. 2001 Census data shows that for those who travel to work by bus, 72% of residents work in Wigan and 86% of Wigan workers are resident in the borough. This shows the importance of the local bus network to the economy and its potential for local journeys.

3.31 The borough has an extensive network of bus routes generally radiating out from the main hubs of Wigan and Leigh bus stations to neighbouring towns in and outside the borough, especially along key transport corridors. Circular services connecting settlements are less common. Journeys between smaller centres and other destinations such as employment sites often require interchange in Wigan or Leigh, reducing the attractiveness of taking the bus. Dispersed settlement patterns means commercial and subsidised services are often difficult to sustain. This has resulted in the establishment of a number of demand responsive "Local Link" services joining more remote communities with no access to a car or main bus service to local centres, key services and main bus routes. Such services serve parts of Aspull, Standish, Shevington, Orrell, Hindley, Leigh, Atherton, Astley and Tyldesley.

3.32 Reliability of bus services is improving, with frequent services in our borough being the best in Greater Manchester. However, punctuality is still an issue, especially in the evening peak. Punctuality problem locations are approaches to Ashton and the route between Wigan and Hindley. Passengers also say that punctuality is their number one priority for improvement, followed by increased service frequency.

3.33 The Local Transport Act, 2008 opens up new opportunities to encourage greater use of buses by entering into quality partnership arrangements with operators. Bus punctuality and satisfaction would be increased with appropriate works on the highways to facilitate bus journeys, especially at peak times. Over 100 km of quality bus corridors are in place in the borough, with bus priority measures at junctions to help buses negotiate congested traffic.

3.34 Bus trips involve interchange with other modes at each end of the journey, so improved interchange between buses and other modes of transport is essential. The passenger perception of the 'door-to-door' journey is critical to the success of more trips by bus.

Rail services

3.35 Wigan is a key strategic hub for the north west rail network and is well-placed for travelling to lots of destinations on local lines and on the West Coast Main Line. Wigan Wallgate and Wigan North Western stations have a combined off-peak frequency of 15 trains an hour. Table 3.2 below illustrates the pattern of rail services. The rail network is a key asset for the borough, and we need to ensure that future plans exploit this important mode of travel as one of our key strengths.

Direct Service (to)	Commuter Service (arrive by 9am)	Off-Peak Service (trains/hour)	Fastest Journey (hr:min)
Preston	7	3	0:13
Warrington	7	2	0:10
St. Helens	7	3	0:15

Direct Service (to)	Commuter Service (arrive by 9am)	Off-Peak Service (trains/hour)	Fastest Journey (hr:min)
Southport	4	2	0:31
Manchester	11	5	0:35
Liverpool	7	3	0:38
Blackpool	2	1	0:51
Birmingham	2	1	1:27
London	2	1	1:55
Scotland	1	2	2:36

Table 3.2 Rail services from Wigan stations, 2011

3.36 2001 Census figures indicate that less than 1% of Wigan workers travel to work by train. This masks the recent growth of rail users on the Wigan/Bolton corridor travelling to Manchester, in both the peak and off-peak periods. Outside the two Wigan stations (Wallgate and North-Western), Atherton and Hindley are the busiest stations at peak times, whilst Gathurst has important off-peak flows. These increases have led to overcrowded trains especially in the morning peak on the Atherton line.

3.37 Rail services have recently seen some improvement in the borough with the introduction in May 2010 of a Sunday service on the Atherton line. Further improvements will follow the 'Northern Hub' project in central Manchester and also the proposed electrification of the 'Lancashire Triangle' of rail lines that connect Liverpool, Manchester, Preston and Blackpool, either via the borough's network or that just outside but in convenient proximity to some residents.

3.38 The range of rail services and destinations needs to be expanded in addition to improving the current passenger experience, both on the train itself and at our stations, through better rolling stock, better stations, better information and improved integration with other forms of transport, for convenience.

3.39 It is also important to support and influence regional and national rail improvements to bring about capacity, connectivity, frequency and journey time improvements for rail services in the borough. New franchises and new infrastructure will enable new passenger services to give more choice to residents and to attract investment.

3.40 The Greater Manchester Transportation Unit does not collect figures for those travelling to Warrington, Preston, St Helens and Liverpool. The figures in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 below show that these destinations are as important as the regional centre for commuters.

Walking

3.41 With many key destinations within 1 mile of residential areas, walking is a realistic travel choice for many. However, sometimes perceptions of time and convenience play a stronger role when travel decisions are made for short, local trips and walking frequently gets dismissed in preference for the car. Most of the infrastructure needed for walking already exists, through a comprehensive network of footways adjacent to the road and off-road footpaths, which often provide traffic free short-cuts. However, there is recognition that these routes need to be easy to travel along and around, catering for everyone's needs.

3.42 More people need to choose walking for their local journeys (those less than 2 miles) and help to reduce the amount of localised congestion. By making people aware of 'smarter travel choices' and encourage them to use the information and help that is already available, including walking maps, journey planners and organised walking activities for families and keen walkers, people can get a better understanding of their communities, and make better use of the walking routes currently available to them. Future development will need to provide and maintain useful and effective connections to existing local communities, and to a range of local services and destinations.

Cycling

3.43 Across Greater Manchester cycling levels increased by 17% between 2005 and 2009, well above the target of 6%. In Wigan, there have been pockets of even greater success, with annual growth on the Whelley Loop Line at about 25%. However, cycling still only represents about 1% of all traffic, even though two-thirds of all journeys are less than five miles. At the current rate of growth, it would take almost 20 years to double this share to just 2%, so there is a need for change.

3.44 A travel planning initiative in Standish has shown that, given the right conditions, borough residents can cycle more. For those taking part there was a doubling of cycling to work and a six-fold increase in cycling to school. Surveys of residents suggest that this can be replicated across the borough, so there is huge potential for much more to be done. This can be achieved by extending and improving the cycle network using on and off-road routes; making best use of what we already have; securing opportunities for new infrastructure; and by extending programmes of education, training and publicity.

School journeys

3.45 36% of primary school children travel to school by car, but only 3% car share, whilst 56% walk. There are minimal levels of travel via bus, cycle or other means (source: school pupil level annual school census returns, 2010).

3.46 It is slightly different for secondary schools, with only 14% travelling by car and only 1% car sharing; 41% walking; 35% by some form of bus; and minimal levels of cycling / other forms of travel.

3.47 The council is working with schools to help improve the safety and sustainability of the school journey. In 2010, 99% of schools had a travel plan in place setting out issues and solutions to be addressed. Only two schools refused to comply with the Government's target of 100%.

Parking

3.48 Despite 28% of households across the borough not having access to a car, there is much demand from residents for kerbside parking along our main road corridors. However, restrictions are present to provide a balance of minimising the effects of congestion and ensuring traffic flows as smoothly as possible at critical times and locations.

3.49 Many of the town and district centres across the borough benefit from off-street parking, with only Wigan and Leigh town centres applying parking charges. They are also the only places where residents parking schemes have been introduced to mitigate parking problems caused by commuters, shoppers and hospital visitors.

3.50 While cycle parking locations are sporadic in town centre locations, at rail stations and at some key employment sites, there are currently very low levels of motorcycle parking provision. Take-up of these modes of travel can suffer from the absence of basic provisions at key destinations, or alternatively vehicles are abandoned on street with a reliance of street furniture items such as bollards, and railings for locking cycles to.

3.51 The borough suffers from lorry crime and this impacts on key businesses decisions. The absence of lorry parks contributes to these issues, as heavy good vehicles generate environmental issues and concerns if not controlled properly.

3.52 The provision of car parking spaces exclusively for disabled motorists is generally below current recommended levels. However the council's existing policy does allow free use of non-disabled spaces by 'Blue Badge' holders so that disabled motorists are not totally disadvantaged. Parking needs to be managed in the future to fulfil the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

3.53 Parking facilities need to be provided in the right locations, at the right price, and provide for the right duration to accommodate various transport needs. This includes reviewing current car, cycle, motorcycle and lorry parking provisions, both on street and in designated parking areas, to ensure the right balance of provision is made to support our borough from economic, environmental and social perspectives.

3.54 The provision of charging points for electric vehicles, to encourage the use of more environmentally friendly vehicles and embrace the use of more modern technology is being brought forward through the Government's 'Plugged in Places' initiative.

Access to services

3.55 Generally, town centres are better placed for access to services and facilities. Radial services to and from the main centres makes them easier to get to. There is a need to improve links to more remote areas or improve services there. The general pattern of public transport cover for the borough is illustrated in the diagram at Figure

3.1. The blue symbols with darker green circles around them are the location of rail stations. The area to the top right (north-east) is Bolton and the area to the south-east is Salford. The borough boundary can just be made out in pale red. The diagram confirms the radial nature of the bus network with good links between Wigan and Leigh and neighbouring towns especially along key transport corridors.

3.56 In a health and lifestyle survey in 2006, most Wigan residents felt that their homes are well placed to access public transport and schools. 78% and 77% respectively said their homes are very or fairly well placed. However, access to leisure facilities and to the nearest hospital with a casualty department was thought to be poorest. 23% and 18% respectively said their home is not very well or badly placed. These perceptions are supported by our own WISDOM evidence base.

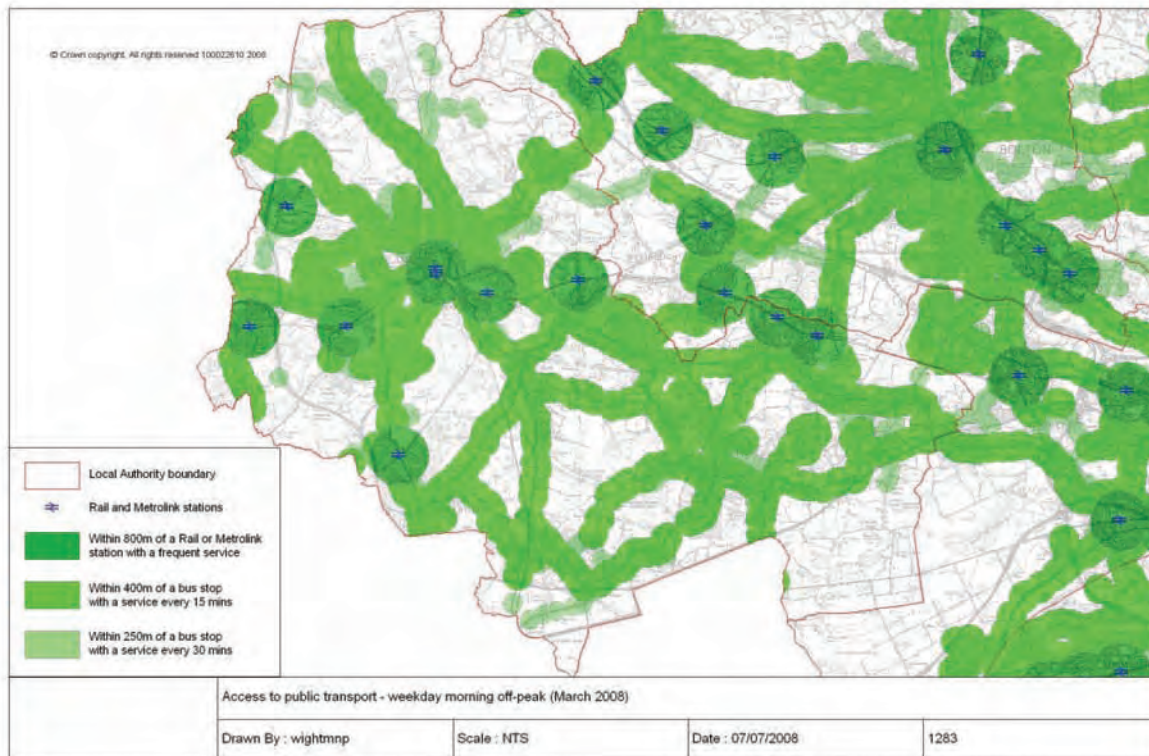


Figure 3.1 Public transport accessibility in Wigan Borough, Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive

Road Safety

3.57 Working in partnership, the council oversees and implements a number of initiatives to help raise awareness and improve road safety. It is an important issue for residents. There were 624 reported injury accidents in Wigan Borough during 2009, which was 54% lower than the base years of 1994-1998, and 10% lower than 2008. These resulted in 97 serious injuries or deaths compared with an average of 147 in the base years. The total number of casualties in 2009 was 890, which was 53% lower than the average of the base years and 5% lower than in 2008 (source: Greater Manchester Transportation Unit, 2010).

Supporting the economy

3.58 A modern and efficient transport system is important to support the local economy. Reducing congestion provides road safety benefits for pedestrians and cyclists, and improved journey times and reliability for public transport users and for freight and business users.

3.59 Businesses in the borough are talking to us about their plans to explore opportunities for transferring freight into other modes. Tonne for tonne, rail freight produces 70% less carbon dioxide than road transport and an average freight train can remove 50 heavy goods vehicles off the road network. We are commissioning some research into how the borough might be able to maximise opportunities for rail freight. We also need to understand how we can benefit from freight operations planned outside of the borough, such as at Parkside in Newton-le-Willows and operations connected with the Atlantic Gateway proposals and Port Salford.

3.60 Improving links to significant employment sites also contributes towards the economic and regeneration objectives of the borough. Sites that are locationally attractive to employers lead to an increase in the local supply of job opportunities. If transport links are provided to areas suffering from deprivation the potential economic wellbeing of that area is improved.

3.61 The most important commuter flows from and to Wigan in 2001, sourced from the national census, are given in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 below, respectively.

Where people living in Wigan Borough work	Number ('00s)	Percentage (%)
Wigan	82,652	61.1
South West (Warrington and St Helens)	11,143	8.2
North East (Bolton)	8,292	6.1
Salford and Manchester	10,983	8.1
North (Preston, Leyland, Chorley)	3,754	2.8
West Lancashire	3,959	2.9
Rest of Merseyside / Cheshire	4,813	3.6
Rest of Greater Manchester / Lancashire	6,839	5.1
Elsewhere	2,819	2.1
Total working outside Wigan	52,602	38.9

Table 3.3 Location of work for Wigan Borough residents, 2001

Where people working in Wigan Borough live	Number ('00s)	Percentage (%)
Wigan	82,652	77.7
South West (Warrington and St Helens)	5,712	5.4
North East (Bolton)	4,162	3.9
Salford and Manchester	1,853	1.7
North (Preston, Leyland, Chorley)	2,135	2.0
West Lancashire	2,163	2.0
Rest of Merseyside / Cheshire	2,612	2.5
Rest of Greater Manchester / Lancashire	3,331	3.1

Where people working in Wigan Borough live	Number ('00s)	Percentage (%)
Elsewhere	1,711	1.6
Total living outside Wigan	23,679	22.3

2001 Location of home for people who work in Wigan Borough, 2001

Current and emerging proposals

3.62 The Core Strategy promotes and seeks the delivery of seven major transport infrastructure interventions. These will each contribute to the improvement of accessibility to key destinations for people and goods and connect people to opportunities both within and outside the borough. These current or emerging proposals are detailed in turn below.

A49 Diversion

3.63 This scheme will provide a new road link connecting the A49 Warrington Road at Goose Green in Wigan with the Westwood Park employment site and on to the A49 Chapel Lane in Wigan town centre. It will significantly relieve the B5238 Poolstock Lane / Poolstock of through traffic, alleviating congestion; facilitate improved conditions for journeys by public transport, walking and cycling; and bring environmental benefits to the local and wider community. It will support regeneration of the town centre and provide direct access to the key site at Westwood Park.

3.64 The scheme has planning permission but does not have funding secured for its delivery. The council is pursuing delivery in conjunction with the development of the Westwood Park site.

Wigan Inner Relief Road

3.65 This scheme around the western side of Wigan town centre will provide a new link between the Saddle Junction and Frog Lane, removing the need for travel through the town centre and relieving congestion 'hotspots'. The scheme has planning permission and funding through the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and the Department for Transport was provisionally agreed in May 2009. However, final confirmation has been deferred following the Governments Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010.

Saddle Link Road

3.66 The approaches to the Saddle junction, from the west and south, onwards to Wigan town centre and vice versa are constrained and this has an adverse effect on the efficiency of the road network in this area. The council is leading a scheme to improve the approaches from the west and also to provide a new link road from the town centre. The scheme will significantly improve traffic flow in to and out of the town centre. Planning permission was granted in January 2010 and work is expected to be completed by 2013.

Wigan Hub

3.67 The council will be taking the lead to secure significantly improved integration between the rail and bus services within the environs of Wigan North Western and Wigan Wallgate rail stations, to provide a modern integrated transport hub. The proposals will promote modal shift to public transport, complement town centre regeneration initiatives and improve the quality of the environment by removing all unnecessary traffic from the area. The council will continue to work with key partners to secure the delivery of this scheme.

A578 Leigh Road – A579 Atherleigh Way link

3.68 Proposed private development at Northleigh Park will fund the delivery of a new road linking the A579 Atherleigh Way with the A578 Leigh Road, ensuring good accessibility for bus services and direct walking and cycling links between residential areas and local facilities and also to key locations within Greenheart. A new section of the proposed National Cycle Network 55 will also be accommodated within the development site.

A578 Leigh Road – A58 Liverpool Road link

3.69 Further proposed private development south of Hindley will fund the delivery of a new road linking the A578 Leigh Road with the A58 Liverpool Road ensuring good accessibility for bus services and direct walking and cycling links between residential areas and local facilities and also to key locations within Greenheart.

Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway

3.70 Plans to introduce a high quality public transport link from Leigh to Manchester City Centre have been progressing for a number of years. A public inquiry into the Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway was held in September 2002, with the report submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2003. The Department for Transport concluded the scheme provided important benefits especially in remediating social exclusion and that no other alternative would deliver these benefits as cost effectively or within a quicker timescale. Transport and Works Act powers were awarded in July 2005.

3.71 Further detailed modelling and appraisal of the busway has been undertaken as part of the development of the Greater Manchester Transport Fund programme. The economic appraisal was undertaken as part of the Cross-City Bus Priority scheme and has a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.0, which represents high value for money. The business case focuses on the need for a public transport solution to improving existing social exclusion issues, exploit employment opportunities in the regional centre and deliver substantially improved journey times between Leigh, Salford and Manchester.

3.72 The scheme has planning permission and received provisional confirmation of funding through the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities in 2009. However, final confirmation of funding for the scheme has been deferred following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010. Initial advance works for the scheme were undertaken in 2010.

Climate change considerations

3.73 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 accessibility are:

- More intense weather events such as heat-waves and flooding could disrupt road and rail networks and other transport infrastructure.
- An average of 2 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person is emitted annually as a result of transport in Wigan. This is lower than the national average of 2.6 tonnes but still very high in a global context (UK Government, 2005).
- The transport sector contributes a significant amount - about one-third - of Wigan's carbon dioxide emissions.
- Measures to tackle vehicle usage could lead to an improvement in local air quality and reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.
- One such measure would be the Introduction of the necessary infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles.

Key community and stakeholder involvement

3.74 There are a number of 'key stakeholders' who have played an important role in the development of our approach to accessibility issues. 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.

3.75 The following key stakeholders have been involved:

- Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority*
- Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive*
- Greater Manchester Transportation Unit*
- Greater Manchester Joint Transport Team*
- Highways Agency
- Network Rail
- Merseytravel
- Neighbouring councils
- Major developers and landowners
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
- Wigan Borough Partnership, our local strategic partnership
- Community groups including township forums and the Community Network
- The residents of the borough.

*Now Transport for Greater Manchester.

3.76 These key stakeholders have been involved at all stages of the Core Strategy's preparation including issues and options, preferred options, revised proposals and draft policies and proposed submission.

3.77 At the proposed submission stage, there were 5 representations on policy CP7 'Accessibility', with support received from Warrington and West Lancashire Councils and Peel Investments (North). Manchester Airport requests reference to the role it plays in Wigan and a member of the public requests a rail freight terminal in the borough. Minor change 1.23 is proposed to the key delivery items table beneath the policy to ensure consistency with minor change 1.11 to policy SP3 'Northleigh Park'.

3.78 Further information is available in our Consultation Reports. Changes are set out in the 'Schedule of Minor Changes to the Draft Core Strategy for Submission to the Secretary of State'.

Infrastructure audit

3.79 The table below lists the borough's main transport related infrastructure. It is managed by Wigan Council unless stated otherwise.

Infrastructure Type		Count
Walking	Public rights of way: footpaths	435 km
	Public rights of way: bridleways	35 km
	Restricted byways / byways open to all traffic	Nil
Bus	Quality bus corridors	101 km
	Category A bus stations (GMPTE)	1 Wigan, 1 Leigh
Rail	Rail stations (Network Rail/train operators)	9 no.
	West Coast Main Line (Network Rail)	17 km
	Regional rail network (Network Rail)	31.7 km
Cycling	On road cycle lanes	26.7 km
	Traffic-free cycle routes: good quality	44.2 km
	Traffic-free cycle routes: in need of improvement	46.3 km
	National Cycle Network route 55	3.9 km

Infrastructure Type		Count
	National Cycle Network route 91	0.7 km
	Canal network / towpath	34 km
Roads	Motorways (Highways Agency)	17 km
	A roads	117 km
	B roads	55 km
	C roads	68 km
	Other, unclassified roads	884 km
	Freight primary route network	45.3 km
Parking	Dedicated on-street motor cycle parking locations	1 (Wigan)
	Lorry parks	1 (Leigh)
	Car parks: multi-storey	4 Wigan (1 private) 2,330 spaces 1 Leigh 158 spaces
	Car parks: surface (minimum 20 spaces)	20 Wigan (12 private, 2 PCT) 5,089+ spaces* 14 Leigh (1 private, 1 PCT) 2,498 spaces** 22 Other significant car parks in borough (16 private, 2 WL&CT) 4,581 spaces

Infrastructure Type		Count
	Convenient rail car parks (included in above)	Wigan North Western - 403 spaces Wigan Wallgate - 205 spaces Atherton - 66 spaces Hindley - 63 spaces

* excludes matchday parking at DW Stadium; ** excludes Leigh Sports Village.

3.80 Within the A roads category only 25 km (24%) can be classed as being built to modern or relatively modern standards. Over three-quarters of this (77%) is the A580 East Lancashire Road (53%) the A579 Atherleigh Way (24%). The balance is made up of short stretches in the town of Wigan.

3.81 The 101 km of quality bus corridor is made up of 48.7 km of core routes partly funded by GMPTE and 52.2 km of non-core routes fully funded by Wigan Council.

Infrastructure constraints

3.82 Greater Manchester Transportation Unit records that A and B roads as a proportion of the total network, and the amount of traffic carried on them, are similar in Wigan to Greater Manchester as a whole. This does not measure the quality of those roads and the prevailing conditions, as referred to previously. A and B roads in Wigan pass through significant areas of Victorian housing and frontage development where many residential and commercial properties are located close to the edge of the carriageway. Numerous active and redundant rail bridges add to the physical constraints, especially on routes into Wigan town centre at the A573 Britannia Bridge; A49 Wallgate Bridge; and Skew Bridge; and elsewhere on the B5206 at Gathurst; B5239 at Standish; and A573 at Platt Bridge.

3.83 Land is extremely limited for widening schemes for general traffic, bus or cycle lanes or parking for residents. Air quality and vibration impact on residents' safety, health and wellbeing and make walking and cycling unpleasant. Competition for road space by general traffic, residents' parking, commercial freight and deliveries and public transport contribute to the conditions described previously.

3.84 Whilst the published maintenance regime ensures the existing roads are maintained to achieve optimum conditions, it cannot be used to expand and significantly improve the network to bring it up to modern standards.

Road network

3.85 Wigan is well connected to the national motorway network, served by the M6 and the M58 to the west, and the M61 close to the north-eastern boundary. The A580 East Lancashire Road (dual carriageway) broadly follows the southern boundary of the borough.

3.86 While the borough enjoys excellent external road links the road network internally is based almost exclusively on the late 19th century network between towns. These are characterised by 30 mph speed limits, single carriageways which pass through significant areas of Victorian housing and frontage developments. Numerous active and redundant rail bridges and canal bridges add to the physical constraints. Consequently there have been relatively few new routes or significant widening schemes and little space is available to introduce bus and cycle lanes or provide off-road parking for residents. Air quality, noise and vibration impact adversely on health and well-being and make walking and cycling unpleasant.

3.87 Congestion is therefore a serious problem in the core of the borough with the most congested location in the morning peak being all roads approaching Hindley town centre.

3.88 The following current or emerging road proposals are set out in detail at paragraphs 3.62 - 3.69 (excluding 3.67):

- A49 Diversion
- Wigan Inner Relief Route
- Saddle Link Road
- A578 Leigh Road – A579 Atherleigh Way link
- A578 Leigh Road – Liverpool Road link.

Bus

3.89 Both Wigan and Leigh have 'Category A' bus stations and frequent bus services connect them with most district and local centres in the borough. There are also cross boundary bus services linking Wigan, Leigh and Ashton with key adjacent towns and

facilities. There are 49km of core quality bus corridor routes partly funded by GMPTE and 52km of non-core routes fully funded by Wigan Council. Local Link, demand responsive, flexible and door-to-door services operate in several areas of the borough that are less well served by the conventional bus network and Yellow School Buses are in operation to many schools.

3.90 Plans for a new high quality busway linking Leigh with Tyldesley, Ellenbrook, Salford and Manchester are included as a priority in the Greater Manchester Transport Fund. The busway will play a key role in enhancing Leigh's public transport connections to the Regional centre, including interchange with other services regionally and nationally. This proposal is explained in more detail at paragraph 3.70.

Rail

3.91 The borough benefits from good rail connections with direct services on the West Coast Main Line every hour to London and Scotland. Other direct destinations include Birmingham, Warrington, Preston, Liverpool and St Helens. These services depart from Wigan North Western Station, classed as a national interchange by the Department for Transport. The line is also important for freight services.

3.92 The majority of direct services to Manchester city centre via Atherton or Bolton, to the east and Southport and Kirkby to the west depart from Wigan Wallgate, 100 metres from North Western station. Proposals to provide a 'Wigan Hub', to improve the integration of the two stations is detailed at paragraph 3.67.

3.93 There are 7 other stations in the borough and one just outside the boundary, all giving direct connection to Wigan and all but one to Manchester. However, some stations, such as Ince, Pemberton, Orrell and Bryn only have hourly services and, other than Ince, no Sunday service. A Sunday service started on the Atherton line in May 2010. Most of the south and east of the borough is not served by rail.

3.94 There are line capacity constraints on the Atherton line where headway and line speed restrictions and the lack of capacity at Salford Crescent and Salford Central Stations restrict the opportunity to increase the frequency of local commuter services. The Southport line also suffers from poor performance due to track, rolling stock and timetabling issues.

3.95 Several stations have benefited recently from improvements such as the recently completed car park at Wigan North Western, car-park enhancements at Hindley, upgraded walking and cycling access, real-time train running information and CCTV.

Cycling

3.96 Routes in Wigan's cycle network fall into two main categories:

- on road: advisory and mandatory cycle lanes, quiet routes such as 20 mph zones and traffic-calmed areas.
- traffic-free: along old railway lines, canal towpaths and bridleways and formal facilities adjacent to roads, often on a shared footway.

3.97 Although cyclists are permitted to use these facilities, each has its own limitations such as cyclists not riding on public footpaths and cycle permits required on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal towpath. These are all set out in detail, along with programmes for general improvements, in 'Active Travel: A Strategy for Encouraging Cycling'.

3.98 National Cycle Network route 55 provides 3.9km of cycleway within the borough, while route 91 enters to the north for a very short section of 0.7 km. The Whelley Loop Line provides a traffic free cycle route between Amberswood Common and Haigh Hall. Key challenges include providing a safe and continuous off-road walking and cycling network and improving the environment on urban routes to encourage more walking and cycling to local centres.

Walking

3.99 Wigan's pedestrian network takes into consideration all key routes to provide access on foot to local services and facilities. It comprises many different types of route:

- Footways alongside urban roads,
- Pedestrian areas in Wigan, Leigh and Atherton town centres,
- Alleys, ginnels, urban and residential footpaths often provide important cut-throughs and more direct access to key destinations,
- Public rights of way including footpaths and bridleways provide an off-road network,
- Parks and open spaces, including disused railway lines provide key linkages for functional trips as well as recreational walking,

- Shared use routes, cycleways and footways,
- Canal towpaths.

3.100 Wigan's Rights of Way Improvement Plan sets out priorities for maintaining and enhancing the borough's Rights of Way network to cater for recreational and utility users. 'Active Travel: A Strategy for Encouraging Walking' sets out general improvements to the pedestrian network.

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 all been addressed in the Core Strategy, particularly by policy CP7 and the accessibility elements of policies SP1, SP3 and SP4.

Message	Source documents
The borough suffers from poor transport infrastructure, traffic congestion and increasing car ownership and dependence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Statistics in Wigan (2009) • Wigan Economic Development Plan (2005) • Vision 2026: Sustainable Community Strategy (2008) • Wigan Corporate Strategy 2009-2012 (2010 Refresh) • Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan (2011) • Wigan Congestion Study (2010)
We need to reduce the need to travel, especially commuting by car.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (2001) • Vision 2026: Sustainable Community Strategy (2008) • Smarter Choices: Changing the way we travel (2004) • Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan (2011) • Northwest Regional Spatial Strategy (2008)
There is a need to enable, encourage and remove the barriers to walking, cycling and use of public transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision 2026 Community Strategy (2008) • Sustainable Communities – building for the future (2003) • Wigan Cycling and Walking Strategies (2009) • Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan (2004)

Message	Source documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (2001) • A Climate Change Action Plan for England's Northwest 2010 - 2012 (2009) • Wigan Borough Health and Lifestyle Survey (2005-06) • Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener (2002) • Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy (2005) • Census (2001)
Residents feel that their homes are well placed to access public transport, schools and most services, but not leisure facilities or hospitals with a casualty department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wigan Borough Health and Lifestyle Survey (2005-06) • Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report (2010) • Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan Accessibility Strategy (2006)
Reduce emissions and adapt to climate change (see Topic Paper 13).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (2008) • A Climate Change Action Plan for England's Northwest 2010-2012 (2009)
Need to make the best use of existing resources and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (2008) • Wigan Local Development Framework Transport modelling (2010 & 2011) • Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy (2005)
Traffic congestion impacts detrimentally on the environmental quality of retail centres. However, car usage is suited to certain types of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wigan Borough Retail Study (2007) • Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (2008) • Transport Statistics in Wigan (2009)

Message	Source documents
shopping. There is a need for local shops which serve a large walkable catchment area.	

FIVE

Main spatial planning issues identified

5.1 Set out below are the issues relating to accessibility 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 A 1

There is a relatively extensive network of bus services but bus use is low and continuing to decline. There are issues of service frequency, reliability, integration, vehicle quality, availability of information, personal safety and cost such that it is often not an attractive option. People who have choice choose other options, notably the car. Others have no choice. Many of these issues are made worse when travelling across the Greater Manchester boundary as there are different ticketing and operating systems in different areas.

Issue A 2

The borough has a relatively good rail network but Leigh, Tyldesley, Astley, Golborne, Lowton and Standish are not on the network and parts of Ashton and Hindley are not well served. Rail use has increased and there are capacity issues to/from Manchester at peak times. There are other issues with the extent and frequency of services, including on the 'Pemberton' and 'Atherton' lines. Safety, security and access to some stations are also issues.

Issue A 3

The road network is constrained. Many town centres are not bypassed; there is continuous or regular development along most main roads; and there are a small number of short lengths of dual carriageway. Congestion and slow journey times are

major issues. The ability to widen roads is constrained by existing buildings and railway bridges. Buses, lorries and cars have to share the same road space with its limitations and constraints and accordingly, contribute to and experience the same congestion. As a result cycling and walking are unpleasant and safety is an issue.

Issue A 4

Car ownership and dependence is increasing, especially for short journeys like the 'school run'. Car parking on and off-street does not match perceived need in certain locations. Development has not always been located with regard to reducing the need to travel by car. We have a high level of residents commuting by car to work outside the borough.

Issue A 5

Large numbers of people live alongside main roads and their quality of life is affected by heavy traffic, noise and pollution. It also spoils the environment for pedestrians, which impacts on community cohesion and personal health and well-being, and is a constraint on economic growth.

Issue A 6

There are significant constraints on public sector funding for major transport improvements. Development will need to contribute substantially if we are to secure the improvements needed.

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 gaps in provision can be identified that are not currently funded or will take many years to come on-stream through the Local Transport Plan and other programmes:

Walking and cycling

Issue A 7

On road and traffic-free cycle and walking routes need to be joined-up and link origins and destinations effectively, taking advantage of rights of way and National Cycle Network routes, and developing new routes where needed and opportunities allow, such as at Northleigh Park and the broad location for new development. Conditions for walking and cycling also need to be improved, including route surfacing and maintenance, environmental quality and safety.

Bus and rail network

Issue A 8

The network of quality bus corridors needs to be further developed. Leigh and Tyldesley are poorly served by public transport to/from Manchester city centre. The proposed Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway is still awaiting funding.

Interchange facilities between the two rail stations in Wigan town centre and bus and taxi are poor. Public transport interchange at other rail station and at local centres is also poor.

There is a need for better park and ride facilities at Atherton, Hindley and Gathurst stations. Improved track and signalling and additional and better rail rolling stock are also needed, as is electronic information and CCTV at stations.

Strategic road network

Issue A 9

Most of the road network is unsuitable for modern transport requirements, especially east-west through the centre of the borough, to the south of Wigan and to the west of Leigh.

SEVEN

Main sustainability issues identified

7.1 We have 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 help to inform the sustainability appraisal framework. They are:

Issue A 10

Reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, which has high levels of use.

Issue A 11

Encourage and enable a shift to more sustainable forms of travel by improving public transport and facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

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 headline objectives. Objective 16 specifically relates to accessibility.

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-questions
Objective 16. To develop transport, telecommunications and economic infrastructure so as to encourage efficient patterns of movement, less need to travel and	Will it reduce the proportion of development that generates large amounts of road traffic and increase the proportion of journeys taken by public transport and other sustainable modes?
	Will it lead to an increase in the proportion of journeys taken by foot or cycle?
	Will it reduce the need to travel by promoting alternatives to travel such as home working and Travel Plans?
	Will it improve road safety for all road users; with a particular emphasis on pedestrian safety?

Sustainability Objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-questions
improvements in the choice and use of sustainable transport modes.	Will it reduce long distance commuting and encourage more people to live and work locally and not travel to work by car?
	Will it provide and improve access (via sustainable modes) to key shops, services and facilities that are appropriate to the needs of different groups and communities?

Baseline position

8.3 This section identifies the key monitoring indicators and baseline data relating to accessibility for the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Baseline indicators for Sustainability Objective 16 and Core Strategy indicators.

Indicator	Wigan Baseline	Wigan trends	Relevant Targets	Comparisons	Comments
Average 12 hour weekday traffic flows on A and B roads, all motors	12224 (2009)	1% increase since 2008	Limiting traffic growth to 2% based on 2003/04 levels for the whole of the Local Transport Plan area.	Greater Manchester decreased by 1% since 2008	Wigan has less vehicle kilometres than the Greater Manchester average. Nevertheless, the total number of kilometres has increased significantly.
Carbon dioxide emissions – road transport (tonnes of CO ₂ per resident)	2 tonnes of CO ₂ per resident per year (2005)	Trend data not available yet.	Reduce overall emissions by 20% by 2020 (Transport a third of this)	England – 2.6 tonnes Northwest – 2.5 tonnes (2005)	Although emissions of CO ₂ per resident are lower than national and Northwest averages, they are high in a global context.

Indicator	Wigan Baseline	Wigan trends	Relevant Targets	Comparisons	Comments
The percentage of people who travel to and from work by private car.	71.34% driver or passenger (Census 2001)	Trend data not yet available (awaiting Census 2011)		71% of trips to work were by car. (National Travel Survey, 2005, drivers & passengers)	In line with national figures although still high levels and heavy reliance on private car.
Percentage of people using public transport (bus or train) when travelling to work	8.17% (Census 2001)	Trend data not yet available (awaiting Census 2011)		15% of trips to work by public transport (National Travel Survey 2005)	Low levels of public transport use when travelling to work. Service capacity and constraints on trains.
Local indicator - Traffic levels	100 (1993)	Upward trend to 107 peak in 2003, declining to 103 in 2009		GM - 99 in 2009 National - 103 in 2009	Since 1993 traffic has grown by 3% in Wigan compared to a 1% decrease in GM and 3% nationally.
Local indicator - Number of rail passenger trips in Greater Manchester	Wigan/Bolton Corridor index 100(1991) am peak	Generally an upward trend to 181 in 2009		GM - 145 in 2009	1% increase in am peak 2008-2009

Indicator	Wigan Baseline	Wigan trends	Relevant Targets	Comparisons	Comments
Percentage of people cycling or walking when travelling to and from work.	11.4% (Census 2001)	Trend data not yet available (awaiting Census 2011)		13% of trips to work. (National Travel Survey, 2005)	Low levels of cycling and walking to work.
Percentage of people who work from home and numbers of businesses actively implementing Travel Plan initiatives	7.16% work from home (Census 2001) 74 Travel plans (2010)	Trend data not yet available (Census 2011)			Proposed indicator that needs developing
The number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions (per annum)	97 killed or seriously injured (2009)	Downward trend (135 killed or seriously injured in 2001)	To reduce to 73 by 2010	Difficult to compare.	Downward trend.

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 CP7 'Accessibility'. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that we have produced our Core Strategy in line with legal requirements and that the policies are 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:

1. Community and stakeholder involvement
2. Subject to sustainability appraisal
3. Regard to the sustainable community strategy
4. 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:

1. Founded on a robust and credible evidence base; and
2. The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives
3. 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.

4. Flexible
5. Able to be monitored
6. Consistent with national policy

9.5 The remainder of this section sets out the case for policy CP7 against these 4 legal requirements and the tests of soundness.

Policy CP7 Accessibility

Community and stakeholder involvement

9.6 The community and key stakeholders including Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority and Passenger Transport Executive, Greater Manchester Transportation Unit and the Highways 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 CP7. Policy CP7 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 CP7 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 accessibility and transport and key stakeholders were involved, including Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority, Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive and Greater Manchester Transportation Unit. 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 CP7 is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy, specifically it:

- Seeks to manage travel demand, reduce the need to travel and increase accessibility in accordance with policy DP1.
- Promotes sustainable communities in accordance with policy DP2.
- Seeks to make best use of existing infrastructure in accordance with policy DP4.
- Manages travel demand, reduces the need to travel and increases accessibility in accordance with policy DP5.
- Seeks to marry opportunity and need and encourage accessibility by linking areas of greatest need to economic opportunities, notably by public transport to address issues of social exclusion in accordance with policy DP6.
- Develop Wigan's role as a regional public transport gateway in accordance with policy MCR1, specifically through Wigan Hub.
- Examines transport problems on a multi-modal basis and identifies opportunities for improved integration of public transport in accordance with policy RT1, specifically through the major transport interventions.
- Reduces congestion and car borne trips, reallocates road space in favour of walking, cycling and bus measures in accordance with policy RT2 by seeking to maximise bus and rail use and developing walking and cycling networks.
- Provides a framework for enhancement and improvement of bus and rail services in accordance with policy RT3 under clause 3 of the policy.
- Improves road safety, reduces traffic growth and maintains a high quality environment in accordance with policy RT4 by reducing as far as possible the adverse effects of transport on our communities, town centres and the wider environment.
- Provides measures to support and improve the movement of freight and transfer to rail where possible in accordance with policy RT7 particularly by maximising the potential of the West Coast Main Line.
- Provides measures to increase participation in walking and cycling for environmental, congestion and personal health benefits in accordance with policy RT9 by generally improving connections between local residents and employment and community facilities.

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 policy CP7 is in line with two of them: 'Ambitious communities', and 'Living healthier and longer'.

Founded on robust and credible evidence

9.10 Policy CP7 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 transport modelling. The key sources of evidence which support policy CP7 are Planning Policy Guidance note 13, our Transport Modelling (2011), the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan and the North West Route Utilisation Strategy.

The most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternatives

9.11 Alternative approaches to policy CP7 would be not to improve accessibility to key destinations or not to connect people to opportunities. This would mean congestion and slow journey times in the borough would continue to constrain the borough as a place to live in and work; the transport network would not be improved; public transport would continue to be poorly integrated and we would continue to have high levels of commuting by car to areas outside the borough. This would mean our economy would not be able to perform in line with other parts of the region and environmental quality and life chances and personal health and wellbeing would continue to be adversely affected.

Deliverable

9.12 Infrastructure related to accessibility is set out in section 3 of this topic paper, along with a commentary on constraints and current proposals. The key messages identified in section 4 indicate what needs to be addressed with regards to accessibility. Our modelling work in particular is demonstrating which parts of our highway network will experience the greatest levels of stress and therefore require mitigation. Some of these will be addressed by current proposals and others as part of development proposals conforming with policy CP7.

9.13 The key delivery items table beneath policy CP7 sets out specific projects that will address the key messages. These include the A49 Diversion, Wigan Inner Relief Road, Saddle link Road, Wigan Transport Hub, Leigh Road-Atherleigh Way link, Leigh

Road-Liverpool Road link, Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway, maximising the use of the existing rail network, bus service improvements, maximising the capacity, efficiency and safety of the existing road network and improving the on and off-road network for walking and cycling. To demonstrate delivery, a Transport Strategy for Wigan to 2026 will be produced to sit alongside and complement the Core Strategy.

9.14 In addition to Wigan Council, a number of organisations including Transport for Greater Manchester, Network Rail, train operation companies, the Highways Agency and the Homes and Communities Agency will play a crucial role in the delivery of this policy.

9.15 Neighbouring authorities have been involved at all stages of the policy's preparation. Warrington and West Lancashire Councils made supportive representations to policy CP7; no local authorities made objections. This indicates that the policy is coherent with the Core Strategies of neighbouring authorities.

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

Flexible

9.17 Policy CP7 establishes the strategic focus for accessibility. The various key delivery items can be brought forward if development proceeds quickly or funding becomes available. Similarly they can be held back if development is slower to come forward or if modelling subsequently provides an alternative scenario. Each delivery item is independent but designed to achieve maximum improvements for the borough by the end of the plan period.

Able to be monitored

9.18 The means for monitoring policy CP7 are set out in chapter 10 of the Draft Core Strategy: Proposed Submission version, specifically:

- Implementation of key delivery items as set out in paragraph 9.13
- Net changes to travel times on designated routes
- Bus and rail service use
- % of new homes built within 30 minutes public transport travel time of key services.

Consistent with national policy

9.19 Policy CP7 is consistent with national policy, specifically:

- Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (2001)
- Planning Policy Statement 1: Sustainable Development (2005)
- Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 (2008).

TEN

Next steps

10.1 This is the final version of the topic paper summarising and analysing evidence on accessibility 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.

LDF

WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY

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