

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 policies CP8, CP9, CP10 and CP11 and by the built environment and landscape elements of policies SP1, SP3 and SP4.

Message	Source documents
The amount of derelict land has reduced in the borough but a significant amount remains (Wigan has the most sites/ area of land in Greater Manchester).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wigan Derelict Land Survey (2005) Wigan Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2005) Greater Manchester Derelict Land Strategy (2002)
There is a need to identify potential sites in the borough that would be suitable for renewable energy production. If sites are identified it is likely that there will be landscape impacts which need to be managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North West Sustainable Energy Strategy (2006)
There is a need to improve the quality of the built environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005) Taking SHAPE for the future: 2006-2012 By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice (2001)
Active management of the Region's historic, environmental and cultural assets is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010) North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)

Message	Source documents
An urban renaissance is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008) ● By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice (2001)
Multi-functional networks of green spaces are needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008) ● Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities (2003)
We need to conserve and enhance the historic environment; support conservation-led regeneration in areas rich in historic interest, and in particular exploit areas with potential for regeneration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010) ● North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)
Local authorities and local communities must identify, protect and raise the profile of their local heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● White Paper: Heritage Protection for the 21st Century (2007) ● Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010)
To improve our streets by reducing clutter, coordinating design and reinforcing local character, whilst maintaining safety for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Streets for All North West – a regional English Heritage guide to the management of streets and public open spaces (2005)
The general extent of the Green Belt should be maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts (1995) ● North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)

Message	Source documents
Benefit of natural greenspace for climate change mitigation and adaptation through natural drainage, air quality and moderating urban micro climates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities (2003)• Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester (2008)

FIVE

Main spatial planning issues identified

5.1 Set out below are the issues relating to built environment and landscapes 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 BEL 1

Most of the open land between urban areas in the borough is Green Belt and protected from development. In a number of locations between urban areas and the Green Belt there is land safeguarded for potential future development.

Issue BEL 2

There has been a significant legacy of derelict land in the borough but most has been reclaimed and improved. A significant amount remains but this is largely concentrated at 2 large sites in Leigh, which are priorities for reclamation. Reclaiming derelict, underused or neglected land as green infrastructure can have beneficial implications on the health and social well being of local people, particularly those living in deprived communities.

Issue BEL 3

The landscape character of the borough has been disfigured by coal mining and other industrial activity, particularly in the inner areas around Ince, Hindley, Leigh, Golborne and Astley. Most has been restored by reclamation work but the landscape is still relatively immature. Extensive areas contain semi-mature woodlands and underused and neglected land typical of a degraded and partially restored landscape. This has a significant impact on the image of the borough.

Issue BEL 4

Half of the people in the borough live within a short walking distance of countryside and open land but, although convenient for many, it is underutilised for informal recreation.

Issue BEL 5

Many of our built environments are car orientated, which means many of our local communities suffer from the impacts associated with traffic-dominated streets and spaces. Many of our public spaces are cluttered and difficult for people to navigate, which has particularly undermined the character of listed buildings and conservation areas and the appearance of spaces used as meeting places. Some developments fail to ensure that all people, including those with disabilities, can easily and comfortably move into and through places.

Issue BEL 6

Although there are a limited number of fine architectural buildings in the borough, there are many buildings that are valued by local people and contribute to local distinctiveness. Modern development is often of a standard type found across the country that fails to create a unique 'sense of place'. It is vital that we encourage sympathetic design if we are to retain the special character and distinctiveness of our localities.

Issue BEL 7

The borough's listed buildings contribute positively to the historic environment, but some of these heritage assets are in a state of disrepair through lack of maintenance and neglect.

SIX

Main infrastructure issues identified

6.1 The infrastructure audit in Chapter 3 sets out the current position in the borough. A number of key gaps in provision can be identified:

Issue BEL 8

Some of the borough's listed building stock is still either underused or under threat from demolition, there are also 5 listed buildings classified as being 'at risk' on the national register and around 40 'at risk' on the local register.

Issue BEL 9

A number of buildings and structures of local interest do not benefit from protection from national legislation and currently do not benefit from identification under local policy.

Issue BEL 10

Some Conservation Areas are at risk due to poor maintenance, which may alter a locality's sense of place.

Issue BEL 11

Half of the people in the borough live within a short walking distance of countryside and open land but, although convenient for many, it is underutilised for informal recreation.

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 BEL 12

The amount of derelict land in the borough has reduced but still remains significant.

Issue BEL 13

It is imperative that we respond and plan for climate change by ensuring sustainable drainage, design and construction in all developments.

Issue BEL 14

The quality and character of landscapes, townscapes and buildings needs to be preserved and enhanced.

EIGHT

Our sustainability framework

Sustainability Objectives and Criteria

8.1 The following sustainability objectives and appraisal criteria 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 the Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Development Plan Documents (Department of Local Communities and Government, 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. Objectives 5 and 6 specifically relate to built environment and landscapes.

Sustainability objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-questions
Objective 5. To preserve and enhance the borough's landscapes, countryside, green and open spaces.	Will it ensure the efficient use and re-use of land and buildings? (Leading to a net reduction in the amount of derelict land)
	Will it conserve and enhance the countryside, green and open spaces, making the borough a more attractive place to live, visit and do business?
	Will it reduce the pressure for inappropriate new development in the countryside? (renewable energy schemes should be given greater leniency)
	Will it maintain and enhance landscape quality and distinctiveness?

Sustainability objective	Appraisal criteria / sub-questions
	(Consider geodiversity, visual amenity etc...)

Sustainability objective	Appraisal criteria / Sub-questions
<p>Objective 6.</p> <p>To ensure high quality, sustainable design, whilst respecting, enhancing and capitalising on the boroughs historic environment.</p>	<p>Will it protect and enhance sites, buildings, features and areas of historical, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas?</p> <p>Will it be based on high-quality design that respects local character and enhances local distinctiveness?</p> <p>Will it utilise the borough's built heritage as an asset, contributing to a positive image of the borough as an attractive place to live, visit and do business? (For example Conservation-led regeneration opportunities, heritage based tourism, traditional building skills and the wider environmental economy)</p> <p>Will it ensure high quality and sustainable design - taking account of the likely impacts of climate change over the lifetime of buildings / open spaces? (such as exaggerated heat island, flood risk, other weather extremes)</p>

Baseline position

Indicators / monitoring data - Sustainability Objective 4: To maintain and enhance the character and quality of the Borough's landscapes, countryside, green and open spaces.

Indicator	Wigan Baseline	Wigan Trends	Relevant Targets	comparisons	Issues/ Comments
Hectares of derelict land reclaimed	2006 total = 442 hectares 2010 total = 383ha	There has been a decrease in derelict land of 170 hectares from (1998-2010)	367 hectares of derelict land remaining following reclamation of 16 hectares at Bickershaw South by summer 2011	Not available	There has been a net reduction in derelict land in the borough since 1998.
Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land.	471 new or converted dwellings which is 91% of all dwellings built. (2009-2010)	Increase since 2004 (65%) 2005 - 2006 (88%) 2006-2007 (97%)	2006 - 70% 2009 - 80%	England = 77%	Wigan performed worse than England in 2004 and 2005. However, the percentage of new and converted dwellings completed on previously

Indicator	Wigan Baseline	Wigan Trends	Relevant Targets	comparisons	Issues/Comments
Number of appeals allowed against refusal of development in a) greenbelt b) safeguarded land.	a) one b) nil (2009-2010)	a) one b) nil (2005 - 2006)	Nil	Not available	developed land has continued to exceed the target. There have been 3 appeals against refusal on Green Belt grounds 1 of which was allowed and 2 were dismissed.
Planning approvals on grade 1,2, or 3A agricultural land	23 approvals (2009-2010)	33 approvals (2004 - 2005)	No approvals	Not available	Many of these approvals were for development in already established developed areas and for minor domestic extensions to existing houses in residential areas.

Indicator	Wigan Baseline	Wigan Trends	Relevant Targets	comparisons	Issues/ Comments
					Others were for agricultural use itself.

Indicators / monitoring data – Sustainability objective 5: To ensure high quality, sustainable design; whilst respecting, enhancing and capitalising on the boroughs historic environment.

Indicator	Wigan Baseline	Wigan Trends	Relevant Target	Comparisons	Issues/ Comments
% of listed buildings / features at risk (Grade 1 and 2*)	0.83% (2009-2010) 5 buildings currently identified at risk: Haigh Hall Leigh Spinners Mill Gateway and lodges to Haigh Hall Park Winstanley Hall and Barn, Stable & Gateways to east of the hall		Eventually remove all of the buildings at risk from the register.	England = 3.4%	Less buildings at risk compared to previous survey in 2001.

Indicator	Wigan Baseline	Wigan Trends	Relevant Target	Comparisons	Issues/Comments
Demolition or significant detrimental change to buildings in conservation areas.	2 buildings (2009 - 2010)	4 buildings (2005 - 2006)	For no damage to occur or demolition of these buildings.	Not available	In all cases, the demolition was in line with policy and was judged to produce an overall gain to the local environment.

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 policies in the Core Strategy that this topic paper serves are policies SP5, CP8, CP9, CP10 and CP11. The purpose of this section is to show that we have produced our Core Strategy in line with legal requirements and these 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 policies SP5, CP8, CP9, CP10 and CP11 against these 4 legal requirements and the tests of soundness.

Policy SP5 Greenheart

Community and stakeholder involvement

9.6 The community and key stakeholders including Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, Red Rose Forest, and Lancashire Wildlife Trust 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 SP5 and other policies where appropriate. Policy SP5 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 the Consultation Reports.

Subject to Sustainability Appraisal

9.7 Policy SP5 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 the Greenheart area and key stakeholders were involved, including Forestry Commission, Natural England, and the Environment Agency. 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 SP5 is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy as set out below:

- It promotes sustainable communities in accordance with policy DP2 by seeking to improve the natural environment and create a better setting for new development contributing to higher quality of life.
- It promotes environmental quality in accordance with policy DP7 by protecting and enhancing landscape character and bringing derelict land back into use.
- It promotes walking and cycling in accordance with policy RT9 by working in partnership to improve walking and cycling links between communities, employment and other services.
- It aids the integrated enhancement and protection of the regions environmental assets in accordance with policy EM1, by conserving and enhancing important environmental areas and features.
- It promotes the protection, maintenance and enhancement of landscape features in accordance with policy EM1(A) Landscape.
- It promotes the natural environment in accordance with policy EM1(B) Natural Environment by increasing biodiversity resources.
- It promotes the remediation of contaminated land in accordance with policy EM2 through the continued regeneration of derelict and despoiled land.
- It promotes the wider spatial outcomes delivered by Green Infrastructure in accordance with policy EM3 by improving the links between communities and Greenheart enabling people to live healthier lives.

Regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy

9.9 Our sustainable community strategy 'Vision 2026' was produced in 2008 in line with the Core Strategy timeframe. It identifies four priority areas and this policy is in line with 2 of them:

- Ambitious Communities - policy SP5 will improve the image of the Borough and protect the environment for future generations.
- Living Healthier and Longer- policy SP5 will deliver Greenheart as a high quality countryside park, enabling people to live healthier lives.

Founded on robust and credible evidence

9.10 Policy SP5 is founded on robust and credible evidence as shown in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this topic paper. This is backed up further by the separate 'Built Environment and Landscapes' evidence review document. The key sources of evidence which support policy SP5 are the Landscape Character Assessment, Biodiversity/Ecology Study, the Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Project and the Greenheart Vision and Action Plan.

The most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternatives

9.11 The alternatives would be not to provide the policy framework to develop 'Greenheart' at the core of the borough, and deliver the multiple benefits associated with it, through the development of Greenheart as a high quality countryside park in accordance with the Greenheart Vision and Action Plans. Therefore our approach is deemed the most appropriate strategy in the context of the significant reviewed evidence, consultation and future challenges such as climate change.

Deliverable

9.12 The key messages identified in section 4 of this document indicate what needs to be addressed in the borough with regards to built environment and landscapes.

9.13 To address these messages and deliver change and improvement in the borough, policy SP5 has indicated a key delivery item. This is developing the Greenheart of the borough as a high quality countryside park.

9.14 In addition to Wigan Council, a number of organisations including Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Red Rose Forest will play a crucial role in the delivery of this policy. The support of these organisations is demonstrated in the Consultation Reports that accompany the Core Strategy.

9.15 Neighbouring authorities have been involved at all stages of the policy's preparation. No representations have been received from neighbouring authorities relating to policy SP5 indicating that the policy is coherent with their Core Strategies.

Flexible

9.16 Policy SP5 establishes a focus on the development of the core of the borough as a high quality countryside park that will help improve the image of the borough, therefore supporting regeneration whilst also encouraging healthier lifestyles. The strategic nature of the policy provides for the protection and enhancement of the environment in the core area of the borough enabling Greenheart and the borough to adapt to future changes during the plan period.

Able to be monitored

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

- Developing Greenheart as a high quality countryside park

Consistent with national policy

9.18 Policy SP5 is consistent with national policy with regards to the key documents reviewed-

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
- Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)
- Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005)
- Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (2011)
- Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (1991)

Policy CP8 Green Belt and safeguarded land

Community and stakeholder involvement

9.19 The community and key stakeholders including developers and the general public 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 CP8 and other policies where appropriate. Policy CP8 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 the Consultation Reports.

Subject to Sustainability Appraisal

9.20 Policy CP8 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 Green Belt and safeguarded land and key stakeholders were involved. 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

9.21 Policy CP8 is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy as set out below:

- It maintains the general extent of the Green Belt in accordance with policy RDF4.
- Although it promotes a local detailed boundary change in the Green Belt, at the M6 motorway south of Wigan, this is justified by the existence of exceptional circumstances which will be examined by an independent inspector at examination-in-public once the Core Strategy has been submitted to the Secretary of State.

Regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy

9.22 Our sustainable community strategy 'Vision 2026' was produced in 2008 in line with the Core Strategy timeframe. It identifies four priority areas and this policy is in line with two of them:

- Ambitious Communities - policy CP8 will protect the environment for future generations, creating more sustainable communities.
- Living Healthier and Longer - policy CP8 will help people to live healthier lives.

Founded on robust and credible evidence

9.23 Policy CP8 is founded on robust and credible evidence as shown in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this topic paper. This is backed up further by the separate 'Built Environment and Landscapes' evidence review document. The key source of evidence which supports policy CP8 is Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts.

The most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternatives

9.24 The alternative would be not to provide the policy framework to protect Green Belt in the borough. This would be contrary to national and regional policy. Therefore our approach is deemed the most appropriate strategy in the context of the significant reviewed evidence, consultation and future challenges such as climate change.

Deliverable

9.25 The key messages identified in section 4 of this document indicate what needs to be addressed in the borough with regards to built environment and landscapes.

9.26 To address these messages and deliver change and improvement in the borough, policy CP8 has indicated a set of key delivery items. These include: maintaining the Green Belt, defining new major existing developed sites in the Green Belt and identifying and defining safeguarded land.

9.27 In addition to Wigan Council, a number of organisations including developers and the general public will play a crucial role in the delivery of this policy.

9.28 Neighbouring authorities have been involved at all stages of the policy's preparation. No representations have been received from neighbouring authorities relating to policy CP8 indicating that this policy is coherent with their Core Strategies.

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

Flexible

9.30 Policy CP8 establishes a focus on how we will maintain the Green Belt whilst permitting the appropriate sorts of development to take place.

Able to be monitored

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

- Percentage of appeals allowed against development in the Green Belt.

Consistent with national policy

9.32 CP8 is consistent with national policy with regards to the key documents reviewed:

- Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts

Policy CP9 Strategic landscape and green infrastructure

Community and stakeholder involvement

9.33 The community and key stakeholders including the Environment Agency, Natural England and Red Rose Forest 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 CP9 and other policies where appropriate. Policy CP9 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 the Consultation Reports.

Subject to Sustainability Appraisal

9.34 Policy CP9 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 strategic landscapes matters and green infrastructure and key stakeholders were involved, including Environment Agency, Natural England and Red Rose Forest. 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

9.35 Policy CP9 is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy as set out below:

- It promotes environmental quality in accordance with policy DP7 by ensuring the protection and enhancement of the environment and local character, including landscape and Green Infrastructure.
- It promotes the importance of landscape in accordance with policy EM1(A) Landscape by protecting, enhancing and maintaining distinctive landscape features.
- It promotes protection and enhancement of the natural environment in accordance with policy EM1(B) Natural Environment by setting the framework to manage Green Infrastructure as a single high quality network.
- It promotes the regeneration of derelict land in accordance with policy EM2 Remediating Contaminated Land by continuing to restore despoiled land in order to protect and enhance landscape character.
- It promotes the wider spatial outcomes of Green Infrastructure in accordance with policy EM3 Green Infrastructure by setting the framework to manage Green Infrastructure as a single high quality network.

Regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy

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

- Ambitious Communities - policy CP9 will improve the image of the Borough and protect the environment for future generations, creating more sustainable communities.
- Living Healthier and Longer - policy CP9 will develop the management of Green Infrastructure as a high quality multi functional network enabling people to live healthier lives.

Founded on robust and credible evidence

9.37 Policy CP9 is founded on robust and credible evidence as shown in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this topic paper. This is backed up further by the separate Built Environment and Landscapes' evidence review document. The key sources of evidence which support

policy CP9 are the Landscape Character Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Biodiversity/Ecology Study, the Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Project, Greenheart Vision and Action Plan and the Mosslands Vision.

The most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternatives

9.38 The alternatives would be not to provide the policy framework to protect and enhance landscapes and green infrastructure in the borough, this would make it more difficult to deliver the multiple benefits that it is known a well managed and planned green Infrastructure network can achieve. Therefore our approach is deemed the most appropriate strategy in the context of the significant reviewed evidence, consultation and future challenges such as climate change.

Deliverable

9.39 The key messages identified in section 4 of this document indicate what needs to be addressed in the borough with regards to built environment and landscapes.

9.40 To address these messages and deliver change and improvement in the borough, policy CP9 has indicated a set of key delivery items. These include: strengthening landscape character; delivering and managing green infrastructure; and identifying green areas to store flood water.

9.41 In addition to Wigan Council, a number of organisations including Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, Forestry Commission and Red Rose Forest will play a crucial role in the delivery of this policy. The support of these organisations is demonstrated in the Consultation Reports that accompany the Core Strategy.

9.42 Neighbouring authorities have been involved at all stages of the policy's preparation. No representations have been received from neighbouring authorities relating to policy CP9 indicating that this policy is coherent with their Core Strategies.

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

Flexible

9.44 Policy CP9 establishes a focus on how we will strategically improve the natural environment and open spaces throughout the borough for the benefit of people and wildlife. The strategic nature of the policy provides direction to how landscapes and Green Infrastructure will be planned and managed in the future as a network allowing it to react to future changes and challenges.

Able to be monitored

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

- Developing and managing Green Infrastructure

Consistent with national policy

9.46 Policy CP9 is consistent with national policy with regards to the key documents reviewed:

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
- Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)
- Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005)
- Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open space, Sport and Recreation (1991)

Policy CP10 Design

Community and stakeholder involvement

9.47 The community and key stakeholders, including Places Matter! and English Heritage, 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 CP10 and other policies where appropriate. Policy CP10 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 the Consultation Reports.

Subject to Sustainability Appraisal

9.48 Policy CP10 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 energy efficiency and design and key stakeholders were involved, including Places Matter! and English Heritage. 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

9.49 Policy CP10 is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy as set out below:

- It seeks to create better places which help build communities where people want to live, work and play in line with policy DP2 Sustainable Communities.
- In line with policy DP7, it promotes environmental quality by understanding and respecting the character and distinctiveness of a locality and by promoting good design quality in new development.
- It seeks development to minimise the impact of and adapt to climate change as well as conserve natural resources in accordance with policies DP9, EM16, EM17 and EM18.
- In accordance with policy L4, it seeks to achieve a sustainable housing mix that satisfies the latest national guidance for design and sustainability.
- It encourages the creation of attractive and safe environments which encourage modes of sustainable travel rather than car use in line with policies DP5, RT2 and RT9.

Regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy

9.50 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 CP10 is in line with three of them:

- Ambitious communities - policy CP10 ensures built environments have the necessary robustness to enable local communities to accommodate a mix of people, uses and meanings.
- Living healthier and longer- policy CP10 aims to create built environments that encourage people to adopt a more active lifestyle.
- Strong community - policy CP10 promotes built environments that foster social cohesion.

Founded on robust and credible evidence

9.51 Policy CP10 is founded on robust and credible evidence as shown in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this topic paper. This is backed up further by the separate 'Built Environment and Landscapes' evidence review document. The key sources of evidence which support policy CP10 are:

- By Design: Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice
- Better places to live by design
- Building for Life
- Manual for Streets.

The most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternatives

9.52 The alternative would not be to provide a policy framework for design. This is not a sustainable approach, as it would result in development being primarily designed in response to market forces and not fully considering the needs of the community and the local environment. Therefore, a policy framework for design would encourage development to take a more balanced approach, which is deemed as appropriate in context of the significant reviewed evidence, consultation and current economic climate.

Deliverable

9.53 The key messages brought out in chapter 4 of this document indicates what needs to be addressed in the Borough with regards to design quality.

9.54 To address these messages and deliver change and improvement in the borough, a delivery table in policy CP10 has indicated that a Design Quality Supplementary Planning Document will be developed.

9.55 In addition to Wigan Council, a number of organisations including Places Matter! and English Heritage will play a crucial role in the delivery of this policy. The support of these organisations is demonstrated in the Consultation Reports that accompany the Core Strategy.

9.56 Neighbouring authorities have been involved at all stages of the policy's preparation. No representations have been received from neighbouring authorities relating to policy CP10 indicating that this policy is coherent with their Core Strategies.

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

Flexible

9.58 Policy CP10 provides a policy direction that encourages the design of new development that acknowledge an area's local distinctiveness and that meets the latest national design criteria. To ensure that policy CP10 does not become dated and allows for new development to be designed in accordance with the latest design thinking, no specific design guidance has therefore been referred to in the policy. This will ensure that to the best of the councils knowledge new development will always be designed to help make and shape better places to live, visit and for businesses to locate and thrive.

Able to be monitored

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

- % of built developments performing well against policy requirements
- % of new developments built to a 'very good' standard against the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment Building for Life Assessment
- % of homes that attain Code for Sustainable Homes levels 3, 4, 5 and 6

Consistent with national policy

9.60 Policy CP10 is consistent with national policy with regards to the key documents reviews:

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
- Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2006)

- Planning Policy Statement 4: Delivering Sustainable Development (2009)
- Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)
- Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (2001)
- Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (1991)

Policy CP11 Historic environment

Community and stakeholder involvement

9.61 The Community and key stakeholders, including English Heritage, Wigan Civic Trust and Wigan Heritage and Environment Network have all been involved at each stage of the Core Strategy's preparation. Their views and comments have been considered and help shape the content and direction of policy CP11. Policy CP11, 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 the Consultation Reports.

Subject to Sustainability Appraisal

9.62 Policy CP11 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 re-using building stock, maintaining and enhancing character, buildings at risk, and protecting and conserving heritage assets, including, listed buildings, conservation areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and key stakeholders were involved, including English Heritage, Wigan Civic Trust, and Wigan Heritage and Environment Network. 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

9.63 Policy CP11 broadly conforms with Regional Spatial Strategy Policy EM1(C) 'Historic Environment', which seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment, within the north west. Within Policy EM1, the focus is to foster the regeneration potential of the wide variety of the different types of heritage within the major centres of Liverpool and Manchester, the outer-lying smaller Pennine towns in East Lancashire and mill towns of East Cheshire, together with the traditional rural villages and market towns and the historic cities of Carlisle, Chester and Lancaster, and the Lake District Landscape. The Regional Spatial Strategy Policy highlights the diverse and special historic character of the north-west region. Policy CP11 is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy as set out below:

- It promotes sustainable economic growth by the regeneration of town centres through the re-use and adaptation of historic buildings in accordance with Policy EM1(C)
- It promotes sustainable communities by protection and conservation of heritage assets for present and future generations to enjoy in accordance with Policy EM1(C)

Regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy

9.64 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 CP11 is in line with three of them:

- Ambitious communities - Protecting our historic environment for future generations to enjoy is fundamental to policy CP11. The historic environment is a resource which can be accessed by all and provides an attractive and interesting environment, which offers a range of opportunities for the wider community to enjoy.

- Living healthier and longer - The historic environment presents a diverse landscape, which offers opportunities for recreational, educational and leisure activities. These resources are accessible to all and provide people with a wide choice of recreational pastimes, which can lead to healthier and more active lifestyles.
- Strong community - Public participation and involvement is a fundamental part of the planning process and opportunities for people to get involved in shaping their environment for the future can be seen through active consultation in Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

9.65 Policy CP11 sets out the objectives to protect and enhance the historic environment in Wigan Borough and ensure that heritage assets are conserved for the present, and enjoyed by future generations to come.

Founded on robust and credible evidence

9.66 Policy CP11 is founded on robust and credible evidence as shown in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this topic paper. This is backed up further by the separate 'Built Environment and Landscapes' evidence review document. The key sources of evidence that support policy CP11 are the White Paper: 'Heritage Protection for the 21st Century' and Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment' together with its practice guide.

The most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternatives

9.67 The alternative would be not to provide the policy framework to protect, conserve and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets. Failure to protect the historic environment and heritage assets would result in the loss of important buildings, structures and features, which provide an insight into the past, provides local identity and gives a clear indication of how the borough was shaped and developed over the years. Therefore, our approach is considered the most appropriate strategy in the context of the significant reviewed evidence, consultation and current economic climate.

Deliverable

9.68 The key messages brought out in section 4 of this document indicate the issues which need to be addressed in the borough with regards to the historic environment. These specifically relate to the need to improve the quality of the built environment through

good design, conserve and enhance the historic environment through the protection of heritage assets and look towards opportunities to exploit conservation-led regeneration in areas rich in historic interest.

9.69 To address these messages and deliver opportunities and improvements in the borough, policy CP11 has outlined a set of key delivery mechanisms:

- Conserving, protecting and enhancing our heritage assets through survey work, conservation area appraisals, supplementary planning guidance and planning applications
- Encouraging the sympathetic and appropriate re-use of buildings, including buildings at risk, in line with statutory and development management processes
- Promoting the value of our historic environment, in line with statutory processes and through supplementary planning documents
- Undertaking a historic landscape character assessment
- Preparing a historic environment supplementary planning document

9.70 It is recognised that the suite of development plan documents to be produced, together with the monitoring of heritage assets, such heritage at risk, and a review of conservation areas will help ensure policy CP11 is deliverable and accountable as a driver to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment, identifying opportunities for heritage-led regeneration and opportunities for the appropriate re-use and sensitive adaptation of historic buildings.

9.71 In addition to Wigan Council, a number of organisations, including English Heritage, Wigan Civic Trust and Wigan Heritage and Environment Network will play a crucial role in the delivery of this policy.

9.72 Neighbouring authorities have been involved at all stages of the policy's preparation. No representations have been received from neighbouring authorities relating to policy CP11 indicating that these policies are coherent with their Core Strategies.

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

Flexible

9.74 This is a critical issue for the Core Strategy which should last 10 years and not easily become out-of-date as a result of change, such as the economic change of recent years. While giving direction it should still remain relevant. In the case of the 'Historic Environment', the strategic nature of policy CP11 in setting the framework for protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic environment, together with the desire to exploit conservation-led regeneration and address our heritage at risk, should enable the Core Strategy to adapt to any changes over time.

9.75 The flexibility of policy CP11 can be demonstrated by the fact it encourages the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and range of statutorily designated or undesignated heritage assets. The Policy also seeks to make the best and most appropriate use of historic buildings, including buildings at risk, so that they continue to make a positive contribution to the special character of the locality, to be enjoyed now and by future generations. This will help to encourage sustainable development and promote the heritage offer.

9.76 With regards to promoting the value of the historic environment, opportunities will be sought to improve signage, interpretation and the use of public art to further reveal the significance of heritage assets.

Able to be monitored

9.77 The means for monitoring this policy are set out in chapter 10 in the Draft Core Strategy: Proposed Submission Version. The monitoring specifically relates to the following measurable indicators:

- Heritage Assets at Risk (this includes both designated assets, such as listed buildings, conservation areas, etc, and undesignated assets, such as locally listed buildings and structures).

Consistent with national policy

9.78 Policy CP11 is consistent with national policy and other policies set out in the Core Strategy, specifically:

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- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2009)
 - Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005).

TEN

Next steps

10.1 This is the final version of the topic paper summarising and analysing evidence on built environment and landscapes 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.



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WIGAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY

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Health and recreation Final Topic Paper 1

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Core Strategy
Submission Version



Places Directorate
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