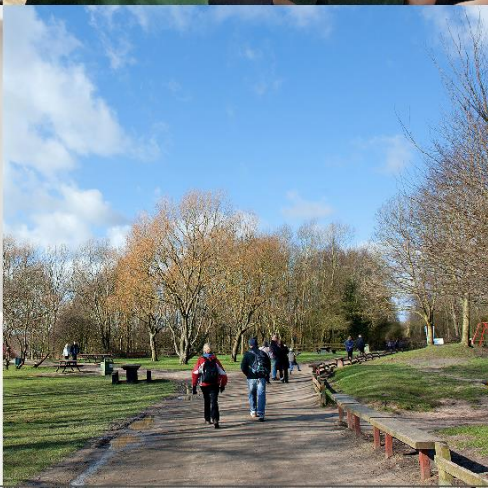




Wigan Council



# Progress with Unity Health and Wellbeing



Public Health Annual Report 2023 - 2024



# Back to the Future

2024 marks 50 years since our borough formed from our 14 proud towns. Over this time the world around us has drastically changed and there is lots to celebrate and to be proud of.

The health and wellbeing of the population has also changed during this time. In Wigan we have successfully reduced deaths from heart disease, respiratory illness and cancers by acting on the things that cause these illnesses.

These improvements have however been compromised by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, enduring austerity and the difficult financial landscape. As a result not everyone in our borough enjoys the same benefits of health as others.

This means we need to accelerate our efforts to improve health, scale up our commitments to prevention across the whole population and focus on supporting communities where health outcomes are poorer.



# Learning from the Past

During the hundred years before 1974, the advancements in living and working conditions, scientific, and medical developments transformed the health and quality of life of the population including the advent of the NHS which radically enhanced access to preventative health and treatment services for the whole population.

By 1974 people were living longer, and in better health. However new health challenges emerged as technology advanced and society evolved. Conditions such as heart disease and cancer, rather than infectious disease, became more prevalent and the link between health and wealth was increasingly recognised.

In the years that followed there was a focus on reducing individual risk of illness and deaths from respiratory and cardiac conditions and cancer through behaviour change. The social factors such as housing, education and economic conditions, which had proved so transformative in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were also increasingly identified as important factors to improve health.

Image courtesy of Archives: Wigan & Leigh showing two women in the 1890s washing clothes in Wigan





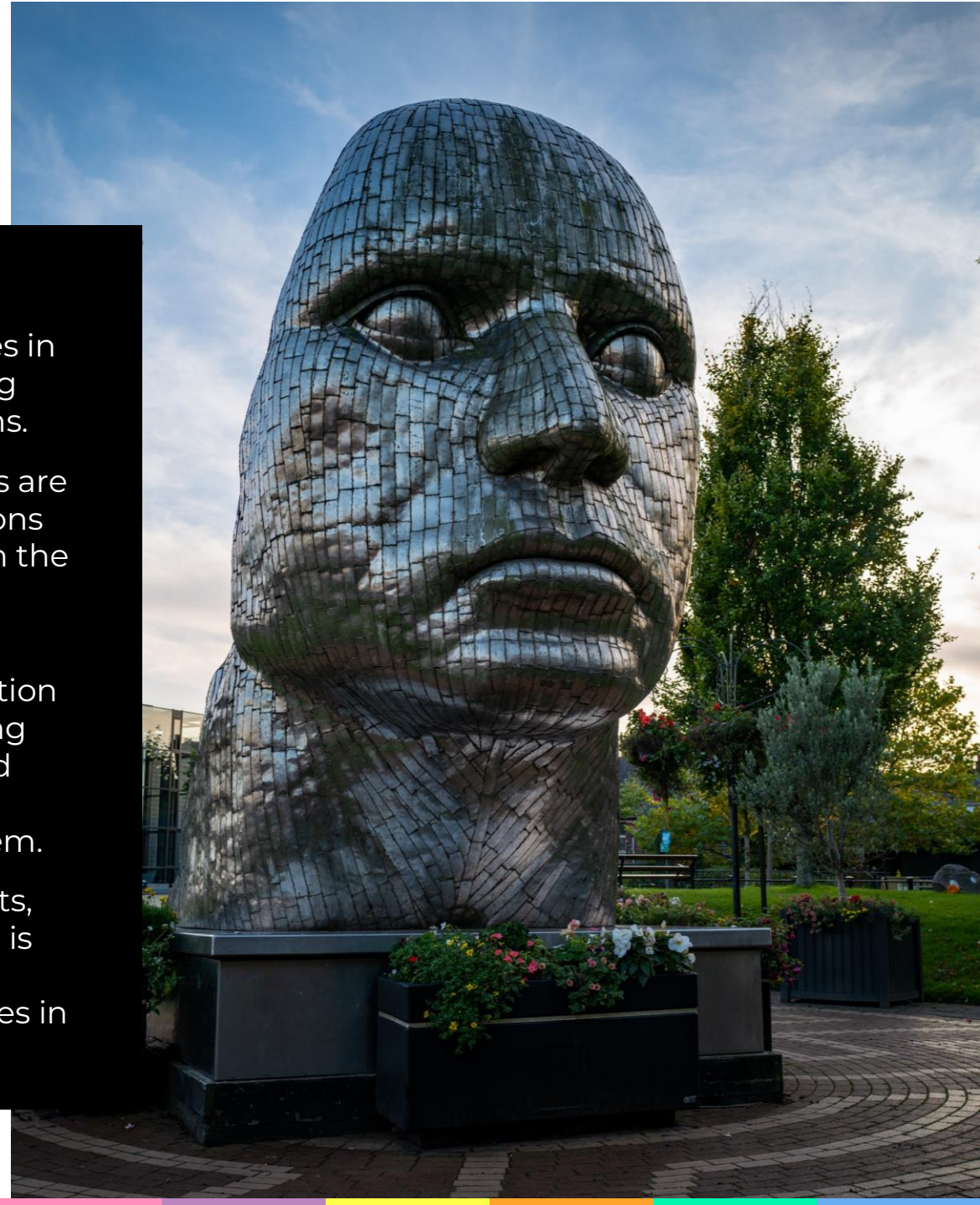
# Looking to the Future

Whilst people live longer now than in 1974 not everyone in our borough experiences health in the same way. These differences in health outcomes have widened over the last 50 years underlining the importance of housing, education and economic conditions.

The recent challenges and opportunities that our communities are living through requires a new response that draws on the lessons from the past to improve social conditions and which builds on the strengths of our borough.

Our greatest asset is our people and the amazing network of communities that make up our borough. Following the disruption of the pandemic we need to refocus our efforts on reconnecting with local people, understanding their contribution, needs and strengths, and foster a culture for health and wellbeing with support and services delivered where people live and want them.

The future affords exciting new technologies and developments, and we need to harness these recognising that our population is changing and diversifying alongside doing the things that we know improve lives especially in communities where differences in health can be most improved.



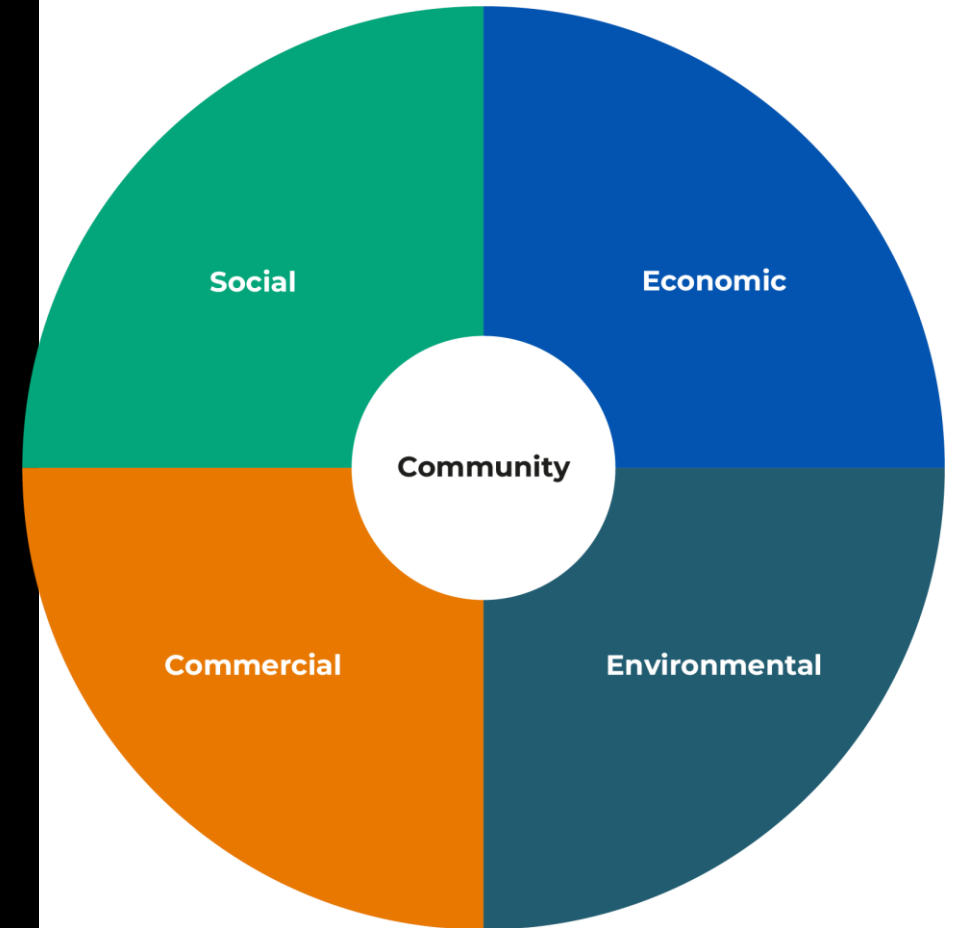
# A New Era for Public Health

Keeping well relies on a connected number of things, from our environment through to our genetics. It's complex and we need everyone working together to respond to the current challenges and opportunities that this brings.

Progress with Unity intends to tackle inequalities and enable our towns and neighbourhoods' to flourish; both of which are critical to improving quality of life for everyone. Our Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy and our Economic Strategy support delivery of these missions.

This is our opportunity to transform health through an integrated approach to the social, economic, commercial and environmental conditions in Wigan and where organisations and communities are deeply connected.

We have so many achievements to be proud of and much more to be hopeful for and ambitious about. As we move into a new era we need health to be everyone's business to support all our residents to live their best life and achieve all that we want as a borough. Enjoying good health and wellbeing is at the heart of this.



# Progress with Unity

Progress with Unity is a new movement for change for the decade ahead which is built around the successes and opportunities for our borough but also the lessons we have learned along the way.

Through conversations we have designed two key missions which we must consider when undergoing any activity for services.



**Wigan**♥  
**Council**

## Mission 1

**Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents & businesses.**

*"Together, we will break down the barriers that create financial, health, education and environmental inequalities in our borough."*

**Health & Wellbeing Strategy**

**Civic University Agreement**

## Mission 2

**Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish for those who live and work in them.**

*"Together, in genuine partnership with our residents and businesses, who know our communities best, we will help each town and neighbourhood in the borough to celebrate and maintain their identity whilst understanding and helping to achieve what is needed to thrive."*

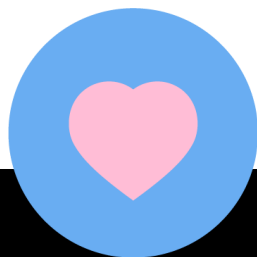
**Economic Strategy**

**Corporate Parenting Strategy**



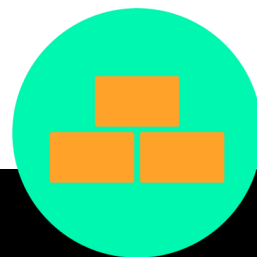
# Recommendations

As we Progress with Unity these recommendations set out to support the work underway and direct the ongoing impact of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy.



## 1. A culture for health and wellbeing

Create a culture of wellbeing working closely with, and for, our communities, investing in our amazing community assets, listen to and involve people in decisions about health creation and deliver services and support in locations and the way that works for people.



## 2. A borough that builds health

To complement our community assets our built and natural environment must support health; responding to the challenges of now and the opportunities of the future in all our communities.



## 3. A place with opportunities for everyone

To target the gap in differences in health outcomes within our borough we must further develop our collective approach to financial inequalities so that all our residents have opportunities and resources that support them to live well.



# 1. A culture for health and wellbeing

In Wigan we have a proud history of strong grass root community organisations, from sporting clubs to those providing care services in local neighbourhoods. These groups are the bedrock of our local communities supporting people to live well.

- We now need to further develop the way all organisations listen to our communities, share what we learn and make sure we use this insight to enhance what we do to respond.
- Work together with community, voluntary and faith organisations to build/develop lasting solutions that reflect and respond to needs in local communities
- Develop ways of working and deliver services close to where people want them and that respond to how people live.
- Utilise and develop technology to support people to stay well in a way that works for them.

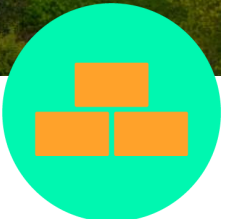
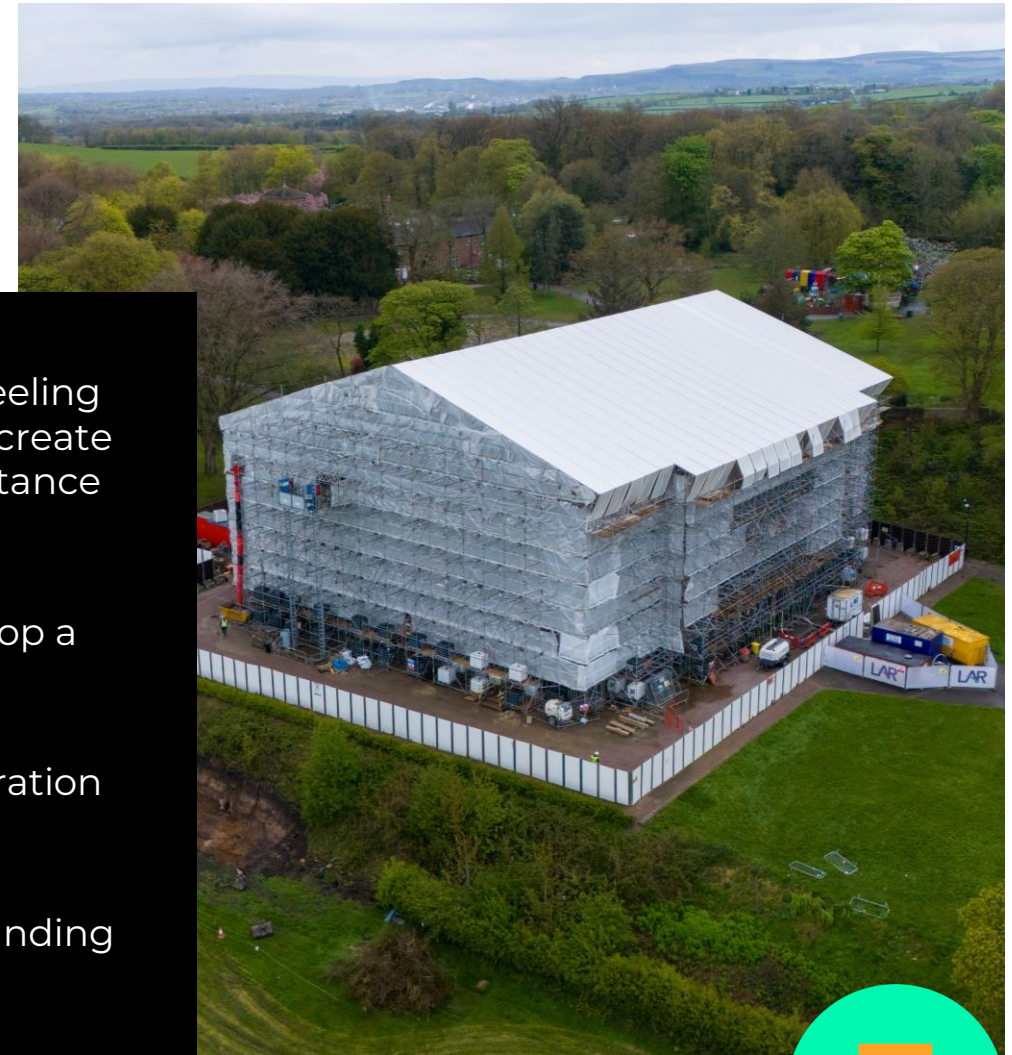




## 2. A borough that builds health

Our surroundings play a key role in shaping health. Good housing, feeling safe, places to have fun and be active as well as access to amenities create the conditions to live well. Progress with Unity underlines the importance of supporting our neighbourhoods to flourish.

- To accelerate improvement in health outcomes we need to develop a whole system and life course approach to housing for health.
- Create conditions that support health by addressing the concentration of health harms and the way that they are promoted.
- Address differences in neighbourhood environments by understanding the built, natural and community assets in each place and opportunities these offer to create and improve health.
- Assess all policies for their impact on health to maximise the enhancing benefits and promote a health first approach.



# 3. A place with opportunities for everyone

Cost of living pressures are the second major health-related emergency in three years. They have the greatest impact on people who are least equipped to deal with financial challenge and extended to those who would normally be able to manage without support. Our Economic Strategy, our work with schools, universities and colleges and our community wealth building programme all contribute to create thriving economic opportunities.

- We can go further by bringing together all our work to tackle financial inequalities in one collective approach to improve health overall and target the gap in health outcomes within our borough.
- Develop approaches that support children and families with readiness for school, work and financial skills for life.
- Match our efforts to support people experiencing financial pressure with our approaches to prevention focusing on communities with lower household incomes.





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