

Wigan Borough Local Plan: Publication version

Guidance notes for the completion of the Comments form

The Publication version of the Wigan Borough Local Plan is published in accordance with legal requirements in order for comments to be made prior to its submission to the Government for independent public examination.

The legal basis for the public examination is to consider whether the plan complies with legal requirements and is 'sound'.

The Comments form is in two parts:

- Part A for personal details (and agent details where necessary)
- Part B for your comments.

For those completing the paper version of the Comments form, if you wish to make comments on multiple parts of the Local Plan, please complete separate Part B sheets for each policy or part of the plan that you wish to submit comments. Additional sheets may be used to provide additional information but please be as precise as possible.

Part A – Personal / Agent Details

Please complete this section fully as it is not possible for anonymous comments to be considered. Comments will be published on the council's website and will be submitted alongside the Local Plan for independent examination. Signatures and contact details will be removed from all published responses.

Please supply an email address if you have one as it will allow us to keep you fully informed about the plan process. Everyone who submits comments will be added to the council's local plan database (if not already included).

Part B – Your comments

Name or Organisation - This requirement only applies when completing the paper form as it allows us to identify your comments, particularly if you make more than one comment.

Question 1 - Please specify which section of the Local Plan your comments relate to, either a policy number (e.g. Policy H1), section name (e.g. Vision and strategic objectives), or a paragraph number.

Legal compliance (questions 2 & 3)

The Inspector will first check that the plan meets the legal requirements for plan-making before moving on to the tests of soundness.

You should consider the following before making comments on legal compliance:

- The Local Plan should be included in the current Local Development Scheme and the key stages should have been followed. If the plan is not in the current scheme it should not have been published for comments. The Local Development Scheme should be on the council's website.
- The process of community involvement for the Local Plan should be in general accordance with the council's Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out the council's strategy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of Local Development Documents, including local plans.
- The Plan should comply with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. On publication, the council must publish the documents prescribed in the Regulations, making them available on its website and at its principal offices. The council must also notify the various persons and organisations set out in the Regulations and any persons who have requested to be notified.
- The council is required to provide a Sustainability Appraisal when it publishes a plan, which often forms part of an Integrated Assessment (IA). The IA identifies the process by which the appraisal has been carried out, the baseline information used to inform the process, and the outcomes of that process. It is a tool for appraising the plan to ensure it reflects social, environmental and economic factors.

Duty to Co-operate

The requirement to undertake the 'duty to co-operate' ended on the 25 March 2026. As a result, any plan submitted for public examination on or after this date will no longer be examined for compliance against this duty.

However, the council has continued to work with the spirit of the former duty and has published 'Duty to Co-operate' statements for information, as part of our evidence base, to support the local plan.

Soundness

Soundness is explained in paragraph 36 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Inspector must be satisfied that the Plan is:

- **Positively prepared:** This means that the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.
- **Justified:** The plan should be the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives, based on a proportionate, robust and credible evidence base.
- **Effective:** The plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities, sound infrastructure delivery planning and no regulatory or national planning barriers. It should be flexible to changing circumstances.
- **Consistent with national policy:** The plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.

If you think the content of the plan is not sound because it does not include a policy on a particular issue, you should go through the following steps before making comments:

- Is the issue already covered specifically by national planning policy?
- Is the issue already covered by another policy in this plan, or the Places for Everyone Plan?
- If the policy is not covered elsewhere, in what way is the plan unsound without the policy?
- If the plan is unsound without the policy, what should the policy say?

General Advice (questions 4 - 6)

If you wish to make comments seeking a change to the plan or part of a plan, you should set out clearly in what way you consider the plan or part of the plan is not legally compliant or sound, having regard as appropriate to the soundness criteria set out above. Your comments should be supported by evidence wherever possible. It will be helpful to your case if you also say precisely how you think the plan should be changed.

You should succinctly provide all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your comments and your suggested changes. Any further submissions after the plan has been submitted for public examination may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters, issues and questions he or she identifies.

Where groups or individuals share a common view on the plan, it would be helpful to make a single submission which represents that view, rather than many separate submissions repeating the same points. In such cases the group should indicate how many people it is representing and how the comments have been authorised.

Please consider carefully how you would like your comments to be dealt with in the examination: whether you are content to rely on your written comments, or whether you wish to take part in hearing session(s). Only people who are seeking a change to the plan have a right to be heard at the examination hearing session(s), if they so request. In considering this, please note that written and oral comments carry the same weight and will be given equal consideration in the examination process.

All comments must be submitted by **5pm on Wednesday 21 October 2026**. All comments received on the Publication version of the Local Plan will be submitted alongside the plan to the appointed independent Planning Inspector.

The examination process is likely to include public hearings. The Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who wish to participate. If you would like to appear and speak at the hearings, please state this and explain in the space provided why you consider it is necessary.

If you are submitting comments on the Local Plan in writing by using the Local Plan Comments form, please complete and return to the following address: **Wigan Council, Strategic Planning, Places Directorate, PO Box 100, Wigan, WN1 3DS**.

Please make sure that comments are posted in sufficient time to be delivered to the Council ahead of the deadline.

A limited supply of paper copies of the Local Plan comments form will be available in all borough libraries during the consultation period.

Alternatively, you can view and print a copy of the form on the Council website at www.wigan.gov.uk/futurewigan.