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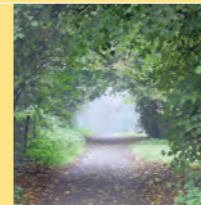
WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY

# LDF

WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY



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## Built environment and landscapes Final Topic Paper 9

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Core Strategy  
Submission Version



Places Directorate  
[www.wigan.gov.uk/ldfcorestrategy](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/ldfcorestrategy)

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# ONE

## Introduction

### Purpose of this document

**1.1** This is Topic Paper 9 on 'built environment and landscapes'. It is one of 13 topic papers that we have produced to 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 landscapes
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 policies:

- SP5 'Greenheart'
- CP8 'Green Belt and safeguarded land'
- CP9 'Strategic landscape and green infrastructure'
- CP10 'Design'
- CP11 'Historic Environment'

**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. The key related topic papers for 'Built Environment and Landscapes' are:

- Accessibility
- Biodiversity and nature conservation
- Community safety and neighbourhood quality (enhancing natural surveillance)
- Economy and employment (key for viability in the built environment)
- Energy
- Natural resources and pollution
- Health and recreation (creating walkable and cycle friendly neighbourhoods)
- Housing (promoting good quality residential design)

**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 principle 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 built environment and landscapes topic area are:

- Planning Policy Statement 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development'
- Planning Policy Guidance 2 'Green Belts'
- Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning and the Historic Environment'
- Planning Policy Statement 9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation'
- Planning Policy Guidance 17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation'
- Regional Spatial Strategy - this is part of the development plan for the borough but will be revoked once the Decentralisation and Localism Bill is enacted.

**1.8** Wigan's natural environment revolves around landscapes rich in wildlife and full of potential for countryside recreation. In addition, its urban landscape and townscapes are diverse. The borough has over 600 'listed' buildings, 23 designated Conservation Areas, 13 archaeology and ancient monuments, 1 historic park and 13 other gardens of more local interest. Also, over half of the borough, amounting to around 100 square kilometres, is Green Belt which helps to protect the urban structure by keeping towns and settlements separate. The borough's Conservation Areas cover areas as diverse as Wigan and Leigh town centres, residential areas such as Swinley, industrial areas such as Wigan Pier and rural villages such as Haigh.

**1.9** The Local Development Framework can seek to provide planning policies that will facilitate the conditions to enhance and improve environmental standards for the benefit of local communities. 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 has been 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 built environment and landscapes. This information has helped us to establish a set of sustainability objectives and sub-questions to tackle these issues. Further information is available in 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](http://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, 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 and draws out the key messages for the Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal. The key plans, policies and strategies which provide support for policies SP5, CP8, CP9, CP10 and CP11 and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from a built environment and landscapes perspective include:

### National plans, policies and strategies

Documents published by UK Government unless stated otherwise

**2.2** The built environment is highlighted as a key policy area in a number of national planning policy documents.

#### **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)**

This statement states that planning should facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of development by protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities; and also by ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted.

The statement places a commitment on protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment and states that planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole. Planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality through positive policies on issues such as design, conservation and the provision of public space.

#### **Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belt (1995, amended 2001)**

National policy on Green Belts sets out five purposes of including land in the Green Belt which are to:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas
- prevent neighbouring towns from merging
- assist in safeguarding countryside from encroachment
- preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
- assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

It sets out that the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence and that once the general extent has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. Where such an alteration is proposed, it is necessary to show that opportunities for development within the urban area contained by and beyond the Green Belt have been considered. We have done this in the proposed broad location for development at Junction 25, M6 motorway, south of Wigan.

Existing settlements within the Green Belt may be treated in one of three ways. In Wigan Borough the option has been taken in the two small Green Belt settlements of Haigh and Bickershaw of 'washing over' the settlements, listing them in the development plan and setting out a policy for the treatment of infill development, including defining an infill boundary and ensuring that any infill does not have an adverse effect on the character of the villages. The Core Strategy does not propose to alter existing policy.

The statement includes the concept of safeguarded land. This is land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer term development needs beyond the plan period. The designation of such land helps to strengthen the permanence of Green Belt boundaries since it provides for the protection of land for future development beyond the plan period. The Core Strategy provides the appropriate mechanism to review safeguarded land boundaries and this opportunity is being taken at the Key strategic site - Northleigh Park and in the remaining 5 broad locations for development.



Finally, Green Belts provide protection against inappropriate development. The construction of new buildings is inappropriate unless it is for agriculture or forestry or to provide essential facilities for outdoor sport, recreation, cemeteries or other uses that preserve openness. Limited extensions, alterations and extensions of existing buildings and limited infilling are allowed. Policies CP8 and CP18 provide for changed circumstances while other Green Belt policies remain unchanged.

Redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified in the Unitary Development Plan is allowed under set criteria. In Wigan the Green Belt contains sites which have major existing developed site designation on factories, collieries, power stations, water and sewage treatment works, hospitals, and education establishments. Existing Unitary Development Plan designations will remain and two further sites are proposed for inclusion in this category by the Core Strategy at St Mary's RC and Shevington High Schools.

### **Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2006)**

This planning policy statement promotes a wide variety of well designed housing that is in suitable urban and rural locations, which uses the land efficiently. The Core Strategy advocates the use of relevant guidance and standards and promotes to use of masterplans and other appropriate techniques to secure the delivery of high quality development as advocated by the statement. Housing should also seek to adapt to and reduce the impact of, and on, climate change.

### **Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009)**

This aims to ensure that the historic, archaeological and architectural heritage of centres is conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced to provide a sense of place and a focus for the community and for civic activity.

### **Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010)**

This Planning Policy Statement highlights the value of the historic environment, and the contribution it makes to our cultural, social and economic life. Those parts of the historic environment with historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are classed as 'heritage assets', including scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas.

The historic environment should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life it brings to this and future generations and the Core Strategy contains policies to secure this. They recognise that our heritage assets are a non-renewable resource and that proposals should take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation. Assets need to be put to viable and appropriate uses and managed change is sometimes necessary for long term maintenance. Their positive contribution to local character and effective place-making is recognised and promoted.

The Core Strategy reflects the central role planning has to play in conserving our designated and undesignated heritage assets and making the best use of the historic environment by the sensitive re-use of existing historic buildings, conservation-led regeneration, monitoring of historic assets and the stimulus it can provide to inspire imaginative high quality design and helping to create more sustainable places.

#### **Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)**

This states that planning authorities should take a positive approach to innovative, high-quality contemporary designs that are sensitive to their immediate setting and help to make the countryside a better place for people to live and work. To encourage good design local planning authorities should utilise tools such as Landscape Character Assessments.

#### **Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005)**

This states that the form and location of development should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of geology.

#### **Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (2001)**

This guidance promotes designs and layouts which minimise the need for long distance commuting, calls for a focus of mixed use development involving large amounts of employment, shopping, leisure and services in city, town and district centres, and near to major public transport interchanges. It also encourages a mix of land uses, including housing, in town, suburban and local centres.

### **Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)**

This guidance details how local networks of high quality and well managed open space help to create urban environments that are attractive, clean and safe and can play a major part in improving people's sense of well-being.

### **Documents produced by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment**

#### **By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System (2001)**

Effective design policy and guidance should consider how in a particular context, development form can achieve the urban design objectives. The guide lists character, continuity and enclosure, quality of the public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability and diversity as key urban design objectives. In addition, it recognises urban structure, urban grain, landscape, density and mix, height, massing, details and materials as important aspects of development form.

#### **By Design: Better Places to Live (2001)**

The guide prompts a holistic view of the design of residential environments. It identifies, movement, mix, community, structure, layout, place, amenity, parking, safety, space, adaptability, maintenance, sustainability and detail as being key attributes of successful housing development.

#### **Building for Life (2008)**

The Building for Life tool comprises 20 questions, or criteria, to assess the design quality of new housing developments, resulting in a numerical score. The criteria reflect the importance of functionality, attractiveness and sustainability in well-designed homes and neighbourhoods.

### **Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice (2000, amended 2008 and 2009)**

This provides detailed guidance on the making, management and enforcement of tree preservation orders (TPOs). A tree preservation order protects trees and woodland: they may not be cut down, uprooted, topped, lopped or wilfully damaged or destroyed without our consent. Tree preservation orders cannot be applied to bushes or shrubs, although one may be made to protect trees in hedges or an old hedge which has become a line of trees of a reasonable height and is not subject to hedgerow management. Tree preservation orders are used to protect selected trees and woodlands if their removal would have a significant impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public. Trees in Conservation Areas are also protected. A preservation order is therefore an important tool in the management of the quality of the built environment and landscape in its ability to protect trees.

**2.3** Other key national plans, policies and strategies which provide support for the built environment and landscape policies and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from a built environment and landscapes perspective include:

#### **Design**

- **Manual for Streets (2007)** - The purpose of the guide is to change how residential streets are designed, from a 'movement function' focused around the car to a 'place function' that serves the local community.
- **Manual for Streets 2 (2010)** - This builds on the guidance contained in 'Manual for Streets', exploring in greater detail how and where its key principles can be applied to busier streets and non-trunk roads, thus helping to fill the perceived gap in design guidance between Manual for Streets and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

#### **Historic Environment**

- **Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (English Heritage, 2010):** The purpose of this guide is to assist local authorities, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing Planning Policy Statement 5 and to help in the

interpretation of policies within it. As a guide to interpreting how policy should be applied, this practice guidance may also be material to individual planning and heritage consent decisions.

- **The Setting of Heritage Assets: Consultation Draft (English Heritage, November 2010):** This will provide the basis for English Heritage advice on the setting of heritage assets when we respond to consultations by third parties and when we assess the implications of development proposals for the historic places that we manage. It will also be offered to assist others involved with managing change that may affect the setting of heritage assets. The aim of the guidance is to assist effective and timely decision making by ensuring it takes place within a clear framework and is as transparent and consistent as possible.
- **Understanding Place – Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Consultation Draft (English Heritage, July 2011):** This sets out ways to manage change in a way that conserves and enhances historic areas through conservation area designation, appraisal and management.
- **Good Practice Guide for Local Listing: Consultation Draft (English Heritage, May 2011):** Local listing supports Planning Policy Statement 5 and the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide in relation to the contribution of non-designated heritage assets to the character of the historic environment. It is intended to encourage a transparent and consistent approach to the process of creating and managing a local list by:
  - strengthening the role of locally listed heritage assets as material considerations in planning decisions
  - renewing the role of local listing as a means of encouraging communities to identify and manage aspects of their local heritage
  - improving access to clear and comprehensive information about locally listed heritage assets, including through Historic Environment Records (HER)



## Regional plans, policies and strategies

**2.4** The Regional Spatial Strategy forms part of our Local Development Framework, setting the context for our Core Strategy and other development plan documents.

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

The main policies with regards to the built environment and landscapes are:

**Policy DP 2 Promote Sustainable Communities** - including improving the built and natural environment, and conserving the regions heritage.

**Policy DP 7 Promote Environmental Quality** - protecting and enhancing environmental quality; ensuring new development is in character with the local environment and is of a good design quality; the historic environment is protected and enhanced; derelict land is brought back into use; the greening of our towns and cities; and the maintenance and enhancement of the open countryside and rural areas.

**Policy DP 9 Reduce Emissions and Adapt to Climate Change** - reducing the region's carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets, including from buildings and transport, for example by: increasing urban density; encouraging better built homes and energy efficiency, eco-friendly and adaptable buildings; focusing substantial new development on locations where energy can be gained from decentralised supply systems; the management and re-wetting of the region's blanket and raised bog resource.

**Policy RDF 4 Green Belts** - Maintaining the general extent of the Region's Green Belt. Local detailed boundary changes should be examined through the Local Development Framework process.

**Policy EM 1 Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets** - delivering an integrated approach to conserving and enhancing the landscape, natural environment, historic environment and woodlands of the region; and prioritising areas, sites, features and species of international, national, regional, and local importance.

**Policy EM 1 (A) Landscape** - producing landscape character assessments and strategies to identify, protect, maintain and enhance natural, historic and other distinctive features that contribute to the character of landscapes and places.

**Policy EM 1 (C) Historic Environment** - protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic environment supporting conservation-led regeneration in areas rich in historic interest, and in particular exploiting the regeneration potential of the textile mill town heritage.

**Policy EM1 (D) Trees, Woodland and Forests** - encouraging a steady, targeted expansion of tree and woodland cover, woodland management and protecting ancient semi-natural woodland.

**Policy EM 3 Green Infrastructure** - conserving and managing existing green infrastructure, creating new green infrastructure, enhancing its functionality, connectivity and accessibility by:

- Identifying appropriate partnerships to enable progress including the identification, development and management of new areas of open space and the retention, enhancement and adaptation of existing areas.
- Ensuring the maintenance and improvement of biodiversity.
- Integrating proposals for improvements in the delivery of new developments, particularly area based regeneration and major proposals.
- Maximising its role in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

**Policy EM 4 Regional Parks** - including in Wigan/Salford Greenheart Regional Park, assess the assets, opportunities, function and potential to meet the objectives for regional parks, identify locations; and secure delivery and management arrangements.

**Policy EM 16 Energy Conservation and Efficiency** - ensuring that the approach to energy is based on minimising consumption and demand, promoting maximum efficiency and minimum waste in all aspects of local planning, development and energy consumption.

**2.5** Other key regional plans, policies and strategies which provide support for the built environment and landscape policies and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from a built environment and landscapes perspective include:

### Design

- **Streets for All North West (English Heritage, 2005)** – this is a regional guide to the management of streets and public open spaces.
- **North West Best Practice Design Guide (North West Regional Assembly, 2006)** - This guide focuses on the environmental and social aspects of design. It explains how developments should conserve nature, improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse emissions, reduce opportunities for criminal activity, prevent or reduce the impact of flooding and blend well into their surroundings with the use of sustainable local materials.

### Sub Regional plans, policies and strategies

#### Strategic Landscape and Green Infrastructure

- **The Mosslands Project, The Vision (Red Rose Forest, Natural England, Government Office North West, Salford City Council, Warrington Borough Council, Wigan Council, 2007):** Sets out the vision for the Mosslands area in Wigan, Salford and Warrington and how this will be delivered by the Mosslands Partnership. It highlights the importance of the Mosslands as a habitat and landscape and why it should be protected and restored.
- **Red Rose Forest Plan (Red Rose Forest Team, 1995):** The Red Rose Forest is the Community Forest for central and western Greater Manchester. The Forest Team are working to transform this area into a greener, healthier and more satisfying place to live, work and invest. This plan sets out the 40 year programme to achieve the Forest aim. It sets out the Forest wide visions under headings including community contact, sport, recreation and access, and tourism as well as strategies for the development of core Forest areas. In addition, it sets out short, medium and long term targets for delivery by the Red Rose Forest Partnership of which Wigan Council is a member.

### Historic Environment

- **Greater Manchester Historic Landscape Characterisation Project:** Historic Landscape Characterisation is a GIS-based technique which leads to the creation of a permanent and renewable database. Information is structured by the identification and grouping of archaeological, historical and other environmental attributes attached to land parcels. This method, unlike conventional landscape assessment, allows the creation of many different classifications of historic landscape types, each of distinct and recognisable common character. The distribution of landscape types can be mapped using GIS, supported by written descriptions and the historical processes that they represent.

## Local plans, policies and strategies

### Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006)

Local planning policies for Green Belt and safeguarded land are contained in chapter 6. There are policies on Green Belt (GB1); re-use of buildings (GB1A); extensions to existing dwellings (GB1B); replacement dwellings (GB1C); development in Green Belt settlements (GB1D); major existing developed sites (GB1E); and safeguarded land (GB2). It is proposed to replace policies GB1 and GB1D with policy CP8 as set out in Appendix A of the Draft Core Strategy (Proposed Submission version).

Local planning policies for design are set out in chapters 8 and 9. There are policies on design of new residential development and extensions (R1D); Design (EV3); design of new development (EV3A); advertisements (EV3B); design of shopfronts and commercial premises (EV3C), landscaping (EV3D); water features (EV3F) and public art (EV3H). It is proposed to replace all of these policies with policy CP10, except policy EV3F as it has designations on the Proposals Map.

Local planning policies for green infrastructure are set out in chapter 9. There are policies on the greenway network (C1E); water features (C1F); and the Regional Park (C1G). It is proposed to replace policy C1G with policy SP5.

Local planning policies for historic environment conservation are set out in chapter 9. There are policies on conservation (EV4); design in conservation areas (EV4A); listed buildings (EV4B); buildings and structures of local interest (EV4C); historic

parcs, gardens and cemeteries (EV4D); and archaeology (EV4E). It is proposed to replace all of these policies with policy CP10, except policies EV4A and EV4D as they have designations on the Proposals Map.

Policies that are not proposed for replacement by policies in the Core Strategy will remain in force until replaced by a future development plan document.

**2.6** Other key local plans, policies and strategies which provide support for the built environment and landscape policies and contribute to policies SP1, SP3 and SP4 from a built environment and landscapes perspective include:

### **Strategic Landscape and Green Infrastructure**

- **Wigan Greenheart Regional Park Vision and Action Plan (2008)** - These documents set out the key objectives of the Greenheart Regional Park and how they will be delivered. The action plan sets out priorities for the development of Greenheart which the core strategy can help to deliver.
- **A Woodland Strategy for Wigan (1995)** - This sets out how the Council will protect, enhance, develop and promote Wigan's woodlands and urban tree cover. The Strategy supported and supplemented the Council's Unitary Development Plan policies on woodlands at the time.

### **Design**

- **Supplementary Planning Documents** on shop fronts, landscape design, residential design and house extensions (Wigan Council) provide further advice in support of the relevant policies.

### **Historic Environment**

- **Wigan Heritage Strategy (2009)** – This is the capital strategy for Wigan's heritage assets, with a primary purpose of providing a prioritisation of projects from many large-scale capital applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Objectives are to



promote local identity and pride through community activity and involvement, to increase use and awareness of heritage assets, to improve understanding and learning and to manage relevant archives, collections and resources.

- **Local Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans** - These documents are intended to identify the special character of an area along with elements that are worthy of retention or enhancement as well as those elements that detract from the character. They will also act as a framework for the control of development and are also useful to developers so they may gain a greater understanding of the character of the area, as an integral consideration in the preparation of their proposals. Through the management plan, suggestions will be made for a programme of possible enhancements.

## THREE

# Other key evidence reviewed

## Key sources of information

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

**3.2** The main sources of information used are:

### National

- Building for Life (CABE, 2008)
- Lifetime Homes (Habinteg, 2009)
- Urban Design Compendium 1 (Llewelyn-Davies, 2000)
- Urban Design Compendium 2 (Roger Evans Associates, 2007)
- The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment website - [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)
- The Urban Design Group website - [www.udg.org.uk](http://www.udg.org.uk)
- The English Heritage website - [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)
- The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings website - [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)
- Character of England Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Features Map (Natural England, 2005)
- The Economic Value of Green Infrastructure (NWDA and Natural England, 2009)

### Regional / Sub Regional

- Creating Inspirational Spaces (Gillespies, 2007)
- Places Matter! Website - [www.placesmatter.co.uk](http://www.placesmatter.co.uk)
- North West Green Infrastructure website - [www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk](http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk)
- Report on Joint Character Area 56 "Lancashire Coal Measures" (Natural England, 2005)

- Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester (TEP, 2008)
- Next Steps Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework (TEP, 2010)

## Local

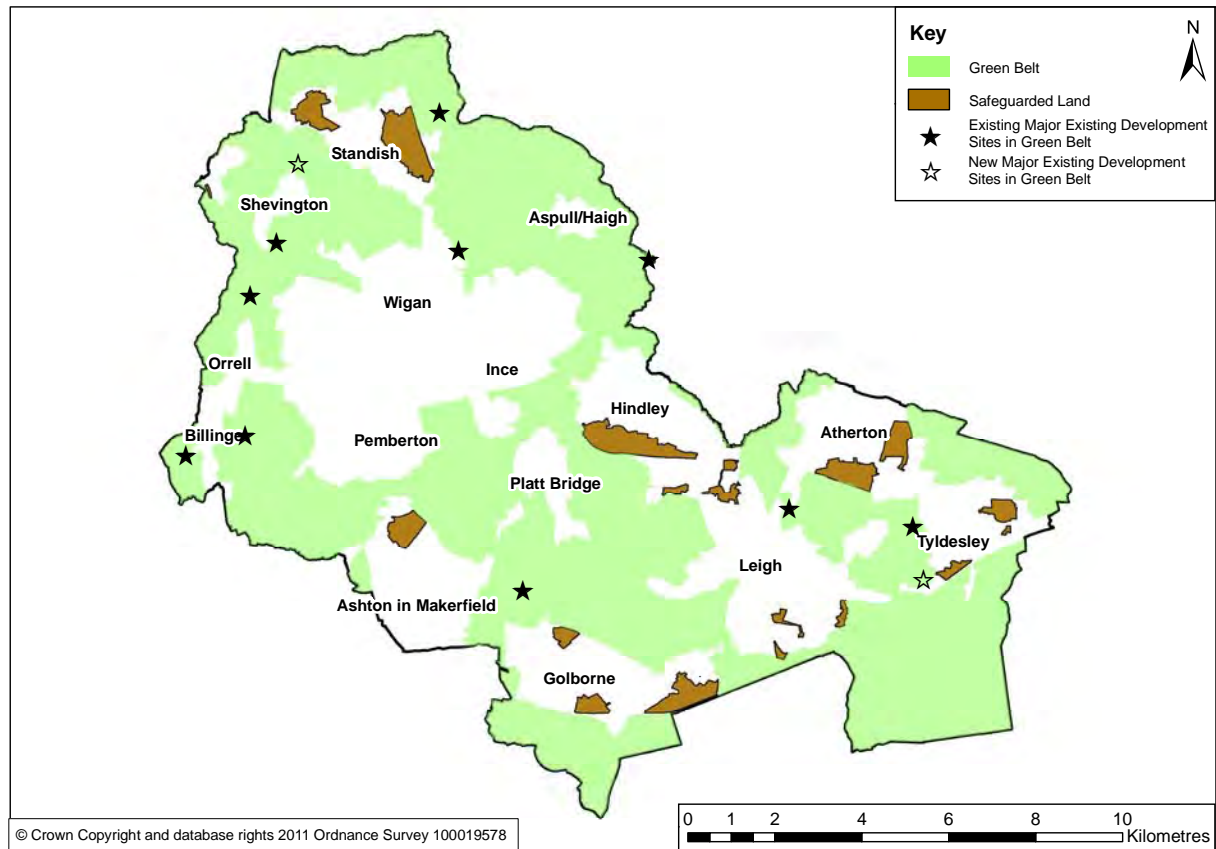
- Masterplans and Design Guides found on Wigan Council website - [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk)
- Wigan: A Landscape Character Assessment (AGMA, 2009)
- Derelict Land Survey (Wigan Council, 2005)
- Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans on Wigan Council website - [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk)
- Listed Buildings on Wigan Council website - [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk)
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments on Wigan Council website - [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk)
- Level 2 Hybrid Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2011)

## Green Belt and safeguarded land

### Green Belt

**3.3** 56% of the borough (approximately 10,650 ha) is designated as Green Belt. This is the third highest proportion of Green Belt designation in Greater Manchester. The extent of Wigan's Green Belt is shown in Map 3.1 below and includes land in the following areas:

- Between Wigan and Horwich and between Wigan and Standish extending to Skelmersdale in West Lancashire to the north and west.
- The Douglas valley north west of Wigan and land to the west and south west of Wigan and around Ashton-in-Makerfield.
- Between Hindley and Westhoughton and Bolton and separating Leigh from Atherton and Tyldesley.
- South of Ince and Hindley and west of Leigh but excluding Abram, Ashton-in-Makerfield and Golborne.
- South of the East Lancashire Road and west of Swinton in Salford.



**Picture 3.1 Green Belt, safeguarded land and existing and proposed major existing developed sites in the Green Belt**

### Major Existing Developed Sites in the Green Belt

**3.4** There are 10 designated major existing developed sites, at: Former Leigh CE High School, Leigh; industrial area off Edge Green Road, Golborne; Bispham Hall Brick and Terracotta Works, Billingeh; St John Rigby College, Orrell; Winstanley College, Winstanley; Leyland Mill, Wigan; Dicconson Mill, Aspull; Astley Works, Gin Pit Village; Kilhey Court Hotel, Standish; and the Orica UK Ltd site at Shevington.

**3.5** In addition it is proposed to designate new major existing developed sites at St Mary's R.C. High School at Astley and Shevington High School. These are both educational establishments, one of the categories of sites listed in Planning Policy Guidance note 2 'Green Belts' as being appropriate for major developed site status, and substantial sites.

**3.6** In the case of St Mary's High School there is an on-going need for infilling, which would not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site, and possibly some redevelopment to allow the school to continue to function to its full potential.

**3.7** In the case of Shevington High School, there is a possibility at some stage in the future that it will become redundant as a school. Designation of the built part of the site as a major existing developed site will allow for the possibility of redevelopment of the redundant buildings (which would be unlikely to secure an alternative use in this location and could therefore fall into disuse and dereliction) without adding to, and possibly diminishing, the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

### **Safeguarded land**

**3.8** There is over 642 hectares of land designated as 'safeguarded land' in the borough. As shown in Map 3.1 this safeguarded land is located in predominantly substantial sites to the:

- North and south of Golborne and Lowton
- South of Leigh
- South and east of Tyldesley and Astley
- South and east of Atherton
- South of Hindley and Hindley Green
- East and west of Standish.

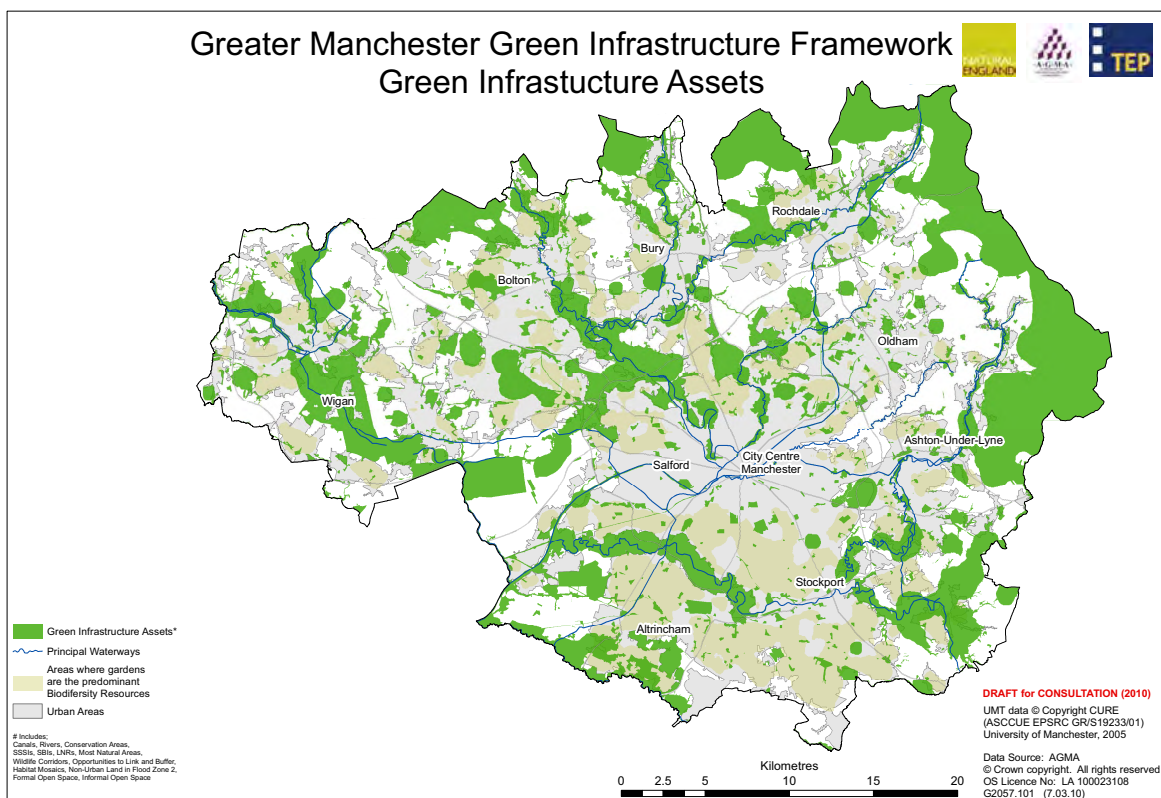
**3.9** The purpose of including land in the Green Belt and the concept of safeguarded land and major existing developed sites are contained within national planning policy (Planning Policy Guidance note 2). It is summarised in section 2 of this topic paper. This guidance also sets out the the development management policies operating within these areas. The only proposed release of land from the Green Belt in the Core Strategy is within policy SP4 'Broad locations for new development', Junction 25, M6 motorway, south of Wigan. Further information for the justification of this release is contained within Topic Paper 5, Economy and employment and also within Annex 4 of the Final Consultation Report (August 2011).



## Strategic landscape and green infrastructure

### Extent of strategic green infrastructure

**3.10** The key areas of green infrastructure have been mapped in the Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework. In the main they cover the Greenheart area and the mosslands. The east-west core is clearly an important area in terms of green infrastructure assets, as shown in map 3.2. Around 70% of the land area in Wigan is countryside, open land or other open space. At 57 square kilometres the Greenheart area represents over 25% of the total area of the borough (200 square kilometres). In addition, the mosslands cover 158 hectares.

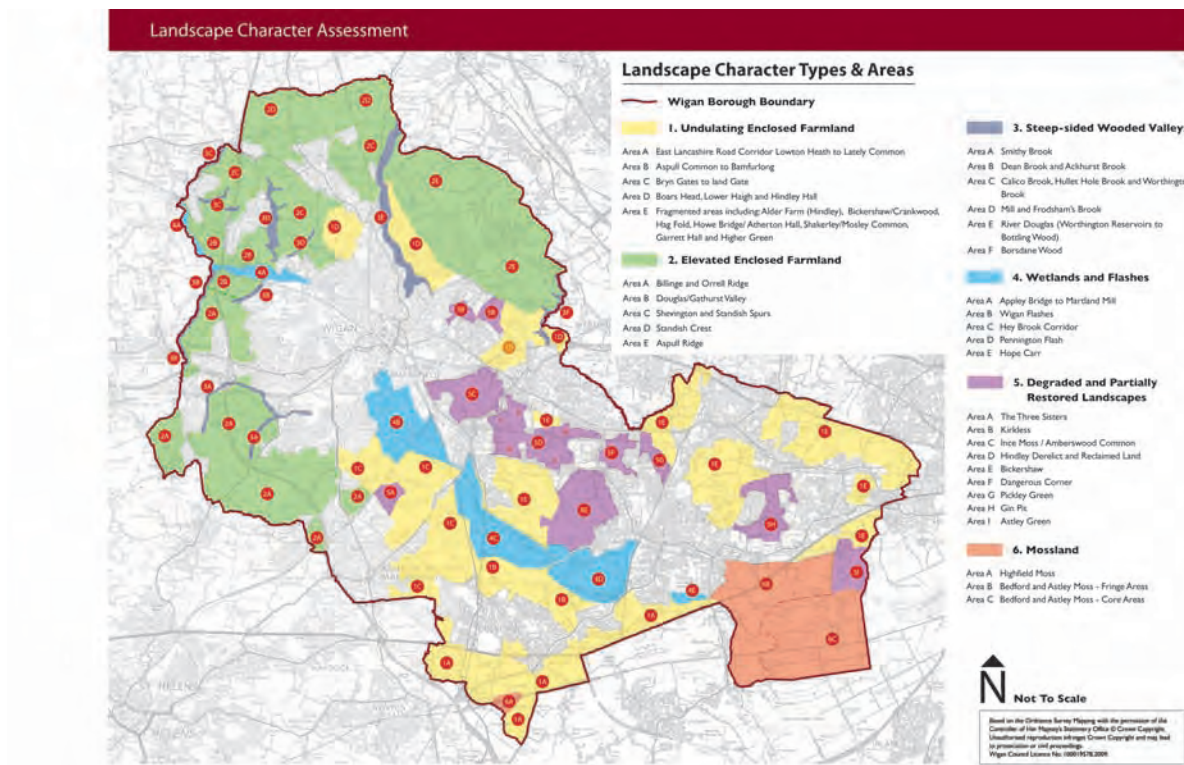


**Map 3.2 Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Assets (Next Steps Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework, TEP, 2010)**

## Landscape character areas

**3.11** Landscape character is what makes one area different from its neighbouring areas. It reflects the complex interaction between people and place in an area and helps form a sense of place. Landscapes can be an important view, such as the view across the River Douglas valley from Haigh Hall, or simply an everyday place that we experience such as a patch of local green space. Wigan's landscape character is influenced by factors such as its underlying geology, topography, architectural heritage, land use, land management, biodiversity, and industrial past, all of which combine to help create the environment that we are familiar with today.

**3.12** Our Landscape Character Assessment provides an objective view of Wigan's landscape as it is today, to help define its landscape character and to recognise the pressures of change upon it. The assessment identifies six broad landscape character types that generally cross the borough, in bands, from east to west from the elevated enclosed farmland in the north to the mosslands in the south. Each character type is made up of a number of discrete character areas, all of which are indicated in map 3.3.



Map 3.3 Landscape character types and areas

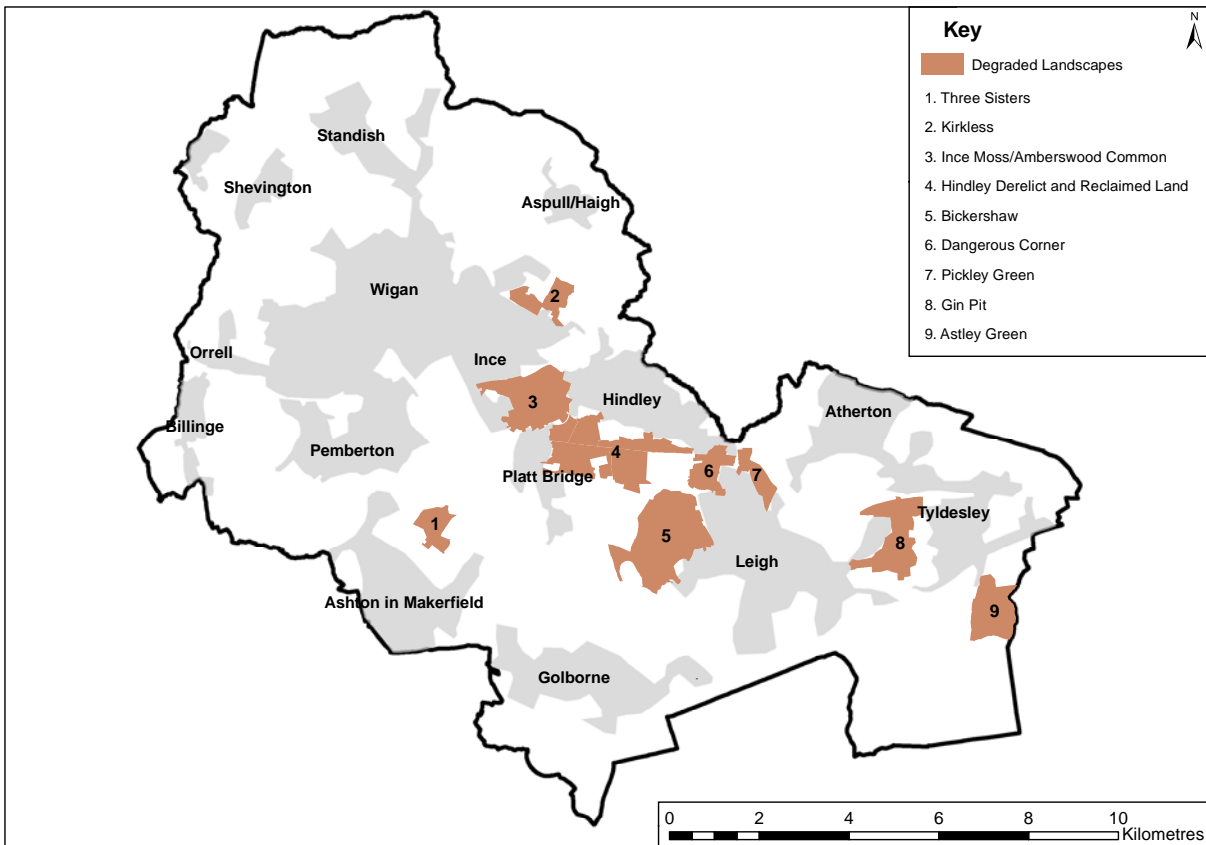
## Land of value / potential value for wildlife

**3.13** These landscape character areas include significant areas of land which are, or have the potential to be, of value for wildlife. This is found notably, but not exclusively, within Greenheart and the mosslands. Further information can be found in Topic Paper 10 'Wildlife habitats and species'.

## Degraded landscapes

**3.14** There are a number of degraded and partially restored landscapes highlighted in the landscape character assessment as shown in map 3.4. These are mostly located in the inner areas of the borough, the east-west core between Wigan and Leigh. In the most part they are a legacy of the borough's coal mining and industrial past. Over the years many of these areas have been reclaimed and are maturing. There are however large areas such as Bickershaw and North Leigh where dereliction is still evident. Smaller, more localised pockets of former coal mining dereliction still exist, particularly within the

east-west core. Through focusing new development within the inner area, the Core Strategy provides a major opportunity to tackle degradation through mitigation, reclamation and re-use.



**Map 3.4 Degraded landscapes in the borough**

**3.15** A number of these degraded landscapes are within the borough's Greenheart, including Three Sisters, Kirkless, Ince Moss/Amberswood Common and Bickershaw. Policy SP5 of the Core Strategy commits to the regeneration of these derelict and despoiled areas within 'Greenheart' to boost the borough's image and support regeneration.

**Off-road networks**

**3.16** The retention and improvement of strategic access routes throughout the borough is important as the network delivers multiple benefits to the local population. It gives improved accessibility, access to recreation opportunities and contributes to general health and wellbeing. It is also important to help deliver the vision and objectives of Greenheart.

The borough's industrial legacy means there is an abundance of canal towpaths and former mineral railway lines which provide off-road walking, cycling and horse riding routes. These are a critical component of the borough's green infrastructure and provide a major opportunity to supplement the traditional transport networks in the borough whilst helping to improve the health and well-being of residents.

### **Key strategic sites and broad locations**

**3.17** The Core Strategy proposes a key strategic site at Northleigh (policy SP3) and 6 broad locations for new development in policy SP4. In addition to the main housing or employment function, the policies propose significant elements of strategic green infrastructure at each site/location, which will provide opportunities for recreation, enhance accessibility for walkers and cyclists, and create sustainable off-road links between communities and facilities.

**3.18** 18 hectares of strategic green infrastructure are proposed as part of the key strategic site at Northleigh; this equates to approximately 25% of the total site. In addition to the opportunities this site provides for improved accessibility, especially to Greenheart, it also contributes to the remediation of degraded land in the borough and provides for improved wildlife habitats and flood mitigation measures.

**3.19** Each of the broad locations for development proposed in policy SP4 will lead to improvements in the borough's strategic green infrastructure. There will be opportunities to increase walking, cycling and horse riding in and around each of the broad locations. Enhanced links into Greenheart will be achievable at some of these locations, particularly South of Hindley, Landgate and Junction 25, M6 motorway, south of Wigan. Green infrastructure will be an important consideration for the development of each of the sites.

### **The economic benefits of green infrastructure**

**3.20** According to the document 'The Economic Value of Green Infrastructure', green infrastructure can underpin the success of other economic sectors, offering an improved environment, jobs, sustainable business enterprises, social benefits, economic security and cost savings. It can also contribute to longer term employment, better health, more engaging education and social cohesion.

**3.21** The document identifies numerous economic benefits of green infrastructure; these are set out in Table 3.5 below.

Green Infrastructure Intervention	Benefit of Green Infrastructure
Economic growth and investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves image and combats poor perceptions, helping to attract and hold high value industry, entrepreneurs and workers</li> <li>• Can be credited to helping to attract, create and safeguard new jobs and startup businesses</li> <li>• Increases the scope for leveraging in private sector investment, reducing unemployment and increasing GVA</li> <li>• Businesses attract and retain more motivated staff in greener settings</li> </ul>
Land and property values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views of natural landscapes can add up to 18% to property values</li> <li>• Greener cities attract more visitors, bringing with them retail and leisure spending and providing job and rental opportunities.</li> </ul>
Labour productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green spaces nearer workplaces reduce sickness absence and absenteeism, increasing productivity</li> </ul>
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors are already worth £10.9bn per year to the Northwest supporting 200,000 full time equivalent jobs</li> <li>• Rural tourism supports over 37,500 jobs in the Northwest</li> </ul>
Products from the land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40,000 people work in agriculture in the Northwest</li> <li>• Agriculture offers diverse economic opportunities. Traditional sectors such as food are seeing new possibilities</li> </ul>



Green Infrastructure Intervention	Benefit of Green Infrastructure
	<p>as interest grows in local, regionally distinctive food and drink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biomass is still the major source of renewable energy in the UK</li> </ul>
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in green infrastructure can encourage leisure and exercise activities such as walking, cycling and sport, which can contribute to reducing the level of long-term illnesses such as heart disease, obesity and asthma which are above national levels in the borough.</li> </ul>
Recreation and leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways enable healthy low-cost recreation</li> </ul>
Quality of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community owned green spaces can create jobs and local pride</li> <li>• The government's Urban Green Spaces Taskforce in 2002 emphasised that the decline of urban green spaces has helped to weaken community cohesion in many deprived areas</li> </ul>
Land and biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green infrastructure provides vital habitats and jobs managing the land</li> </ul>
Flood alleviation and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green infrastructure measures such as protecting or promoting woodlands, water and wetland habitats and grasslands, and sustainable urban drainage systems, allow better drainage and help to prevent or alleviate flooding</li> </ul>



Green Infrastructure Intervention	Benefit of Green Infrastructure
Climate change adaptation and mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Northwest's woodlands have been valued at £601m in possible markets for carbon capture and storage, while its wetlands are similarly a major resource</li> <li>• Green infrastructure can counter soaring summer temperatures in cities</li> </ul>

**Table 3.5 - The economic benefits of green infrastructure (The Economic Value of Green Infrastructure, NWDA and Natural England, 2009)**

### Extent of parks, allotments and gardens

**3.22** There are 3 principal parks and 15 township parks in the borough totalling approximately 728 hectares. Further information on Wigan's parks, can be found in Topic Paper 1 'Health and Recreation'.

**3.23** There are 48 sites classified as allotments in the borough covering just over 34 hectares. These include 12 statutory allotment sites with 376 plots which are managed by Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, and a further 36 non-statutory sites with 238 plots which are currently managed by Legal and Property Services on behalf of the Planning and Housing portfolios. Further information on allotments can be found in Topic Paper 1 'Health and Recreation'.

**3.24** We have one nationally registered historic park (Mesnes Park, Wigan) and 18 local historic parks, gardens and cemeteries in the borough. The open space, sport and recreation assessment report (2007) records 57 parks and gardens sites totalling 817 hectares (including the principal and township parks). 1,890 amenity greenspace sites totalling just over 376 hectares are also recorded and the majority of the borough is adequately catered for and the land is kept in average to good condition.

### Trees

**3.25** The council currently has 651 Tree Preservation Orders protecting individual trees, groups of trees, areas and woodlands. Legislation on Tree Preservation Orders is set out in Section 2. Trees play a valuable role in terms of amenity. Amenity is not defined

by the Town and County Planning Act nor does it prescribe the circumstances in which it is in the interests of amenity to make an order. However, the amenity value of trees and woodlands can be quantified by their visible beauty, ecology and economic value, such as an increase in property prices and by providing a healthy local environment which improves people's quality of life by moderating climate, temperature and reducing pollution.

### **Carbon storage**

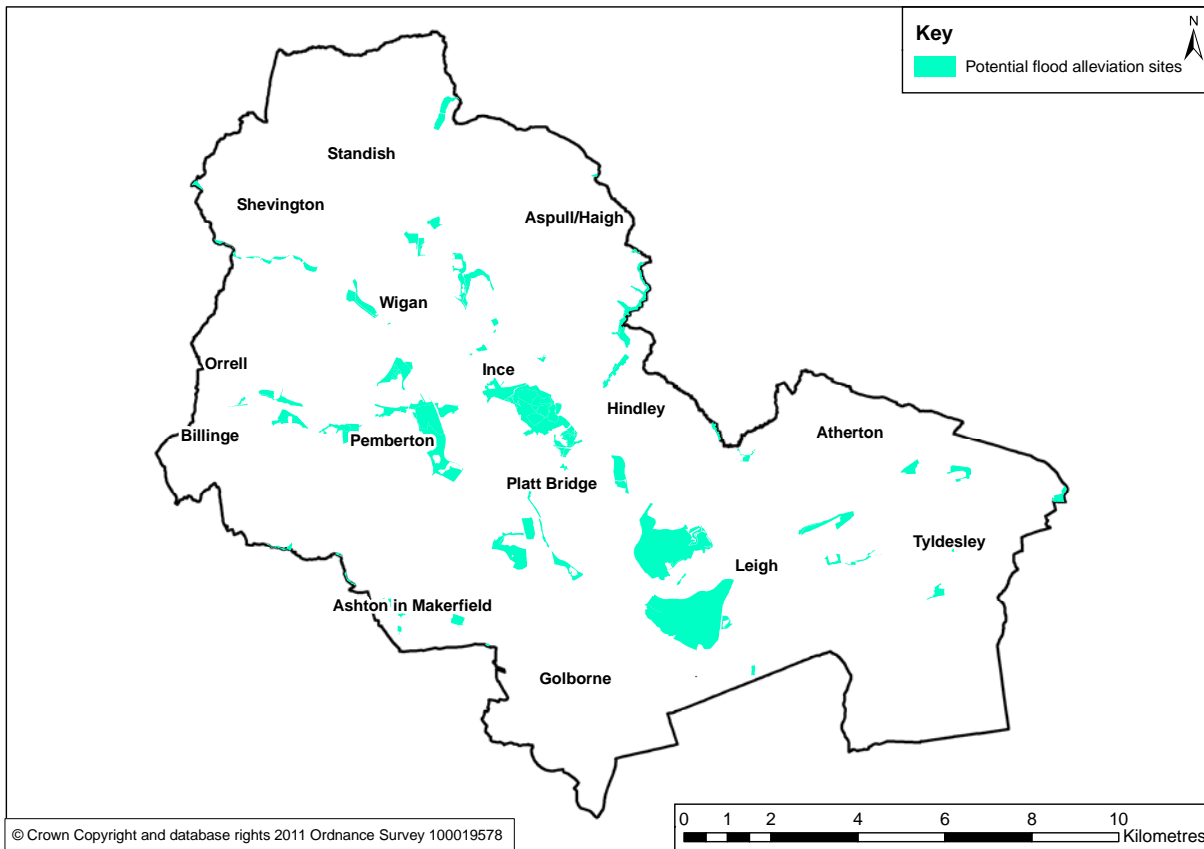
**3.26** Natural carbon sinks are those parts of the natural environment that accumulate and store carbon as part of a natural process. They do this through a process called carbon sequestration. The main carbon sinks are living plants and forests, and oceans and the waterways that serve them. By retaining these natural carbon sinks we can lock away carbon emissions that would otherwise contribute to global warming and climate change. The Global Canopy Programme estimates that deforestation accounts for around 25% of global carbon emissions.

**3.27** Most of our natural environment (flora and fauna) could be considered as carbon stores but specific areas include the mosslands and where we have had peat extraction. The amount is difficult to quantify as different foliage and the conditions they live in give different absorption rates. However, to give a comparison, a hectare of trees can absorb around 4.8 tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum. If all of the borough's greenspace (assumed at 70% of the borough) absorbed carbon dioxide at that rate, it would equate to some 67,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, or 4% of our emissions.

### **Flood water storage**

**3.28** With regards to flood risk, green spaces can be used to manage storm flows and free up water storage capacity in existing infrastructure to reduce risk of damage to urban property. Opening up land to create flow paths or flood storage areas can help protect current and future developments.

**3.29** The suitability of our green infrastructure areas have been assessed to determine those sites that may be used to provide strategic flood mitigation function in the future. Green Infrastructure sites have been assessed based on their close proximity to main rivers within the borough. Map 3.6 shows potential flood alleviation sites across the borough and has been taken from the Level 2 Hybrid Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Wigan.



**Picture 3.2 Potential flood alleviation sites in the borough**

**3.30** River corridors identified as functional floodplain are an excellent linkage of green infrastructure and can provide storage during a flood event.

### Climate change reduction and adaptation measures

**3.31** Research by the Sustainable Cities: Options for Responding to Climate Change (SCORCHIO) project at Manchester University shows that urban areas heat up more than rural areas in hot weather. This is known as the urban heat island effect. Urban areas contain materials, such as brick and concrete, that retain heat. Rural areas, due to their more natural environment, are able to release the heat. The difference is more noticeable at night.

**3.32** Urban heat can contribute to health problems and premature deaths especially during heat waves. Temperatures are rising and are set to rise even further due to climate change. In addition, there will be more extremes of weather – and therefore more heat waves. Adaptation measures such as green roofs, tree cover and more natural materials can help reduce heat retention and improve shading from higher temperatures.

**3.33** A greener urban environment helps to reduce the urban heat island effect and helps reduce flooding through slowing rainwater run off. Improved urban tree cover and urban greenspace can provide refuge from higher temperatures and also reduce urban heating which builds up as part of the urban heat island effect – thereby reducing the requirement for air conditioning within buildings. Urban greenspace and trees are also a form of carbon sink, helping to trap and store carbon emissions.

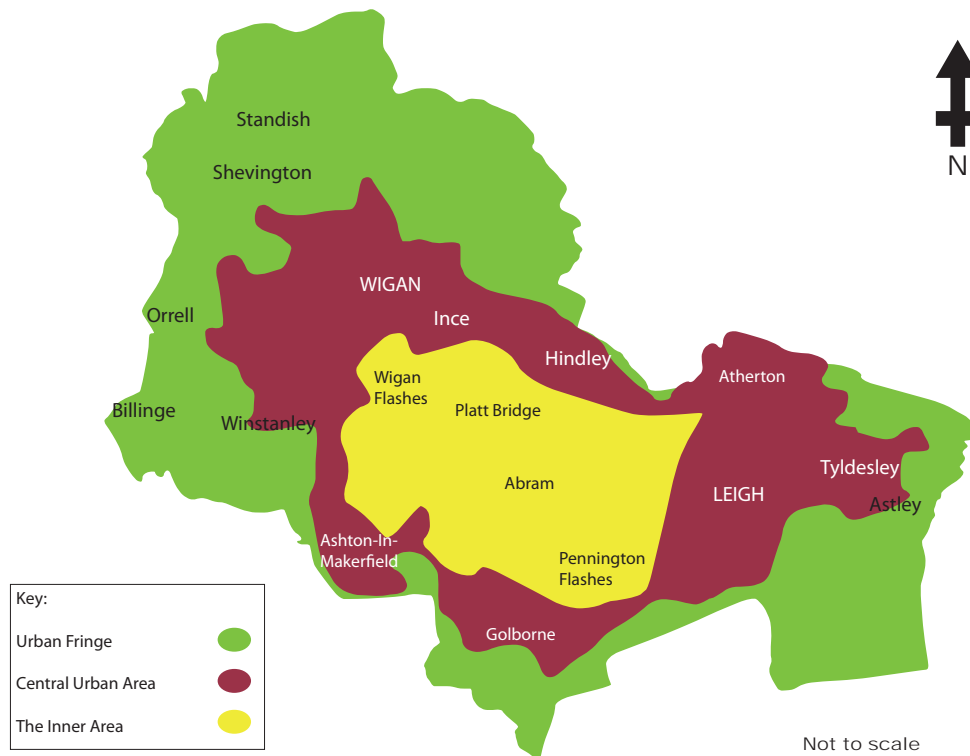
**3.34** Green roofs are relatively new in the urban environment in the UK. However, Wigan's largest shopping centre, the Grand Arcade, has a green roof in part. They provide good insulation therefore reducing the need for heating and cooling systems. They can also help slow down the run off from rainwater thereby reducing surface flooding or can help capture the rainwater for use in such things as flushing toilets.

## Design

### The character and identity of the borough

**3.35** The borough's built environment and landscapes were in the past inextricably linked, with topography dictating settlement patterns and the design of settlements defining the character of the land. This relationship has sometimes been overlooked by new development. Therefore, it is important that this relationship is again properly appreciated and enhanced to help shape the future of the borough, creating locally distinctive environments.

**3.36** The borough's built environment and landscapes can be spatially characterised into three distinct character areas, where the quality of the built environment and landscapes reflects our past, our present and provides opportunities for our future. The three areas are illustrated in figure 3.8. The spatial arrangement has been determined through the landscape character assessment and the broad spatial pattern of development of the borough.



**Map 3.8 Broad character areas in the borough**

### The central urban area

**3.37** The central urban area includes the principal towns of Wigan, Leigh and Ashton in Makerfield, together with the smaller towns of Atherton, Hindley, Ince, Golborne and Tyldesley. These urban settlements once formed the borough's former industrial heartland but today serve as the borough's commercial heartland. This area is dominated by high density red brick Victorian terraced dwellings, of which many are embellished by decorative terracotta detailing. Many commercial buildings, such as former mills, are significant in both style and grandeur and are constructed predominantly of red brick and terracotta. Significant landmark buildings include town halls, municipal buildings, churches and educational institutions. Larger Victorian and Georgian properties can be found on the principal thoroughfares in the more affluent parts of the borough such as Wigan Lane.

**3.38** The majority of the borough's population either live or are dependant on the central urban area; in addition this tends to be the area which people visit. It is therefore important for the borough's main towns to be attractive, sustainable, vibrant and viable.

**3.39** Issues to be considered include protecting and enhancing mills, houses and key community buildings which define the historical and architectural built environment; enhancing the image of the town's streets and spaces, making them people-friendly rather than car-friendly; respecting and enhancing the distinctive grid pattern built fabric; promoting higher densities particularly in and around nodes of public transport; and promoting distinctive built environments with the use of appropriate building materials and styles that characterise this historic environment.

### **The inner area**

**3.40** The inner area of Wigan is predominantly green and encircled by the urban settlements of Wigan, Leigh and Ashton. The area was once the main productive coal mining area of the South Lancashire Coalfield. It includes Spring View, Platt Bridge, Abram, Bickershaw, Westleigh, Wigan Flashes and Pennington Flashes Country Park. This former mining area is now a green heartland due to a number of reclamation schemes. Development is concentrated along key transport corridors where Victorian terrace houses and 1960s semi detached houses predominately make up the housing stock. It is relatively flat when compared with the the rest of borough. The Greenheart initiative has helped to rejuvenate this area giving it a new identity and introducing greenery and biodiversity. In addition, it is intended new housing on the reclaimed Bickershaw Colliery site will set high design precedence for other new developments.

**3.41** Issues to be considered include the need to recognise and respect the mining legacy; the introduction of green streets and spaces that effectively connect with the flashes and promote the Greenheart initiative; and the promotion of sustainable modes of transport with investment in redundant railway lines and canal towpaths to effectively accommodate pedestrian and cycle movement.

### **The urban fringe**

**3.42** The urban fringe includes the towns of Aspull, Haigh, Standish, Shevington, Orrell, Billinge and areas south of the East Lancashire Road. This area of the borough is recognisable due to its agricultural origins, with small local centres fulfilling and providing

the basic services to their immediate populations. Houses within the local centres or main settlement clusters are primarily built of stone (coal measure stone, Lancashire millstone grit) or red brick, with high density 19th and early 20th century terraces generally found along main arterial routes. Some large detached dwellings and apartment blocks can also be found along these main arterial routes. Lower density cul-de-sac residential estates of mid–late 20th century consisting of semi detached and detached houses can be found off the main arterial routes with large halls and farmsteads found in the hinterland.

**3.43** Many people aspire to live in this part of the borough due to its rural/semi-rural setting and infrastructure benefits. However, it is important that development respects the rural setting of the urban fringe area as well as reduce the use of the car with the promotion of other sustainable modes of travel.

**3.44** Issues to be addressed include the need to protect and enhance older farm halls and barns which are of architectural and local interest; ensuring new development respects the rural setting of the area as appropriate and the need to promote distinctive built environments with the use of appropriate building materials and styles.

### **Accessible developments for all**

**3.45** Manual for Streets explains how the aesthetic and functional success of a neighbourhood is highly dependent on the way streets are laid out and how they relate to the surrounding buildings and space. Certain elements are critical because once laid down, they cannot easily be changed. It stresses how the movement framework should take account of the form of the buildings, landscape and activities that form the character of the street, and the links between new and existing routes and places. It also explains how street networks should be connected or ‘permeable’ to encourage walking and cycling and make places easier to navigate through. A permeable network of streets also means a more even spread of traffic throughout the area, which in turn avoids the need for distributor roads with no frontage development.



## **The importance of a high quality landscape scheme**

**3.46** The Urban Design Compendium states that a quality landscape and a sense of urbanism can, and should, go hand in hand and that the urban design challenge is to design schemes so that there is a cohesive landscape structure, within which planning standards can be met while making a positive contribution to the sense of place, in both overall and local terms.

**3.47** A key design principle identified by the compendium is to treat everything as landscape; buildings define the edge of space; landscape occupies the space, whether it is a park, a street, a fence or a pavement. This means designing the landscape structure before the engineer becomes involved and avoiding space left over after planning.

## **Using materials that facilitate easy maintenance**

**3.48** All developments require maintenance throughout their life to retain high standards of visual attractiveness, durability and environmental performance. Good design and the use of high quality materials in construction can facilitate easy maintenance and minimise future disruption and disturbance.

## **Designing out crime**

**3.49** Government initiatives such as 'Secured by Design' encourage the building industry to adopt crime prevention measures in the design of developments to assist in reducing the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime, creating a safer and more secure environment. The North West Best Practice Design Guide explains how a sense of security and freedom from crime and the fear of crime are fundamental to quality of life. Designing out crime is therefore a key objective in the planning and delivery of all new development.

## **Planning for waste storage and collection**

**3.50** The need to recycle has increasingly led to consumers sorting waste into a number of bins for collection by different dustcarts. In Wigan, there can be up to 4 bins per household including general household waste, garden waste, plastic and glass, and paper. This requires increased space for storage and manoeuvring space for collection vehicles. In denser, mixed-use areas collections may be noisy and at unsociable hours. The Urban Design Compendium 2 explains that alternative methods of collection are now

possible. These include collecting sorted waste through underground ducts, which avoids the need for vehicular collection and virtually eliminates refuse storage problems. Such schemes are being implemented in new urban extensions and retro-fitted in dense urban areas such as the old centre of Barcelona. Making provision for waste storage and collection in new development, including the consideration of alternative methods such as these, is important if we are to retain and improve the quality of our built environment.

### **Incorporating public art**

**3.51** The Artists and Places publication explains how art, in the sense of writing, designing, performing and drawing, can also reflect on what is meaningful to people about a place. The contribution of art and artists is more than merely placing a piece of public art in front of a building, or staging a performance in a public space. When artists are engaged in place making the way they think and address issues can fundamentally affect the outcome, by broadening the scope of what is conceivable, and by helping professionals and communities to unlock their creativity and find better ways of expressing themselves. Examples of public art in the borough which make a positive contribution in the local context include the Face of Wigan at The Wiend; the Market Cross Floor Mosaic in Market Place, Wigan town centre; mechanical structures at Trencherfield Mill, the 'Spirit of Wigan' at Landgate roundabout and other pieces of public art on new developments such as at Gibfield in Atherton.

### **Historic environment**

#### **Heritage assets**

**3.52** There are 606 listed buildings and structures, 1 nationally registered historic park (Mesnes Park in Wigan), and 12 scheduled ancient monuments. These national designations represent a very small proportion of the overall stock of historic buildings, structures and parks in the borough. Despite this, parts of the borough are of significant value locally not least as a legacy of our industrial and mining past. As such we have 23 Conservation Areas and 18 local historic parks, gardens and cemeteries. In addition to the nationally listed buildings, there are buildings of local interest and a local list of these is currently being prepared.

**3.53** The 606 listed buildings include one grade I, 40 grade II\* and 565 grade II. The grade I listed building is the Church of St Wilfrid, Standish. The grade II\* listed buildings include Haigh Hall, Leigh Spinners Mill, Winstanley Hall and outbuildings, St Mary's Church in Wigan, plus several other churches, manor houses, farmhouses and mill buildings. A full list of listed buildings can be viewed on our website at [www.wigan.gov.uk](http://www.wigan.gov.uk).

**3.54** The 12 Scheduled Monuments in the borough are:

- Winstanley moated site and five fish ponds at Winstanley
- Gidlow Hall moated site at Aspull
- Morley Hall moated site at Tyldesley
- New Hall moated site at Astley
- The Moat House moated site at Haigh
- Haigh Sough mine drainage portal at Haigh
- Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear at Astley
- Market Cross in Market Place at Standish
- Mabs Cross on Standishgate at Wigan
- Cross base on Green Lane at Standish
- Cross base on Standish Wood Lane at Standish
- Cross base at junction of Green Lane, Standish Wood Lane and Beech Walk at Standish.

**3.55** The 23 designated conservation areas in the borough cover a diverse mix of areas designated for their special architectural and/or historic interest and whose character and appearance is desirable to preserve. The borough's conservation areas include the commercial town centres of Wigan and Leigh, industrial areas such as Bridgewater Canal and Wigan Pier, and suburban residential areas such as Swinley, Pennington and Astley Village. The protection of these areas from unsympathetic and inappropriate development is crucial if their historic environment and distinct character are to be conserved.

**3.56** Whilst it is recognised that some of the borough's built heritage has suffered from poor maintenance, repair and inappropriate alterations in the past, conservation-led regeneration projects, such as the Townscape Heritage Initiative, (in Hindley and Wigan Town Centres), have contributed positively to the protection of the historic environment by carrying out sensitive repairs and other enhancement works to historic buildings, structures and spaces within them.

**3.57** Both the Townscape Heritage Initiative and the Wigan Streetscene Strategy recognise the essential role of the historic environment in providing character and a sense of identity to an area, combined with the contribution heritage assets make to the attractiveness of streets and public spaces. Supplementary Planning Documents, including the Shopfront Design Guide and the Design Guide for Residential Developments cover more detailed design issues providing good practice guidance on extensions and alterations to properties in conservation areas. Conservation Area Appraisals are particularly helpful in identifying adverse impacts on conservation areas that could be addressed by issuing Article 4 Directions to arrest further loss of architectural features, which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.

**3.58** The borough's listed buildings contribute positively to the historic environment, but some are in a state of disrepair through lack of maintenance and neglect. Heritage at Risk information (national and local) is an effective means of assessing whether protection policies are achieving success and contributing to improved quality of life and local identity.

### **Heritage assets 'at risk'**

**3.59** The National Buildings at Risk Register comprises grade I and grade II\* listed buildings and structural scheduled monuments which are identified as being at risk of neglect and decay, or are vulnerable to becoming so, if urgent steps are not taken to stabilise their condition. The 2010 survey identifies one Conservation Area (Tyldesley), one scheduled monument (Astley Green Colliery engine house and headgear) and the following five grade II\* buildings to be at risk in the borough:

- Winstanley Hall
- Barn and Stables at Winstanley Hall
- Leigh Spinners Mill
- Haigh Hall
- Gateway and Lodges to Haigh Hall Country Park

**3.60** Tyldesley Conservation Area is considered to be at risk as it has suffered from inappropriate advertisements, installation of roller shutters, traffic calming measures and street clutter, through a proliferation of signage. The accumulation of these factors threatens the special character of the historic town centre conservation area.

- 3.61** Astley Green Colliery is the only surviving colliery pit head gear in the Greater Manchester area. The site is operated as a museum, but repairing and maintaining the gear requires significant investment.
- 3.62** The three buildings identified at Winstanley Hall have been derelict for some 20 years, yet exhibit some of the best heritage in the borough, being architecturally and historically of national importance. They suffer from extensive dry rot and roof leaks and some internal floors have collapsed. Temporary repairs have been carried out in the past and security was provided following theft of lead from the roofs. In partnership with English Heritage and site owner, the council commissioned and part-funded an options appraisal to determine an appropriate long term solution for the hall and its outbuildings.
- 3.63** Leigh Spinners Mill is a rare surviving example of a double spinning mill with a large steam engine in situ. To date, the upper sections of the mill chimney have been re-pointed, but the roof of the mill is still in need of repair. The mill is currently on the open market. English Heritage has offered to fund a survey of the roof and engine house to determine the condition and cost of repair.
- 3.64** The upper floors of Haigh Hall are unused and ongoing maintenance is a concern. However, the installation of a temporary roof covering has made the building wind and water-tight. An options appraisal study was commissioned for the wider estate by the council in January 2010. The Plantation Gates and the lodge buildings are boarded up and unused. They form important local landmarks and the lack of permanent repair and use continues to threaten these buildings.
- 3.65** On a local level, a draft buildings at risk strategy has up to 40 buildings and structures at grade II considered to be at risk from loss through neglect and decay. These range from agricultural buildings, farmsteads, Georgian Town Houses, vacant cotton mills, public houses, churches and chapels. Consistent with the national Heritage At Risk Register, a local register will provide a brief visual survey of the asset, an assessment of its overall condition and vulnerability to loss and a 'traffic light system' defining the required priority of addressing the condition of the asset.

## The means of re-using buildings to protect and maintain heritage assets

**3.66** The appropriate re-use of buildings, particularly those which make a positive contribution to the special character of their locality or are identified as being 'at risk', is an effective way of protecting and maintaining heritage assets. In accordance with English Heritage's 'Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide' 2010, the basic principles associated with re-using such buildings are to:

- Preserve or enhance those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the significance of the asset
- Ensure that the value of the asset is not materially harmed
- Aspire to provide a quality of design and execution of works
- Ensure that the historic significance of the place is recognised and reinforced while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure the continued use and enjoyment of the asset.

**3.67** Local examples of good practice include:

- The former Cotton Mill at Trencherfield - Conversion for mixed use development has successfully refurbished this industrial building.
- Beech Hill Chapel - This has been sympathetically restored for residential use.
- Lightshaw Hall - A former threshing barn (a barn used for the storage of cereals) which has been sympathetically restored as an attractive family home.

**3.68** £6.1 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund is currently funding a major heritage-led restoration project in Mesnes Park, Wigan, the borough's only registered historic park and garden. This project includes major restoration and refurbishment works to several heritage assets within the park, including the pavilion (Grade II), bandstand, bowling pavilion, entrance lodge together with enhancing the historic park landscape. Many of the structures had fallen into various levels of disrepair and were consequently providing a poor local environment. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2012.

## Promoting the historic environment

**3.69** Signage, interpretation and public art are effective tools in promoting the value of our historic environment. Local examples which have proved successful include Haigh Windmill, a Heritage Lottery funded project for the conservation restoration of the grade

II listed structure. In addition to the repair and restoration of the windmill, the project involved three local schools in the design of artwork in the form of a mosaic. The mosaic depicts locally significant historic features located in Haigh. As part of the project, an interpretation board detailing the history of the windmill and its restoration has been installed adjacent to the public footpath leading to the windmill. A windmill walk leaflet has also been produced, which sets out a circular route encompassing important historic features on the Haigh Estate. The provision of information on the history of Haigh Windmill will attract public interest, enabling people to value and gain new knowledge and understanding about their locality's history.

**3.70** Another example is the refurbishment of Trencherfield Mill in the Wigan Pier Quarter for a mix of apartments, offices and leisure uses including the restored mill engine and machinery hall. This, together with a collection of mill machinery on display enables visitors to learn about Wigan's past and the historical development of the cotton manufacturing industry.

**3.71** During the construction of Grand Arcade substantial evidence of late Medieval activity in Wigan was uncovered, including a hearth/furnace, pottery pieces and tiles. A hypocaust (a Roman underground heating system) was also uncovered, suggesting the existence of a Roman fort in Wigan on the Grand Arcade site. In recognition of the significance of this find, restoration works, including the reconstruction of the remains of the hypocaust, were rebuilt in Concert Square, and interpretation boards detailing the ancient history of the site have been provided. Pottery pieces and tiles are on display in cabinets at the Concert Square entrance to the Grand Arcade Shopping Centre.

**3.72** Promoting the historic environment is recognised nationally in Planning Policy Guidance Note 5 and the management of up-to-date Historic Environment Records is recognised as vital in providing a sound evidence base that can be called on by applicants for future development and by planners when drawing up plans and making decisions.

**3.73** Wigan Heritage Strategy (2009) recognises the importance of heritage as a shared resource, which can promote understanding and learning both through the increased use and awareness of heritage resources and through the management of relevant collections and archives.



## Climate change considerations

**3.74** 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 built environment and landscapes are:

- Fewer requirements for winter heating in buildings.
- Greater need for summer cooling in buildings.
- Exaggerated heat island effect in urban areas such as town centres.
- Potential impacts on visual amenity from renewable energy schemes and micro-renewables.
- Increased drought will have an impact on farmland and there will be changes to growing seasons

**3.75** A key benefit of green infrastructure is climate change adaptation and mitigation. Climate mitigation involves storage of carbon and nitrogen in soils and in timber. Healthy urban soils and increased woodland cover are important outcomes of green infrastructure. The negative effects of climate change on the urban environment can be reduced as green infrastructure can help places adapt to climate change through:

- Improved water management,
- Reducing pressure on existing urban drainage infrastructure,
- Creating more places to grow food locally
- Providing flood storage capacity to protect downstream urban property from damage.

## Key community and stakeholder involvement

**3.76** There are a number of 'key stakeholders' who have played an important role in the development of our approach to the built environment and landscapes. By identifying and involving these key stakeholders from an early stage, we were able to establish a stronger evidence base and more sustainable policy options.

**3.77** The following key stakeholders have been involved:

- Association of Greater Manchester Authorities
- English Heritage
- Home Builders Federation
- North West Development Agency
- Places Matter
- Red Rose Forest
- Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit
- Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- The Forestry Commission
- Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust.

**3.78** 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 the proposed submission stage.

**3.79** At the proposed submission stage, there were 9 representations on Policy CP8 'Green Belt and Safeguarded Land', with support from Warrington Council and one landowner. One representation seeks the retention of the current Green Belt boundary between Wigan and Ashton-in-Makerfield and a further two seek the allocation of land in Standish for development. Another developer considers the implications of the policy make the plan inflexible, especially in Standish. Sport England is concerned about the lack of precise boundaries for the two proposed major existing developed sites in the Green Belt, as they contain playing fields. Two representations are concerned that the

policy pre-judges the review of safeguarded land outside the east-west core, by assuming it will be retained. Minor change 1.24, which is detailed in the schedule of minor changes is proposed in response to this representation.

**3.80** There were 4 representations on Policy CP9 'Strategic Landscape and Green Infrastructure'; 3 in support from British Waterways, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit and United Utilities. Natural England believes that the policy is too generic and should maintain and improve the quality of all landscapes, not just degraded ones. No changes are proposed.

**3.81** There were 2 representations on Policy CP10 'Design'. United Utilities support it but request that the need to meet national carbon targets is included. Natural England would like the word 'maintain' to be added to the opening line and the words "as best as it is able" to be removed from clauses 3 and 4. Other than 'maintain', these are included in minor change 1.25.

**3.82** There were no representations received on Policy CP11 'Historic environment' at the proposed submission stage.

**3.83** 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

### Green Belt and Safeguarded Land

**3.84** Within the borough there are:

- 10,560 hectares of designated Green Belt, which amounts to 56% of the borough.
- 10 designated Major Existing Developed Sites in the Green Belt, with two additional sites proposed at Shevington High School, Shevington and St. Mary's High School, Astley.
- 642 hectares of safeguarded land.

**3.85** Areas of Green Belt and safeguarded land and Major Existing Development Sites are all listed earlier in Section 3.

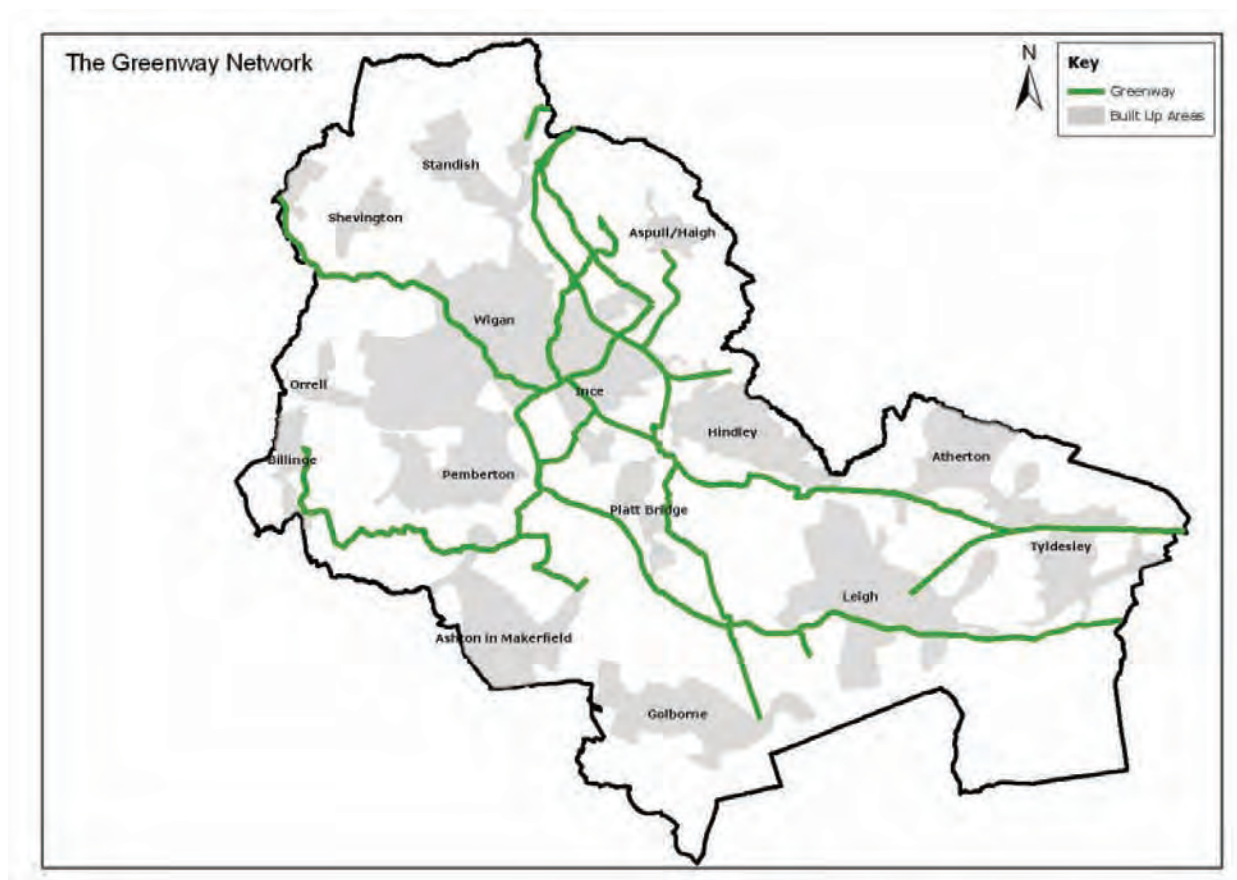
### Strategic landscape and green infrastructure

**3.86** The borough's strategic landscape and green infrastructure consists of:

- 3 principal parks and 15 township parks.
- 48 sites classified as allotments in Wigan covering just over 34 hectares. Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust currently manage 12 statutory allotment sites with 376 plots. A further 36 non-statutory allotment sites with 238 plots are currently managed by the council.
- 651 Tree Preservation Orders

**3.87** Public rights of way and bridleways are audited in Topic Paper 8 'Accessibility'. Parks, allotments and gardens are all audited in Topic Paper 1 'Health and Recreation'.

**3.88** The greenway network, which comprises of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways as well as river and canal corridors, is an important part of Wigan's green infrastructure. These are shown on Map 3.9:



Map 3.9 Wigan Greenway Network (Wigan Council)

## Greenheart

**3.89** The Greenheart area covers approximately 57 square kilometres at the heart of Wigan's former coalfield area, approximately 40% of which is publicly owned. The vision is to create a countryside park and form a linked-up network of open space, sport and recreation facilities, which encourages residents to make better use of the countryside on their doorstep. It is bordered by Wigan, Ince, Aspull, Hindley, Leigh, Lowton, Golborne and Ashton-in-Makerfield with the communities of PlattBridge, Bickershaw and Abram within.

**3.90** The key sites within Greenheart are Haigh Hall, Wigan Flashes, Amberswood, Three Sisters, Bickershaw and Pennington Flash. By 2012 there will be approximately 19.5km of improved towpath surfaces within the area. This will provide a continuous, good quality towpath surface between Marsland Green, Leigh to Top Lock and Robin Park in Wigan.

## Heritage assets

**3.91** Heritage assets in the borough include:

- 606 listed buildings, including one grade I (The Church of St. Wilfrid, Standish), 40 grade II\* and 565 grade II. 5 grade II\* buildings are classified as 'at risk' on the national register and an additional 40 grade II buildings are on the local 'at risk' register. Lack of maintenance is an issue for a number of listed buildings.
- 12 scheduled ancient monuments, one of which is classified as 'at risk'.
- 1 nationally registered historic park (Mesnes Park).
- 18 local historic parks, gardens and cemeteries.
- 23 Conservation Areas covering a variety of urban, suburban, industrial and rural settings. One Conservation Area is at present classified as 'at risk' on the national register, as it is considered to be deteriorating due to poor maintenance. Lack of maintenance is an issue in a number of Conservation Areas.
- buildings of local interest, which currently do not benefit from protection.