

Volume 2 - A Refreshed Employment and Skills Strategy for Wigan: The Strategic Framework



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1 Introducing the Strategic Framework

Context

- 1.1 In January 2019, Wigan Council commissioned Steer Economic Development (Steer-ED) to develop a new Strategic Framework to drive the delivery of an ambitious Skills and Employability agenda for the borough, supporting economic growth and creating opportunities for Wigan's residents through the Deal. This document sets out that Framework, which is intended to catalyse and guide the work of all stakeholders as they strive to improve opportunities, skills provision, and employability.
- 1.2 The Framework is grounded in evidence, and has been supplemented by extensive partner consultation. It is intended to support the development of the Skills and Employability landscape in Wigan over the next ten years in line with the Deal 2030. It is not a set of rules or regulations, but rather a route map on how we want to proceed. It seeks to provide innovation, certainty, and stability in the things we do to improve Skills and Employability for the benefit of Wigan's residents, businesses, and ultimately, the Borough. Importantly, the Framework has been designed with flexibility at its core, so that we can act dynamically in response to the new challenges that will continue to emerge over the coming years.
- 1.3 The emphasis of the Framework is on identifying what needs to be done to address the challenges Wigan faces within the Skills and Employability landscape. As such it defines the key priorities in this area, while recognising alignment to other related strategies and plans including The Deal 2030, The Economic Vision and the Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework.

The Framework's Architecture

- 1.4 The key components of the Framework are as follows:
 - A **Vision** which describes the long-term intent;
 - Five **Strategic Aims** which, at a strategic level, define those objectives the Framework is seeking to realise;
 - Within each Strategic Aim, a series of **Operational Objectives**, which define the broad areas of practical activity that will be pursued in the Framework's name to achieve the Strategic Aims;
 - Four **Cross-Cutting Themes** running across the Framework, establishing a culture for, and conditioning the achievement and delivery of, the Strategic Aims, Operational Objectives and the actions they stimulate.
- 1.5 The remainder of this Framework document is as follows:
 - Section 2 sets out the strategic context within which **the Framework** will operate;

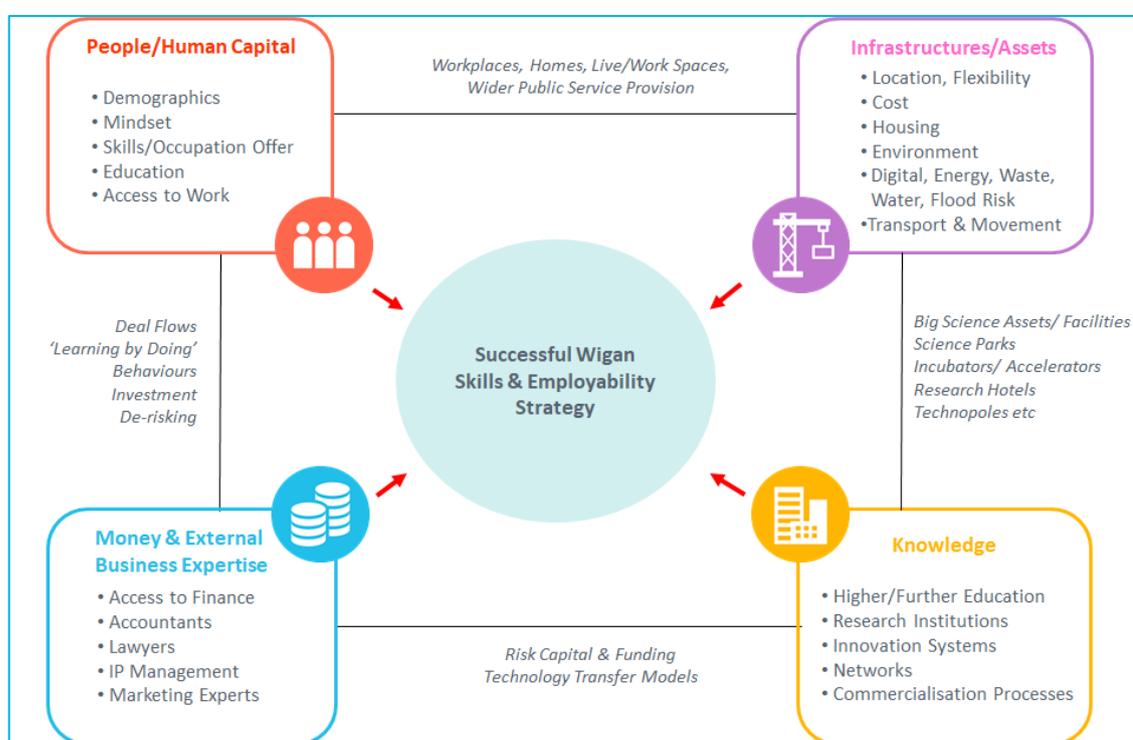
- Section 3 defines the socio-economic, skills and employment challenges that Wigan faces, and which will need to be addressed if Wigan is to prosper economically;
- Section 4 then describes the Vision, and the Strategic Aims, Operational Objectives and Cross-Cutting Themes to deliver this;
- Section 5 sets out the Action Plan and recommended next steps; and
- Section 6 articulates a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to ensure the Strategic Framework remains relevant and up to date

1.6 A detailed **Evidence Base Data Pack** has been also been prepared separately which sets out the evidence from which this Framework has been developed. Further information about this document and the work that underpins it is available, online at **[NBSED TO BE INSERTED ONCE AVAILABLE]**.

2 The Strategic Context

2.1 Although the emphasis of this Framework is on Skills and Employability, it is important to recognise that these domains do not operate in isolation from the wider components of an economic development 'ecosystem'. Accordingly, in preparing the baseline for this Framework, and as background context to the Framework itself, full consideration has been given to those other factors that make for successful place-based economic success. This depiction of factors, and their interrelationships, is summarised in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: The Framework's Overlapping Components

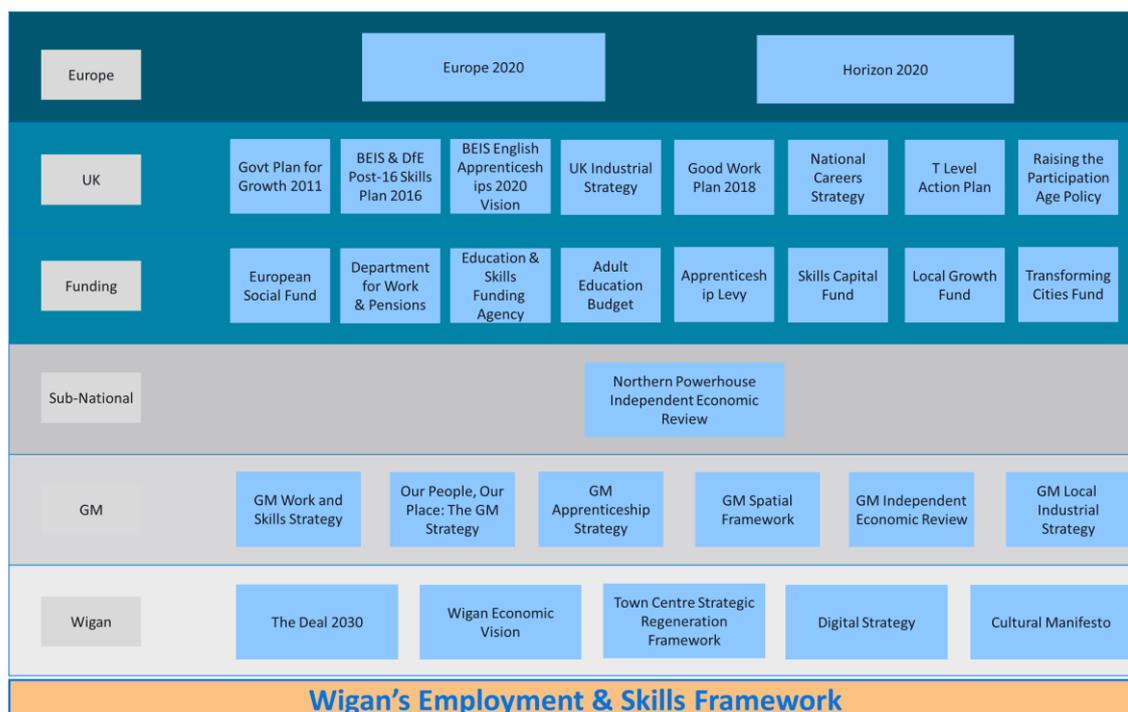


Source: Steer-ED, 2019

2.2 Additionally, the Framework must be progressive and in step with the strategies and activities of other partners, not just in Wigan but also at sub-regional, regional and national level.

2.3 Understanding the strategic positioning of the Framework relative to this existing thinking, is an important influence on the Framework. An overview of the different drivers and layers of Skills and Employability strategy is summarised in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: The Policy Landscape



Source: Steer-ED, 2019

International Drivers

- 2.4 Globalisation continues to happen at pace; trade and other economic processes are increasingly operating at the international scale. Employment opportunities that historically existed locally are moving overseas due to alternative, lower cost locations.
- 2.5 The impact of increased globalisation is that residents in Wigan are in competition for work, not just with others in the local labour force, but with cheaper labour in the East. UK businesses continue to outsource low skilled occupations to overseas functions to reduce the cost base, while high skilled functions are most resilient to increased globalisation. This threatens the sustainability of future employment in Wigan and increases the need for a workforce that is highly skilled and more resilient to global changes.

The European policy environment

- 2.6 At the time of writing, there was much still to be negotiated surrounding future relations between Britain and Europe. Regardless of what these future relations may look like, for several years European Policies have shaped the UK's thinking on skills and influenced the actions we have and will continue to take.
- 2.7 The key strategy piece is Europe 2020 (the ten-year strategy proposed by the European Commission to advance the EU economy). Within this Strategy, two of the five headline targets are directly linked to employment and skills (Box 2-1) and led to a flagship skills initiative. This initiative, *'An agenda for skills and jobs'* has facilitated labour market development and sought to better align the supply of and demand for skills.

Box 2-1: Europe 2020 Targets

- **Raise the employment rate of the population aged 20–64 from the current 69% to at least 75%.**
- Achieve the target of investing 3% of GDP in R&D in particular by improving the conditions for R&D investment by the private sector, and develop a new indicator to track innovation.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels, or by 30% if the conditions are right. Increase the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption to 20%, and achieve a 20% increase in energy efficiency - 20-20-20 target.
- **Reduce the share of early school leavers to 10% from the current 15% and increase the share of the population aged 30–34 having completed tertiary from 31% to at least 40%.**
- Reduce the number of Europeans living below national poverty lines by 25%, lifting 20 million people out of poverty.

The National Policy Environment

The UK Industrial Strategy

2.8 The most prominent policy at present influencing the shape of the National economy is the government’s Industrial Strategy White Paper, published in November 2017. This sets out government’s plan for growth based around five pillars of productivity – ‘the essential attributes of every successful economy’. These are:

- Ideas – the world’s most innovative economy;
- People – good jobs and greater earning power for all;
- Infrastructure – a major upgrade to the UK’s infrastructure;
- Business environment – the best place to start and grow a business;
- Places – prosperous communities across the UK.

2.9 Many of the ambitions set out against these pillars relate to skills and employment, and there is recognition throughout the Strategy of the vital role these factors play ultimately in generating economic success.

“We must help people and business to thrive through skills. Our poor performance in basic and technical skills is key to the UK’s persistently lower levels of productivity compared with other advanced economies”

The Good Work Plan

2.10 The Good Work Plan was published in 2018 as a follow up to the Industrial Strategy and presents the vision for the future of the UK labour market. The vision is to improve quality of work in the UK, rewarding people for their work, celebrating the good employers, boosting productivity and earnings potential, and ensuring workers’ rights.

2.11 Like the Industrial Strategy, the Good Work Plan is a National plan and emphasises the importance of government, businesses, and employers working together to realise the vision. It also underlines the benefits and economic success which can be delivered through a flexible workforce. The Plan considers three key areas:

1. **Fair and decent work**, allowing for flexibility, quality and satisfaction of work which means different things to different people;

2. **Clarity for employers and workers** in terms of employment status, rights and transparency with agency worker contracts and holiday pay;
3. **Fairer enforcement** through the modernisation of the tribunal service.

The National Careers Strategy

- 2.12 The National Careers Strategy, published by the Department for Education in 2017, sets out a more ambitious role for the Careers and Enterprise Company in supporting schools and colleges to meet the Gatsby benchmarks. There is an inclusivity focus to the strategy which wants to ensure that people of all ages have access to careers provision, *'no matter what their background is, to be able to build a rewarding career'*.
- 2.13 The focus of the actions underpinning the strategy is on improving access to information and advice, ensuring everyone is able to understand career opportunities available to them, to make more informed decisions. The improved National Careers Service website is designed with this in mind, and there is commitment from the government to make the destinations and outcomes data more accessible.

Sub-National Policies

Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER)

- 2.14 The NPIER, developed in October 2015, sought to characterise the *'North's economic position and the drivers underpinning its performance'*. It has emphasis on the actions that must be taken to close the Productivity Gap between the North and the rest of the UK.
- 2.15 Skills was identified as a one of the components contributing to the Productivity Gap, articulating a story of low skills across the North. The NPIER identified a need to ensure that the skills levels of the North improves, and to retain and attract more skilled individuals into the North by investing continuously in jobs, infrastructure and innovation, creating an environment where skilled people would want to live and work.

The Greater Manchester Environment

Greater Manchester Work and Skills: Strategy and Priorities 2016-2019

- 2.16 The Work and Skills Strategy was developed to address the importance of integration to Education, Work and Skills in Greater Manchester (GM). In line with National policy, the Strategy is concerned with employers and workers, with a focus on young people and collaboration between businesses, and Education and Training Providers.
- 2.17 The Strategy intends to deliver a work and skills system which meets the needs of both employers and residents. It aims to ensure residents are in a position to achieve their goals through productive, fulfilling employment with the necessary skills for development, and that employers have access to, and ownership of an adaptable, resilient local workforce with the skills needed to thrive now as well as a future pool to draw upon.
- 2.18 Ten priorities underpin the Strategy:
1. **Improving careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG)** to ensure people understand the range of education, training and employment opportunities offered in GM to make informed decisions.
 2. **Reforming the work and skills systems to focus on outcomes not outputs** and ensure people are provided opportunities to gain the technical and soft skills needed for work.
 3. **Developing GM's work and skills infrastructure to meet needs of the economy.**

4. **Improving attainment from compulsory education**, focusing efforts on improving attainment of 5 GCSEs grades A*-C, including English, Maths and STEM subjects.
5. **Strengthening employer engagement** to put employers at the heart of the skills and work system.
6. **Growing the quality and quantity of apprenticeships** and shift the balance of provision towards advanced and higher-level apprenticeships in GM's growth sectors.
7. **Developing high level skills** through working collaboratively with schools and further education and training providers in GM to ensure opportunity to progress to degree level skills and work with GM universities to connect graduates to employment opportunities to retain more graduates in the city region.
8. **Redesigning universal support provision** so those who require the services receive support based on the specific circumstances.
9. **Developing specialist support for hard-to-reach groups** and those who have experienced long periods outside of the labour market.
10. **Ensuring GM commissioned programmes have a skills and work focus** through working with partners to ensure relevant programmes have a strong work and skills component.

Policies in Development

- 2.19 In GM, an Independent Economic Review and Local Industrial Strategy are currently in development. While neither the evidence base or subsequent strategy has been finalised, consultation documentation demonstrates there will be a focus on people and on strengthening the quality of jobs in high employment, low productivity sectors.

Local Strategies

- 2.20 The Strategic Framework must be cognisant of what else is happening locally, where there are overlaps and how it can work alongside existing and planned activity. The most relevant local strategies are discussed below.

The Deal 2030

- 2.21 The Deal 2030 is the Corporate Strategy for Wigan, outlining an agreement, co-designed with residents, community organisations, businesses and public sector bodies, setting out where Wigan should seek to be by 2030. Considerably resident-focussed in its development, it is centred around three key pillars:

- People: 'together we feel happy, safe, included and look out for each other';
- Place: 'together we are proud of our towns and look after our environment'; and
- Future: 'together we will build a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive'.

- 2.22 The Deal 2030 touches on some of the Borough's ambitions for skills and employability, including:

- Supporting young people to gain the skills and experience they need to nurture talent and ambition, delivering economic growth that benefits the whole Borough;
- Encouraging and keeping talent in the Borough;
- Better employment and training opportunities; and
- Ensuring there are a range of employment opportunities for residents.

The Economic Vision for the Borough

2.23 The Economic Vision for the Borough, completed in early 2019, sets out Wigan's economic ambitions and what **will have been achieved by 2030**. In relation to Employment and Skills, by 2030:

- 'Jobs in all sectors have moved rapidly up the scale in both skills and salaries. And we have raised the aspirations and skills of our residents, both old and new, to meet this challenge';
- The influx of a younger demographic looking for a peri-urban experience has boosted levels of diversity in terms of age, ethnicity and demographics... we've created spaces where people can come together to network, enjoy and relax. Each new generation will be our generation *W'*;
- 'From Leigh to Ashton, Standish to Atherton, skills have been enhanced, through quality schooling and access to Further and Higher Education, Gold standard apprenticeships, access to employers and training'; and
- 'We've actively built aspirations with local business owners, given them access to training and development, supported business planning, encouraged networking, helped build the skills of their workforce and created a supportive business ecosystem that means businesses of all sizes can grow and adapt to change'.

Wigan Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework

2.24 The Wigan Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework seeks to provide Wigan Council with an integrated plan, initially for the regeneration of Wigan town centre, followed by plans for additional town centres in the Borough, and the interventions required for transformational change.

2.25 This transformation will, ultimately, create high quality places where people want to live and work. The success of this will complement the successful delivery of the Skills Framework and contribute to the attraction and retention of highly skilled residents and employment opportunities.

2.26 One action of the Wigan Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework is the development of a Boroughwide Skills Strategy, which this document responds to.

3 The Wigan Context

- 3.1 To aid understanding, the development of the Framework has drawn heavily on data which presents us with a view of performance and the ‘starting point’. This section presents the headline findings of that data and articulates some of the key challenges Wigan must seek to address. Data can be accessed in full at this link **[NBSED TO BE INSERTED ONCE AVAILABLE]**.
- 3.2 As the second most populous Local Authority in GM, Wigan is home to over 325k residents. There are 143 schools in the Borough (from primary through to secondary), and 6 mainstream schools and colleges providing Further Education. There are over 20 different Skills and Training Providers providing a range of programmes, and over 8.6k businesses, all of which have an important role to play in relation to Skills and Employability.
- 3.3 Wigan has strong ambitions for its residents through the Deal 2030 and this Framework provides the opportunity for Wigan to challenge itself to create a more prosperous and meaningful future for its residents. The Framework must build on existing strengths, address underlying weaknesses and respond to the opportunities and needs of the Borough.
- 3.4 Wigan has strong foundations to work on in improving Skills and Employability. The consistent desire for ambition and the ability of the leadership to do things differently will be key components of success. This is supported by the strong culture of partnership working between residents, the private and public sector, encapsulated in *The Deal*.

Table 3.1: Wigan at a glance

Indicator	Wigan	GM	England
Population (2017)	325K	2.8m	55.6m
Working Age Pop (2017)	62.5%	63.8%	62.8%
GVA (£m, 2016)	£4.7	£59.1	£1,649
GVA/employee (aka Productivity £k, 2016)	£39	£42	£48
GVA/resident (£k, 2016)	£14	£21	£25
WAP Employment rate (2017)	75.6%	75.8%	74.9%
WAP Unemployment rate (2017)	2.9%	5%	4.5%
Claimant Count/WAP (2017)	2.6%	2.6%	1.9%
Active enterprises per 10k population (2017)	299	402	450
Population with Students attaining 5 A*-C at GCSE (2017)	28%	22%	22%
WAP with no Qualifications (2017)	7.6%	9.6%	7.6%
WAP with NVQ4+ (2017)	26.8%	35%	38.3%
NEETS as % of 16-18 year olds (including Not Known) (2016)	8.3	6.9	6.0
NEETS as % of 16-18 year olds (Known to be NEETS) (2016)	2.5	3.4	2.8
Employers with Skills Gaps (2017)	17%	12%	13%
Average House Price (£k, 2017)	£130	£156	£230

The Headline Picture

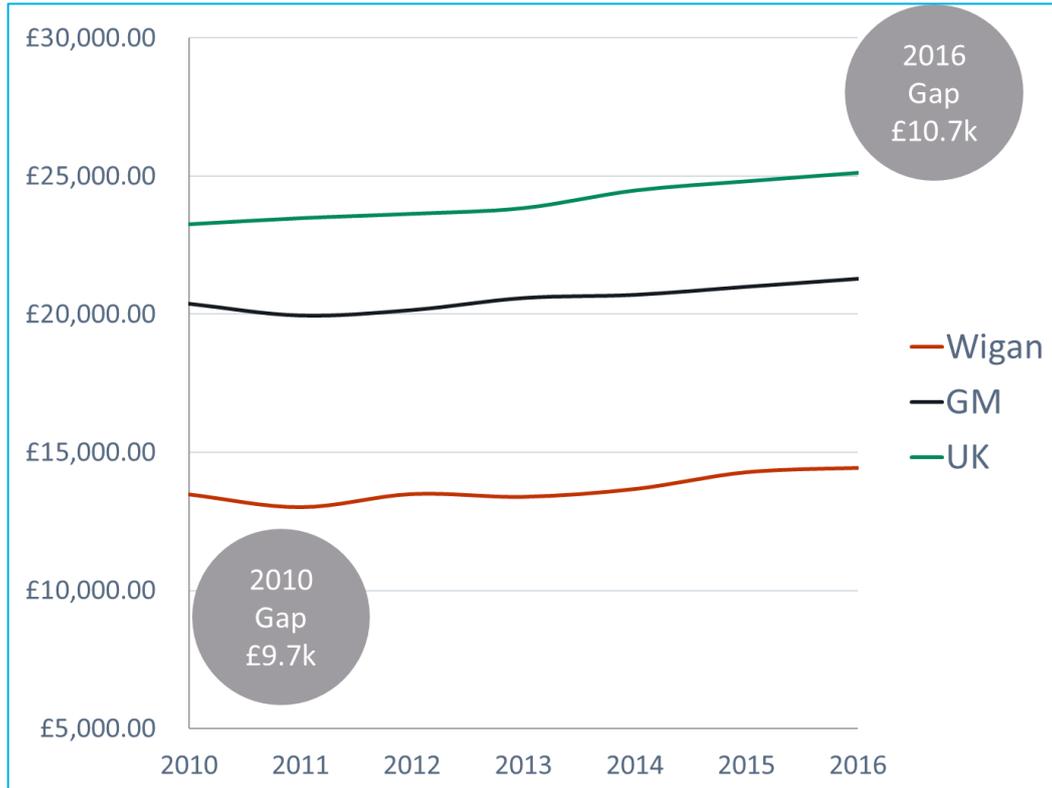
Wigan has a performance gap to close . . .

- 3.5 The primary indicator used to measure an economy's performance is Gross Value Added (GVA). This measure, by government, can be considered in two ways:
- GVA per Capita, also known as output, considers the amount of wealth produced in Wigan, per person in the economy. It is a reasonable measure of prosperity of a place;
 - GVA per Employee, measures the amount of GVA produced by each worker in an economy and is an indicator of how productive that economy is.
- 3.6 Comparative to GM and the UK, Wigan suffers from significant output and productivity gaps (Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2). In 2016, Wigan produced £14,446 of GVA for every person living in the Borough, 42% lower than the average for the UK (£25,121). This gap has been persistent and growing over time.
- 3.7 Positively, since 2010, the gap between Wigan and the UK's GVA per employee has narrowed. In 2010, Wigan's GVA per employee was 22% lower than the average for the UK. Whilst a gap remains, it has narrowed over time and in 2016, Wigan's (£38,729) GVA per employee was 19% lower than the UK average (£47,911).
- 3.8 However, relative to its peers in GM, Wigan is in the bottom two Local Authorities for both output and productivity. **Closing these gaps year-on-year is a considerable challenge that Wigan must address**, and are considered in the Action Plan which accompanies this Volume.

. . . owing to its Industrial Heritage and low-value-sector dominance

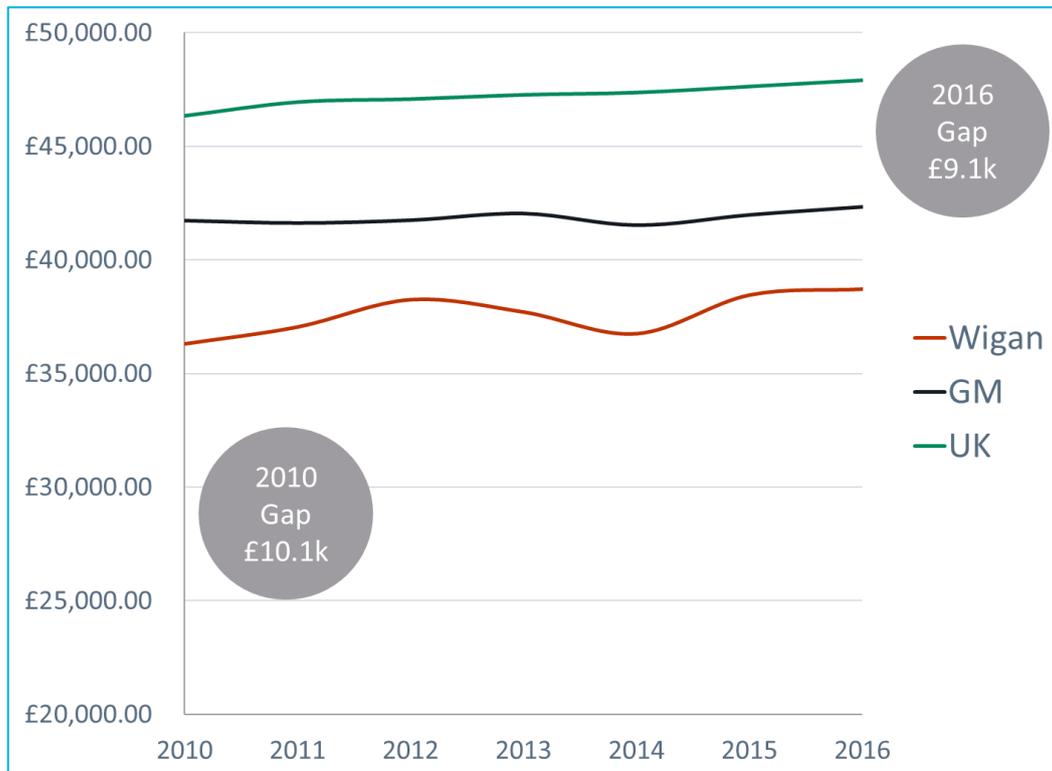
- 3.9 De-industrialisation has impacted many areas of the UK, and economies have struggled to shift their economic base away from traditional manufacturing practices to modern service-dominated structures. Wigan has a strong industrial heritage and an economy that has typically been based around manufacturing and construction, and their component sectors. Wigan now needs to look forward and identify emerging sectors that a) it is well prepared to move into, and b) will offer the best opportunities for developing and maintaining high skill levels and employment opportunities. Presently, Wigan's most dominant sectors in terms of employment are Wholesale and Retail trade, Human Health and Social Work, and Public Administration and Defence. Typically, these sectors provide low-skilled, low-paid jobs and suffer from lower levels of productivity.

Figure 3.1: GVA Per Capita: 2010-2016



Source: Greater Manchester Forecasting Model, 2017

Figure 3.2: GVA Per Employee: 2010-2016



Source: Greater Manchester Forecasting Model, 2017

- 3.10 **The result of de-industrialisation in Wigan is too many jobs in low value sectors** (Figure 3.3). Wigan must focus on reducing employment concentrations in these sectors while being mindful of the risks this can pose, detailed below.

Figure 3.3: Employment Location Quotients - Employment Concentrations in Wigan vs UK

High Value Sectors	Employment LQ
Manufacturing	1.4
Water supply; sewerage, waste management	1.2
Real estate	0.9
Information & communication	0.4
Financial services	0.3
Electricity, gas, & steam	0.1
Mining & quarrying	0.1
Low Value Sectors	Employment LQ
Construction	1.4
Public administration & defence	1.3
Administrative & support	1.1
Human health & social work	1.1
Wholesale & retail trade	1.1
Arts, entertainment & recreation	1.1
Transportation & storage	1.0
Education	1.0
Other services	1.0
Accommodation & food	0.6
Professional services	0.6
Agriculture	0.2

Source: Business Register of Employment and Services, 2017

There are high value opportunities in low value sectors . . .

- 3.11 Manufacturing is a multi-faceted sector, and while much can be of low value, and under pressure from low cost production centres, new production processes and shifts towards high value advanced manufacturing can add significant value to an economy.
- 3.12 There is strong evidence of this in Wigan. For example, since 2016, global advanced manufacturer NicePak has:
- Attracted £40m of investment in the Borough in developing its new state of the art international HQ at Westwood Park;
 - Created 100 new jobs in the area (from an existing employment base of 185);
 - Expanded its apprenticeship programme to create employment and upskilling opportunities for local residents.

. . . but not all high value sectors provide high quality jobs

- 3.13 While there has been some growth in the service sectors of Wigan's economy, growth in high value occupations has not pulled through. Between 2010 and 2017, there was no growth in Manager and Director roles. On the other hand, there has been considerable growth in Administrative Roles (Table 3-1). **Ensuring that the growth in high value sectors translates into high value occupations is a key challenge for Wigan.**

Table 3-1: Wigan's Occupational Structure

Occupation Group	2010	2017	Change (%)
Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	0.6	1.2	100.0
Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occs	2.5	4.4	76.0
Administrative Occupations	7.6	10.8	42.1
Transport & Mobile Machine Drivers/Operatives	4.0	5.3	32.5
Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	1.4	1.8	28.6
Elementary Administration & Service Occs	8.8	11.3	28.4
Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Profs	3.8	4.3	13.2
Sales Occupations	7.2	7.3	1.4
Corporate Managers and Directors	5.3	5.3	0.0
Other Managers and Proprietors	2.5	2.5	0.0
Teaching and Educational Professionals	4.9	4.9	0.0
Secretarial and Related Occupations	1.6	1.6	0.0
Caring Personal Service Occupations	7.7	7.5	-2.6
Business & Public Service Assoc. Professionals	7.6	7.0	-7.9
Skilled Construction and Building Trades	4.5	4.1	-8.9
Business, Media and Public Service Professionals	3.0	2.7	-10.0
Health Professionals	3.2	2.8	-12.5
Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Profs	2.3	2.0	-13.0
Health & Social Care Assoc. Professionals	1.3	1.1	-15.4
Process, Plant and Machines Operatives	4.8	3.5	-27.1
Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	7.0	5.0	-28.6
Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	0.6	0.4	-33.3
Customer Service Occupations	2.1	1.0	-52.4
Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	3.0	1.0	-66.7
Protective Service Occupations	2.3	0.7	-69.6

Source: Annual Population Survey, 2018

Entry level jobs are an important source of employment for disadvantaged communities in Wigan

- 3.14 While it is important for Wigan to shift towards providing high value, high skilled occupations, in high value sectors, this should not overlook the need for low skilled, entry-level opportunities, that are accessible to disadvantaged residents, the long term unemployed looking to enter or re-enter the labour market, and those residents with additional needs. The challenge for Wigan will be in ensuring those individuals have opportunities to upskill continuously, securing higher value positions once they have successfully entered the labour market. Lower value sectors offer real opportunities for residents to move into the labour market. It is important that once residents move into these entry level jobs, they are able to access routes to higher skilled jobs. In essence, entry level jobs should be seen as an important first step on a 'skills escalator'.

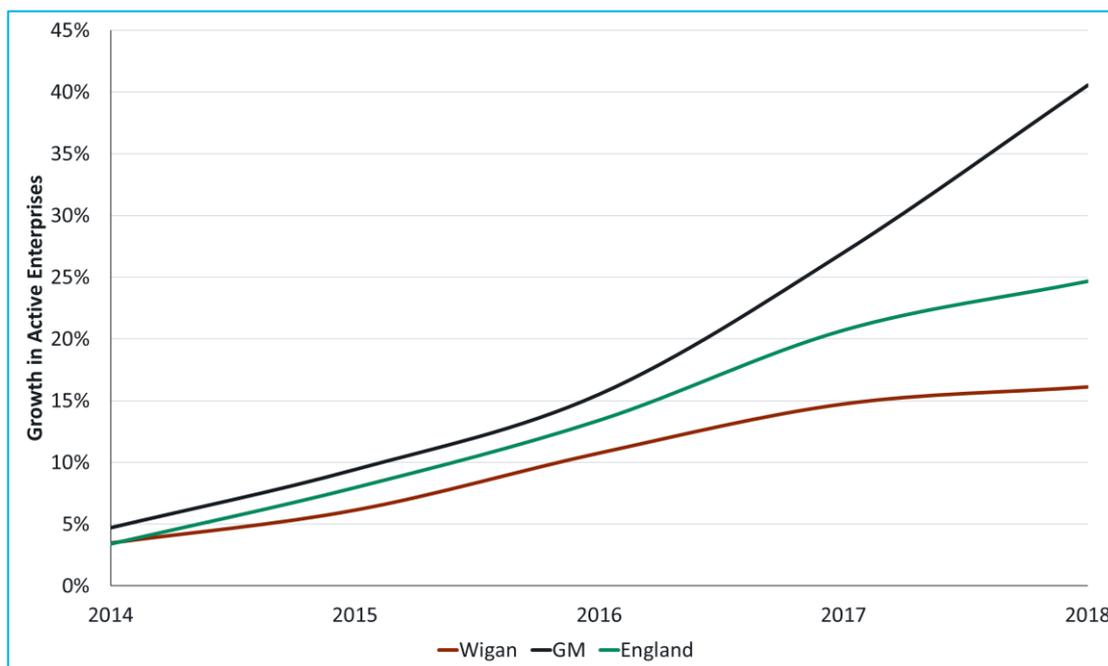
On Enterprise . . .

Wigan needs more businesses . . .

- 3.15 Businesses are the wealth generators of an economy, providing employment and upskilling opportunities. This recognised, Wigan suffers from a considerable enterprise deficit. For every 10,000 residents in Wigan, there are 299 businesses, compared to 402 in GM and 499 in England. Positively, the deficit is reducing and since 2013 the number of active enterprises has grown, albeit at a lower rate to both England and GM (Figure 3.4). The reasons for the slow

down are legion, including external factors such as a loss of business confidence as a result of ongoing Brexit negotiations, and/or from uncertainties in international trade as a result of the US's changing approach to trade and tariffs. That said, some factors implicated at the England level have not yet been shown in GM. So, despite growth in enterprise, there is still a large gap. Closer links to GM policy relating to enterprise could go some way to reducing the gap.

Figure 3.4: Growth in Active Enterprises, 2014-2018



Source: UK Business Counts, 2018

3.16 Put simply, **there are not enough business builders in the Borough** providing meaningful employment opportunities. Attracting new businesses into the Borough, to drive demand needs to be a key aim of Wigan actioned through this Strategic Framework, and other local regeneration strategies, such as Wigan's new Town Centre Regeneration Framework.

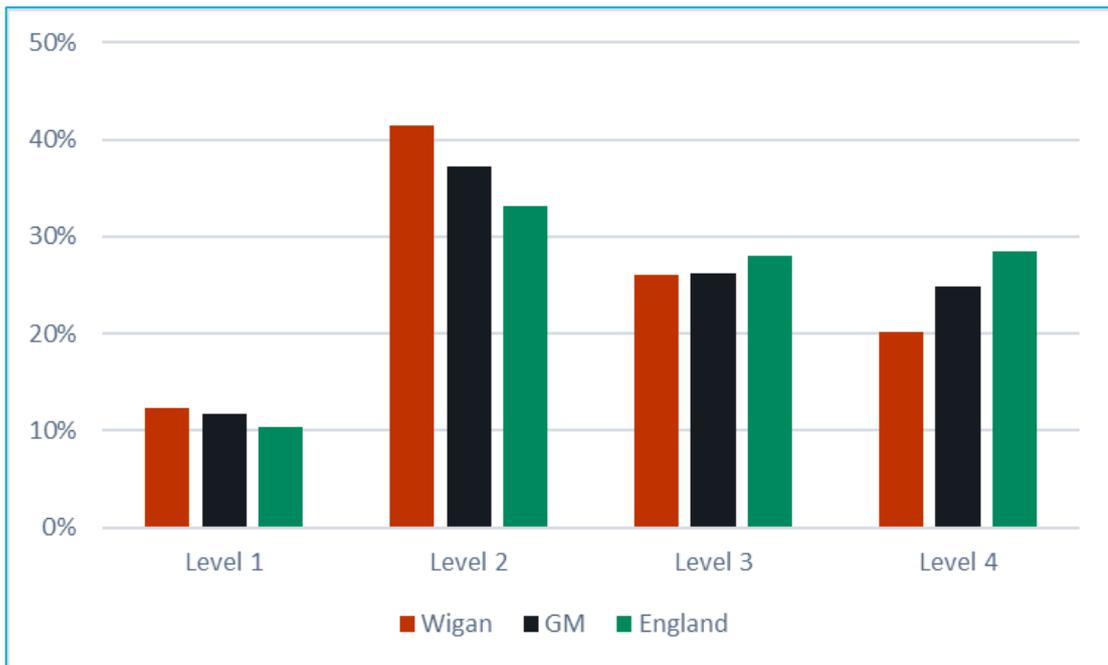
... with the building of an entrepreneurial culture a key need

3.17 In 2017, only 10.8% of Wigan's Working Age Population (WAP) were self-employed. This compares to 12.6% for GM and 14.5% for England. In the same year, just 41 new businesses per 10,000 of the resident population were formed, compared to 73 in GM and 67 in England. Importantly, those new businesses which start and grow will create further demand for Skills and Employability in the Borough, but enterprise and new start formation is not yet a first nature behaviour for Wigan.

The current business base is not providing sufficient high skilled job opportunities ...

3.18 The occupational structure of Wigan's economy is not demanding enough high skilled workers. Considering the occupational structure of Wigan, there is a high proportion of jobs that do not require workers to be high-skilled to be competent in their roles (Figure 3.5). The occupational opportunities available in the workforce will drive aspiration, yet there are not enough jobs demanding higher skilled workers.

Figure 3.5: Proportion of jobs by skills levels requirements

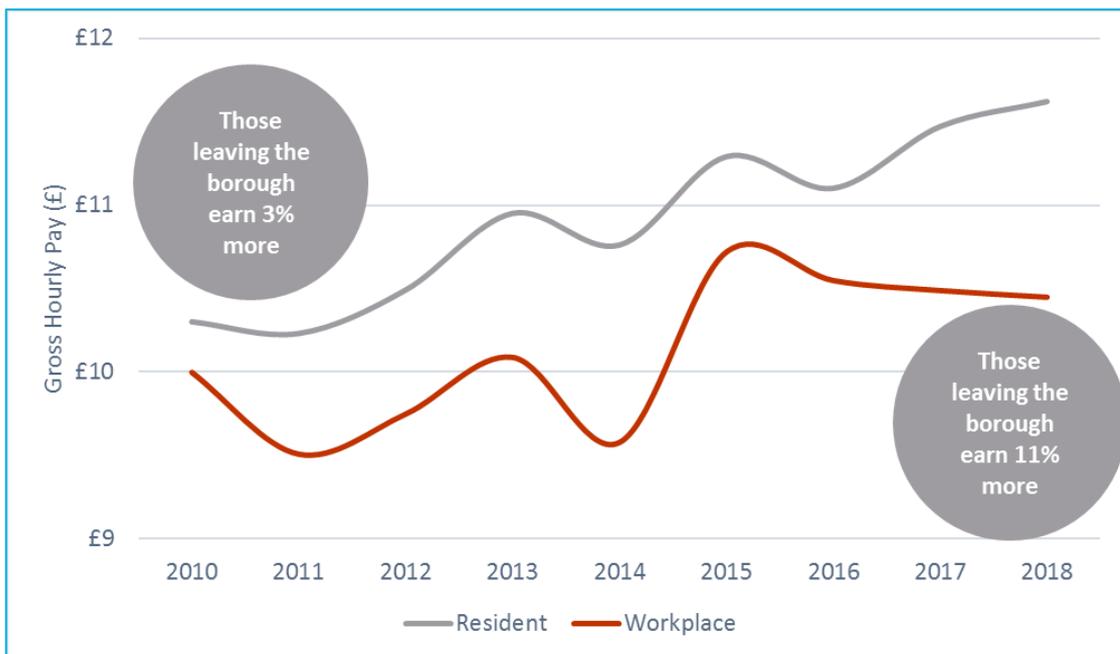


Source: Annual Population Survey, 2018

... with residents leaving the Borough in pursuit of highly skilled, highly paid work

3.19 Each day, almost half of Wigan’s workers (47%) access employment elsewhere, and, in doing so, receive higher wages. In 2018, residents employed outside of the Borough earned 11% more than those working in the Borough. This gap between resident and workplace earnings evidences further the limited offer of highly paid, highly skilled jobs within Wigan.

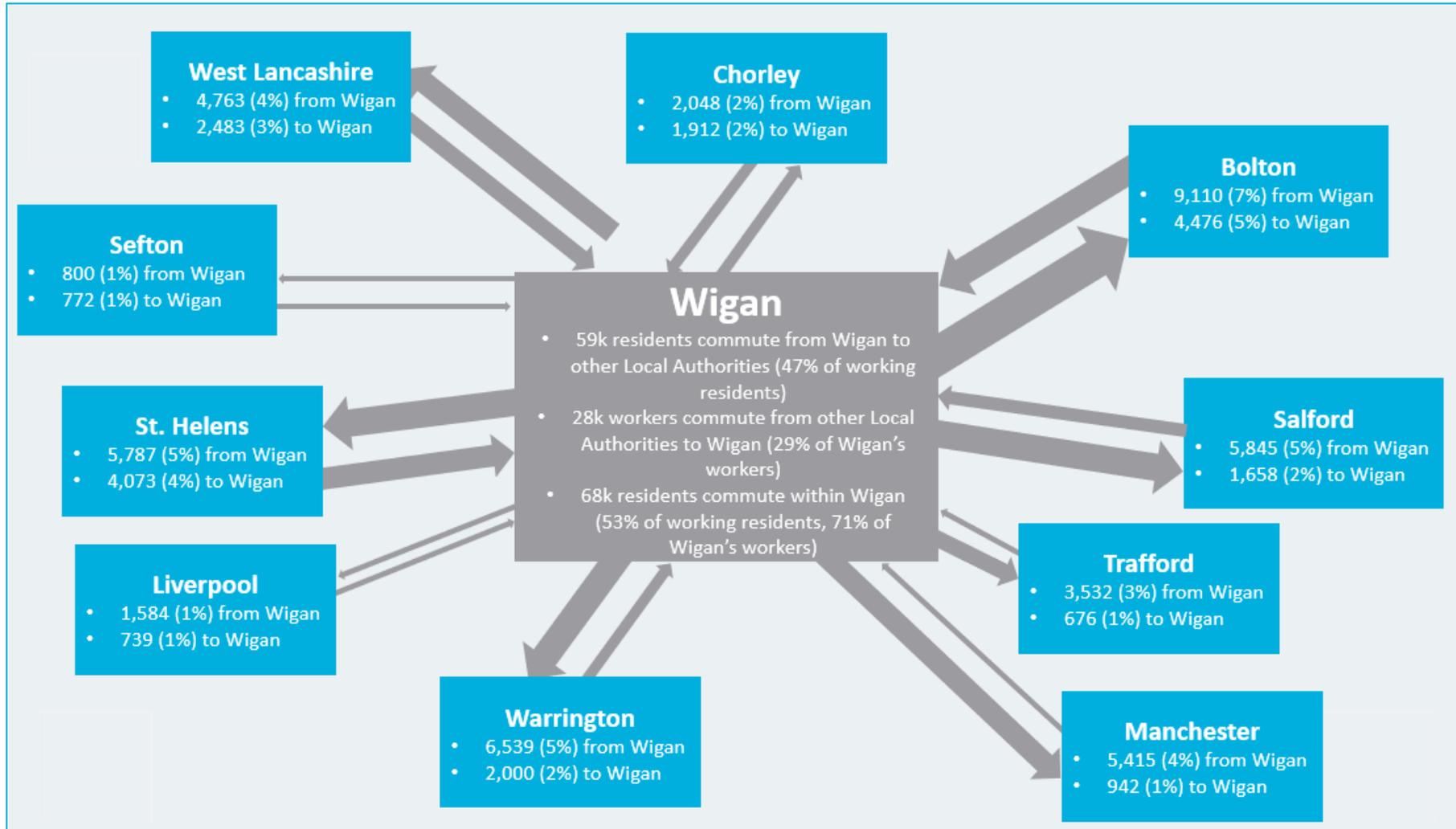
Figure 3.6: Workplace and Resident Earnings, 2010-2018



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earning, 2018

- 3.20 Where then do these people work? As Figure 3.7 shows, the majority of Wigan's residents employed outside of the Borough work in Bolton, (7%), closely followed by Warrington, Salford and St. Helens. Wigan needs to improve its local employment offer to ensure that those wishing to seek employment locally are able to find suitable opportunities.

Figure 3.7: Travel to Work Flows – Wigan’s Residents and Workers to other places



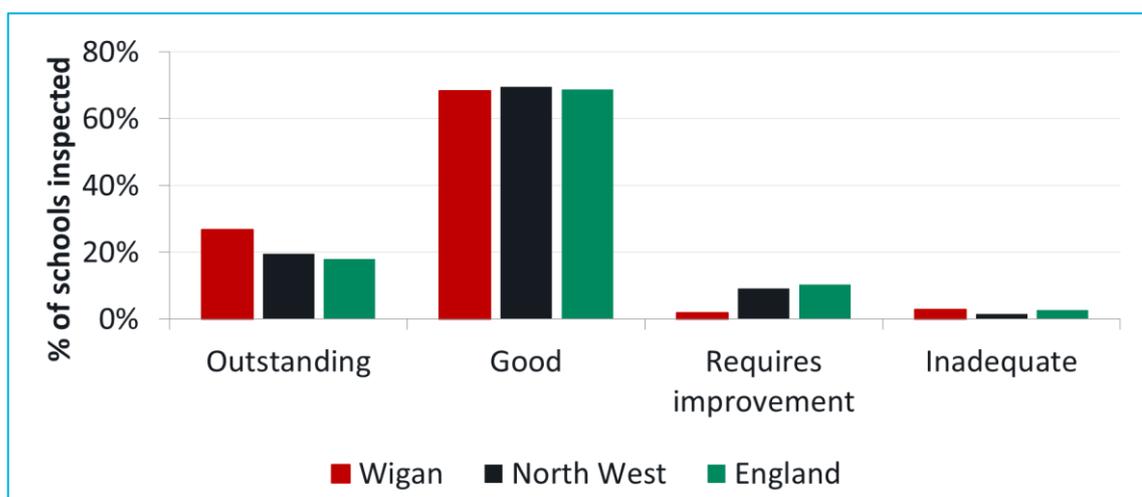
Source: ONS, 2011

On Skills . . .

Wigan has good Primary Education provision . . .

- 3.21 Those close to education provision in the Borough judge Wigan’s Primary schools to perform well. In terms of the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards, collectively Wigan’s Primary schools are above the average, compared to England as a whole, with no Primary school in the Borough achieving below average results. Further, 11% of pupils attending the Borough’s Primary schools are achieving higher than expected standards, compared to 10% in England.
- 3.22 The most recent Ofsted ratings also present a positive picture (Figure 3.8) – almost all Primary schools in Wigan are rated either ‘Good’, or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted.

Figure 3.8: Ofsted Primary School Ratings



Source: Ofsted, 2018

. . . but weaknesses in Secondary provision . . .

- 3.23 At Secondary, education provision is not as strong, and schools have less positive Ofsted ratings when compared with the North West and England (Figure 3.9). Students appear disengaged with work and education when leaving school, with a low proportion of school leavers going on to ‘positive destinations’. Amongst boys, those achieving Grade 5 or above in English and Maths is lower than the National average, whilst girls in Wigan perform in line with the National average. ‘Discouraged’ White British Boys is an issue to be alert to.

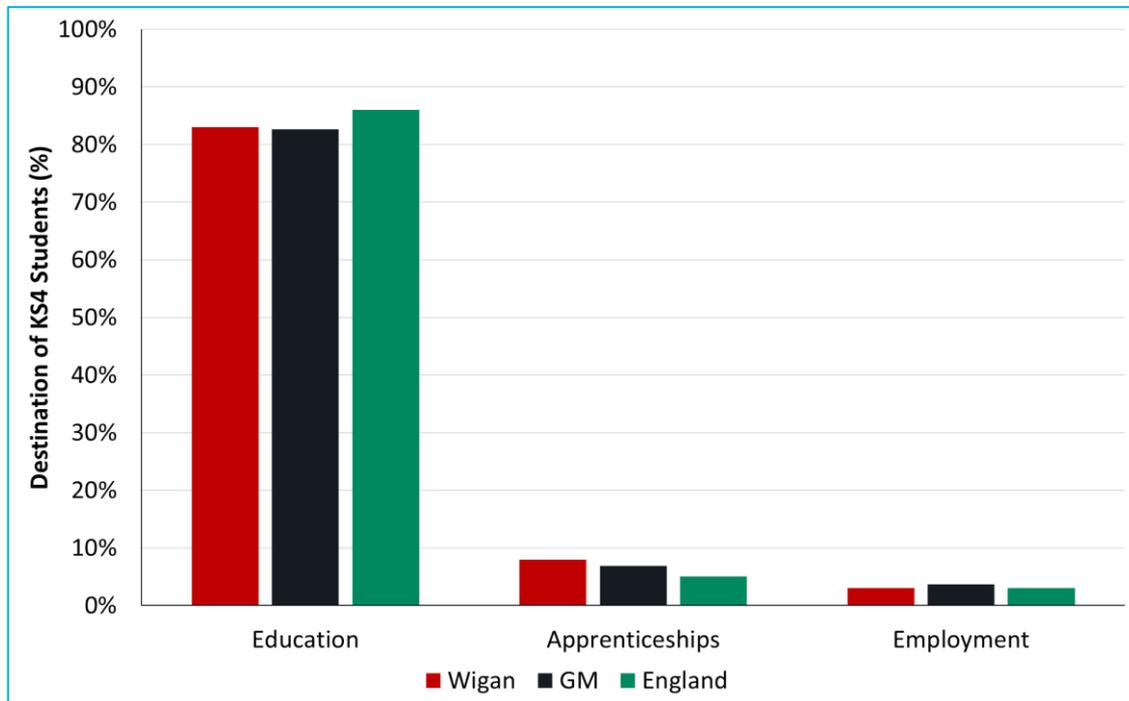
Figure 3.9: Ofsted Secondary School Ratings



Source: Ofsted, 2018

3.24 However, the situation is improving; Wigan has a slightly higher percentage of its pupils continuing with education post Key Stage 4 than GM’s population, though this is below the National average. Further, Wigan performs well in the number of pupils sustaining Apprenticeships and is line with the National average for employment post Key Stage 4.

Figure 3.10: Percentage of Pupils in Sustaining Education or Employment post Key Stage 4 (age 16+)



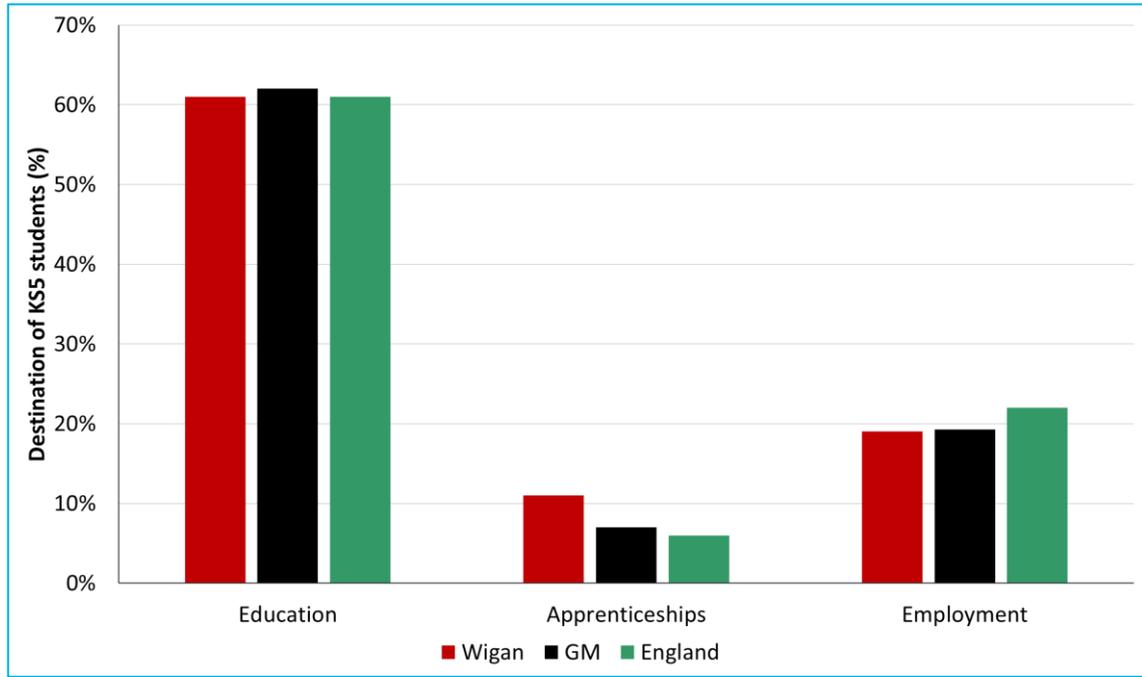
Source: Department for Education, 2015/16

... and a mixed picture on Further Education

3.25 There are 6 Further Education colleges in Wigan providing Post-16 education (though Wigan’s UTC is due to close in August due to low student numbers). A-level attainment performs in line broadly, with National Averages with stronger performance when vocational routes are taken.

Focus should be given to ensuring that those leaving education have sufficient information to make informed decisions Post-16 around the available education routes and pathways to employment. As highlighted in Figure 3.11, although slightly below England and GM for Post-18 numbers in education and employment, the vocational outlook is strong, with Apprenticeships significantly above GM and England.

Figure 3.11: Percentage of Students Sustaining Education or Employment post Key Stage 5 (age 18+)

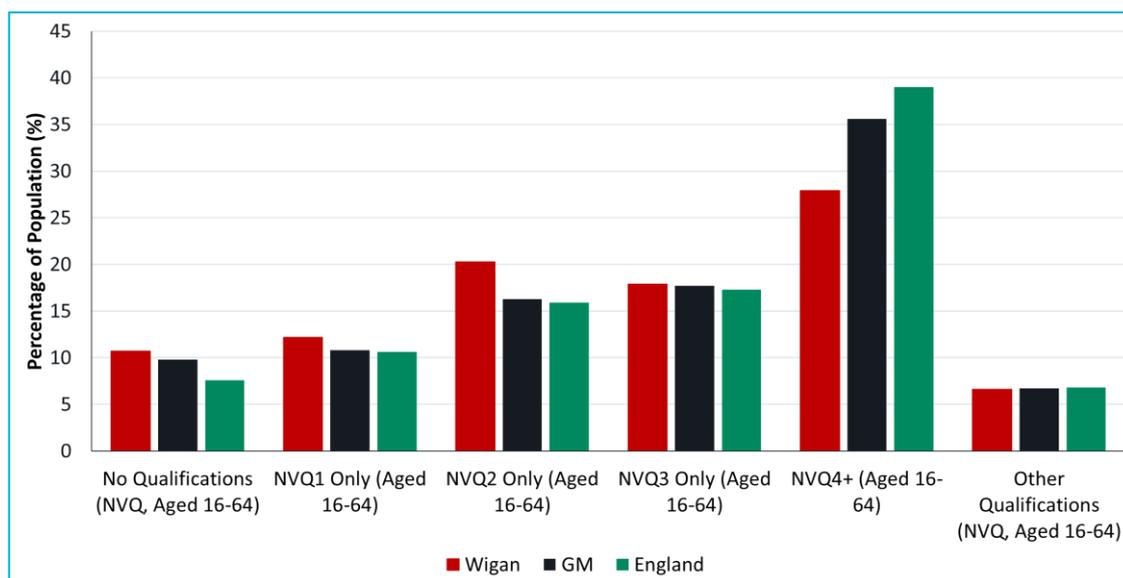


Source: Department for Education, 2015/16

Wigan needs to upskill its residents

3.26 Encouragingly, almost all of Wigan’s Working Age Population (WAP) is qualified to at least NVQ Level 1 and the Borough has an over representation of residents with NVQ Level 2 and 3 (Figure 3.12: WAP by skills levels). This is in a large part due to the strong take up of Apprenticeships in the Borough. Total Apprenticeship Starts per 10,000 of WAP was 119 in Wigan, higher than the England average of 108. Apprenticeships are a strong pathway to employment, enabling residents to step onto, and subsequently progress up the ‘Skills Escalator’.

Figure 3.12: WAP by skills levels



Source: Department for Education, Apprenticeship Starts, 2017/18

- 3.27 One driver of the low representation of residents skilled to level NVQ4+, the key skill cohort for a highly skilled and competitive economy, is the limited provision of Higher Education (HE) in the Borough. This results in residents seeking these qualifications leaving Wigan. Given the strong supply of HE in close proximity to the Borough, the challenge is to ensure that those accessing these opportunities stay or return to Wigan on completion. While considered as part of this Framework this will also be dependent on the actions of complementary Place-based regeneration strategies.
- 3.28 Additionally, residents need to be incentivised to upskill, which typically costs both time and money. This investment will only be made if the right incentives are in place and the benefits of doing so, in terms of access to high quality employment, outweigh the personal costs.
- 3.29 Given this background, a key focus for intervention by this Framework is to upskill the workforce **at all levels**, ensuring people do not ‘get stuck’ at low or medium skills levels. Key to this will be increasing the proportion with higher-level skills in the workforce, which must be done strategically and intelligently – **targeting skills training in alignment with future skills demand**.

On Labour Supply . . .

Wigan has strong levels of employment . . .

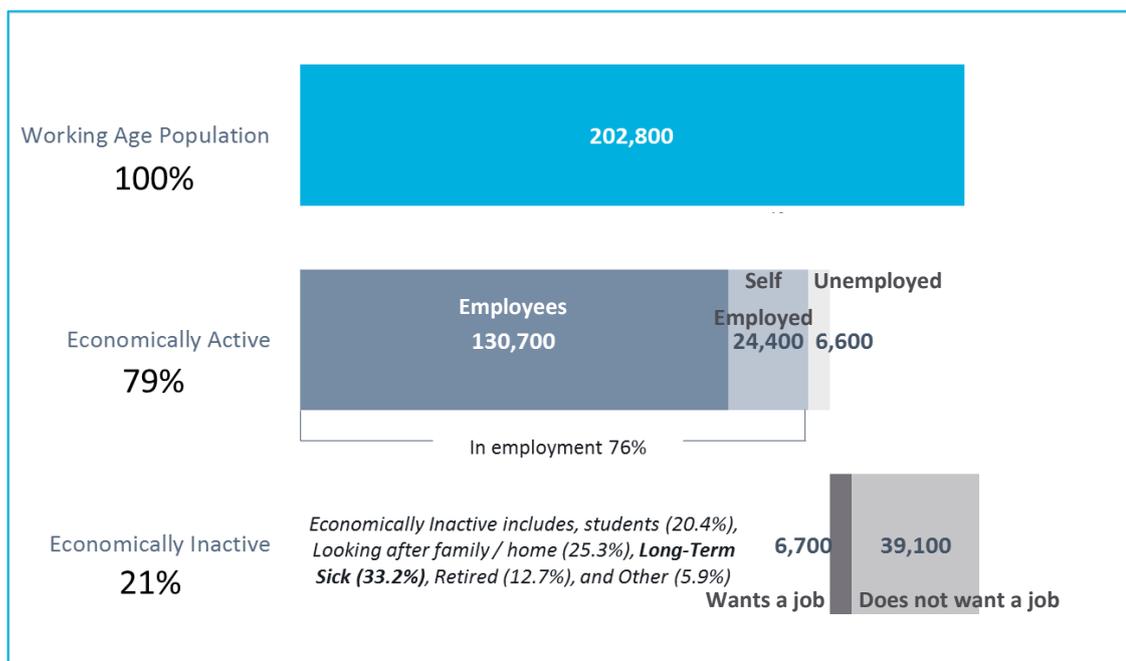
- 3.30 With an unemployment rate of less than 3% (lower than both GM and England), Wigan is close to full employment. A high proportion of the population in Wigan is economically active (79%) – both of these factors provide a good base on which to build.

. . . but there are challenges with the economically inactive . . .

- 3.31 Wigan has a relatively low proportion of its population that are economically inactive (21%). Whilst some of these residents do want to work but did not meet the economically active

criteria (15%)¹, one-third are inactive due to long-term sickness. More widely, a significant proportion of economically inactive residents are students (20%), and those looking after their family (25%) and therefore may become economically active in the future. The 85% who are economically inactive and do not want a work includes students and those looking after their family; a proportion of these people will seek work in the future (Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13: Components of Wigan’s Labour Supply



Source: Annual Population Survey, 2018

. . . which causes social mobility challenges and dampens aspirations

3.32 There is a negative relationship between long-term unemployment, and the aspirations of young people living in workless and low income households. Interventions should therefore help to overcome challenges in social mobility, such as:

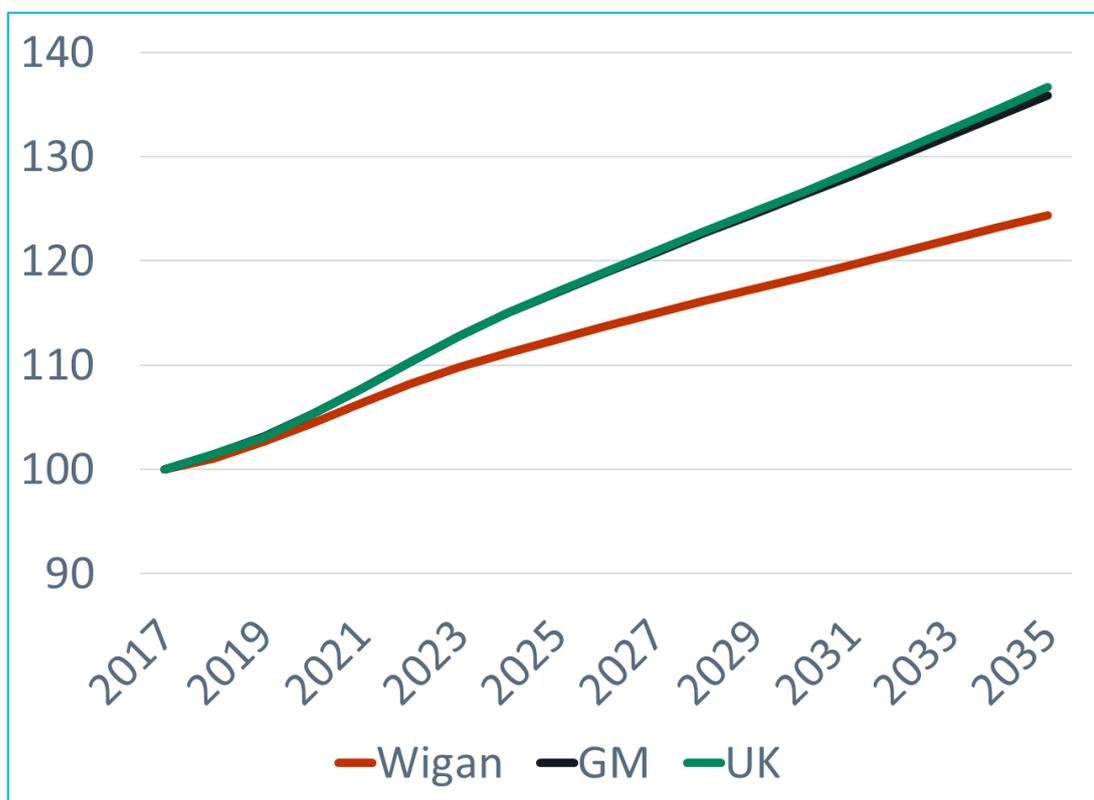
- Maintaining the strong uptake of apprenticeships, which offer structured pathways to employment and upskilling;
- Enabling better decision making at key points in young people’s lives;
- Ensuring opportunities for upskilling are provided throughout adult’s working lives to improve social mobility; and
- Greater targeted programmes relating to Skills and Employability to those in disadvantaged communities that are most disengaged with work.

1.1 ¹ To be counted as unemployed, and so economically active, people must meet the following criteria: "Without a job who were available to start work in the two weeks following their interview and who had either looked for work in the four weeks prior to interview or were waiting to start a job they had already obtained." People out of work who do not meet these criteria are classed as economically inactive but may still state that they want to work. For example, someone may not be actively seeking work because they were temporarily sick or injured.

Looking towards a Future Wigan?

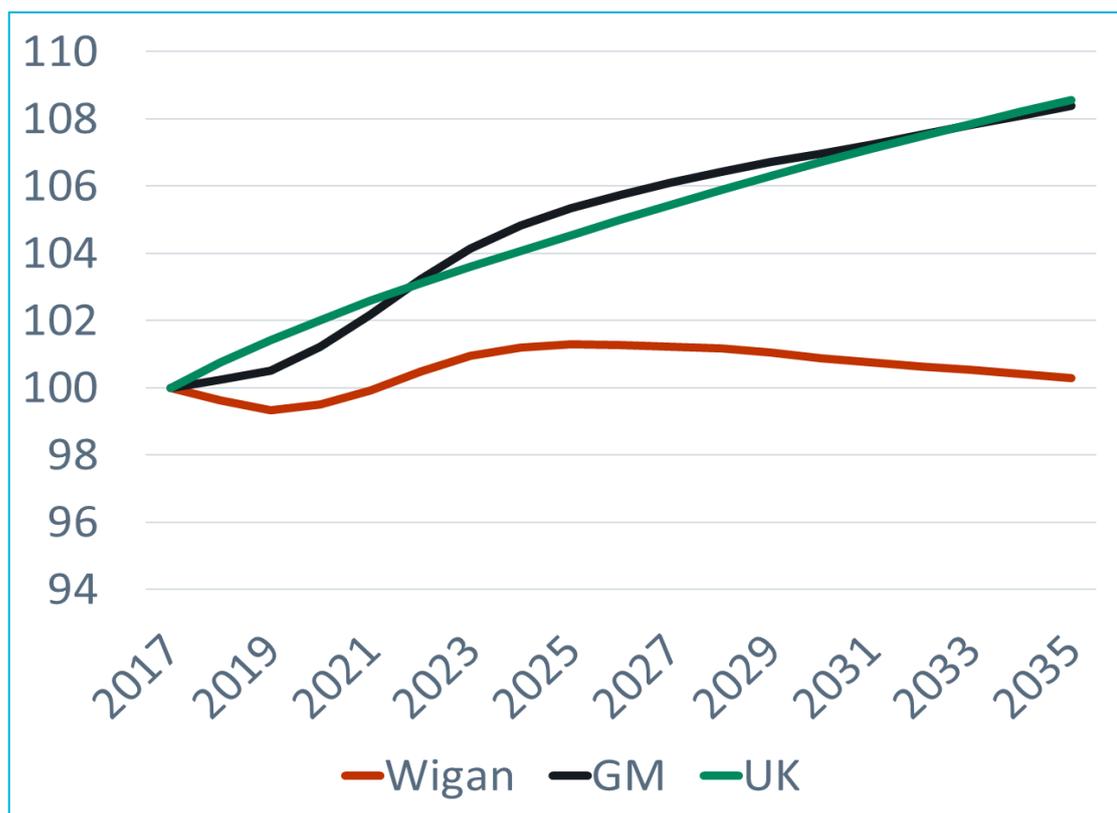
- 3.33 So, where will Wigan be in fifteen years' time without a refreshed Skills & Employability Strategy? This question has been answered by the production of an economic projection which shows how the economy is likely to perform up to 2035, if existing trends continue.
- 3.34 The overall picture is an economy that is growing its output, albeit at a slower rate than GM and the UK, but crucially, with stagnant job growth (Figure 3.14 and Figure 3.15). Employment is a particular cause for concern here, which is projected to remain stagnant to 2035. This means that in a business as usual situation, GVA growth in Wigan will be generated from improvements in technology (replacing workers), not by improvements in the productivity of its workers.

Figure 3.14: GVA Growth, 2017-2035



Source: Oxford Economics, 2017

Figure 3.15: Employment Growth, 2017-2035



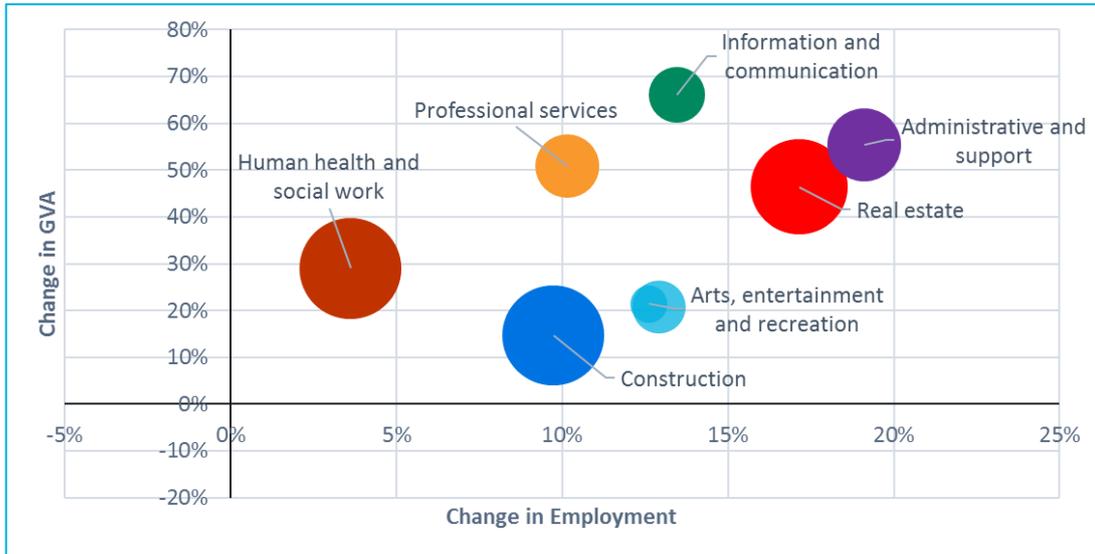
Source: Oxford Economics, 2017

- 3.35 In light of this, what might Wigan’s sectors look like in 2035? The projections allow classification of sectors into one of three different groups:
- Expanding Sectors which will witness a growth in GVA and a growth in employment;
 - Adjusting Sectors where GVA will increase but employment is likely to decrease; and
 - Shrinking Sectors that will see both GVA and employment decrease over the next decade.

Wigan has a strong representation of Expanding Sectors . . .

- 3.36 A number of Wigan’s most significant sectors are forecast to grow. High value sectors such as Real Estate, Financial Services, and IT are expected to grow both in terms of output and employment. IT is the most significant expected expansion, with employment growth of 13% and GVA growth of 66%, but the relative GVA base is smaller.
- 3.37 Some of Wigan’s lower value sectors are also expected to expand; Administrative/Support and Human Health/Social Work. While these sectors are not highly productive, they are important to Wigan’s economy as they provide a high amount of early employment opportunities for those which have been excluded, seeking to enter, or re-enter the labour market. Focus should therefore be on how best to use the opportunity presented by growth in these sectors, and ensure that workers within them are given the best opportunity to upskill and progress. These sectors provide a substantial number of accessible entry level jobs. It is important to ensure that once people enter the labour market in these jobs, there are opportunities available for them to progress to higher skilled positions, enabling them to develop aspirational career pathways.

Figure 3.16: The Expanding Sectors, 2017-2035

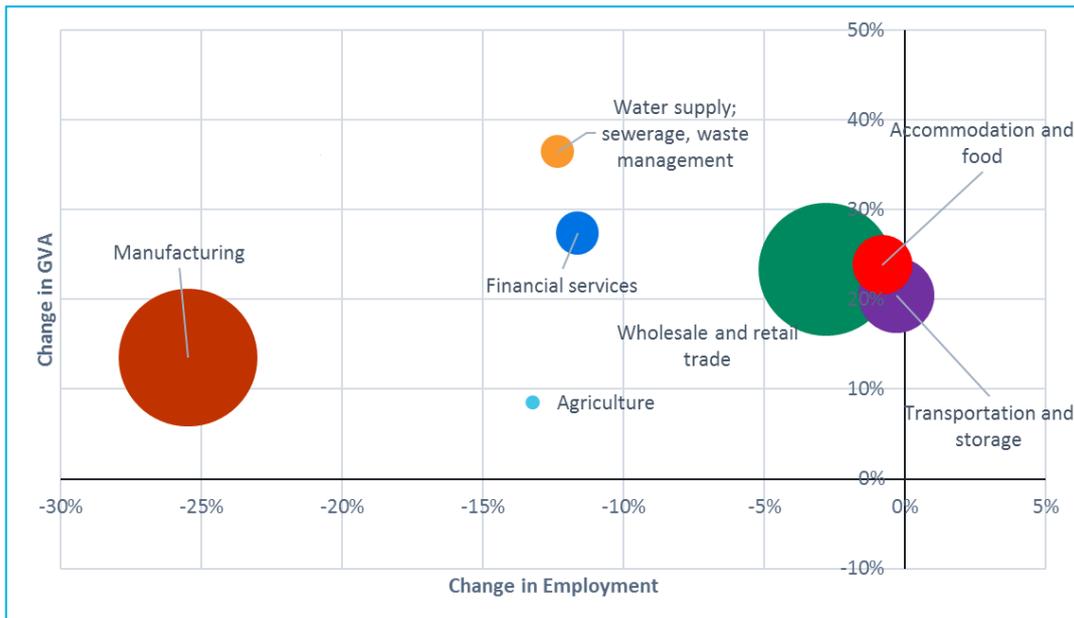


Source: Oxford Economics, 2017

... and can maximise productivity gains from Adjusting Sectors ...

3.38 Adjusting Sectors are those that are becoming more productive, creating additional output but with less labour. These sectors will be important in closing Wigan’s productivity gap, yet employment losses will be a risk. Manufacturing, Wigan’s largest employer, is likely to see a decrease in employment between now and 2035 which presents a significant risk for the economy. As the sector sheds its workforce (for example in response to more Automation and Artificial Intelligence), it is critical that workers in the sector are seen as assets and given the right opportunities to retrain, reskill, and find employment in other parts of Wigan’s economy, for the Borough’s benefit.

Figure 3.17: The Adjusting Sectors, 2017-2035



Source: Oxford Economics, 2017

3.39 To manage the impact of the adjustments within these sectors, Wigan must take a number of actions:

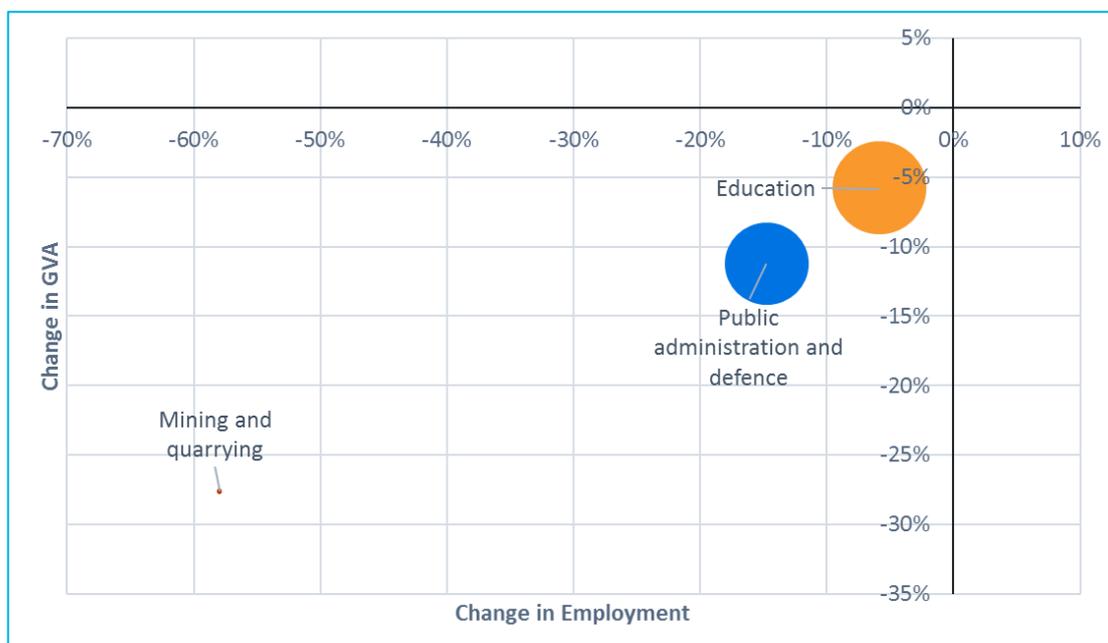
- Be informed on, and retain, the high value-add employment opportunities that do exist in these sectors;
- Maximise the wealth creating impacts of these sectors in Wigan; and, crucially,
- Ensure that Lifelong Learning is embedded into the culture of Wigan’s employers and workforce so that, as these sectors adjust, workers within them can transfer their skills and labour into other sectors.

... and must take action to reduce the threats posed by Shrinking Sectors

3.40 Inevitably, as economies advance, there will be sectors that fall in terms of both output and employment. Previously such sectors have been ‘older’ sectors that have lost competitiveness as the economy has become increasingly global. The declining Mining and Quarrying sector in Wigan is a good example of this. The other two Shrinking Sectors in Wigan are Public Administration/Defence, and Education. The decline in these sectors is reflective of substantive public funding cuts in restructuring the sectors in recent years, which are forecast to continue. Wigan has been a public sector leader in developing new ways to deliver services effectively in response to austerity and it is imperative that these approaches translate into delivery of the Skills and Employability Framework.

3.41 As these sectors shrink, the focus must be on ensuring that these reductions are delivered with increased outflows to private sector employment and with minimal outflows to non-employment. Similar to managing employment losses in Adjusting Sectors, this can only be achieved by ensuring that the right training is provided throughout worker’s working lives to enable a more seamless response to changing sector shapes.

Figure 3.18: The Shrinking Sectors, 2017-2035



Source: Oxford Economics, 2017

- 3.42 Careful management of both Adjusting and Shrinking sectors will be required to reduce the number and impact of employment losses in these sectors, and the economy overall. As the Wigan Deal recognises, it is essential that Wigan strives to maximise future prosperity and growth while ensuring no one is excluded by providing all residents with the skills and capabilities to generate wealth.
- 3.43 In summary, there is work to do to realise and sustain the economic potential which is contained within Wigan's economy. This Framework is developed to address the key skills and employment issues facing Wigan, including amongst others, closing the productivity gap, helping to adjust the occupational structure, and building aspiration amongst younger and disadvantaged residents.
- 3.44 The strong foundations, including high levels of employment (albeit in lower value jobs), positive apprenticeship engagement levels, and ambitious, able leadership position Wigan well to tackle these challenges, and the Framework outlined below highlights the strategic imperatives that will be required for Wigan to achieve its aspirations.

4 The Strategic Framework

4.1 To address the challenges outlined in the preceding chapters, Wigan needs to be focussed, integrated and committed for the long term. The Strategic Framework developed highlights what we consider to be the *most important* Strategic Imperatives for Wigan. In addition to the Strategic Imperatives there is a set of Operational Aims for delivery, and four Cross-Cutting themes. These are discussed below.

The Strategic Framework

Vision

4.2 **[NBSED Final version and quantification of Vision once level of stretch in Action Plan is defined. The Vision, to be agreed must incorporate:**

- **The need to close the Productivity Gap;**
- **The need to upskill the workforce;**
- **The need to embed learning for life culture.]**

The need for an effective, integrated skills system]

Strategic Imperative 1: 'Skills for productivity'

4.3 The need for increased productivity in Wigan is clear and well-evidenced. There is a significant productivity gap with GM and, more noticeably, the rest of the UK. If Wigan cannot improve productivity it cannot generate the wealth to meet the needs of its residents. This significant productivity gap is largely a result of too many low skilled, low pay jobs in low value sectors. This must be addressed if Wigan is to achieve a more productive economy, which, in turn, improves competitiveness and economic success.

Operational Aims

4.4 Wigan must see and use Skills and Employability development as routes to increase productivity. It can do this by:

- Increasing the skills levels of all, year on year;
- Increasing the number of employment opportunities in high-growth, high value sectors;
- Establishing an effective skills escalator to enable workers to continuously progress and create entry opportunities for others; and
- Developing and articulating a unique selling point (USP) for Wigan that enables specialist skills development.

Strategic Imperative 2: 'Demanding employers'

4.5 Wigan's business base has a significant role to play in providing employment opportunities and upskilling the workforce. Ultimately, businesses act as the 'demand driver' for skills, determining how many workers are needed and at what skill level.

- 4.6 Despite the important role they play, the prevalence of market failures and information asymmetries limits businesses' understanding of, and willingness to, engage with skills agendas. Typically, the failures at play are:
- Businesses do not understand fully the value of investing in skills and learning and the positive impacts it can have on business performance; and
 - A lack of upskilling due to 'risk of poaching' and others benefitting from any investment that is made.

4.7 Typically, such problems are exacerbated in SMEs that face additional barriers to engaging with, and investing in training and skills development (time pressures, knowledge and awareness, and financial resource). In Wigan, over 99% of the business base is SMEs.

4.8 Not only does Wigan need a more engaged business base, but also more enterprising businesses that, through increased growth and investment, can offer not just more jobs, but more rewarding and meaningful jobs. Creating such opportunities will, in turn, raise the ambitions of residents and enable them to fulfil their ambition within the Borough.

Operational Aims

- 4.9 Employers will become more demanding by:
- Building their awareness of the benefits of skills and learning throughout working lives;
 - Incentivising increased business investment in skills and training;
 - Encouraging the business base to be more enterprising; and
 - Providing the business base with real-time intelligence on future trends that impact skills needs.

Strategic Imperative 3: 'Supply that delights and delivers'

- 4.10 Suppliers of skills need to be responsive to changing national and global conditions, and the changing needs of businesses. Those working within the supply side (Further Education Colleges, Education and Training Providers, etc.) need to be known to, and work effectively with, employers across all parts of the economy.
- 4.11 The current complexity and fragmentation within the supply side is creating unnecessary barriers for business engagement. With over 20 different Skills and Training Providers it is unclear as to how and when businesses can engage, and, who to engage with. The situation is confusing for service users, and needs to be seamless at all points.
- 4.12 An additional challenge for Skills and Employability is access to good quality and impartial Careers Information Advice & Guidance (CIAG) which meets the needs of residents and employers through education and working lives. The landscape is fragmented and delivered via a range of mechanisms across Education, whilst adult provision is offered via the National Careers Service to those who meet defined eligibility criteria.
- 4.13 There is significant improvement to be made to Wigan's supply side.

Operational Aims

- 4.14 Ensuring the supply side delights and delivers will be achieved by:
- Developing a consolidated, comprehensible and communicable local skills provider system;

- Ensuring that skills providers are not solely output focussed, but instead, driven by the outcomes and impact of their activities and designed to build on the assets of Wigan's residents and place; and
- Making it easier for employers to understand, and engage with, suppliers;
- Improving CIAG and ensuring this is made accessible at all transition points in education and working life.

Strategic Imperative 4: 'Daring to aspire and achieve'

- 4.15** Wigan's overall ranking on the 2017 Social Mobility Index (SMI) is 208th out of 324 local authorities; this is a slight decrease from Wigan's 202nd ranking in SMI 2016 and evidences that there are areas in Wigan that suffer from deprivation and social mobility issues. These social challenges have dampened aspirations and hold back equal access to opportunities. Subsequently, ambition must become increasingly embedded in Wigan's DNA; being skilled/successful is not yet something that is celebrated consistently locally.
- 4.16** Early encounters with employers and role models can shape and influence future ambition and aspirations. Work is underway with the Careers and Enterprise Company to address this, but there is limited evidence of impact as this is a new initiative. Raising aspirations will ultimately result in a higher skilled workforce, that is employed in a more enterprising business base.
- 4.17** For those that want to be successful, the conditions in Wigan are not in place to support, nurture and develop the individual. Adding to this, is a somewhat outdated view on 'what success looks like' with significant emphasis still placed on traditional academic pathways to employment. Increased parity of esteem between academic and vocational routes is required.

Operational Aims

- 4.18** Wigan will deliver a more ambitious culture amongst its people by:
- Embedding learning and upskilling as normal behaviours throughout working lives;
 - Identifying relevant local role models who can engage with the population and raise aspirations;
 - Equipping people to make the right choices about their jobs and careers; and
 - Increasing the amount of quality engagement between employers, Young People and workplace encounters.

Strategic Imperative 5: 'Learning for life'

- 4.19** The structure of the Working Age Population (WAP) is changing, and new and recent entrants to the labour force will need to work longer and in more job roles during their working lives. It is important that the workforce is equipped with transferrable skills that allow them to transition between different sectors and occupations over time.
- 4.20** National and global changes will also change demand for future skills and, subsequently, the need for continuous retraining. Without this, the workforce will not be able to respond flexibly and dynamically to changes and have meaningful and rewarding jobs.
- 4.21** The culture of lifelong learning and continuous training is not yet embedded into the working practices in the UK, including Wigan; over a 3-month period (October – December 2018), just 14% of the UK's WAP received job related training (ONS, 2019). It is necessary to increase access to, and promotion of, job related training to encourage lifelong learning. With a

successfully implemented Skills and Employment Strategy, Wigan has the opportunity to move ahead of the curve in this area.

Operational Aims

4.22 Embedding a culture of lifelong learning will be achieved by:

- Developing accessible training and development programmes that match economic demand;
- Developing individual's end-to-end understanding of skills, occupations and employability and why these matter in the workforce;
- Enabling retraining opportunities and career moves across the economy; and
- Developing transferrable skills enabling greater career flexibility.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES				
1: 'Skills driving productivity'	2. 'Demanding employers'	3.'Supply that delights & delivers'	4. 'Daring to aspire and achieve'	5. 'Learning for life'
RATIONALE	RATIONALE	RATIONALE	RATIONALE	RATIONALE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productivity is important for local wealth, economic success and resilience. & skills a key driver of productivity But, only 27% of the WAP are highly skilled. There are too many low skilled jobs, with low pay, in low value sectors – with no clear progression pathways High-skilled residents leaving Wigan for better paid jobs elsewhere This impacts Wigan's GVA/worker - c. 50% lower than UK . . . & gap widening And Wigan's GVA/head in bottom 20 of all UK LAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers drive demand for jobs and skills. But across UK, employers (esp. SMEs) don't understand consistently value of skills/ learning. & businesses face barriers to investing in skills (time, money etc...) Employers not articulating fully skills needs to providers There is only a core of businesses engaged with skills and employability Enterprising firms create more & better jobs 8.6k businesses in Wigan . . . but not creating enough demand for skilled jobs Not attracting new large employers into the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills provision landscape appears complex & fragmented . . . c20 different skills providers Who, when, how do I use this ? Barriers exist between skills suppliers and employers Skills suppliers need to be better aligned with changing nature of work (models, tech & soft skills) Insufficient understanding among all people limits choices CAG in the borough considered sub-optimal & effective CAG is needed throughout adults working lives Strong take up of apprenticeships . . . But risks in sustainability of supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic social challenges have shaped aspirations and access to opportunity Significant local pockets of historically high-levels of claimants & long-term unemployed History of paternalistic employers So, ambition not yet part of the DNA Early encounters with employers can be positive but lack of role models a key gap. & so is support offer for those who want to be successful Being skilled/successful not yet something to be proud of locally Important to ensure parity of esteem between academic and vocational routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age structure of WAP is changing New & recent entrants to labour force will need to work longer & transfer between jobs Global technology trends & demand for future skills will require retraining (automation!). but only 13% of WAP are receiving job related training (3 months) Soft skills (eg creativity) now in high demand Lifelong learning enables workers to adapt to changing demands for skills & have meaningful & rewarding jobs Retirees are still an asset – if they are suitably skilled
OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVES	OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close GVA gaps with GM & UK, year-on-year. A lifetime's work! Increase skills levels of all, year-on-year ↑ no of employment opps in high growth sectors Deliver skills escalator – upwards/onwards Develop and articulate Wigan's strengths and USP to existing <i>and</i> prospective businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build businesses' awareness of benefits of skills/ learning Reduce barriers to investing in skills and provide right incentives for employers Encourage business base to be more enterprising Provide business base with real-time intelligence on future and market/tech change . . . equip them to do the thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherent, comprehensible & communicable local skills-provider system Move agenda from activities/outputs & on to outcomes/impacts Reduce engagement barriers between suppliers and employers Improve CAG & ensure accessible at all points in a career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed learning & upskilling as normal behaviours Identify relevant role models who can raise aspirations Equip people to make the right choices about their jobs & careers Increase levels of employer engagement with Young People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop accessible training & development programmes Develop end-to-end understanding of skills, occupations & employability Ensure retraining opportunities & career moves across the economy Develop transferrable skills enabling greater career flexibility
<p>←←←←← Acting now, but future savvy →→→→→</p> <p>←←←←← Understanding & exploiting our outward 'connectedness' →→→→→</p> <p>←←←←← Making the most of the strengths of our people and Borough →→→→→</p> <p>←←←←← A place where all approaches and contributions are valued →→→→→</p>				

Four Cross-Cutting Themes

4.23 Ensuring coherence in approach and consistency in delivery will be key to ultimate success. To achieve this, the Strategic Framework is underpinned with four Cross-Cutting themes, as follows:

- Acting now, but being future savvy;
- Understanding and exploiting outward connections;
- Exploiting the strengths of the Borough; and
- A place where all approaches and contributions are valued.

4.24 The Cross-Cutting themes will set the culture and delivery approach of the Strategic Imperatives, so ensuring close integration and consistency in the delivery of the subsequent Actions. The themes are expanded on below.

Acting now, but being future savvy

4.25 The only guarantee of the future is that change will happen. There is a need to ensure that Wigan has access to information regarding future markets and technologies. It is important that businesses, employers and skills providers understand how best to exploit and drive these opportunities, on a sustainable basis.

4.26 Uncertainty around future trends should not cause inertia or prevent action now. Actions need to be future informed and flexible, to respond to changes as and when they happen.

Understanding and exploiting outward connectivity

4.27 Wigan occupies a unique position, lying between the core cities of Manchester and Liverpool, and with easy access to the Lancashire jobs market. This connectedness should be seen as an opportunity, where there are thousands of successful businesses and employment opportunities on Wigan's doorstep, available for skilled and talented Wigan workers.

4.28 What is important is to ensure that people can easily access these opportunities, increasing their potential to upskill and progress, yet ensuring that Wigan retains these residents, and their wages. This is where there is strong overlap between actions to improve Skills and Employability, Placemaking and Regeneration Strategies.

Exploiting the strengths of the Borough

4.29 Wigan has some strong foundations on which to build. Major assets include location, environment, people, leadership from the Council, a core of engaged, *generous* business, and strong vocational pathways to employment. The borough is also seen as a leading area for Place Based delivery and partnership working through the Deal. These assets, if exploited fully, will enhance the success of any actions to improve Skills and Employability.

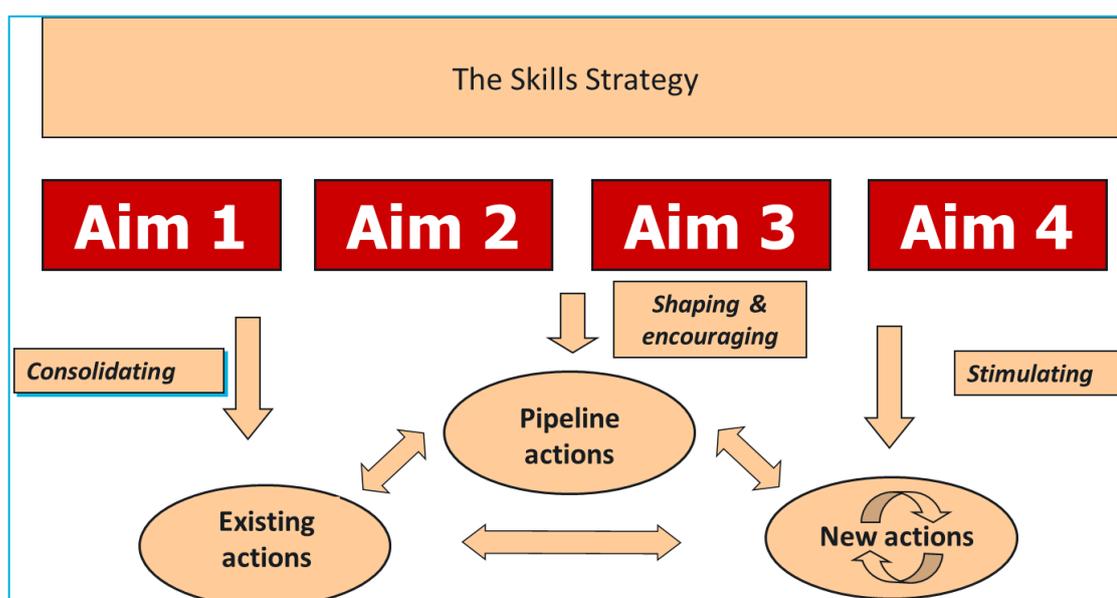
A place where all approaches and contributions are valued

4.30 Wigan is a diverse economy, with diverse demographics. It is crucial that actions to improve skills and employability work for the highest skilled residents looking to progress even further, and those that are remote from the world of work but looking to engage. Wigan must become a place that values all that its residents have to offer and can provide the best tailored support for individual differing needs. Underpinning this will be understanding that success means different things for different people and, there are different ways to be successful. Actions put in place must support different talents, skills and ambitions and provide the right encouragement for all residents to reach their potential.

5 On to Action Planning and Implementation

- 5.1 This Section sets out the evidence underpinning the challenges that Wigan needs to address and, the subsequent Vision, Strategic Imperatives and Operational Aims to address these challenges.
- 5.2 The next logical step in the Strategy Development process is to develop a set of actions that will deliver the Operational Aims, but, before doing so, we must understand the nature of existing activity and how they are, or are not, delivering against Strategic Imperatives. This process is outlined in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: An Overview of Action Mapping and Gapping



Source: Steer-ED, 2018

- 5.3 Once an agreed set of actions have been determined, the Strategy must then consider implementation. Drafting strategies is easy; implementing them is hard. Successful implementation will only come about through drive, commitment, and hard work. More than any other, clarity on the *functions* and then the *forms* of implementation will be the single most important consideration.
- 5.4 Implementation of the Framework needs to achieve the following:
- **A real understanding of the socio-economic state of Wigan, absolutely and relatively.**
The evidence assembled in the course of drafting this Framework provides a firm foundation to build on, but this will need to be refreshed regularly and, crucially, partners will need to move their focus on from the data numbers to the causes and explanations

underlying these. Clarity of who is responsible for providing the data and identifying when new data becomes valid for comparison will be important.

- **A long-term Vision of where Wigan should, and could, be.** This is particularly hard to do within the constraints imposed by public sector spending windows. It is vital in ensuring stability of the strategy, despite external changes and uncertainty, that the end point of our collective journey is understood and maintained. It is helpful to identify what levers are actually available and who owns them so that all parties are clear what may be achievable, rather than allowing subsequent actions to become just a wish list.
- **Robustness in making the hard choices resulting from our Vision.** Simply put, ‘doing what you’ve always done gives what you’ve always got’. If Wigan is going to move ahead and re-establish itself, then those activities underway that are not contributory will need to be left behind. Some simple prioritisation or categorisation of the actions will be helpful early on, so that people are challenged to consider how they can assist the implementation of those actions that are most attractive.
- **Best of class design, implementation, and delivery of actions to take the Strategy forward.** This will require looking way beyond Wigan’s borders to see how specific challenges have been addressed elsewhere. It may also mean, on occasions, facing up to the fact that delivery capability within Wigan is not of the calibre or scale needed to tackle the particular challenge we face, and not being uncomfortable about securing solutions from elsewhere in the UK or further afield.
- **A real commitment to monitoring and evaluation**, so that the relevance locally of Strategy action is constantly reviewed, and delivery impact evidenced and maximised.
- **The continuing enthusiasm of partners**, to ensure that the process of implementation remains consensual and inclusive, and that energies and resources are fully captured. Clarity of ownership of actions between the partners is particularly beneficial. If there is a clear leader, let them lead. Where there is a collaborative action, spell out who will actually be responsible for galvanising activity.
- **Consistent and influential presentation of the skills and employment agenda**, as set out in the Framework. This must become established as the definitive statement of actions for the development of skills and employment in Wigan if notice is to be taken of it. Having agreed what the key *functions* demanded of the strategy are, then and only then, should attention focus on defining suitable *forms* by which these functions can be delivered. All too often, albeit with best intention, forms for implementation are agreed before functions have been properly specified.
- **A Delivery Infrastructure, responsible for taking forward those actions defined by the Framework.** As far as possible, these actions would be delivered through the range of existing delivery bodies, ideally working to clear Service Level regimes defined by the Strategy to ensure excellence and innovation in delivery. In other cases, where the nature or scale of challenge of the action demanded that some new form of delivery was appropriate, this might involve forming a bespoke delivery vehicle, or buying a solution to the delivery challenge from the market. As mentioned earlier, it is helpful for all partners to be clear about prioritisation. Some actions will be pragmatic and achievable quickly, some will be challenging but worth developing now, and others will be ambitious and visionary. It is important to be clear on whether the delivery challenge is about function or form. Being clever about the form will not necessarily overcome a challenge that is about the function.

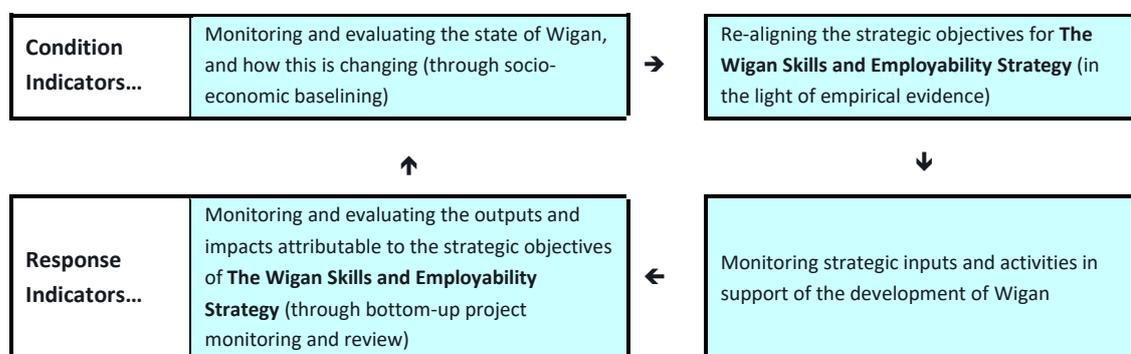
6 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 6.1 **The Wigan Skills and Employability Strategy** represents a new and bold approach to supporting the people and communities of Wigan. The undertaking will be a significant one – the challenges to be faced are stretching and the operational context will not be static. Changes will come from within the Borough, in response to the Strategy and from elsewhere as the economic and policy environment changes. New funding opportunities may also materialise which are likely to have a direct impact on the aspirations set out in the Strategy.
- 6.2 To respond to these challenges, and to demonstrate progress, it is vital that the delivery of **The Wigan Skills and Employability Strategy** is underpinned with a robust Monitoring and Evaluation framework, which is able to provide intelligence, both in real time and in retrospect, on the changing strategic context and on the differences that the Strategy and its actions are leveraging.

Component parts of the Framework

- 6.3 In order to meet the above requirements, the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will need two parts. A **top-down component** will monitor the changing state of conditions in Wigan, requiring the use of *Condition Indicators*. The **second component will be bottom-up**, and will enable the Strategy’s activities, outputs, and outcomes/impacts to be assessed using appropriate *Response Indicators*.
- 6.4 When taken together, the two components should provide a clear and robust insight into the Strategy’s efficiency and effectiveness in bringing about desired changes in Wigan. The use and development of the Framework will of course be iterative. Over time, as operating evidence and experience grows, the Framework will yield information on those actions that are more effective and efficient than others, allowing strategic and operational priorities to be reshaped accordingly.
- 6.5 How these two components work together is indicated in the diagram below (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Visualisation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework



Source: Steer-ED, 2018

Designing the Framework

6.6 The two components described above must be, as far possible, consistent and fit together well. To achieve this, the process of designing the final Framework needs to be an iterative one with three distinct stages of development:

Sketching out the Framework's main building blocks.

6.7 This will require:

- Defining the principal *condition* indicators consistent with the Strategy's strategic objectives;
- Specifying the *activity categories* that capture the contribution of actions on the ground; and
- Developing the *logic chains* that connect the inputs and activities to the outputs and outcome/impact measures within each activity category.

Populating the architecture of the Framework with detailed indicators.

6.8 This will require detailed consultations with those partners involved in delivering specific Strategy actions, once these have been identified prioritised and scheduled.

Specifying the complete Framework in terms of monitoring and evaluation procedures.

6.9 In other words, an operational model and a schedule of actions that will need to be put in place to ensure that the Framework actually delivers on the ground. This stage will involve the preparation of guidance and rollout workshops to promote awareness and understanding.

6.10 Progressing these three stages of the Framework's development will be a significant undertaking, and will require the Strategy's partners to work closely and collaboratively at all levels. Reflecting this, it will be important early on in the life of the Strategy that resources be prioritised to enable this important task to be advanced.

Moving Forward

6.11 The next stage of this work must be to:

- Develop a suitable set of actions;
- Design the implementation parameters and Governance arrangements; and
- Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to monitor regularly the progress of the Strategy.

6.12 To remind ourselves, our Vision is as follows:

[NBSED – SDP to add in Vision summary]

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