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This Economic Prospectus for the borough of Wigan sets out our ambition to grow Wigan’s economy, create jobs and attract investment; to create wealth and prosperity for local people and communities; and to promote Wigan as a key location for employment and for people to make their home.

It is an important time to launch the Prospectus. Much is happening in and around Wigan Borough to develop the economic and housing growth of the area. We have an unrivalled proximity to the North West’s key economies – Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire. We are one of the 10 local authority areas, which make up the Greater Manchester City Region and we are playing a leading part in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Greater Manchester Strategy, the Devolution Deal with Central Government, and the Northern Powerhouse.

Powers and resources are being devolved to Greater Manchester to promote economic growth and the reform of public services. Substantial population, economic and housing growth is predicted over the next 10 years and a new Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) will set out where this can be accommodated.

Like Greater Manchester, the Liverpool City Region and other areas in the North West have negotiated Growth Deals aimed at growing the economy. The development of the Atlantic Gateway, linking the cities of Manchester and Liverpool, with Wigan at the geographical heart will be an important economic driver. It is therefore essential that Wigan Borough also focuses on its employment and residential role outside of Greater Manchester in the wider region, in order to take advantage of the growth potential close to the borough’s boundaries.

It is important that Wigan plays a strong role in contributing to this growth and together with our partners take advantage of it to benefit the borough.

Lord Peter Smith
Leader of Wigan Borough Council

Cllr David Molyneux
Deputy Leader of Wigan Borough Council, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Richard Waterfield
Chair of the Wigan Forward Board

Paul Simpson
Vice Chair of the Wigan Forward Board

It needs energy and drive to make this happen. Today, Wigan Borough is more confident and looking to its future. Wigan continues to demonstrate resilience and flourish in a challenging economic climate. Wigan people and businesses have a deserved reputation for hard-work and loyalty, and are resourceful and determined in creating and finding new employment. The quality of the borough’s housing, environment and its connectivity are catalysts for our economic prosperity and support the future growth and regeneration of the borough as a place to live, work, invest, visit and do business.

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By 2035, Greater Manchester aims to be one of the world’s leading sub-regions, driving sustainable growth across a thriving north of England.

We intend to use Wigan’s unique position located between the main conurbations of Manchester and Liverpool to drive economic growth and prosperity within the borough.

We will also ensure that all who live here are able to take maximum advantage of the employment opportunities both within the borough and the wider region and enjoy an excellent quality of life.

The borough has significant land resources, which will be deployed to ensure that we have the capacity to accommodate significant levels of business and housing growth over the next 10 years. We are a confident, proactive and welcoming borough and will work with all to deliver this strategy.

Our vision for Wigan is a place where people want to work, invest, live and visit.

The prospectus has four main objectives:

1. Enable Growth: Growing the economy, businesses and creating jobs
2. Skills for Success: Equipping local people to take advantage of work opportunities in and around the borough and create better lives for themselves and their families through employment.
3. Connected Infrastructure: Ensuring the right connections are in place to support Wigan’s ambitions for economic growth
4. Great Places & Communities: Building pride and belief in Wigan as the borough of choice to live and enjoy an excellent quality of life.
KEY 10 YEAR OUTCOMES

CREATE 10,000 NEW JOBS

12,000 APPRENTICESHIPS

LOCAL ECONOMY GROWTH 5.255m

BUILD 10,000 NEW HOMES

QUALITY EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL ABLE TO WORK
ACCESS TO LONDON AND GLASGOW
WITHIN 2 HOURS

STRAategic DEVELOPMENT Map

EMPLOYMENT:
1. Bradley Lane Industrial Estate
2. Wigan Town Centre
3. Wigan Pier Quarter
4. Phoenix Way
5. Wigan Enterprise Park
6. Martland Park & Heinz
7. South Lancs Industrial Estate
8. Stone Cross Park
9. Pocket Nook
10. Leigh Town Centre
11. Chadwick Lane

HOUSING:
1. Standish
2. Golborne / Lowton
3. Coldharbour Astley
4. Garrett Hall, Tydesley
5. Westleigh Waterfront
6. Bickershaw

MIXED USE:
1. Landgate
2. Pemberton Colliery
3. Westwood Park
4. South of Hindley
5. Northleigh
6. Parsonage
7. Leigh Waterways
This prospectus sets out our proactive approach to business, employment and housing growth for the next 10 years and how we will ensure that the people who live, or come to live, in the borough are able to take advantage of these opportunities. We will keep our approach under review so it is responsive to changing circumstances. We will work with our partners and the private sector to make it a reality.

Whilst historically the area grew on traditional industries and coal mining, the Wigan of today is very different. The borough consists of towns and villages set within attractive green open spaces (over 70% of the borough is accessible green space) with some amazing water features such as the Pennington Flashes.
Wigan Borough is a place where people want to work, invest, live and visit. It is a large borough with a population of 321,000 people. The population has grown by over 5% in the last 10 years and is expected to continue to grow over the next 10 years.

The borough of Wigan is centrally located between the major conurbations of Manchester and Liverpool and is ideally placed to access the UK’s transport network and be the location of choice for business and residential development. The West Coast Mainline train services stop in Wigan giving rail access to London and Glasgow within two hours. Manchester and Liverpool airports are a 35 minute drive or rail journey away. Commuting by rail and road is easy to many locations in the North West.

Wigan plays an important role in the region in terms of a location for living and employment. Our travel to work statistics show that approximately 60,000 people commute to work locations in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire, utilising the good rail and road linkages. The number of people commuting into the borough is half those who commute out and approximately 65% of them are from outside of Greater Manchester.

Enhanced connectivity is key to supporting growth in the borough. The re-regulation of bus services is a big opportunity to enhance the relationship between workers and employment locations.

**Demographics**

**Total Population:** 321,000

- Population increase: 5.2% (2001-2014)
- Working Age Population: 202,800
- Economically Active: 80.3%
- Residents in Employment: 75.2%
  - Employees: 66.4%
  - Self Employed: 8.6%
- Aim to grow population by 20,000+ over next 10 years.

**Average Annual Earnings**

- Residence Based: £21,064
- Workplace Based: £18,619

On average local residents commuting outside the borough to work earn £2,445 more than those who stay in the borough.

**Transport - Commuting Patterns**

- **59,800** Wigan residents commute out of the borough to find work on a daily basis.
- **27,614** residents commute in to Wigan to work leaving a net outward commute of 32,196

83% of journey’s are made by car.

Wigan residents commuting outside the borough to work earn £2,445 more than those who stay in the borough.
There are currently over 9,000 businesses in the borough supporting nearly 120,000 jobs. Whilst a high proportion of our businesses are small, we also have major employers such as Heinz, Wincantons, AB World Foods, Hovis, Tesco and ASDA. We want all our businesses to grow, prosper and employ more people.

The borough’s strong manufacturing base will continue to drive economic growth together with the diversification of the economy with technology and digital growth. Wigan Borough also has some of the best energy efficient business parks which provide a robust base for further logistics and distribution growth around our motorways.

The main towns of Wigan, Leigh and Ashton offer attractive modern retail, leisure and employment opportunities which are growth drivers for the local economy. Wigan’s economy is currently worth £4,201 million. This is currently projected to grow by 2.3% to £5,255m by 2024 but we believe this could be more by adopting the proactive approach to growth and economic development set out in this prospectus.

Wigan borough scores highly in terms of ‘livability’, with high quality housing to buy or rent, vibrant market towns and friendly communities, good schools and colleges, lots of green space and canal-side walks to enjoy and easy connections to the rest of the northwest for work, leisure and shopping.

Wigan’s economy is expected to grow 2.3% p.a. to £5.255bn by 2024. This forecasted growth is driven by significant growth in the business, financial and professional service sector, accounting for 36% of total growth.
With further population growth forecasts, the borough needs adults of working age to be healthy, financially secure and engaged in work or training. We want to attract more people to live in the borough with good quality skills, taking advantage of our location in the centre of the north west. We also want to support our population to age well and to ensure that we have a good range of affordable housing.

The borough has a housing stock of 142,000 homes covering a good range of property types and locations. Our house prices are below the Greater Manchester average, making living in Wigan a more affordable proposition.

91% of our schools are rated good or outstanding, providing an excellent launch pad for our students to be successful in their chosen careers. The borough’s Primary Ofsted Figure (% of good/outstanding schools) is 93%; this places Wigan 3rd best in the north west and 14th in the whole country.

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We are working with the private sector to bring forward a good range of employment and housing sites and are planning for more. The demand for good employment sites continues with Poundland’s Distribution Centre and Nice Pak International recently locating to the borough, bringing multi million pound investments and creating hundreds of jobs. We are planning for further sites in the borough to take advantage of the M6 Motorway and East Lancashire road corridors.

We are already working with many of the major house-builders to create new residential communities. Our Planning Core Strategy sets out plans to build 10,000 new homes over the next 10 years and the demand for new housing sites in Wigan is likely to increase as the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework progresses.

Wigan Borough intends to play a key role in accommodating the significant growth anticipated in the region over the next 10 years.

Come and join us in this venture.
OBJECTIVE 1
ENABLE GROWTH

GROWING THE ECONOMY, BUSINESSES AND CREATING JOBS THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WORLD CLASS BUSINESS SUPPORT SYSTEM, INNOVATION, EXPORTS AND INWARD INVESTMENT.
Delivery Mechanisms

1. Promote and position Wigan Borough as a key place to do business and market Wigan Works as a brand for business.
2. Work closely with our partners across the North West region to maximise our opportunities for business growth.
3. Develop programmes to support our growth sectors, logistics, manufacturing, health and social care, digital, and professional/financial services.
4. Ensure a good portfolio of employment sites which are attractive to the market and ready for development. In particular bring forward opportunities for further sites along the M6 and East Lancashire Road.
5. Promote development sites to local agents, developers and partners to accelerate business investment, growth and development, to proactively encourage job creation and employment opportunities.
6. Develop a package of support to encourage entrepreneurship and an enterprise culture, within business and schools, to help those who are not in work to set up new enterprises.
7. Continue to support community organisations and social enterprises to flourish through the delivery of the Deal for Communities programme with a view to inspiring new business and job opportunities.
8. Create more incubator space to support business start-ups and micro-enterprises, and other small units for their succession and growth.
9. Work with independent businesses, retailers, investors and partners to transform our town centres as engines of the local economy and places for employment, leisure, tourism and shopping.
10. Support and develop Education Business Partnerships to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship across the curriculum and strengthen community business links for career and employment opportunities.
11. Strengthen and enhance partnerships between the public and the private sector in order to support our growth ambitions and develop business champions and ambassadors to promote pride and belief in the borough.
12. Promote business to business support, linking supply chains and enabling shared learning through a range of networking opportunities, Business Expos and other mechanisms.
13. Strengthen collaborative relationships with the Manchester Growth Company to facilitate access to finance, wider business support and specialist advice.
14. Use the business engagement team to provide an enhanced businesses advice, support and after-care offer to new and existing businesses.
OBJECTIVE 2
SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

Equippping our people to take advantage of work opportunities in and around the borough and to create better lives for themselves and their families through employment.

AMBITIOUS PRIORITIES

› Quality employment for all able to work
› Strongly-performing education sector
› Up-skill people to succeed
› Training meets business needs and the borough's growth sectors - now and in the future
› Skills for life long learning
Delivery Mechanisms

1. Ensure we maintain a quality education system throughout the borough which is ambitious for our students.
2. Raise aspirations from an early age through the delivery of comprehensive and quality careers advice to match employment opportunities.
3. Work with training providers and colleges to ensure the local training offer meets the skills gaps identified through local and regional business intelligence and to ensure that quality provision meets the highest standards.
4. Continue to deliver community based skills and learning, building self-reliance through the establishment of job clubs and peer support networks, and encouraging business start-ups through the promotion of self-employment, micro-businesses and kick start opportunities.
5. Promote apprenticeships to local employers and schools to harness fresh talent and enable people of all ages to realise their potential.
6. Promote and advocate a new independent online information and advice centre, WiganWorks.com to share best practice about options for training, recruitment and local employment opportunities.
7. Develop work experience and volunteering opportunities with businesses across the borough, to help ensure people have experience of the workplace; to build confidence and develop skills to enable people to move closer to being ‘work ready’ and to increase peoples chances of gaining employment.
8. Embed the behaviours of the Deal - be positive, be courageous, be accountable – and develop a campaign to encourage businesses to invest in employees’ skills development.
9. Develop and expand mentoring programmes to ensure businesses harness the knowledge and skills of the mature workforce for succession planning, training of younger employees and internal career development opportunities.
10. Develop a skills offer to attract inward investment by ensuring education and training is tailored to match the borough’s growth sectors, to up-skill people to ensure they are job ready, and ensure recruitment opportunities are prioritised for targeted groups.
11. Encourage businesses to consider living wages rather than national minimum to provide realistic employment opportunities to encourage more people to come off benefit support and have sufficient financial support to ensure sustained employment.
12. Deliver effective employment and skills programmes with harder to reach and more vulnerable groups, addressing the wider determinants of worklessness (especially ex-military veterans, those with mental health, disabilities, drugs and alcohol, social isolation, debt and homelessness concerns) to ensure an holistic approach to supporting people to access work and bring them closer to the employment market.
13. Work with colleagues across Greater Manchester to support the wider public service reform agenda; to develop, enhance and embed integrated employment pathways into wider services that place individuals and communities at the heart; to develop and enhance programmes; such as the Live well pilot and Working Well expansion to support and address complex dependency and worklessness; and, to prioritise opportunities for those not in education or employment or training.
OBJECTIVE 3
CONNECTED INFRASTRUCTURE

DEVELOP A PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ENABLES US TO REACH OUR GROWTH POTENTIAL BY ENSURING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS ARE IN PLACE TO SUPPORT WIGAN’S AMBITIONS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH.

AMBITIOUS PRIORITIES

› QUALITY TRANSPORT SYSTEMS ACROSS, TO AND THROUGH THE BOROUGH
› EXCELLENT CITY CONNECTIONS
› CAPITALISE ON THE STRATEGIC LOCATION OF THE BOROUGH AT THE HEART OF THE NORTHWEST
› OPTIMISE #DIGITALWIGAN
› HIGH SPEED RAIL CONNECTIVITY
› WELL CONNECTED COMMUNITIES
Delivery Mechanisms

1. Improve superfast broadband across the borough to reduce and remove white spots for residents and businesses across the borough.

2. Promote and develop enhanced wifi coverage borough-wide, through school and community wifi hubs and local business clusters (including town centres and business parks).

3. Improve access from the motorway networks to employment and housing sites through the implementation of the A49 and M58 link roads and promoting new connections to the M61 through Bolton.

4. Improve the East-West transport infrastructure across the borough to reduce congestion, improve commuter journey times, provide efficient road freight routes, and ensure residential and business developments are better connected.

5. Enhance the connectivity of the borough on the West Coast mainline with fast links to London and other cities, including support for high speed rail (HS2/HS3).

6. Develop Wigan Interchange as a focal point for commuter and business travel.

7. Seek substantial improvements to rail and bus infrastructure, ticketing and timetabling to enhance access to key employment destinations.

8. Maximise the opportunities of rail freight.

9. Ensure key transport corridors are managed and maintained through efficient network management in order to reduce congestion and keep travel times to a minimum.

10. Work with partners across Greater Manchester and beyond such as, Transport for Greater Manchester and Network Rail to capitalise on infrastructure opportunities and funding.

11. Develop a well-connected, safe and accessible cycling network, both on highway and off road to embrace a culture of commuting by bike and for leisure activities.

12. Improve the gateways to the borough, with new investment in the public realm to ensure entry points are welcoming and inviting.
OBJECTIVE 4
GREAT PLACES AND COMMUNITIES

BUILDING PRIDE AND BELIEF IN WIGAN AS THE BOROUGH OF CHOICE TO LIVE AND ENJOY AN EXCELLENT QUALITY OF LIFE.

AMBITIOUS PRIORITIES

› STRONG COMMUNITIES AND PRIDE IN THE PLACE
› ATTRACT PEOPLE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT THE BOROUGH
› ACCELERATE HOUSING GROWTH IN THE BOROUGH
› ENSURE A WIDE RANGE OF HOMES IN KEEPING WITH OUR NEEDS
Delivery Mechanisms

1. Market Wigan as a place of choice to live, work and visit.
2. Ensure a good portfolio of housing sites which are attractive to the market and ready for development.
3. Proactively work with a range of partners including developers, landowners, housing providers to accelerate rates of development and address issues of market viability.
4. Work with Greater Manchester partners, Homes and Communities Agency and other public sector agencies (including health) to maximise opportunities, funding and encourage development.
5. Focus the council's expertise, land and limited financial resources on stimulating and unlocking priority developments and major sites.
6. To use the Strategic Housing Market assessment and other housing needs information to ensure we are fully aware of our housing market and its development requirements.
7. Regenerate areas of poor housing to improve the overall housing offer.

8. Deliver the Connecting Housing with Care Programme to support independent living and self-reliance.
9. Deliver the Affordable Housing Programme and examine mechanisms to promote further affordable housing.
10. Ensure public sector land is released to support housing development.
11. Promote and continue to improve Wigan's unique green and diverse environment through the delivery of the Greenheart strategy and other environmental improvements.
12. Promote the vitality of our town centres and communities through events and activities to entertain and create a feel-good factor in the borough.
13. Develop the borough's heritage, sport and recreational assets and opportunities to stimulate leisure, tourism and the visitor economy.
14. Continue to work with our vibrant and diverse communities, building on assets and growing capacity through the Deal for Communities, Borough in Bloom, Neighbourhood Plans and other programmes that build pride and community spirit.
to create wealth and prosperity for local people and communities; and to promote Wigan as a key location for employment and for people to make their home.

The prospectus has four main objectives:

1. Growing the economy, businesses and creating jobs
2. Equipping local people to take advantage of work opportunities in and around the borough and create better lives for themselves and their families through employment.
3. Ensuring the right connections are in place to support Wigan's ambitions for economic growth
4. Improving the supply of good quality housing across the borough to ensure a balanced housing market offer and choice and to improve access to affordable housing

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