

Integrated Assessment of the Wigan Borough Local Plan

Integrated Assessment Report

Wigan Council

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Quality information

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Table of contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	IA explained	1
2.	What is the plan seeking to achieve?	2
2.1	Why a new Local Plan?	2
3.	What is the scope of the IA?	5
3.1	Introduction.....	5
3.2	Sustainability objectives	5
Part 1: What has plan-making involved		7
4.	Introduction (to Part 1)	8
4.1	Background	8
4.2	Issues and Opportunities Consultation document	8
4.3	Options and Preferences Consultation Document.....	8
4.4	Initial draft Plan Consultation	8
5.	Policy preferences and options	10
5.1	Background	10
5.2	Strategic issues	10
5.3	Summary of appraisal findings	12
6.	Employment site options	15
7.	Employment strategy options	59
Part 3: What are the IA Findings at this Stage?		83
8.	Introduction (to Part 3)	84
9.	Appraisal of the Draft Plan	85
10.	Mitigation and Enhancement.....	117
11.	Monitoring and next steps	121
Appendix A Options and Preferences Appraisal		124
Appendix B Policy Screening Matrix.....		143

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned by Wigan Council to lead on an Integrated Assessment (IA) in support of the new Wigan Borough Local Plan.
- 1.1.2 This document is the IA Report, which describes the steps within the integrated assessment that have been undertaken throughout the plan-making process. The report contains all the information required to satisfy legislative requirements and is a key piece of evidence.

1.2 IA explained

- 1.2.1 IA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and alternatives, with a view to minimising adverse effects and maximising the positives. IA involves undertaking the legally required Sustainability Appraisal (SA)¹ process alongside: Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), which is undertaken to discharge the Public Sector Equality Duty; Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to have regard to health impacts and promote the reduction of health inequality.
- 1.2.2 To ensure meaningful integration between these different impact assessment tools and therefore avoid duplication, the processes are combined and presented in one report (rather than a series of separate reports).
- 1.2.3 It is a requirement that SA is undertaken in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which were prepared to transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. There is established practice and guidance in relation to the SA of Local Plans, and therefore this process is a solid foundation upon which the Integrated Assessment is based (drawing in the features of HIA and EqIA as appropriate).
- 1.2.4 In line with regulations and guidance, a report (in this case known as the IA Report) must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that essentially 'identifies, describes, and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be considered alongside consultation responses when finalising the plan.
- 1.2.5 More specifically, the IA Report should answer two key questions -
 - What has Plan-making / IA involved up to this point?
 - including with regards to consideration of 'reasonable alternatives'
 - What are the IA findings at this stage?
 - i.e., in relation to the draft plan

¹ Since provision was made through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it has been understood that local planning authorities must carry out a process of Sustainability Appraisal alongside plan-making. The centrality of IA to Local Plan-making is emphasised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 require that an IA Report is published for consultation alongside the 'Proposed Submission' plan document.

2. What is the plan seeking to achieve?

2.1 Why a new Local Plan?

- 2.1.1 A new Local Plan is needed to reflect and update the challenges and opportunities facing the borough, including meeting housing needs, delivering an improved economic offer, reinventing town centres, creating thriving communities, the delivery of key and supporting infrastructure, and protecting the environment.
- 2.1.2 It is also necessary for Local Plans to be reviewed at least every five years to ensure they are up to date.
- 2.1.3 The new Local Plan presents an opportunity to address changing national policy and legislation and reflect spatially the Council's key strategies:
- 2.1.4 The new Local Plan will look forward to 2039 replacing the 2013 Local Plan Core Strategy and saved policies in the 2006 Unitary Development Plan.

2.2 Outline of the Plan

- 2.2.1 The strategic objectives of the Local Plan are listed below, which are important in the context of defining reasonable alternatives.

Objective 1: People

- 2.2.2 To ensure that new development delivers environments that help people lead healthier lifestyles and supports our communities to fulfil their potential.

Objective 2: Homes

- 2.2.3 To ensure that the borough's housing stock is able to meet the needs of our existing and future residents, in homes that are of the right type, quality and affordability, and that people are able to live independently for longer.

Objective 3: Jobs

- 2.2.4 To take greater advantage of the borough's strategic location and physical and human assets, to foster a more resilient and diverse economy that works for local people, where businesses choose to invest, remain and grow, and where everyone can realise their potential and talents.

Objective 4: Transport

- 2.2.5 To address transport-related barriers to economic participation and our residents' ability to access opportunities, and to ensure that transport is an enabler of economic growth so that our towns and neighbourhoods can thrive and flourish for those who live and work in them.

Objective 5: Places

- 2.2.6 To ensure that new development is genuinely integrated into our places, reflecting the attributes that make our towns and neighbourhoods distinctive, is connected to neighbouring communities, transport links and jobs, and is supportive of our civic infrastructure.

Objective 6: Town and local centres

- 2.2.7 To regenerate and improve our town and local centres, responding to and celebrating their diverse assets, roles and identities, such that all of our towns and neighbourhoods have a thriving and flourishing town or local centre at their heart, with a suitable range of uses, services and attractions.

Objective 7: Environment

- 2.2.8 To protect, enhance and restore our unique natural environment and be at the forefront of nature recovery, particularly in and around our internationally and nationally protected areas, the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh and Chat Moss.

Objective 8: Climate change

- 2.2.9 To ensure that development mitigates and adapts to climate change by securing low carbon and renewable energy opportunities, managing flood risk and promoting the efficient use of water resources and water quality.

2.3 Relationship with other plans and programmes

- 2.3.1 The Wigan Borough Local Plan is being prepared in the context of a range of relevant plans, programmes and policies. Those of particular note are discussed in this section, with a more detailed consideration presented within the scoping report (looking at a wider range of plans, programmes and policies internationally, nationally, regionally and locally).
- 2.3.2 Firstly, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the national policy context and principles that Local Plans must follow, ensuring they deliver sustainable development while reflecting local needs.
- 2.3.3 The Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan forms part of the development plan for Wigan Borough. The PfE Plan is a joint planning document for all the Greater Manchester authorities (except for Stockport). It provides a coordinated approach across the sub region, and sets out a strategy for growth, introducing strategic policies and sites. The following four strategic sites are allocated in Wigan Borough, which help to meet local housing and employment needs:
- M6 Junction 25, Wigan
 - North of Mosley Common
 - Pocket Nook, Lowton
 - West of Gibfield, Atherton
- 2.3.4 The Wigan Borough Local Plan needs to be in general conformity with the PfE Plan.

2.3.5 The development plan for Wigan Borough also comprises:

- Saved policies within the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2013)
- Saved policies within the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan (April 2006)
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan (April 2012)
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan (April 2013)
- Standish Neighbourhood Plan (July 2019)
- Golborne and Lowton West Neighbourhood Plan (July 2023)
- Abram Neighbourhood Plan (January 2025)

2.3.6 The saved policies within the Local Plan Core Strategy and the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan will be superseded by the new Wigan Borough Local Plan.

2.3.7 The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 (published February 2017, updated January 2021) also provides important context for the Wigan Borough Local Plan as it sets out a range of principles, priorities and actions for Wigan that will influence spatial planning. This includes provision for transport infrastructure across the Wigan-Bolton growth corridor (now known as NorthFold), improvements to stations, town centre accessibility and active travel measures. Work is underway on the preparation of a new strategy – the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2050, along with the Delivery Plan 2027-2037 – which will replace the 2040 strategy once published.

3. What is the scope of the IA?

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the IA, i.e., the sustainability objectives that should be a focus of (and provide a broad methodological framework for) the integrated assessment. Further information on the scope of the IA - i.e., a more detailed review of sustainability issues/objectives as highlighted through a review of the sustainability 'context' and 'baseline' - is presented in the IA Scoping Report.
- 3.1.2 The SEA Regulations require that "When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the Environmental Report [i.e., the IA scope], the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies". In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England. A Scoping Report was sent to the statutory consultees for comment in May 2023. The responses received have been considered and amendments made to the baseline information, policy context and IA Framework if deemed necessary. It should be noted that scoping is not a static process, and further updates can be made as the IA (and plan making) process progresses to reflect important changes in evidence, baseline information and policy context.

3.2 Sustainability objectives

- 3.2.1 Table 3.1 presents the sustainability objectives - grouped under 13 topic headings - established through scoping.
- 3.2.2 Taken together, the sustainability objectives (presented in Table 3.1) and supporting criteria provide a methodological 'framework' for appraisal. Full detail is provided in the accompanying scoping report.

Table 3.1 IA Topics and Objectives

IA topic	Sustainability Objectives
Housing	To provide an appropriate quantity and quality of new homes to meet needs.
Health and Community	Enable and support people to be active, safe, and healthy by ensuring good access to a range of services / facilities and the natural environment, and creation of well designed, inclusive, and beautiful places.
Equality and Diversity	To provide equality of opportunity for people with a protected characteristic whilst celebrating diversity.
Climate Change	To adapt to, mitigate and be resilient to the impacts of climate change.
Water	To positively address the issues of water quality and quantity and manage flood risk.
Environmental Quality	To minimise the adverse impacts of development on environmental resources and amenity.
Historic Environment	To protect and enhance the quality, integrity, and distinctiveness of the historic environment of Wigan.
Landscape and Townscape	To protect and enhance the quality, integrity and distinctiveness of the borough's landscapes and townscapes.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, ensuring that current ecological networks and future improvements in habitat connectivity are not compromised.
Resource Efficiency	To improve resource efficiency in design, construction, and operation, increase energy generation from renewable sources and support the circular economy.
Land and Soil Resources	Protect, preserve, and promote the efficient use of land, soil, and other natural resources.
Transportation	To support the delivery of an improved and integrated transport system that provides good alternative choices to travel by car.
Economy	To support the development of an innovative, diverse, competitive, higher value and low-carbon economy locally that supports job growth and good access to jobs training and education.
Town and Local Centres	To improve the vitality and viability of our town and local centres.

Part 1: What has plan-making involved

4. Introduction (to Part 1)

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 This section of the report sets out the work undertaken by the Council to date.
- 4.1.2 As set out in Chapter 2, the Council has been developing and preparing the evidence base to inform the new Local Plan. Several stages of engagement have been undertaken, and the Council is now consulting on the Publication Version of the plan ahead of the Submission.

4.2 Issues and Opportunities Consultation document

- 4.2.1 In October – December 2022, the Council held an extensive public focused consultation on Issues and Opportunities, primarily using a questionnaire.
- 4.2.2 The consultation was organised by key themes and sought to invite residents to have their say on the future of the borough.
- 4.2.3 Over 1,400 residents completed the questionnaire, with a range of common messages being put forward for the Council to take into consideration.

4.3 Options and Preferences Consultation Document

- 4.3.1 The Options and Preferences document built upon the issues and opportunities consultation, setting out the Council's preferred approach to policy development under a range of themes.
- 4.3.2 Policy preferences and 'options' for addressing key issues and opportunities were presented across seven different themes.
- 4.3.3 The document also set out questions, accompanying the options, in order to focus responses on the key issues going forward.

4.4 Initial draft Plan Consultation

- 4.4.1 At this stage, the Council built upon the evidence base to develop an initial draft Local Plan consisting of a proposed strategy, site allocations and supporting policies.
- 4.4.2 As part of the plan-making process, the Council explored whether there are reasonable alternatives in relation to the strategy for employment growth. This is an important part of an integrated assessment, because options should be considered and appraised in a timely manner (i.e. to inform decision making). At this stage of plan-making, the focus was on alternatives in relation to employment land strategy.

- 4.4.3 An Interim IA Report was prepared at this stage to report on findings (which are now replicated in this full IA Report).
- 4.4.4 The following sections of the IA Report discuss the options that have been considered by the Council and to present an appraisal of those that are determined to be reasonable against the IA Framework. This includes the consideration and appraisal of different site and strategic options.

5. Policy preferences and options

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 The Options and Preferences document set out the key borough-wide challenges that need to be addressed through the new Wigan Borough Local Plan (in the context of the then emerging, now adopted, Places for Everyone Plan).
- 5.1.2 The consultation document set out, under a series of themes, some of the planning issues the Local Plan will need to address and identified options for how to respond to these. The themes were as follows:
- 1: Homes
 - 2: Jobs
 - 3: Town and Local Centres
 - 4: Transport
 - 5: Places
 - 6: Environment
 - 7: People
- 5.1.3 Apart from Jobs (which is dealt with in the following chapters), it was determined that none of the options presented for the other themes constituted reasonable alternatives. The options were largely procedural and not strategic spatial options that needed consideration through the IA.
- 5.1.4 To help inform policy development, a high-level appraisal was undertaken to provide a discussion about the emerging preferences (and on policy 'options' if appropriate).
- 5.1.5 The appraisal findings at this stage were set out in an Interim IA Report, which was consulted upon alongside the Options and Preferences Consultation Document.
- 5.1.6 Given that the Plan has since progressed, the appraisal findings in relation to these early plan approaches have been superseded by an appraisal of the actual draft Plan policies (see section 9).
- 5.1.7 The appraisal findings from this interim stage are summarised below. The complete assessment can be found in **Appendix A**

5.2 Strategic issues

Employment

- 5.2.1 In light of the evidence of employment land need, the Council deemed it necessary to explore options for economic growth in further detail.
- 5.2.2 Chapters 6 and 7 of the IA Report set out how the IA has considered and appraised site allocation options and strategic alternatives that combine these options.

Housing

- 5.2.3 The Council has determined that there are no reasonable alternatives in terms of housing for the Wigan Borough Local Plan. However, the delivery of housing land is an important strategic factor that is typically a focus of Integrated Assessment work for Local Plans; it therefore warrants further discussion here to provide outline reasons as to why no alternatives are considered to be reasonable.
- 5.2.4 The 'Places for Everyone' Development Plan Document (PfE), of which Wigan is one of nine participating boroughs, states that Wigan requires an average of 972 new homes every year for the 15 years to 2039. The PfE sets the context for the Wigan Borough Local Plan and is therefore the basis upon which the Council has explored options for housing delivery. The Wigan Borough Local Plan relates to the period 2022-2039 and equates to a total of 16,527 dwellings.
- 5.2.5 The Council considered whether the housing requirement for Wigan Borough should be amended in light of the changes to the standard methodology housing need calculations (introduced alongside the NPPF update in December 2024). This resulted in a much higher requirement figure for Wigan compared to that in the PfE (1,418 dwellings per annum). However, the NPPF provides transitional arrangements for the Greater Manchester authorities covered by the Places for Everyone Joint Plan. At para 234 (c) Annex 1 (Implementation) it is stated that the new framework will not apply where a joint local plan has been adopted since 12th March 2020. In conclusion, the Council believe it is unreasonable to Plan for a different housing target to that set out within Policy JP-H1 of the PfE Joint Plan.
- 5.2.6 Given the forthcoming changes to the local plan preparation process and the uncertainty about Wigan's likely housing needs should a Greater Manchester Spatial Development Strategy be progressed, it is premature to set a strategy for housing growth within this Local Plan. However, the Council have committed to an early plan update that will ensure such issues can be explored and addressed in an appropriate manner.
- 5.2.7 The Council also considered whether there are reasonable alternative ways in which it can deliver the housing strategy set out in the PfE Policy JP-H1. The approach within the draft Plan relies upon a range of sources as set out below.

	Homes
Completions 2022 - 2024	2,554
Sites allocated in the Places for Everyone Plan	2,199
Sites allocated in the Wigan Borough Local Plan	4,295
SHLAA supply: large sites	8,845
SHLAA supply: small sites	253
Small sites windfall allowance	540
Total identified supply	18,686

- 5.2.8 The Council believes that the sources of supply identified are reliable and realistic and there is confidence that the housing target can be met without the need to release Green Belt land for housing. A total of 2,159 more homes than required is identified in the trajectory to provide flexibility in supply.
- 5.2.9 This provides further confidence that the housing requirement can be met in the Plan period without the need to consider alternative sources (i.e. land in the Green Belt.)
- 5.2.10 In this respect, there are no exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release, and thus no reasonable alternatives to the proposed strategy for housing.
- 5.2.11 The Council has also considered whether different strategic sites could be allocated than those identified in the draft Plan. However, this would essentially mean releasing new Green Belt land and abandoning support for sites that have already been tested through the Plan making system and are key to regeneration strategies for Wigan Borough. This approach is considered to be unreasonable.

5.3 Summary of appraisal findings

- 5.3.1 Below is a summary of the IA findings for each sustainability objective in relation to the Options and Preferences document considered 'as a whole'. It is important to remember that the high-level nature of the policies at this stage made it difficult to conclude in absolute terms with regards to significance. Therefore, the focus was on identifying whether effects are likely to be broadly positive, negative, neutral and / or if there are uncertainties.

Housing

- 5.3.2 The new Local Plan is guided by the Places for Everyone Plan with regards to housing growth, and the current strategy and identified housing supply is sufficient to meet identified needs. In this respect, the Wigan Borough Local Plan is unlikely to have significant implications with regards to housing. However, the stated preferences seek to influence the types, tenures and quality of housing, which is likely to have **positive effects**.

Health and Community

- 5.3.3 A range of policy preferences are included that ought to have **positive effects** on health and wellbeing, particularly those that support active travel, well served communities, an appropriate housing mix and environmental improvements.

Equality and Diversity

- 5.3.4 Measures which support town centre regeneration, vibrancy and accessibility are likely to benefit minority groups that reside in or close to such areas, including ethnic minorities. There are also likely to be some **positive effects** in relation to housing delivery and access to employment. It is noted however that there may be community resistance to large scale change of town centres, which could bring some **negatives**.

Climate Change

- 5.3.5 Several preferred approaches are likely to have **positive effects** with regards to climate change mitigation and resilience. This includes a focus on the reuse of land and buildings, support for active travel and sustainable transport, the enhancement of green infrastructure and the need for high quality design.
- 5.3.6 There is a degree of **uncertainty** with regards to the potential effects of employment growth.

Water

- 5.3.7 Some key measures are likely to have **positive effects** with regards to water quality and flooding. Of particular importance is the proposed requirement to reduce surface water run off rates and promote the use of natural drainage.

Environmental Quality

- 5.3.8 Potential **mixed effects** are identified at this stage with regards to environmental quality. On one hand there could be increased noise, dust and traffic in town and local centres in the short term, whilst in the longer-term, there could be improved public realm and improved air quality. There is **uncertainty** regarding the effects of employment growth on air quality.

Historic Environment

- 5.3.9 There is potential for mixed effects on the setting and the significance of a range of heritage assets. However, given that there is a conservation-led approach to regeneration and development proposed in the town and local centres (and for selected heritage assets) it is more likely that **positive effects** will remain in the long term.

Landscape and Townscape

- 5.3.10 The proposed preferred policy approaches are likely to have **positive effects** upon landscape and townscape as there is a desire to achieve enhancements to the built environment as well as better managing changes of use in the countryside.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.3.11 There are likely to be **positive effects** with regards to biodiversity, as there is a heavy focus on achieving biodiversity net gain, enhancement of strategic wildlife sites and corridors and urban greening.

Resource Efficiency

- 5.3.12 The preferred approaches touch upon the need for resource efficient developments. Whilst **positive**, there are no specific measures that are likely to lead to significant effects in this respect.

Land and Soil Resources

- 5.3.13 There is a focus on the reuse and regeneration of town and local centres, which is positive with regards to the efficient use of land and natural resources.

- 5.3.14 With regards to soil and land, several preferences are likely to have some **positive effects** by promoting biodiversity net gain and green infrastructure enhancement.

Transportation

- 5.3.15 The potential for mixed effects is identified. On one hand, there is a focus on making accessible town and local centres that are well served by public transport and active travel. There is also a heavy focus on active travel and enhancements to bus and rail infrastructure. This is likely to have **positive effects** in terms of reducing congestion and the need to travel by car.
- 5.3.16 However, there is also support for strategic road infrastructure that will encourage continued use of private vehicles. Some forms of employment growth may also be reliant on road transport, which together could lead to **negative effects**.

Economy

- 5.3.17 There is commitment to enhancing opportunities for traditional and growth sectors, including in the 'green' economy. There is also support given to infrastructure enhancement to help support sustainable economic growth. In this sense, **positive effects** are expected, but there is a need to explore further whether the existing employment land stock is sufficient to cater for Wigan's ambitions, as well as identifying opportunities.

Town and Local Centres

- 5.3.18 There are several policy preferences that should serve to improve the physical appearance and function of town and local centres. A focus on regeneration, active and sustainable travel and high-quality design should help lead to more attractive places to live, visit and work. Overall, it is likely that **positive effects** will arise.

6. Employment site options

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment (2024) concludes that whilst the borough's existing employment areas are well occupied and provide a valuable economic function, more employment sites of the right quality and in the right places are needed to meet modern business requirements. This is due to a range of factors, including:

- Businesses in the borough want to grow but some premises are outdated or in the wrong place.
- There is a lack of sites with the right attributes to accommodate growth and demand in key employment sectors.
- There is a high degree of out-commuting.
- Competition from neighbouring authorities is strong.
- There is a need to address inequalities in the borough.

6.1.2 The Council recognises these issues and explored potentially suitable sites to address these issues. As part of this process, the Council invited landowners to submit sites that could be suitable to address such needs as part of previous consultation on the emerging plan. The following eight sites have been identified as potentially suitable, and these have been explored through the Integrated Assessment, with the findings presented in this section of the report:

1. Land North of Moss Industrial Estate, Aspull Common
2. Land East of Warrington Road, Wigan
3. Land north of M6 Junction 26, Wigan
4. Bridgewater West, Astley
5. Drummers Lane, Bryn
6. South of Astley Point, Astley
7. South of Pennington
8. Land west of Winwick Lane, Lowton

6.2 Appraisal methods

6.2.1 The appraisal of options has been undertaken by assessing each site against a framework of sustainability objectives and supporting criteria. These sustainability objectives for the IA were established at the Scoping Stage of the IA process. The aim is to identify what the effects would be as a result of development and how this compares to what might otherwise be expected to happen (the projected baseline).

6.2.2 All the sites have been appraised through a mixture of desktop analysis and site visits. A consistent approach has been taken making use of objective data sources as much as possible. However, a degree of professional judgement needs to be taken when undertaking strategic appraisals in the absence of detailed plans and evidence studies.

6.2.3 To determine effects, account is taken of a range of factors including the magnitude of change, the sensitivity of receptors, the likelihood of effects occurring, the length and permanence of effects, and cumulative effects. This gives a picture of how significant effects are likely to be, ranging from neutral, minor, moderate, and major. The table below sets out the scale that has been used to record effects.

Major positive		Major negative	
Moderate positive		Moderate negative	
Minor positive		Minor negative	
Neutral		Uncertainty	?

6.2.4 A range of information has been submitted by site promoters for some of the sites. This includes baseline information as well as visioning material and high-level layouts for development. We have incorporated such information into the appraisals as appropriate, taking care to ensure consistency where the levels of detail are not the same between the different proposals.

6.2.5 Where there are clear references to mitigation and enhancement measures these have been taken into account in the assessments. However, it must be remembered that these are not detailed planning applications, and in practice scheme details can change substantially. Therefore, a degree of caution is applied when determining effects and factoring in mitigation measures. Conversely, if details about mitigation and enhancement are absent, this does not mean that there will not be opportunity for these to be implemented, and therefore the effects should not be viewed as 'fixed'.

6.3 Land North of Moss Industrial Estate, Aspull Common

Description

- 6.3.1 The site comprises agricultural land to the north of an industrial estate and south of Pennington Flash Nature Reserve and a sailing club. The southern part of the site is predominantly flat, with the remaining site sloping. There is also a residential area close to the southwest of the site.



Site photos



Housing

- 6.3.2 The site would not involve housing alongside employment and given the site's proximity to an existing industrial estate, it may not be the most appropriate site for future housing development. **Neutral effects** are predicted.

Health and community

- 6.3.3 The site includes numerous PRoWs, one of which connects communities to the south with Pennington Flash Nature Reserve and the sailing facilities to the north. Other PROWs are on the periphery of the site but are not particularly accessible due to the amount of vegetation. Comprehensive development of the site would likely require the diversion of some PRoWs and would negatively affect amenity for users of the site for recreation.
- 6.3.4 The site is partially visible from paths that run through the adjacent Pennington Flash Nature Reserve, but development can be sensitively designed to avoid significant adverse effects on users and to maintain good connectivity between the park and existing communities. Overall, a **minor / moderate negative effect** is predicted.

Equality and diversity

- 6.3.5 The site does not fall within an area with concentrations of any particular community groups that could be disproportionately affected. The site falls within an area with lower levels of deprivation. However, the site is within a walkable distance to bus stops with frequent services to deprived locations nearby. A **minor positive effect** is predicted.

Climate change

- 6.3.6 The site falls mostly within Flood Zone 1. There are areas that fall within Flood Zone 2 and 3, but it is unlikely that these areas would be developed. Whilst there are areas at risk of surface water flooding, these could most likely be avoided through site layout and mitigation measures.
- 6.3.7 There are no known peat reserves on site, but a loss of soil would reduce the carbon storage capacity of the site. With this being said, there could be potential to introduce green infrastructure as part of the site design.
- 6.3.8 There are no specific opportunities to achieve carbon reduction measures, though the site would be expected to be built to high levels of efficiency.
- 6.3.9 Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Water quality

- 6.3.10 The site falls within Zone 3 of a groundwater source protection zone and is intersected by a small brook. It is likely that mitigation measures will be implemented that will reduce the risk of pollution during construction and operations. However, much of the site is likely to become hardstanding and surface water run-off patterns could change, which presents a possibility of **minor negative effects** on water quality.

Environmental quality

- 6.3.11 The site is not adjacent to an AQMA, but it is likely to generate vehicular trips that will access nearby routes (containing AQMAs), contributing to a decline in air quality in the short term. In the longer term it is possible that air quality levels will improve due to an increased uptake in low emissions vehicles.
- 6.3.12 Development of the site is likely to lead to increased noise and light pollution as a result of an increased number of industrial units and traffic. This would affect existing communities, despite there already being an active industrial estate adjacent to residential areas. There could also possibly be effects upon recreational users of the nearby Pennington Flash if development is not suitably screened and PROWs are not maintained / enhanced. Overall, **minor negative effects** are predicted.

Historic environment

- 6.3.13 There are no designated or locally important heritage features within close proximity to the site. **Neutral effects** are predicted.

Landscapes and townscapes

- 6.3.14 The site is within Green Belt and falls within an area categorised² as having medium sensitivity with regards to commercial development. **Minor/moderate effects** are predicted.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 6.3.15 The site does not include designated sites, but it is immediately adjacent to a National Nature Reserve (The Flashes of Wigan and Leigh). The site consists of mostly open fields bounded by trees and hedges, small clusters of trees and trees and shrubs along Small Brook. Avoidance and mitigation should be able to safeguard the significance of ecologically important areas on-site. Development also presents opportunities for biodiversity net gain and to support ecological connectivity between the nature reserve and the wider countryside. However, there is potential for development to cause disturbances to habitats and species through further recreational pressures on the nature reserve and potential noise and light pollution (and loss of open space which is likely to be used by birds and other species connected to the flashes). Overall, **minor/moderate negative effects** are predicted at this stage. It should be possible to avoid significant effects and areas of high ecological value, but there is also potential for disturbance and impacts upon biodiversity in an important location for wildlife. If net gain is secured on site or on adjacent land, then the effects would be positive in the longer term.

Resource efficiency

- 6.3.16 There are no existing heat networks or opportunity areas identified in this vicinity and the scheme is relatively small scale.

² Categorisation taken from the Greater Manchester Landscape Character and Sensitivity Assessment prepared in support of the Places for Everyone Plan.

- 6.3.17 There is a presumption that development could be built to high standards of sustainability, with the most likely opportunities being for solar arrays on industrial units.
- 6.3.18 Development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of waste. However, given the relatively small scale of the site, these are **neutral effects**.
- 6.3.19 In terms of waste management, the distance that waste is transported would depend on the companies that are procured by occupiers. However, there are a range of commercial waste collectors within a reasonable distance to ensure that waste can be collected efficiently.

Land and soil resources

- 6.3.20 The site overlaps with approximately 14ha of land categorised as Grade 3b (using the DEFRA predictive land data). The land appears to be in agricultural use and there will be a permanent loss of greenfield land. A **minor negative effect** is predicted.

Transportation

- 6.3.21 The site essentially involves an extension to an existing employment area comprising light industrial and commercial uses. The existing road network appears appropriate for light industry uses, but the site has poorer access to the motorway network, and it is unclear if the local road network is suitable to accommodate the larger vehicles required for large industrial, warehousing, and logistic uses (on a more frequent basis).
- 6.3.22 The site presents some opportunities to support a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling. There are bus stops with high frequency services along Newton Road / St Helens Road approximately 720m from the centre of the site, with services to Wigan and St Helens. The site is also served by several PRowS, but there are no designated cycle routes nearby.
- 6.3.23 Overall, an uncertain **minor positive effect** is predicted.

Economy

- 6.3.24 The site would essentially be an extension to an existing industrial estate, which could make it a suitable location for expansion. The site might not be the most appropriate / attractive in terms of supporting larger industrial / warehousing and logistics uses as it is smaller than the sites alongside the M6 and does not have direct access to the Motorway network. With this being said, it could support higher quality premises in growth sectors and has good access to the A580. With regards to deprived communities, there are none within the immediate location, so walking and cycling from these locations is unlikely. However, there are public transport links to more deprived locations in Leigh, which is a short bus ride away. Overall, **moderate positive effects** are predicted.

Town centres

- 6.3.25 The site is proposed for industrial uses and is in a good location to support this type of development. Offices or other town centre uses are unlikely to be involved, and therefore, it is considered unlikely that there would be any effects in this respect. Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

6.4 Land East of Warrington Road, Wigan

Site description

- 6.4.1 The site is located to the south of Wigan, partially covering an undeveloped gap between Wigan and Bryn. The site is predominantly 'scrub land'. The site is bound by the A49 to the west, with a roundabout to the southwest providing a connection to Junction 25 of the M6, an employment area to the north, residential to the northeast, woodland to the east and open land to the south. The Places for Everyone employment site allocation at M6 Junction 25 is located to the west on the other side of the A49.



Site photos



Housing

- 6.4.2 The site would not involve housing alongside employment and given the site's proximity to an existing business park, it may not be the most appropriate site for future housing development. **Neutral effects** are predicted.

Health and community

- 6.4.3 The site is not publicly accessible and has no recreational value. There are opportunities for development to introduce a new walking and cycling path along the Brook, but this is unlikely to benefit existing communities nearby as there are no existing PRowS to the north east that this could connect to. There could be some minor disturbance to amenity for a small number of properties nearby, but the provision of green infrastructure ought to ensure that effects are mitigated. Therefore, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Equality and diversity

- 6.4.4 The site does not fall within an area with concentrations of any particular community groups that could be disproportionately affected. There are deprived communities near to the site in both Ashton-in-Makerfield and in Wigan (for example, communities in Bryn and Worsley Mesnes fall within the top 10% deprived in the UK, whilst communities at Landgate, Goose Green and Poolstock fall within the top 20% most deprived). The site also benefits from cycle routes and bus stops with high frequency services to Wigan, Leigh, and Ashton-in-Makerfield, thus employment opportunities in this location should be highly accessible to deprived communities. A **minor positive effect** is predicted given the type and number of jobs likely to be created.

Climate change

- 6.4.5 The site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1. Whilst there are areas at risk of surface water flooding running through the site, effects could be mitigated through site layout and the use of sustainable drainage systems.
- 6.4.6 There are no known peat reserves on site, but a loss of soil would reduce the carbon storage capacity of the site. With this being said, there could be potential to introduce green infrastructure as part of the site design.
- 6.4.7 There are no specific opportunities to achieve carbon reduction measures, though the site would be expected to be built to high levels of sustainability. Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Water quality

- 6.4.8 The site does not fall within a groundwater source protection zone. There is a watercourse running adjacent to the site at its boundary, which presents a risk of pollution from construction activities. However, it is likely that mitigation measures will be implemented that will reduce the risk of pollution during construction and operations. On balance, **neutral effects** are predicted with an element of uncertainty.

Environmental quality

- 6.4.9 The site is adjacent to an AQMA running along a section of the A49 and on the M6 corridor. Increased business activity is likely to contribute towards more traffic and associated emissions.
- 6.4.10 There is a trend towards low emission vehicles which should help to offset an increase in trips in the longer term, but in the short term it is possible that negative effects could arise. The scale of the site is relatively small though, and so effects are not likely to be significant.
- 6.4.11 Development of the site is likely to lead to a slight increase in noise and light pollution as a result of a small number of additional business units. This would affect a small number of nearby residential properties, and so suitable mitigation would need to be secured.
- 6.4.12 Overall, uncertain **minor negative effects** are predicted.

Historic environment

- 6.4.13 There are no designated or locally important heritage assets within or adjacent to the site. Development would be next to an existing business park and residential areas that do not have historical importance. **Neutral effects** are predicted.

Landscapes and townscapes

- 6.4.14 Though this is Green Belt land, it is relatively small-scale and self contained with clear boundaries. It is unlikely there would be effects on highly visible, well used open space. Whilst there could be some minor effects on local amenity for nearby residents, it is likely that effects could be well-mitigated. With this being said, the site falls within an area categorised as being 'medium to high' sensitivity to commercial development, and thus **minor negative effects** are predicted.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 6.4.15 The site does not include designated sites, but it is immediately adjacent to deciduous woodland to the east and nearby a National Nature Reserve (The Flashes of Wigan and Leigh). The site consists of agricultural fields which are bounded by trees and shrubs likely to be of some ecological importance. Avoidance and mitigation should be able to safeguard the significance of these areas including the woodland to the east. Development is also unlikely to add recreational pressure on the deciduous woodland, as there are no existing PRoWs crossing the woodland and no residential proposed. Development also provides opportunities to secure improvements to existing habitats, on-site biodiversity gains and improvements to ecological connectivity within and to the wider ecological network.
- 6.4.16 Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted at this stage as it should be possible to avoid significant effects on existing habitats. If net gain is secured on site, then the effects would be positive in the longer term.

Resource efficiency

- 6.4.17 There are no existing heat networks or opportunity areas identified in this vicinity and the scheme is relatively small scale. There is a presumption that development could be built to high standards of sustainability.
- 6.4.18 Development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of waste. However, given the relatively small scale of the site, these are **neutral effects**.
- 6.4.19 In terms of waste management, the distance that waste is transported would depend on the companies that are procured by occupiers. However, there are a range of commercial waste collectors within a reasonable distance to ensure that waste can be collected efficiently.

Land and soil resources

- 6.4.20 The site overlaps with approximately 5ha of land categorised as Grade 3. This is only provisional data though, so it is unclear whether the land is Grade 3a or 3b. The land does not appear to be in agricultural use, but there will be a permanent loss of greenfield land. A **minor negative effect** is predicted.

Transportation

- 6.4.21 The site is located to the south of an existing employment area comprising light industrial and commercial uses. The site benefits from good access to the M6. The site is located nearby areas of high deprivation, which should give those communities good access to new employment opportunities and reduce the need to travel.
- 6.4.22 The site is adjacent to a cycle route along A49 Warrington Road and bus stops with high frequency services into Wigan, Leigh, and Ashton-in-Makerfield. Though there is likely to be some increase in car usage, the site should also support opportunities for a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling. Therefore, a **minor positive effect** is predicted.

Economy

- 6.4.23 This location is within walking / cycling distance to communities that fall within areas of high multiple deprivation. It is also on a highly accessible public transport route that would open up access to a wider range of communities that are more reliant on public transport.
- 6.4.24 Though the site is located close to the M6 and areas of employment growth, it is small scale and would therefore contribute less towards supporting growth in key industries such as manufacturing, distribution, and logistics (which typically require greater floorspace). It is also unlikely to support campus type growth or the development of technology hubs linked to environmental sectors. The scale of provision would also be relatively small. Therefore, only **minor positive effects** are predicted overall.

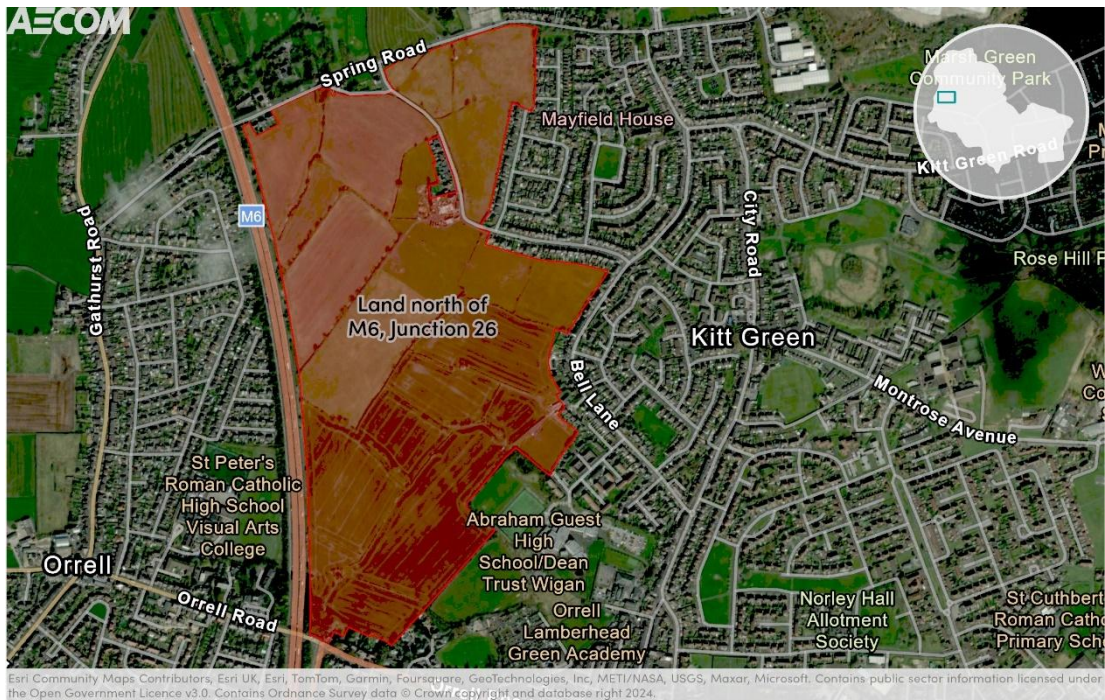
Town centres

- 6.4.25 Given the nature of adjacent land uses, it is possible that further development could involve the provision of office space, which would potentially compete with town centre locations. This is a potential **minor negative effect**.

6.5 Land north of M6 Junction 26, Wigan

Description

- 6.5.1 The site falls to the west of Wigan, consisting of numerous gently rolling agricultural fields with some in arable use. The site is adjacent to a residential area to the east and is bounded by the M6 to the west, with M6 Junction 26 to the south with connections to the M58.



Site photos



Housing

- 6.5.2 The site has been promoted primarily for employment uses, but with a small element of residential development.
- 6.5.3 It is possible that residential uses could be delivered in locations that would be adjacent to existing communities and compatible with new employment uses if appropriate layout and landscaping is achieved (the proposed masterplan illustrates how this could be achieved). However, there is no evidence of need for housing, and for the purposes of the SA, it is assumed that the site would be maximised for employment-led growth. Therefore, **neutral effects** are recorded for housing.

Health and community

- 6.5.4 The site is in private ownership, therefore negative effects on recreation and health are limited in this respect. However, a PRoW crosses the site, providing important access and a recreational path for communities to the east and west. The PRoW can likely be retained, but the comprehensive development of the site would vastly change its setting and amenity value. The PRoW is predominantly unpaved and development presents some opportunities for improvement including new surfacing and lighting, and to introduce a landscaping scheme and new open space. A **moderate negative effect** is predicted.

Equality and diversity

- 6.5.5 The site does not fall within an area with concentrations of any groups with protected characteristics that could be disproportionately affected. However, the site is adjacent to, and within walking distance of, areas with high levels of deprivation. The site further benefits from high frequency bus services into Wigan, St Helens, and Southport. Communities at Norley Hall, Worsley Hall and Marsh Green fall within the top 10% deprived communities and are mostly within a 20min travel distance through sustainable means. Other communities within close proximity fall within the top 20% and include Kitt Green, Pemberton and Newtown.
- 6.5.6 The site would provide significant employment opportunities in an area with high deprivation and in a location which is also highly accessible by public transport to deprived communities locally and further afield. Therefore, a **moderate positive effect** is predicted.

Climate change

- 6.5.7 The site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1. Whilst there are areas at risk of surface water flooding running through the site, these could potentially be avoided through site layout and mitigation measures.
- 6.5.8 There are no known peat reserves on site, but a loss of soil would reduce the carbon storage capacity of the site. With this being said, there could be potential to introduce green infrastructure as part of the site design.
- 6.5.9 There are no specific opportunities to achieve carbon reduction measures, though the site would be expected to be built to high levels of sustainability.

6.5.10 Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Water quality

6.5.11 The site does not fall within a groundwater source protection zone and is not intersected by any watercourses. In this respect, the risk of water pollution is limited. **Neutral effects** are predicted.

Environmental quality

6.5.12 The site is adjacent to an AQMA running along the A577 and on the M6 corridor. The site is suited to warehousing and logistics uses, as well as other employment uses. Increased business activity from a site of this scale is likely to contribute towards substantial additional traffic and associated emissions, in an area with sensitive receptors including a nursery, secondary school and residential areas. However, the transition towards low emission vehicles should help to reduce effects on air quality in the long term. The development of this site would also be likely to include a new link road, which could reduce traffic along existing routes, including commercial traffic to existing employment areas to the north of the site, through local centres and residential areas (this could have significantly positive effects in the longer term).

6.5.13 New employment uses and associated traffic is also likely to lead to an increase in noise and light pollution. This is likely to cause some adverse effects on the amenity of nearby communities and users of nearby schools. Despite the site being predominantly low lying with opportunities to introduce mitigation measures, noise pollution and light pollution (to a lesser extent) are likely given the significant change of uses involved.

6.5.14 Overall, **minor-moderate negative effects** are predicted.

Historic environment

6.5.15 There are no designated or locally important heritage assets within the site itself. There are some listed buildings within 50m of the site boundary to the north in Orrell, but these are well integrated within the existing built up area and their setting does not rely upon the current land use and open nature of the site. Dean Wood Manor is a Grade II Listed Building to the south of the site, which would not be directly affected. The building is relatively well screened by trees/bushes, so significant effects on its setting are also considered to be unlikely, especially if a buffer of vegetation is included within the site boundary. In this respect, it is expected that there would be **neutral effects** on heritage assets.

Landscapes and townscapes

6.5.16 Development would lead to a loss of Green Belt land, which falls within two parcels, the main parcel covering the majority of the site categorised as having a 'strong to moderate' contribution for purpose 1 'moderate' contribution for purpose 2, 'moderate' contribution for purpose 3, and 'weak' contribution for purpose 4 (according to the 2016 Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment).

6.5.17 The site is visible from the M6, as well as from selected / limited viewpoints in Orrell and Pemberton which have elevated positions.

6.5.18 The site falls within an area categorised as being of medium-high sensitivity to commercial and residential development, and the extent of change would be substantial. As such, **moderate negative effects** are predicted.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

6.5.19 The site does not include any internationally or nationally designated sites, but there are areas of TPOs to the north and adjacent to the south.

6.5.20 The site is approximately 2.3km northeast of Ravenhead Brickworks SSSI (within West Lancashire Borough) and there have been recordings of BAP protected species in the area surrounding the site. The site mostly consists of agricultural fields which are bounded by trees and shrubs likely to be of some ecological importance. Avoidance and mitigation should be able to safeguard the significance of ecologically important habitats, but it may be difficult to avoid the loss of some features given the scale and nature of development. Development also provides opportunities to secure improvements to existing habitats, on-site biodiversity gains and improvements to ecological connectivity within and to the wider ecological network. However, it is also noted that part of the site already falls within a countryside stewardship agreement (and any such positive activities could be lost).

6.5.21 Overall, **minor negative effects** are predicted at this stage. Whilst it should be possible to avoid significant effects on existing habitats, the large-scale change to an open greenspace is likely to have negative effects on species. If net gain is secured on site, then the effects could be positive in the longer term.

Resource efficiency

6.5.22 There are no existing heat networks or opportunity areas identified in this vicinity. However, development ought to explore the potential for such schemes. There is a presumption that development could be built to high standards of sustainability.

6.5.23 Nevertheless, development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of waste (greater than would be the case if existing employment land was repurposed). Given the relatively large scale of the site, these are **minor negative effects**.

6.5.24 In terms of waste management, the distance that waste is transported would depend on the companies that are procured by occupiers. However, there are a range of commercial waste collectors within a reasonable distance to ensure that waste can be collected efficiently.

Land and soil resources

6.5.25 The site overlaps with approximately 61ha of land categorised as Grade 3b (using the DEFRA predictive agricultural land data). The site has been used for agricultural purposes though and appears to be in productive use in some parts, which suggests it has value in terms of soil quality.

- 6.5.26 Development would lead to a permanent loss of at least 40ha of land which is considered to be a **moderate negative effect**.

Transportation

- 6.5.27 The site is located within the M6 corridor and would benefit from excellent access to both Junction 26 of the M6 and Junction 1 of the M58 to the immediate south. Therefore, the site has excellent access to the strategic road network for large industrial, warehousing, and logistic uses (provided suitable access can be achieved). The site is adjacent to a residential area including areas of high deprivation, which should give communities good access to employment opportunities and reduce the need to travel by car.
- 6.5.28 There are several bus stops close to the site with high frequency services into Wigan, St Helens, and Southport. A PRoW crosses the site providing a walking path between communities to the east of the site and to the west of the M6. The site should support opportunities for a modal shift towards public transport and walking, although opportunities for cycling are currently limited due to insufficient cycle routes and infrastructure in the area. A significant benefit to the transport network could be achieved through comprehensive development of this site through the creation of a road directly from the motorway (bypassing routes through local centres) towards Heinz and Martland Park. On balance, potential/uncertain **moderate positive effects** are predicted.

Economy

- 6.5.29 This location is within walking / cycling distance to several communities that fall within areas of high multiple deprivation. There are good public transport links on roads passing through the site.
- 6.5.30 The site is of a scale that would support the provision of industrial units for logistics, warehousing and other growth sectors.
- 6.5.31 Providing that appropriate access can be achieved, the site is also in a prime position close to the motorway network and would be attractive to market in this respect.
- 6.5.32 **Major positive effects** are predicted given the large scale of the site and proximity to multiple communities of need.

Town centres

- 6.5.33 The site is proposed for industrial uses and is in a good location to support this type of development. Offices or other town centre uses are unlikely to be involved, and therefore, it is considered unlikely that there would be any effects in this respect.
- 6.5.34 Development would be expected to create a new direct access to the motorway and a through road, which would help to reduce the number of heavy vehicles travelling through local centres such as Pemberton and Orrell whilst there is some uncertainty depending upon scheme details it is likely that a **minor positive effect** would arise.).

6.6 Bridgewater West, Astley

Description

- 6.6.1 The site falls between Astley and Boothstown, consisting of numerous gently rolling agricultural fields with some in arable use and others defined by several small watercourses. The site is bounded by the A580 to the north and an employment area, otherwise the site falls within a predominantly residential area with the Bridgewater Canal and a former quarry to the south. The site is used for recreation and includes PRowWs and a bridleway.



Site photos



Housing

- 6.6.2 The site is proposed for mixed use development including an element of residential. However, it is not presumed at this stage that growth would necessarily come forward as proposed. The appraisal assumes that employment and leisure opportunities will be maximised, and as such **neutral effects** are predicted for housing at this stage.

Health and community

- 6.6.3 The site includes numerous PRowS and a bridleway which connect to several communities. The site is also used for recreation, particularly walking, cycling and dog walking.
- 6.6.4 The site provides local people with good access to open countryside. Comprehensive development could negatively affect amenity for users of the site for recreation. Though some PRowS could be retained or expanded, the experience of using them would be vastly different. In this context, **moderate negative effects** are predicted in relation to the health and wellbeing of nearby communities that utilise the site. It is noted that proposals for the site seek to deliver recreational features, which could mitigate these effects and perhaps even lead to enhancement for users of the area for recreation.

Equality and diversity

- 6.6.5 The site does not fall within an area with concentrations of any community groups with protected characteristics that could be disproportionately affected. Whilst the site is in an immediate area with higher incomes, the site is nearby highly deprived communities in Walkden, Swinton and Salford. Parts of the site are served by bus stops with services to communities in Greater Manchester with high levels of deprivation. Employment opportunities in this location could therefore be made accessible to deprived communities by public transport. However, it should be acknowledged that existing bus stops along more frequent routes are across the A580 and not ideally accessible. Therefore, a potential **moderate positive effect** is predicted.

Climate change

- 6.6.6 The site falls mostly within Flood Zone 1. There are areas that fall adjacent to Flood Zones 2 and 3, but it is unlikely that these areas would be developed.
- 6.6.7 Whilst there are areas at risk of surface water flooding across the entire site, these could potentially be avoided through site layout and mitigation measures.
- 6.6.8 There are no known peat reserves on the developable areas of the site, but a loss of soil could reduce the carbon storage capacity of the site. With this being said, there could be potential to introduce green infrastructure as part of the site design.

- 6.6.9 There are no specific opportunities identified to achieve carbon reduction measures through low carbon energy schemes, but the site would be expected to be built to high levels of sustainability. A concept for the site has been prepared which states that a campus style development could be delivered that focuses on green industry and technology. This would be positive in relation to carbon emissions reductions but is only of course a concept at this stage and so uncertainty must be acknowledged. A **neutral effect** / **minor positive effect** is predicted.

Water quality

- 6.6.10 The site does not fall within a groundwater source protection zone. There is a watercourse running through the site, which presents a risk of pollution from construction activities. However, it is likely that mitigation measures will be implemented that will reduce the risk of pollution during construction and operations. On balance, **neutral effects** are predicted with an element of uncertainty.

Environmental quality

- 6.6.11 The site is adjacent to an AQMA running along the A580, with the wider road network connecting onto the M6 and M60/M61 corridors which also fall with AQMAs. The site could be suited to warehousing and logistic uses, as well as other employment uses (it is being proposed for scientific and technical sectors). Increased business activity from a site of this scale is likely to contribute towards substantial additional traffic and associated emissions, in a broadly residential area. However, the transition towards low emission vehicles should help to reduce effects on air quality in the long term. There are further opportunities for vehicular access to the site to be provided along the A580 or the A580/A572 junction, without having to pass through residential areas and thus protecting sensitive areas from some adverse effects.
- 6.6.12 New employment uses and associated traffic is also likely to lead to increase in noise and light pollution. This is likely to cause some adverse effects on the amenity of nearby communities, although the site presents some opportunities for mitigation.
- 6.6.13 The proposed uses (mixed) are likely to generate less heavy industrial traffic and less intrusive forms of development in terms of noise, light, and vibrations.
- 6.6.14 Overall, **minor** / **moderate negative effects** are predicted.

Heritage

- 6.6.15 There are no heritage assets within the site boundary itself, with the closest designated assets being a Grade II Listed winding tower and house (at the Lancashire Mining Museum) and a Grade II Listed farmhouse. There are direct views towards the winding tower from within the site, but these would likely be retained as areas of green infrastructure would likely be incorporated. Therefore, **neutral effects** are anticipated in this respect.

- 6.6.16 With regards to the farmhouse, its setting would be unlikely to be significantly affected, as areas of greenspace would remain between any forms of built development. The proposals provided in support of the site involve green space to enhance activities at the mining museum.
- 6.6.17 This would have a positive effect in terms of improving interaction with heritage features. However, given that these are only concepts, it is not possible to determine that these effects would arise at this stage.

Landscapes and townscapes

- 6.6.18 The site is largely within a parcel of Green Belt land scored as having a 'strong' contribution towards purpose 1 and moderate contribution to purposes 2 and 3. In terms of landscape sensitivity, the site falls within an area categorised as being medium-high sensitivity to commercial development and medium sensitivity to residential development (and presumably other less intrusive forms of development). Parts of the site are visually attractive, but most of the area is open, relatively flat fields. To the south of the site there are important landscapes along the Bridgewater Canal that are well used for recreation. Views from the canal are unlikely to be significantly affected as there is substantial screening from the proposed site. To the north of the site, there are views into the site, and these are likely to be affected by new development. Most of the development would likely take place on flat, open land which is somewhat screened by vegetation. It is possible that such features would be retained, with potential for some enhancement through new green infrastructure.
- 6.6.19 With the assumption that the site will consist of a relatively low-density development **minor / moderate negative effects** are predicted. However, a degree of uncertainty must be recognised. A development consisting of large industrial units and fewer green infrastructure features would have a more significant / major negative effect.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 6.6.20 The site is within 2.5km of Manchester Mosses, which is a SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Apart from an area of Deciduous Woodland in the southwest corner, the site does not include designated sites. However, the site is thought to have BAP protected species present including Great Crested Newt, Brown Hare, and Skylark species. Protected species have been identified in the northern and southern part of the site. The area along the Bridgewater Canal to the south is also known to include BAP protected species including Bullfinch, Reed Bunting, Soprano Pipistrelle and Water Vole. The site consists of mostly open fields bounded by trees and hedges, clusters of trees and woodland and trees and shrubs along watercourses. The site is further adjacent to wildlife corridors. Avoidance and mitigation should be able to safeguard the significance of the most ecologically sensitive areas, as these are mostly aligned with boundaries. However, development is likely to cause potential disturbance from pollution and to ecological connectivity, which likely extends across the site. Development also presents opportunities to secure onsite biodiversity gain, as some open fields are likely to be of lower ecological value due to their agricultural use.

- 6.6.21 This could help retain ecological connectivity across the site and to and from wildlife corridors including the corridor along the Bridgewater Canal.
- 6.6.22 Overall, **minor / moderate negative effects** are predicted at this stage as there is potential for development to undermine ecological connectivity and result in the loss of existing trees and green infrastructure which may be of biodiversity importance or important habitats for protected species. However, if net gain is secured on site and through sensitive design, there is potential for positive effects in the longer term.

Resource efficiency

- 6.6.23 There are no existing heat networks or opportunity areas identified in this vicinity. However, a mixed-use development ought to explore the potential for such schemes. There is a presumption that development could be built to high standards of sustainability. Nevertheless, development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of waste (greater than would be the case if existing employment land was repurposed). Given the large-scale nature of the site these are **minor negative effects**.
- 6.6.24 In terms of waste management, the distance that waste is transported would depend on the companies that are procured by occupiers. However, there are a range of commercial waste collectors within a reasonable distance to ensure that waste can be collected efficiently.

Land and soil resources

- 6.6.25 The site overlaps with approximately 70ha of greenfield land, which comprises a mix of agricultural uses, wooded areas, and former peat bog. Approximately 50ha of agricultural land covers the site and is categorised as Grade 3b (using the DEFRA predictive data).
- 6.6.26 Though the land is not categorised as ‘best and most versatile’ the site has been used for agricultural purposes and appears to be in productive use in some parts, which suggests it has value in terms of soil quality. Development would lead to a permanent loss of much of this land. Therefore, overall, **moderate negative effects** are recorded.

Transportation

- 6.6.27 The site is located adjacent to the A580, approximately 5km from M60 Junction 13. Therefore, the site has good access to the strategic road network for large industrial, warehousing, and logistic uses. Whilst the site is in an area with higher incomes, the site is near deprived communities in Walkden, Swinton and Salford, which should give some communities good access to new employment opportunities and reduce the need to travel.
- 6.6.28 The site is nearby several bus stops with high frequency services to Manchester city centre, Leigh, Salford, and Trafford, but these are mainly located across the A580 and require walking/cycling/wheeling to access. The site includes several PRowS and a bridleway and is adjacent to a shared foot and cycle path along the A580.

- 6.6.29 The site should support opportunities for a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling. However, currently, the A580 is heavily used by private vehicles, and development in this location could exacerbate that trend. Therefore, a **minor positive effect** is predicted overall.

Economy

- 6.6.30 This location is close to some areas experiencing high levels of multiple deprivation. However, most surrounding communities are relatively affluent.
- 6.6.31 Having said this, there are communities in the wider area that could potentially access employment opportunities here by car or public transport (for example in Tyldesley, Walkden and Leigh).
- 6.6.32 The site is of a scale that could support large scale industrial uses (but this is not what has been proposed by site promoters). That said, the concept envisages include high quality employment space, tourism, residential and retail space. Should such a development be provided, this would bring significant employment benefits. Likewise, development of the site for large-scale industrial uses ought to bring about positive effects too. Overall, an uncertain **major positive effect** is predicted.

Town centres

- 6.6.33 It is possible that retail space would be included on this land as part of a mixed-use development. However, this is not a foregone conclusion as the site is only at concept stage.
- 6.6.34 The type of retail might also be ancillary to other developments on the site such as employment, tourism and residential. In this respect, the potential for competition with town centre uses is considered to be minor.
- 6.6.35 It is noted that several settlement centres are nearby including Boothstown and Astley, so there could be some effects in terms of increased traffic or increased/decreased use of nearby services. This is an uncertainty though.

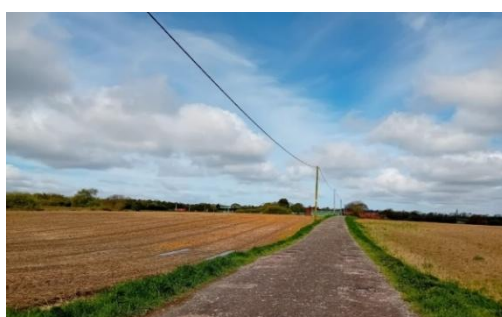
6.7 Drummers Lane, Bryn

Description

- 6.7.1 The site is in the north-east of Bryn, covering a large area between Bryn and Wigan and adjacent to a proposed strategic employment allocation in the Places for Everyone Plan. The site predominantly consists of gently rolling agricultural land in arable use, with the parcel fronting onto the A49, north of the Park Hotel and Park Lane Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel, in employment use. The site is bounded by the M6 between the north, west and southwest of the site, with a roundabout to the north providing a connection to Junction 25 of the M6 and the A49. The site is adjacent to employment uses to the east and a residential area to the south.



Site photos



Housing

- 6.7.2 The site has been promoted primarily for employment uses, but with a small element of residential development.
- 6.7.3 It is possible that residential uses could be delivered in locations that would be adjacent to existing communities and compatible with new employment uses if appropriate layout and landscaping is achieved (the proposed masterplan illustrates how this could be achieved). However, there is no evidence of need for housing, and for the purposes of the SA, it is assumed that the site would be maximised for employment-led growth. Therefore, **neutral effects** are recorded for housing.

Health and community

- 6.7.4 The site is in private ownership, therefore negative effects on recreation and health are limited in this respect. However, a PRoW crosses the site, providing a recreational path for communities to the countryside. The PRoW can likely be retained, but the comprehensive development of the site would likely change its setting and amenity value over the stretch where it crosses the site. A **minor negative effect** is predicted.

Equality and diversity

- 6.7.5 The site does not fall within an area with concentrations of any groups with protected characteristics that could be disproportionately affected. The site is adjacent to a deprived area and is within a cyclable distance to other deprived communities in Ashton-in-Makerfield. The site further benefits from cycle routes and bus stops with high frequency services to Wigan, Leigh, and Ashton-in-Makerfield, thus employment opportunities in this location should be accessible to deprived communities. A **moderate positive effect** is predicted.

Climate change

- 6.7.6 The site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1. Whilst there are areas at risk of surface water flooding running through the site, these could potentially be avoided through site layout and mitigation measures.
- 6.7.7 There are no known peat reserves on site, but a loss of soil would reduce the carbon storage capacity of the site. With this being said, there could be potential to introduce green infrastructure as part of the site design.
- 6.7.8 There are no specific opportunities to achieve carbon reduction measures, though the site would be expected to be built to high levels of sustainability.
- 6.7.9 **Neutral effects** are predicted.

Water quality

- 6.7.10 The site does not fall within a groundwater source protection zone. **Neutral effects** are predicted.

Environmental quality

- 6.7.11 The site is adjacent to an AQMA running along the A49 and on the M6 corridor. The site is suited to warehousing and logistic uses, as well as other employment uses. Increased business activity is likely to contribute towards additional traffic and associated emissions. Air quality is further likely to deteriorate in the area from new employment uses proposed in the Places for Everyone Plan for land north of the A49. However, the transition towards low emission vehicles should help to reduce effects on air quality in the long term.
- 6.7.12 The site is also adjacent to residential areas to the south and nearby communities to the east. New employment uses and associated traffic is likely to lead to increase in noise and light pollution, although some effects can likely be mitigated through sensitive design.
- 6.7.13 Overall, **minor negative effects** are predicted.

Heritage

- 6.7.14 There is one designated heritage asset close to the site boundary. Park Lane Unitarian and Free Christian Chapel is a Grade II Listed asset, just 20m away from a likely entrance to the site. The site is already surrounded by industrial and agricultural uses, and its setting is unlikely to be significantly affected by further development on the proposed site. As such, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Landscapes and townscapes

- 6.7.15 The site is within the Green Belt with the majority falling within a parcel that makes a strong contribution to purposes 1 and 2 and a moderate contribution to purpose 3. In terms of landscape sensitivity, the site falls within an area categorised as being medium-high sensitivity to commercial and residential development. There are long range views across the site towards Wigan town centre and the Pennines. Development here could have cumulative effects upon the landscape alongside already permitted / allocated growth nearby at Junction 25. Development would be visible from several viewpoints outside and within the site and would change the experience for people using public rights of way. **Moderate negative effects** are predicted given that the site assessed covers a large part of the remaining Green Belt parcel in this location. With a smaller site area / developable area, the effects could be mitigated somewhat, but negative effects would remain.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 6.7.16 The site does not include designated sites, but it includes deciduous woodland to the northwest and a pond and woodland across the motorway to the north west. The site mostly consists of agricultural fields which are bounded by trees and shrubs likely to be of some ecological importance. Avoidance and mitigation should be able to safeguard the significance of these areas.

- 6.7.17 Development also provides opportunities to secure improvements to existing habitats, on-site biodiversity gains and improvements to ecological connectivity within and to the wider ecological network. However, it is also important to note that the site could form part of a wider ecological corridor heading towards the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh National Nature Reserve. There is already significant loss of greenspace in this location and further development could have cumulative effects.
- 6.7.18 Overall, **minor negative effects** are predicted at this stage as it should be possible to avoid substantial effects on existing habitats.
- 6.7.19 If biodiversity net gain is secured on site, then the effects would be positive in the longer term. However, there is potential for further severance of a wildlife corridor, which should be acknowledged.

Resource efficiency

- 6.7.20 There are no existing heat networks or opportunity areas identified in this vicinity. However, development ought to explore the potential for such schemes. There is a presumption that development could be built to high standards of sustainability. Nevertheless, development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of waste (greater than would be the case if existing employment land was repurposed). Given the relatively large scale of the site, these are **minor negative effects**.
- 6.7.21 In terms of waste management, the distance that waste is transported would depend on the companies that are procured by occupiers. However, there are a range of commercial waste collectors within a reasonable distance to ensure that waste can be collected efficiently.

Land and soil resources

- 6.7.22 The site overlaps with approximately 25ha of land categorised as Grade 3b (using the Defra predictive land data. Though this is not 'best and most versatile agricultural land' the site has been used for agricultural purposes and appears to be in productive use in some parts, which suggests it has value in terms of soil quality. Development would lead to a permanent loss of much of the land which is considered to be a **minor negative effect**.

Transportation

- 6.7.23 The site lies to the southeast of a proposed warehousing and logistics area. The site benefits from good access to the M6 at Junction 25 (southbound only) and a suitable access for larger vehicles required for large industrial, warehousing, and logistic uses can likely be provided off Wigan Road. The site is located between Wigan and Ashton in Makerfield, and close to some communities with high deprivation, which should give some communities good access to new employment opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

- 6.7.24 The site is served by a cycle route along the A49 (Wigan Road and Warrington Road). The centre of the site is also within approximately 700m of bus stops with high frequency services into Wigan, Leigh, and Ashton-in-Makerfield. There is a train stop at Bryn some 1.5km away, which could offer access to communities farther afield (though most likely outside of Wigan), but there would be a long walk or the need to use bus services on the A49.
- 6.7.25 Overall, the site should support some opportunities for a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling. Therefore, a **minor positive effect** is predicted (recognising that a degree of travel by private transport is likely to continue).

Economy

- 6.7.26 This location is within walking / cycling distance to communities that fall within areas of high multiple deprivation. There are also very good public transport links on roads passing the site.
- 6.7.27 The site is of a scale that would support the provision of industrial units for logistics / warehousing and other growth sectors.
- 6.7.28 Providing that appropriate access can be achieved, the site is also in a good position close to the motorway network and would be attractive to the market in this respect.
- 6.7.29 Taking into account the scale of the site (which is smaller than similar opportunities at Winwick Lane and on land north of M6 Junction 26 and north of M6 Junction 26) **moderate positive effects** are predicted.

Town centres

- 6.7.30 The site is proposed for industrial uses and is in a good location to support this type of development. Offices or other town centre uses are unlikely to be involved, and therefore, it is considered unlikely that there would be any effects in this respect. Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

6.8 South of Astley Point, Astley

Description

- 6.8.1 The site comprises flat unused fields to the south of the A580 and the Astley Point leisure development, and west of the residential community at Higher Green Lane. It is small in scale compared to other strategic options.



Site photos





Housing

- 6.8.2 The site is proposed for employment uses and is too small to support an appropriate mixed-use scheme. As such, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Health and community

- 6.8.3 The site is in private ownership, therefore negative effects on recreation and health are limited in this respect. However, there are PRowS along the northern boundary and to the south west. Development is likely to change current views of green fields and trees from the PRowS along the northern boundary. However, there are opportunities for development to improve the path including new surfacing and lighting, and to introduce a landscaping scheme and new open space. Therefore, a **neutral effect** is predicted.

Equality and diversity

- 6.8.4 The site does not fall within an area with concentrations of any community groups with protected characteristics that could be disproportionately affected. Whilst the site is in an immediate area with higher incomes, the site is also nearby deprived communities in Walkden and Leigh, which may benefit from new employment opportunities. The site is also close to several bus stops which should improve accessibility by public transport for some deprived communities to new employment. However, it should be acknowledged that the more frequent bus services would require crossing the A580 and are not close to the site itself. Given the relatively small scale of development and the lack of direct access to a wide range of communities of need, only a **minor positive effect** is predicted.

Climate change

- 6.8.5 The site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1. Whilst there are areas at risk of surface water flooding running through the site, these could potentially be avoided through site layout and mitigation measures.
- 6.8.6 There are no known peat reserves on site, but a loss of soil would reduce the carbon storage capacity of the site. With this being said, there could be potential to introduce green infrastructure as part of the site design.
- 6.8.7 There are no specific opportunities to achieve carbon reduction measures, though the site would be expected to be built to high levels of sustainability.
- 6.8.8 Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Water quality

- 6.8.9 The site does not fall within a groundwater source protection zone and is not intersected by any watercourses. In this respect, the risk of water pollution is limited. **Neutral effects** are predicted.

Environmental quality

- 6.8.10 The site is adjacent to an AQMA running along the A580, with the wider road network connecting onto the M6 and M60/M61 corridors which also fall with AQMAs. The site is suited to smaller scale employment uses such as offices, which is likely to contribute towards some additional traffic and associated emissions, but the scale is not likely to be significant. Furthermore, an access to the site can be provided through the Astley Point development, avoiding residential areas being affected. New employment uses and associated traffic is also likely to lead to increase in noise and light pollution in an area with some residential uses. However, adverse effects on communities can likely be mitigated through sensitive design and only a small number of properties would likely be affected. Overall, a **minor negative effect** is predicted.

Heritage

- 6.8.11 There are no designated or locally important heritage features within or adjacent to the site itself. Though the Astley Green Winding Tower is nearby (and visible from the site), its setting would not be affected by small scale employment units. Therefore, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Landscape and townscape

- 6.8.12 The site is within the Green Belt and falls within an area categorised as being medium-high sensitivity to commercial development. Upon inspection through a site visit, the area consists of low amenity grassland/scrubland and mostly 'young' trees.
- 6.8.13 Though vegetation around the site provides some important screening functions from the built environment and linear settlement pattern of Astley Green, the site itself has limited landscape value in its current form.

- 6.8.14 **Minor negative effects** are predicted, though there is good potential for these to be mitigated for a low-density employment development.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 6.8.15 The site is approximately 2km north of Manchester Mosses, which is a SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The site does not include or is adjacent to designated sites, but the site is thought to include Great Crested Newt species in its centre and along the southern boundary, a pond to the southwest and trees and shrubs throughout likely of some ecological importance. The development of the site will require the clearance of existing trees and shrubs, although the most sensitive locations can likely be safeguarded. This may also undermine the deliverability of onsite biodiversity net gain.
- 6.8.16 Overall, **moderate negative effects** are predicted at this stage as there is potential for development to result in the loss of existing trees and shrubs which may be of some biodiversity importance or important habitats for Great Crested Newt species. However, the extent of potential effects is not fully known at this stage in the absence of detailed ecological assessments.

Resource efficiency

- 6.8.17 There are no existing heat networks or opportunity areas identified in this vicinity and the scheme is relatively small scale. There is a presumption that development could be built to high standards of sustainability, with the most likely opportunities being for solar arrays on industrial units. Development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of waste. However, given the relatively small scale of the site, **neutral effects** are predicted.
- 6.8.18 In terms of waste management, the distance that waste is transported would depend on the companies that are procured by occupiers. However, there are a range of commercial waste collectors within a reasonable distance to ensure that waste can be collected efficiently.

Land and soil resources

- 6.8.19 The site overlaps with approximately 4.5ha of land categorised as Grade 3b using the Defra predictive land data. The site does not appear to be in agricultural use, but development would lead to a permanent loss of greenfield land, which is considered to be a **minor negative effect**.

Transportation

- 6.8.20 The site falls along the A580, approximately 5km from the access to M60 Junction 13. Therefore, the site has good access to the strategic road network. Whilst the site is in an area with higher incomes, the site is near deprived communities in Walkden and Leigh, which should give communities good access to new employment opportunities and reduce the need to travel.

- 6.8.21 The site is nearby several bus stops with services to Boothstown and Farnworth. The site includes several PRowS and is adjacent to a shared foot and cycle path along the A580.
- 6.8.22 The site should support some opportunities for a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling, and it is of a scale that is unlikely to generate significant levels of traffic. Therefore, an uncertain **minor positive effect** is predicted.

Economy

- 6.8.23 This location is not within immediate vicinity of communities experiencing high levels of multiple deprivation. Having said this, there are communities in the wider area that could potentially access employment opportunities here by car or public transport (for example in Tyldesley, Walkden and Leigh).
- 6.8.24 The site is not of a scale that would support the provision of industrial units for logistics / warehousing and other growth sectors. Smaller scale employment units / office space would be more appropriate on this site (as reflected by the submitted site proposal).
- 6.8.25 Taking into account the above, **minor positive effects** are predicted.

Town centres

- 6.8.26 The site is proposed for some elements of office use, which could possibly compete with potential town centre office development in nearby settlements such as Leigh. This is a potential **minor negative effect**. It is recognised that office uses would not necessarily need to form part of a site proposal though, so a degree of uncertainty is noted. The site is not considered suitable for larger scale industrial / logistics uses given its relatively small scale.

6.9 South of Pennington

Description

- 6.9.1 The site consists of numerous agricultural fields and farmsteads to the south of Pennington. The site is bounded by the A580 to the south, A579 to the west and there is a residential area to the north which is set back with agricultural fields in-between. The site was previously proposed for allocation for employment development in the draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (2019) but is not allocated in the Places for Everyone Plan.



Site photos





Housing

- 6.9.2 No proposals for the site have been promoted, and it is considered more suited as an employment site, given the relative separation between this site and existing residential areas. As such, at this stage, a **neutral effect** is predicted.

Health and community

- 6.9.3 The site is currently used for recreation such as walking, with several public rights of way crossing through the site. There are also former playing fields within the site boundary. Comprehensive development would negatively affect amenity for users of the site for recreation. Though some PROWs could be retained or expanded, the experience of using them would be vastly different. In this context, **moderate negative effects** are predicted in relation to the health and wellbeing of nearby communities that utilise the site.

Equality and diversity

- 6.9.4 The site does not fall within an area with concentrations of any particular community groups that could be disproportionately affected. Whilst the site is in an immediate area with higher incomes, the site is also in proximity to deprived communities in Leigh and Golborne, which may benefit from new employment opportunities. A **minor positive effect** is predicted, although effects are undermined from poorer access through public transport.

Climate change

- 6.9.5 A small part of the site falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Whilst there are areas at risk of surface water flooding running through the site, these could potentially be avoided through site layout and mitigation measures.
- 6.9.6 There are no known peat reserves on site, but a loss of soil and other vegetation would reduce the carbon storage capacity of the site. With this being said, there could be potential to introduce green infrastructure as part of the site design.
- 6.9.7 There are no specific opportunities to achieve carbon reduction measures, though the site would be expected to be built to high levels of sustainability.
- 6.9.8 Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Water quality

- 6.9.9 Approximately half the site falls within Zone 2 of a groundwater source protection zone and parts also fall within Zone 1, with the remainder of the site being within Zone 3. It is likely that mitigation measures will be implemented that will reduce the risk of pollution during construction and operations. However, much of the site would likely become hardstanding and surface water run-off patterns could change, there would also be a need to prepare land, which presents a possibility of negative effects on water quality. Given the presence of more sensitive receptors, **potential moderate negative effects** are recorded at this stage.

Environmental quality

- 6.9.10 The site is adjacent to an AQMA running along the A580, which goes onto connect to the M6 (also designated as an AQMA). The site is suited to warehousing and logistic uses, as well as other employment uses. Increased business activity from a site of this scale is likely to contribute towards substantial additional traffic and associated emissions. However, the transition towards low emission vehicles should help to reduce effects on air quality in the long term. There are further opportunities for vehicular access to the site to be provided along the A580 or A579, avoiding residential areas.
- 6.9.11 New employment uses and associated traffic is also likely to lead to an increase in noise and light pollution. There is potential for this to cause some adverse effects on the amenity of nearby communities. However, it is likely that most effects can be mitigated through sensitive design and residential communities to the northeast should also benefit from being set back from the site. Overall, a **minor negative effect** is predicted.

Historic environment

- 6.9.12 Yew tree Farm House is a Grade II listed building, which is within the site boundary in a central area. The setting of the farm is one of a relative enclosure from surrounding urban areas, and there are a several fields and open space that characterise this location. It is unclear whether the building would be lost as a result of development, but its setting will most likely be significantly affected by large scale development of industrial units on currently open land. This is a potential **moderate negative effect**.
- 6.9.13 Wider effects on the historic environment are likely to be limited given that there are no other designated assets in or adjacent to the site.

Landscapes and townscapes

- 6.9.14 Development would lead to a loss of Green Belt land categorised as 'moderate/strong' for purpose 1, 'strong' for purpose 2, and 'moderate' for purpose 3. With regards to landscape sensitivity, the site falls within a broad area categorised as being of medium sensitivity to commercial and residential development. However, the sensitivity of landscape is considered to be varied across the site.
- 6.9.15 Though the site is close to the A580 and is relatively close to residential areas, it has a somewhat 'rural feel' and contains important landscape features such as trees and hedgerows. The effects will depend on the extent of development, with some locations being more sensitive than others. The scale of development would also influence how much of a 'green buffer' would remain to the north of the site between the existing residential areas.
- 6.9.16 Presuming a comprehensive scheme across the entire site, there are likely to be at least **moderate negative effects** on landscape as there would likely be a loss of landscape features as well as negative effects on the wider character of remaining green spaces.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 6.9.17 The site is approximately 2.4km from the Manchester Mosses, which is a SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The site does not include and is not adjacent to designated sites, but the site is known to include Yellow Hammer species and includes clusters of trees, hedgerows and water features which are likely to be of some ecological importance. The site is also close to the Hope Carr Nature Reserve, which is a designated Site of Biological Importance (SBI). Avoidance and mitigation should be able to safeguard the significance of ecologically important areas on-site, but development could potentially harm existing ecological corridors through the loss of the comprehensive network of boundary hedgerows and trees that bound land parcels within the site. Development also provides some opportunities to secure improvements to existing habitats and achieve biodiversity net gain.
- 6.9.18 Overall, **minor negative effects** are predicted at this stage as it should be possible to avoid significant effects and areas of high ecological value can likely be safeguarded. If net gain is secured on site, then the effects would be positive in the longer term.

Resource efficiency

- 6.9.19 There are no existing heat networks or opportunity areas identified in this vicinity. There is a presumption that development could be built to high standards of sustainability, with the most likely opportunities being for solar arrays. Nevertheless, development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of waste (greater than would be the case if existing employment land was repurposed). These are **minor negative effects**.
- 6.9.20 In terms of waste management, the distance that waste is transported would depend on the companies that are procured by occupiers. However, there are a range of commercial waste collectors within a reasonable distance to ensure that waste can be collected efficiently.

Land and soil resources

- 6.9.21 The site overlaps with approximately 53ha of land categorised as Grade 3b using the Defra predictive land data. Whilst this is not best and most versatile land, some of the land appears to be in use for agricultural purposes, whilst other parcels of land comprise other uses such as former sports fields, light industrial uses, and open green space. Depending on the scale of development, a substantial amount of soil resources would be affected, and this is considered to be a **moderate negative effect**.

Transportation

- 6.9.22 The site is located along the A580, approximately 7.5km from the centre of the site to Junction 23 of the M6. Therefore, the site has good access to the strategic road network for potential large industrial, warehousing, and logistic uses. Whilst the site is in an area with broadly higher incomes, the site is in proximity to deprived communities in Leigh and Golborne, which should give some communities good access to new employment opportunities and reduce the need to travel longer distances.
- 6.9.23 The site includes several PRowS that connect to neighbouring communities and is adjacent to a shared foot and cycle path along the A580. The site is approximately 1km from a bus stop with infrequent bus service to Leigh and approximately 1.6km from frequent bus stops on St Helens Road. The site is therefore less likely to encourage a modal shift towards public transport unless significant new links are secured across the site. Taking these factors into account a **neutral effect** is predicted overall.

Economy

- 6.9.24 The site is in proximity to some areas experiencing high levels of multiple deprivation including areas in Leigh and Golborne. The site is also of a scale that could support a variety of employment uses including large scale industrial, warehousing and logistics and other growth sectors.
- 6.9.25 Providing that appropriate access can be achieved, the site is also in a good position close to the A580 and would be attractive to market in this respect. Overall, a **moderate positive effect** is predicted.

Town centres

- 6.9.26 The site is proposed for industrial uses and is in a good location to support this type of development. Offices or other town centre uses are unlikely to be involved, and therefore, it is considered unlikely that there would be any effects in this respect. Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

6.10 Land West of Winwick Lane, Lowton

Description

- 6.10.1 The site consists of numerous gently rolling agricultural fields and an airstrip (used by a local flying club) in open countryside. The site is to the north of M6 Junction 22 and south of a railway line. There are several farmsteads and small clusters of housing to the east of the site.



Site photos



Housing

- 6.10.2 The site is primarily proposed for employment uses. Though the site is of a scale that would support residential development alongside employment uses, this is not the most appropriate location for such uses (i.e. it will be dominated by large industrial units and is detached from established residential areas). As such, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Health and community

- 6.10.3 The majority of the site is currently agricultural and not publicly accessible. Therefore, negative effects on recreation and health are limited in this respect. However, two community groups use part of the site / adjacent fields and development would affect their function and experience (Warrington Model Flying Club and Lancashire Aero Club). These are **minor negative effects**.

Equality and diversity

- 6.10.4 The site does not fall within an area with concentrations of any groups with protected characteristics that could be disproportionately affected.
- 6.10.5 Development is likely to create significant new jobs, which could potentially benefit some communities. However, the site is poorly accessible by public transport and not within a walkable distance to deprived communities in Wigan, which may undermine the ability of people without access to private car or transport to access new employment opportunities. It should be acknowledged that access to deprived communities in St Helens would be good though. Therefore, a **minor positive effect** is predicted (as the benefit of new jobs for deprived communities in Wigan and those without public transport access is likely to be poorer).

Climate change

- 6.10.6 The site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1. Whilst there are areas at risk of surface water flooding running through the site, effects could likely be mitigated with application of sustainable drainage systems.
- 6.10.7 There are no known peat reserves on site, but a loss of soil would reduce the carbon storage capacity of the site. With this being said, there could be potential to introduce green infrastructure as part of the site design.
- 6.10.8 There are no specific opportunities to achieve carbon reduction measures, though the site would be expected to be built to high levels of sustainability as per PfE Policy JP-S2 and Policy J3 of this Plan.
- 6.10.9 Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Water quality

- 6.10.10 The site falls within Zone 3 of a groundwater source protection zone. It is likely that mitigation measures will be implemented that will reduce the risk of pollution during construction and operations.

- 6.10.11 However, much of the site is likely to become hardstanding and surface water run-off patterns could change, which presents a possibility of **minor negative effects** on water quality.

Environmental quality

- 6.10.12 The site is near the M6 to the south and the A580 to the north, which both include AQMAs. The site is suited to warehousing and logistic uses and would likely link to the adjacent strategic rail freight interchange (SFRI). Increased business activity from a site of this scale is likely to contribute towards substantial additional traffic and associated emissions. However, the transition towards low emission vehicles should help to reduce effects on air quality in the long term. The site is adjacent to a railway line which will provide an alternative transportation mode for freight once the SFRI is developed. The site is also not within proximity to any large communities, and access can likely be provided to the south avoiding standalone and small clusters of homes which could potentially be adversely affected by transported related air pollution.
- 6.10.13 New employment uses and associated traffic is also likely to lead to increase in noise and light pollution. However, the site can likely incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to contain potential effects and does not fall in proximity to large communities or other sensitive uses. There is also potential to reduce wider transport related emissions and road traffic through support for the adjacent Strategic Rail Freight Interchange.
- 6.10.14 Overall, a **neutral effect** is predicted. On one hand, there is a likely increase in pollution from road-based traffic and industrial uses. However, this is offset somewhat by the fact that development would benefit from (and support) the adjacent SFRI.

Heritage

- 6.10.15 There are no heritage assets within the site boundary itself. However, the site is near the Grade II Listed wall, gates, and gate piers to the front of Kenyon Hall. The listed features fall within an adjacent farmstead and are considered to enjoy a contained setting that relates to the curtilage and immediate surrounds of Kenyon Hall. Therefore, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Landscapes and townscapes

- 6.10.16 Development would lead to a loss of Green Belt land. With regards to landscape sensitivity, the site falls within an area categorised as being medium sensitivity to commercial and residential development.
- 6.10.17 The site is mostly open fields, bounded on some sides with hedgerows. There are some long-range views towards the Pennines across the site. The site is currently rural in nature, but this will change in the context of the adjacent Parkside development. Development on the site would be suited to large scale industrial units as a natural extension to the Parkside Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, and this would likely change the character of the land substantially given the scale of buildings.

- 6.10.18 This would likely affect long range views and degrade the rural character of the area further (in combination with the Parkside development). The effects are mostly in relation to views and open space rather than leading to coalescence or negative effects on settlement character. Overall, **minor/moderate negative effects** are predicted.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 6.10.19 The site does not include designated sites, but the site is adjacent along the northwest to an area of peatland which is designated as a BAP Lowlands Fens habitat and Highfield Moss SSSI. This area is also known to have BAP protected species including Linnet, Grey Partridge, and Water Vole. Avoidance and mitigation should be able to safeguard the significance of these areas, but development will likely add increased pressure and cause potential disturbance from pollution, drainage changes and to ecological connectivity, which likely extends across the site with habitats onsite (including clusters of trees and hedgerows) potential being of stepping stone value.
- 6.10.20 Overall, **moderate negative effects** are predicted at this stage, largely due to the proximity to nationally important designated habitats. Suitable mitigation would minimise these effects and it is thought likely that wider impacts on the site would be less significant given much of the site consists of open fields. If net gain is secured on site, then the effects would be positive in the longer term. It is noted that Natural England have raised concerns about this site allocation due to the presence of a nearby SSSI, which also contains deep peat (which gives greater credence to the prediction of moderate rather than minor negative effects).

Resource efficiency

- 6.10.21 There are no existing heat networks or opportunity areas identified in this vicinity. However, a large-scale development ought to explore the potential for such schemes. There is a presumption that development could be built to high standards of sustainability, with the most likely opportunities being for solar arrays on industrial units. Nevertheless, development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of waste (greater than would be the case if existing employment land was repurposed). Given the large scale of the site, these are **minor negative effects**.
- 6.10.22 In terms of waste management, the distance that waste is transported would depend on the companies that are procured by occupiers. However, there are a range of commercial waste collectors within a reasonable distance to ensure that waste can be collected efficiently.

Land and soil resources

- 6.10.23 The site overlaps with approximately 70ha of greenfield land, with much of this categorised as Grade 3b using the Defra predictive data. However, the site does appear to be in agricultural use and detailed surveys of similar agricultural land nearby suggests that there is likely to be at least some best and most versatile land (possible Grade 3a and Grade 2).

6.10.24 There will be a permanent loss of this land, which is considered to be a **moderate negative effect**.

Transportation

6.10.25 The site falls in very close proximity to the M6 and has good access to the wider national highways network. There are also road network upgrades underway which make this site very accessible to vehicles.

6.10.26 Development of the site itself could also help to support development of the adjacent rail freight interchange, which is positive in terms of the sustainable movement of goods.

6.10.27 Conversely, the site is not within close proximity to bus stops or cycle routes and is distant to communities and thus not currently suitable for active / sustainable travel. This somewhat offsets the benefits that could arise in terms of freight movement. Therefore, overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

Economy

6.10.28 The site is of a scale that would support the provision of large industrial units for logistics / warehousing and other growth sectors. The site is also in a prime position close to the motorway network and, upon its completion, adjacent to a proposed strategic rail freight interchange and would be attractive to market in this respect.

6.10.29 The site is not close to many communities' experiencing multiple deprivation in Wigan but is likely to support highly deprived communities in St Helens, and those that can access jobs by car in Wigan. Overall, **major positive effects** are predicted.

Town centres

6.10.30 The site is proposed for industrial uses and is in a good location to support this type of development. Offices or other town centre uses are unlikely to be involved, and therefore, it is considered unlikely that there would be any effects in this respect. Overall, **neutral effects** are predicted.

6.11 Summary of individual site appraisals

	North of Moss Industrial Estate	Land East of Warrington Road	Land north of M6 Junction 26	Bridgewater West, Astley	Drummers Lane, Bryn	South of Astley Point	South of Pennington	Winwick Lane
Housing	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Health and communities	Minor/mod -ve	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Moderate -ve?	Minor -ve	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Minor -ve
Equalities	Minor +ve	Minor +ve	Major +ve	Moderate +ve?	Minor +ve	Minor +ve	Minor +ve	Minor +ve
Climate change	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Water quality	Minor -ve?	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Moderate -ve?	Minor -ve?
Environmental quality	Minor -ve?	Minor -ve?	Minor/mod -ve	Minor/mod -ve	Minor -ve	Minor -ve?	Minor -ve	Neutral
Historic environment	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Moderate -ve ?	Neutral
Landscapes and townscapes	Minor/mod -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve	Minor/mod -ve	Moderate -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve	Minor/mod -ve
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Minor/mod -ve	Neutral	Minor -ve?	Minor/mod -ve	Minor -ve?	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve
Resource efficiency	Neutral	Neutral	Minor -ve	Minor -ve?	Minor -ve?	Neutral	Minor -ve	Minor -ve?
Land and soil	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve	Moderate -ve	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve	Moderate -ve
Transportation	Minor +ve?	Minor +ve?	Moderate +ve?	Minor +ve	Minor +ve	Minor +ve?	Neutral	Neutral
Economy	Moderate +ve?	Minor +ve	Major +ve	Major +ve ?	Moderate +ve	Minor +ve ?	Moderate +ve	Major +ve
Town and local centres	Neutral	Neutral	Minor +ve	Minor -ve ?	Neutral	Minor -ve ?	Neutral	Neutral

7. Employment strategy options

7.1 Introduction / methods

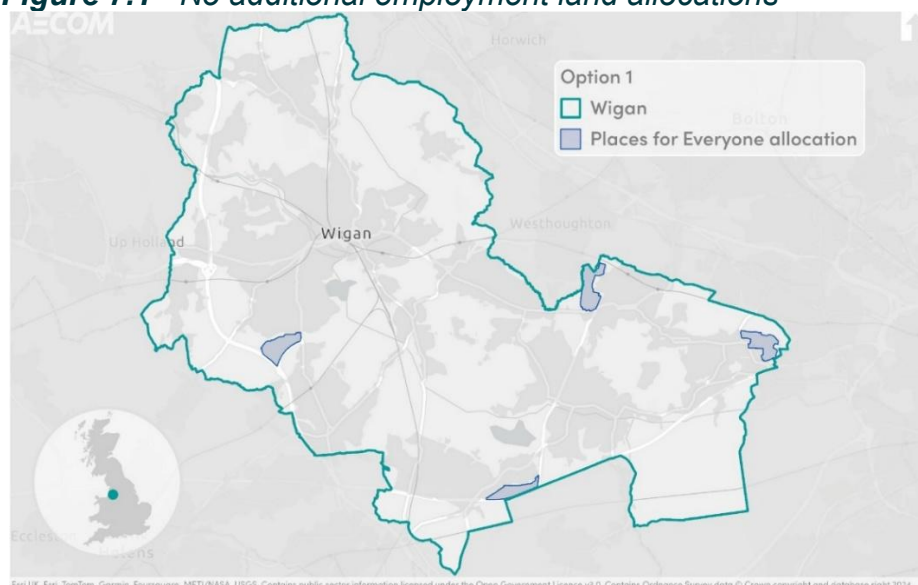
- 7.1.1 Each of the site options have been considered and appraised individually, with the results presented in the previous section. This allows for a high-level understanding of the constraints and opportunities in specific locations.
- 7.1.2 By exploring different 'packages' of these individual sites, it is possible to understand the implications of different strategies for employment growth, considering both the quantum and distribution of land.
- 7.1.3 This section sets out a discussion of such strategic options and establishes those which the Council believe are reasonable (and have therefore been appraised through the IA).

Places for Everyone

- 7.1.4 The Places for Everyone Plan allocates one significant employment site in the borough at M6 Junction 25 (for around 140,000 sqm of employment floorspace) and two further mixed-use allocations comprising some employment at West of Gibfield (45,500sqm) and Pocket Nook, Lowton (15,000sqm).
- 7.1.5 Taking into account existing employment land supply and these three allocations, there is sufficient land to meet identified needs in terms of the amount of land. In this respect, a reasonable approach would be to rely upon the framework provided by the Places for Everyone Plan and not seek to identify further opportunities for employment growth involving Green Belt release within this local plan.

Option 1 – Rely on existing and pipeline supply (Places for Everyone baseline position)

Figure 7.1 No additional employment land allocations



Aspirational growth

- 7.1.6 Wigan Council has an ambitious growth agenda seeking to create a more resilient and inclusive economy. The Wigan Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment (2024) concludes that whilst the borough's existing employment areas are well occupied and provide a valuable economic function, more employment sites of the right quality and in the right places are needed to meet modern business requirements to compete strongly economically and enable more local people to fulfil their potential with better and higher paid jobs.
- 7.1.7 Though there is a sufficient supply of land in terms of the total amount of space available, there is evidence that a greater emphasis needs to be provided upon higher-quality premises that are attractive to market. Such opportunities have specific locational features that cannot necessarily be met through repurposing of existing employment land. There is also a need to be mindful of the value that existing employment sites provide across a range of sectors. Therefore, to support aspirational economic growth the Council consider it appropriate to explore new/additional locations for employment land across the Borough in suitable locations.
- 7.1.8 Another reason for exploring additional employment land stems from consultation feedback on the options and preferences document. Several respondents suggested that elements of the employment land supply should be considered uncertain, and as such additional site allocations should be made within the emerging Plan.
- 7.1.9 Taking the above factors into account, it is considered reasonable to test alternatives for growth that go beyond the 'status quo' provided by the existing land supply and the allocations made within the Places for Everyone Plan.
- 7.1.10 A key consideration is the appropriate timing of responding to the council's aspirational growth ambitions. An option is to explore strategies for housing and employment growth together, in the context of updated evidence of needs across Greater Manchester, which would be achieved as part of an early review of the Local Plan, which is required, at least, to consider housing growth beyond 2039. Alternatively, providing land for employment growth within this Local Plan update would represent a prompt and proactive response to the evidence base.
- 7.1.11 A range of sites have been proposed and / or identified as reasonable options for accommodating the type of employment land required to support aspirational growth. The sites are listed and illustrated in Figures 7.2 – 7.5 below.
- 7.1.12 The sites all fall within two broad 'corridors for growth'.
- The M6 corridor, which has been identified as a prime location for the growth of industrial / logistics land.
 - The A580 corridor, which presents some more nuanced opportunities for growth in emerging sectors
- 7.1.13 The Council considers that a combination of sites could be allocated to provide diversity in supply and to target different growth sectors. Four

strategic options were identified and appraised, with the findings presented within the Interim IA Report (March 2025).

- 7.1.14 It is recognised that there are many other combinations of sites that could be tested, but there is a need for appraisal to be proportionate and meaningful. This means that the options need to be sufficiently distinct from one another.

Option 2a – Economic aspirations for transformation – Focus on East Lancashire Road Corridor

Winwick Lane / Bridgewater West / South of Pennington / Moss Industrial Estate / South of Astley Point

Option 2b – Economic aspirations for transformation – Focus on further strengthening the M6 corridor

Winwick Lane / Land north of M6 J26 / Drummers Lane / East of Warrington Road

Option 2c – Economic aspirations for transformation – Balanced approach in both growth corridors

Winwick Lane / Land north of M6 J26 / Bridgewater West / Moss Industrial Estate

Option 3 – Maximise opportunities at all sites – East Lancashire Road Corridor and further strengthening the M6 corridor

Winwick Lane / Bridgewater West / South of Pennington / Moss Industrial Estate / South of Astley Point / Land north of M6 J26 / Drummers Lane / Warrington Road

Figure 7.2: Focus on East Lancashire Road Corridor

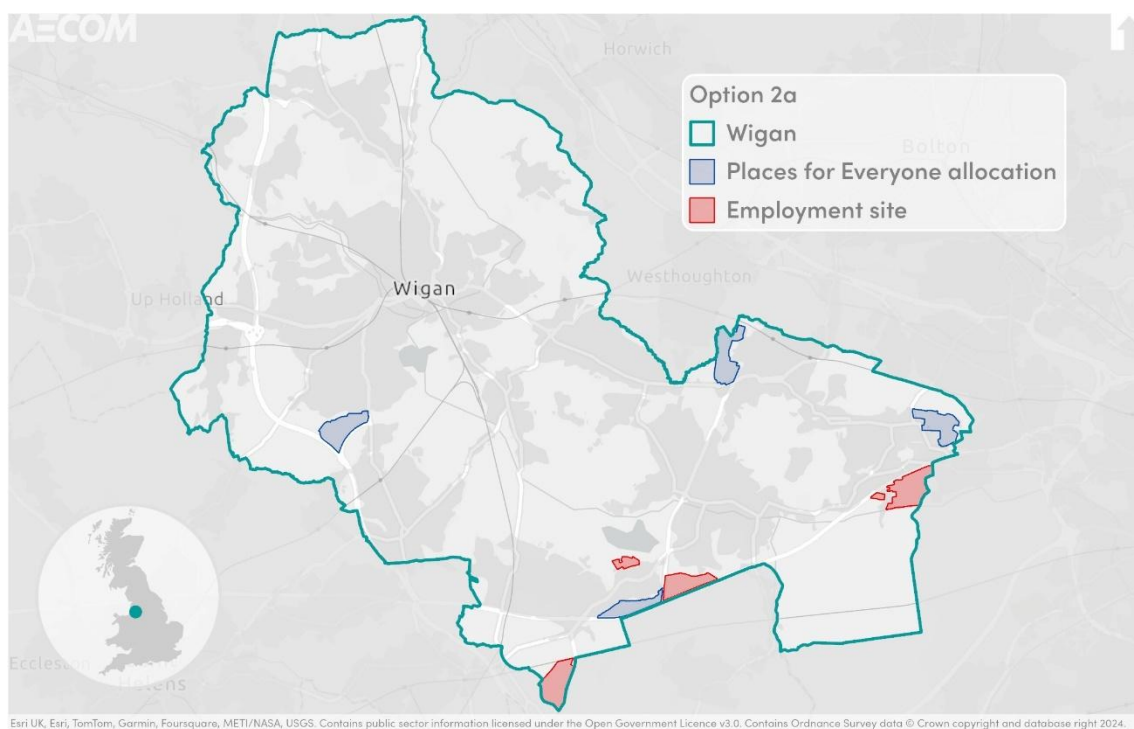


Figure 7.3: Focus on strengthening the M6 Corridor

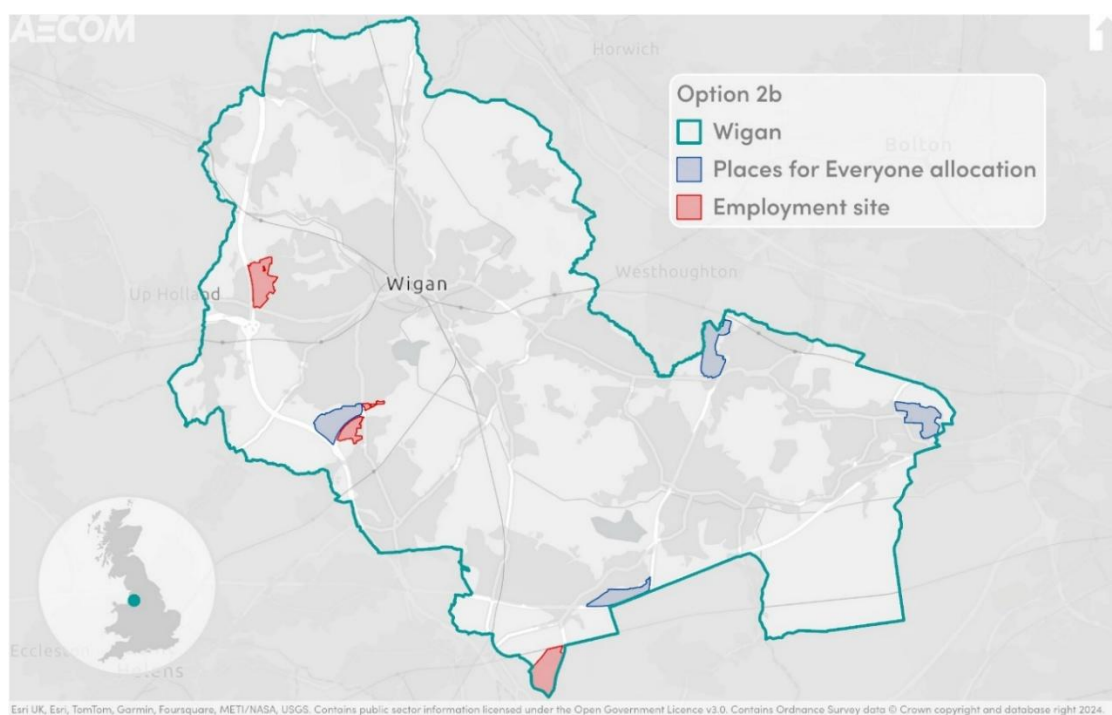


Figure 7.4: Balanced / dispersed growth along corridors

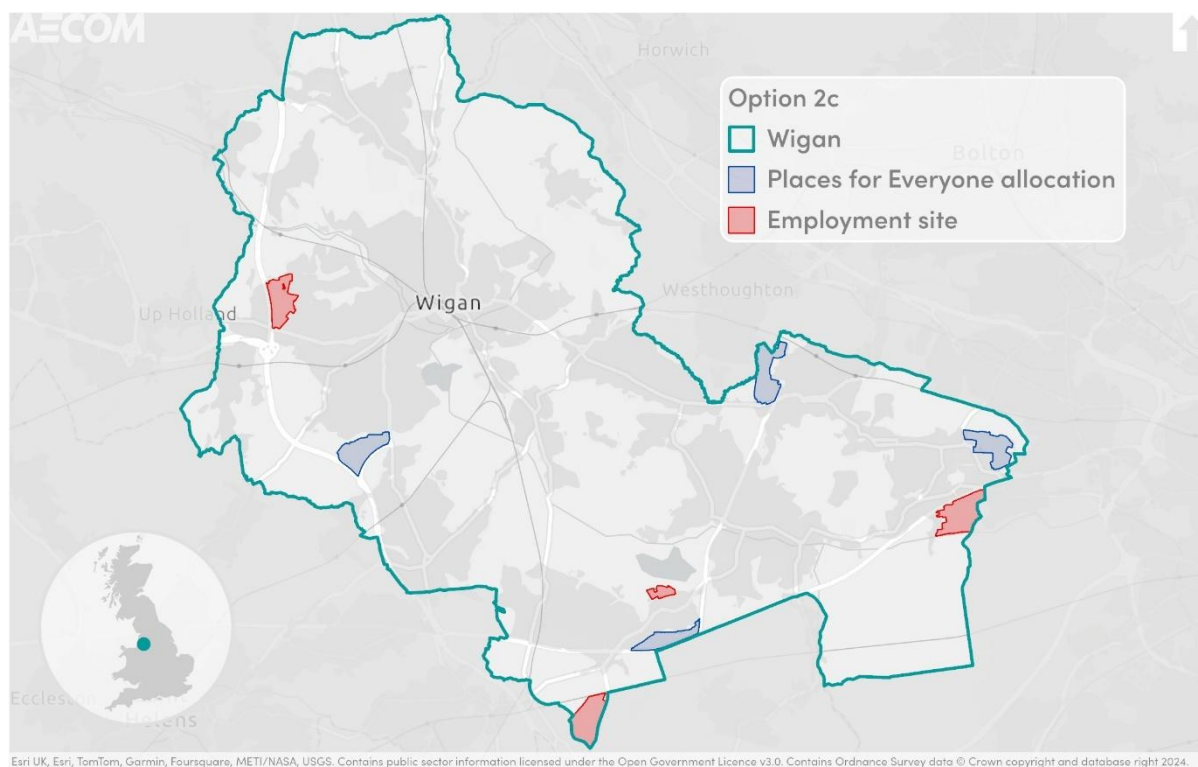
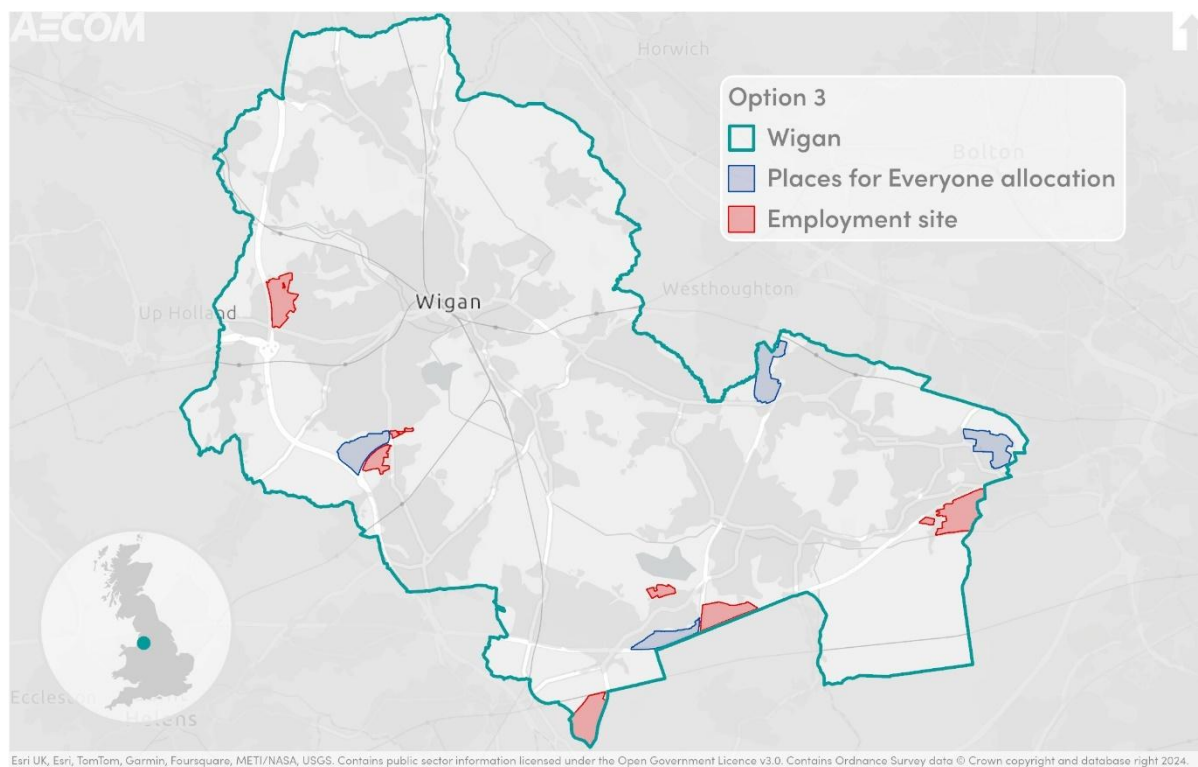


Figure 7.5: Maximise opportunities



7.2 Housing

IA Objective: *To provide an appropriate quantity and quality of new homes to meet needs.*

- 7.2.1 Option 1 would not seek to allocate additional employment land and therefore there would be no prospect of supporting housing development being delivered at the same time. Under this approach it is expected that there would be a sufficient supply of housing over the plan period, and therefore neutral effects are predicted.
- 7.2.2 Options 2a, 2b, 2c and 3 involve sites that could potentially accommodate a small element of housing to support the delivery of employment uses. However, the presumption at this stage is that employment uses would be maximised. The creation of new high quality employment land at several sites might also open-up the possibility of some lower quality employment sites changing uses (for housing) in the longer term. Overall, an uncertain minor positive effect is predicted.

	Option 1 no sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Minor +ve ?	Minor +ve ?	Minor +ve ?	Minor +ve ?
Rank	4	3	2	2	1

7.3 Health and Community

IA Objective: *Enable and support people to be active, safe, and healthy by ensuring good access to a range of services / facilities and the natural environment, and creation of well designed, inclusive, and beautiful places.*

- 7.3.1 All the sites are in private ownership and are not publicly accessible themselves. Some sites are also difficult to access as there are no Public Rights of Way (PROW). In these locations, it is unlikely that there would be significant effects in terms of recreation.
- 7.3.2 However, some of the sites have PROWs running through them or along the boundaries and are well used for recreation by local communities (for example, Bridgewater West, Drummors Lane, land north of M6 Junction 26, South of Pennington). The natural character of these areas would be changed, and though it is likely that PROWs would remain, residents may be less likely to use them and / or the experience would be less positive.
- 7.3.3 Negative effects would likely be experienced at all the additional sites, and it may be difficult to mitigate effects or deliver enhancements depending upon the intended site layout and uses. For example, large-scale industrial uses are likely to be more intrusive and involve greater land-take. Where these overlap with PROWs and natural greenspace the negative effects would be of a greater significance (for example Land north of M6 Junction 26, Drummors Lane, Moss Industrial Estate and South of Pennington). Option 2a involves two of these sites and is considered likely to have moderate negative effects overall.

- 7.3.4 Option 2b contains two such sites and is also considered to have moderate negative effects overall. Option 2c is predicted to have moderate negative effects but is ranked more favourably than options 2a and 2b as it does not include as many sites where PROWs would be intruded upon. Option 3 involves a greater number of sites where recreational / amenity impacts could be felt and as such is predicted to have potential major negative effects.

	Option 1 no sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Moderate -ve	Moderate -ve	Major -ve
Rank	1	3	3	2	4

7.4 Equality and Diversity

IA Objective: *To provide equality of opportunity for people with a protected characteristic whilst celebrating diversity.*

- 7.4.1 Regardless of location of sites, most of the job types that are likely to be secured are in industries such as logistics, low carbon and environment and other growth sectors. Traditionally, many of the jobs in these sectors have a lower representation from females, and those taken by females in these sectors also tend to be lower paid. It is acknowledged that this may be a personal choice (not to enter these sectors), but there is evidence to suggest that there are barriers to entry that could be removed. In this respect, focusing on such industries and sectors has the potential to have a less beneficial effect on women in employment compared to men. Representation for women in these sectors is improving, and there are initiatives that can be implemented by businesses and education institutes to encourage changes. However, there is a risk that a focus on these sectors could lead to a disparity in access to new jobs across the borough between men and women. There are limits as to what planning policy can do to support equality and diversity in this respect, but it could be useful to encourage measures that make it easier / more attractive for women to enter these sectors.
- 7.4.2 The development of employment land presents the opportunity for improved access to jobs. This can be beneficial in terms of tackling deprivation, especially if jobs are accessible to communities experiencing social inequalities. In this respect, the options can be differentiated as follows.
- 7.4.3 Option 1 does not involve any additional employment land, and therefore neutral effects are predicted.
- 7.4.4 Option 2a is predicted to have a minor positive effect. Though some of the sites involved are accessible to deprived communities, there is likely to be a reliance on private transport to access some locations. The focus on this corridor also directs benefits towards the south of the borough and is less likely to bring benefits to communities along the 'central core' (where much deprivation exists).

- 7.4.5 The locations involved under Option 2b have good access to deprived communities. In particular, the site at Land north of M6 Junction 26 is well served by public transport and is close to several deprived communities. As such, major positive effects are predicted.
- 7.4.6 Option 2c involves sites in a greater variety of locations, including at Land north of M6 Junction 26, which is close to several deprived communities. The site at Bridgewater is also relatively close to areas of deprivation both in Wigan and in neighbouring Salford. As such major positive effects are predicted.
- 7.4.7 Option 3 involves all the potential site options and would therefore provide a greater range of opportunities in a wider range of locations that are accessible to multiple communities. As such, major positive effects are predicted.
- 7.4.8 New jobs at all the sites can potentially help to address deprivation and tackle inequalities. However, it can be assumed that the sites that are more accessible to a greater range of deprived communities would be more likely to result in a reduction in inequalities. In this respect, growth at the Land north of M6 Junction 26 site is considered likely to have the most significant effects, followed by the Bridgewater West site (though the benefits would not be solely in Wigan). Option 2a is predicted to have a positive effect, but with the least significance given that it only includes sites to the south of the borough, and mostly in areas that are relatively affluent. Option 2b is likely to have more positive effects given the accessibility of several sites along the M6 corridor to deprived communities. Option 2c is most favourable as it involves two key sites close to deprived areas and spreads the benefits more widely. Option 3, which includes all sites would clearly present more opportunities for growth and to provide jobs for communities of need.

	Option 1 no sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Minor +ve	Major +ve	Major +ve	Major +ve
Rank	5	4	3	2	1

7.5 Climate change

IA Objective: *To adapt to, mitigate and be resilient to the impacts of climate change.*

- 7.5.1 None of the sites are considered to be significantly constrained from a flood risk perspective (including when taking account of climate change). The in-combination effects are unlikely to be notable as the sites are mostly dispersed from one another.
- 7.5.2 At a catchment scale, there could be effects in relation to changes in drainage and surface water run off as a result of a reduction in greenfield land. However, it would be expected (in line with policy requirements) that new development does not increase flood risk downstream and is supported by a suitable drainage strategy. Therefore, overall, it is anticipated that effects would be neutral.
- 7.5.3 In terms of wider resilience factors, each site has the potential to accommodate green infrastructure enhancements to help with factors such as increased heating. It is unlikely that there would be a significant contribution to a 'urban heat island' effect, as most of the sites are in peripheral lower density locations and would still be surrounded by greenfield land.
- 7.5.4 Overall, each of the options is predicted to have neutral effects, but the degree of uncertainty increases as the amount of land use change increases (given greater potential for changes to drainage patterns and a loss of greenspace). In this respect, the higher growth option is ranked least preferable and the lower growth option most preferable.

	Option 1 no sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral?
Rank	1	2	2	2	3

7.6 Water

IA Objective - *To positively address the issues of water quality and quantity and manage flood risk.*

- 7.6.1 Some of the sites involved do not fall within areas protected due to their water quality sensitivity or proximity to watercourses. In these instances, neutral effects are predicted. It is presumed that it will be possible to implement sustainable drainage schemes in line with policy requirements to mitigate the effects of changing land surfaces and potential run-off to nearby water courses.
- 7.6.2 Three sites fall within zone 1 of a Groundwater Source Protection Zone (Winwick Lane, Moss Industrial Estate, South of Pennington), whilst a substantial amount of one of these sites 'South of Pennington' also falls within Zone 2 and Zone 1. The South of Pennington site also overlaps in a small part with a Drinking Water Safeguarded Zone. The potential for negative effects is therefore higher for this site, but also for the options that involve any of these three sites.
- 7.6.3 Options 2a and 3 involves all three of the aforementioned sites and therefore potential moderate negative effects are recorded. Only one of the more sensitive sites is involved for Option 2c (at Winwick Lane), and this falls only within protection zone 1. Therefore, only minor negative effects are predicted for Option 2c.
- 7.6.4 The sites involved for Option 2b do not fall within groundwater protection zones, but there are some small watercourses nearby that could potentially be receptors for pollutants. However, the application of sustainable drainage should limit the magnitude and significance of effects. In this respect, Option 2b is favourable to Option 2a and Option 2b and neutral effects are recorded.

	Option 1 no sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Neutral	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve
Rank	1	4	2	3	4

7.7 Environmental quality

IA Objective - *To minimise the adverse impacts of development on environmental resources and amenity.*

- 7.7.1 With regards to noise, light and other amenity factors, the effects are likely to be confined to individual sites rather than cumulative effects arising because of several sites in combination. The effects are likely to be more pronounced at some sites than others, particularly where there are nearby residential uses and / or the sites are used for recreation. Each of the options involves at least one site with greater sensitivities (such as adjacent residential or PROWs), but Option 3 involves all the sites, and so effects are greater in this respect.
- 7.7.2 With regards to air quality, Option 1 performs most preferable as it will not lead to further industrial activity and associated traffic and emissions. Conversely, Option 3 performs the worst as it involves the greatest amount of development. However, a lack of planned growth is less likely to support new infrastructure enhancements that could help to manage air quality in the longer term.
- 7.7.3 Option 2a is likely to lead to greater traffic along the East Lancashire Road Corridor but could potentially lead to enhanced public transport and active travel offerings with a critical mass of development.
- 7.7.4 Option 2b would lead to a substantial amount of growth around M6 Junction 25, especially when considered alongside committed development. This is likely to lead to increased air quality issues in this location, particularly in the short-term before low emissions vehicles have become the dominant form of travel. However, the location is well served by public transport.
- 7.7.5 Option 2c involves a more dispersed approach, which is less likely to lead to air quality issues in any one location. The approach could potentially still lead to longer term enhancements in terms of public transport corridors along the A580 and a new road to link M6 Junction 26 with Martland Park.
- 7.7.6 Taking account of the factors discussed above, Option 1 is predicted to have neutral effects and is ranked most preferable with regards to environmental quality. Option 2a is likely to put more pressure on the A580 corridor, but in the longer term, this could help to support public transport improvements, which reduces the potential for negative effects somewhat. In terms of noise, light and other disturbances, the sites are predicted to have minor negative effects. Option 2b could be more likely to create air quality issues in a specific location (J25) and is therefore ranked slightly less favourable to options 2a and 2c (despite the significance of effects being broadly the same).
- 7.7.7 Option 3 involves disturbance at a greater number of sites and could therefore have greater potential for negative effects. Cumulative impacts with regards to traffic would also be more likely to arise. These are potential moderate negative effects.

	Option 1 no sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve ?
Rank	1	2	3	2	4

7.8 Historic Environment

IA Objective - *To protect and enhance the quality, integrity, and distinctiveness of the historic environment of Wigan.*

- 7.8.1 The only site that has a notable constraint with regards to the historic environment is South of Pennington, which contains a listed farm building in the centre of the site. The setting of this asset would likely be affected negatively by development. Therefore, Options 2a and Option 3 which include this site will have negative effects in this respect.
- 7.8.2 With regards to cumulative effects, most of the sites are not within close proximity to one another and therefore such effects would be limited.
- 7.8.3 There are two sites close to one another under Option 2b and Option 3 near to Junction 25 of the M6. These are unlikely to affect the historic environment. Though there is a listed building relatively close to both sites, neither development would be visible to one another.
- 7.8.4 Two sites are also close to one another at Bridgewater and South of Astley Point. The Grade II listed winding tower at the Lancashire Mining Museum is visible from both sites and its setting could potentially be affected. However, it is likely that the tower will still be visible given the scale and nature of development proposed. As such, neutral effects would be anticipated.

	Option 1 no sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Neutral	Neutral	Moderate -ve
Rank	1	2	1	1	2

7.9 Landscape and Townscape

IA Objective - *To protect and enhance the quality, integrity and distinctiveness of the borough's landscapes and townscape.*

- 7.9.1 Option 1 will see a continuation of the 'status quo' and would not lead to a loss of further Green Belt land. As such, neutral effects are predicted and this option is ranked as most preferable in terms of landscape.
- 7.9.2 Option 2a involves several sites that individually would have some negative effects upon landscape character. The effects range from minor to moderate. The sites are all somewhat detached from one another and so cumulative effects are considered unlikely to be of major significance. Several of the sites ought to be well screened, but others will contribute to a change to the landscape and the perception of openness along the A580 corridor. Overall, moderate negative effects are predicted.
- 7.9.3 Option 2b involves several sites along the M6 corridor that are sensitive to change. In particular, the inclusion of additional green belt land at Junction 25 of the M6 could close the gap between built up areas of Ashton-in-Makerfield and Wigan (in the context of there already being a significant new development at Junction 25). The loss of land here would also affect local amenity and longer-range views. Other effects on landscape would be experienced at Junction 26 of the M6 and at Winwick Lane. In combination, these are considered to be major negative effects.
- 7.9.4 Option 2c involves large sites that are likely to have a negative effect on landscape character. The sites are somewhat detached from one another and unlikely to have any cumulative effects in any particular location. Therefore, moderate negative effects are predicted overall.
- 7.9.5 Option 3 involves all potential sites. There are likely to be significant effects on landscape character across the borough at several large sites in sensitive locations. There are also likely to be cumulative effects to consider at Junction 25 with regards to Green Belt function. Overall, this option is likely to be most detrimental with regards to landscape and townscape and records major negative effects.
- 7.9.6 Options 2a and 2c are each predicted to have moderate negative effects and are ranked on par with each other. Both involve multiple large sites that are likely to have a notable impact on local character, but not cumulatively. Options 2b and 3 are least preferable given that they give rise to potential cumulative effects in addition to local impacts.

	Option 1 no sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Major -ve	Moderate -ve	Major -ve
Rank	1	2	3	2	4

7.10 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

IA Objective - *To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, ensuring that current ecological networks and future improvements in habitat connectivity are not compromised.*

- 7.10.1 For all options, the potential for biodiversity net gain needs to be recognised, but in the first instance it is important to avoid the more sensitive locations and to follow the mitigation hierarchy. The effects are predicted with this in mind at this strategic level. It is not appropriate for the IA to determine whether a site can achieve BNG, as this will depend on a range of factors. However, it is possible to comment on the likely effects to existing habitats and species.
- 7.10.2 Option 1 would not lead to any further pressures on greenfield land and as such would have neutral effects. Conversely, it is less likely that biodiversity net gain could be generated on these sites through development (though there are already environmental stewardship agreements in place at some of the sites).
- 7.10.3 Option 2a involves growth along the East Lancashire Road Corridor, which is not identified as a wildlife corridor as such. It is considered unlikely that there would be cumulative effects in terms of severing movement along wildlife corridors, but effects on a site-by-site basis are likely. There are three sites of greater concern due to their proximity to designated habitats (Winwick Lane, Moss Industrial Estate and Bridgewater) and therefore moderate negative effects are predicted overall.
- 7.10.4 Option 2b also involves one of the more sensitive locations (Winwick Lane), but the other sites are less constrained in terms of designated habitats. Two sites at Junction 25 of the M6 are relatively close to one another, and in combination with the committed site at Junction 25 could possibly lead to a degree of severance/disturbance of a wildlife corridor which links to the Wigan Flashes. Overall, a minor/moderate negative effect is predicted.
- 7.10.5 Option 2c avoids cumulative effects at Junction 25 of the M6 but is likely to bring about minor negative effects at Junction 26 and involves two sites which are in close proximity to nationally designated sites. As such, minor / moderate negative effects are predicted.
- 7.10.6 Option 3 involves the greatest number of sites and hence is predicted to have moderate negative effects overall (with a greater degree of certainty).
- 7.10.7 In terms of ranking, Option 1 is most preferable given that it has neutral effects and the others bring potential negatives. Option 3 is ranked the least preferable as it involves the most development sites and gives rise to cumulative negative effects. This is followed by Option 2a, which involves three of the more sensitive site locations.
- 7.10.8 Options 2b and 2c are ranked on par, with option 2b potentially bringing about cumulative effects of significance, whilst option 2c involves more sites that are in proximity to designated sites.

	Option 1 no sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Minor / Moderate -ve	Minor / Moderate -ve	Moderate -ve
Rank	1	3	2	2	4

7.11 Resource Efficiency

IA Objective: *To improve resource efficiency in design, construction, and operation, increase energy generation from renewable sources and support the circular economy.*

- 7.11.1 There are no existing heat networks or opportunity areas identified in the vicinity of any of the sites involved. There is a presumption that development could be built to high standards of sustainability on all the sites. In this respect, there are no differentiating factors between the growth options.
- 7.11.2 In terms of waste management, the distance that waste is transported would depend on the companies that are procured by occupiers. However, there are a range of commercial waste collectors within a reasonable distance of all the sites to ensure that waste can be collected efficiently.
- 7.11.3 Development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of waste. In this respect, the scale of growth is important and is the main differentiator between the options. Option 1 should encourage the continued use and reuse of existing employment land, and in this respect neutral effects are predicted in terms of embodied carbon. Conversely, this option has less potential to support creation of premises of higher quality and more efficient design. Overall, neutral effects are predicted.
- 7.11.4 Options 2a, 2b and 2c would all involve a collection of sites that would require new infrastructure and premises to be delivered. There would be a resource cost in relation to these activities and therefore, minor negative effects are predicted. Option 3 involves significantly more growth than the other options and thus moderate negative effects are predicted.

	Option 1 No sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve
Rank	1	2	2	2	3

7.12 Land and Soil Resources

IA Objective - *Protect, preserve, and promote the efficient use of land, soil, and other natural resources.*

7.12.1 Option 1 would be most favourable as it would preserve the existing extent of Green Belt, and the soil resources that fall within this area. Neutral effects are predicted as it is likely that in the absence of a plan the Green Belt would continue to be offered protection from employment developments.

7.12.2 All other options would involve substantial loss of greenfield land, much of which also falls within areas categorised as Grade 3b agricultural land. Though much of the land is predicted to be Grade 3b, there is still a substantial loss of soil resources and greenfield land, and detailed surveys of nearby land suggest that some sites could still contain Grade 3a or Grade 2 land. Though the predictive data is more accurate than the provisional data, it is still limited and not as accurate as detailed surveys. Therefore, each option is predicted to have major negative effects. The amount of loss for each option varies and they are ranked as such.

- Option 2a involves approximately 200ha of Grade 3 land.
- Option 2b involves approximately 140ha of Grade 3 land.
- Option 2c involves approximately 184ha of Grade 3 land.
- Option 3 involves approximately 270ha of Grade 3 land.

	Option 1 No sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Major -ve	Major -ve	Major -ve	Major -ve
Rank	1	4	2	3	5

7.13 Transportation

IA Objective - *To support the delivery of an improved and integrated transport system that provides good alternative choices to travel by car.*

- 7.13.1 Option 1 involves no additional employment allocations and thus is unlikely to support additional transport infrastructure improvements. The current trends in travel (including out-commuting) are likely to continue. Conversely, there will be no disturbances due to construction activities or increased employment uses in the Borough. Neutral effects are predicted overall.
- 7.13.2 Option 2a is likely to lead to an increase in vehicle movements along the East Lancashire Road corridor (business trips and commuting). Currently, public transport infrastructure along the corridor is not sufficient to support a significant modal shift in travel behaviours and therefore minor negative effects are predicted in this respect. However, the delivery of growth could potentially support new infrastructures that strengthen this offer in the longer term. Some of the sites are well served by walking and cycling routes. The site at Winwick Lane also helps to support the delivery of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, which is beneficial for the more sustainable movement of goods and materials. In this respect, potential moderate positive effects are predicted alongside the negatives (i.e. there are mixed effects).
- 7.13.3 Option 2b is likely to lead to increased vehicular traffic around Junctions 23, 24, 25 and 26 of the M6. Given the almost direct access to the motorway for the sites involved, the impacts in terms of congestion on the local network are considered to be minor but nonetheless are negative effects. The sites at J25 and J26 have good access by public transport, walking and cycling (for nearby communities) and present an opportunity to introduce new roads that could relieve pressure on the road network. Development in peripheral locations could also help to draw occupiers away from central locations which are more difficult to access by heavy goods vehicles. The Winwick Lane site is less accessible by public transport to the public but compensates for this through its ability to support the SFRI at Parkside. Overall, moderate positive effects are predicted alongside the negatives discussed above.
- 7.13.4 Option 2c involves a more dispersed approach, which would see less pressures at Junction 25, the potential for network improvements at Junction 26, and support for the SFRI through the Winwick Road site. There is less development proposed along the East Lancashire Road corridor under this approach, which would lessen the increase in traffic compared to option 2a (whilst still giving some opportunities to enhance walking, cycling and public transport at the Bridgewater site in particular). These are mixed effects with potential major positive effects alongside minor negative effects.
- 7.13.5 Option 3 also presents greater opportunities to support new infrastructure including public transport / active travel, the SFRI at Winwick Lane and a new road connecting the M6 Junction 26 through to Martland Park. These are potential major positive effects. However, the increase in employment locations would be likely to put more pressure on some parts of the road network and would place some employment in less accessible locations. As such, potential moderate negative effects are also predicted.

	Option 1 No sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral	Moderate +ve Minor -ve	Moderate +ve Minor -ve	Major +ve Minor -ve	Major +ve Moderate -ve
Rank	3	2	2	1	2

7.14 Economy

IA Objective - *To support the development of an innovative, diverse, competitive, higher value and low-carbon economy locally that supports job Equality,*

- 7.14.1 Option 1 is predicted to have a neutral / minor negative effect as it does not change the position beyond that in the Places for Everyone Plan. Opportunities to expand and diversify the economy could be missed, which is a potential minor negative effect if existing pipeline supply is not realised.
- 7.14.2 All other options are likely to bring positive effects as they involve additional provision of employment land or mixed-use schemes. Option 2a involves a range of sites along the East Lancashire Road corridor and would provide a range of sites that could (in combination) accommodate both large scale industrial uses and provide bespoke growth opportunities for high quality premises. With regards to deprivation, many of the sites are not readily accessible by public transport, walking or cycling to communities of need. Overall, a moderate positive effect is predicted.
- 7.14.3 Option 2b focuses on the M6 corridor, which provides mainly a focus on larger scale industrial uses. In this respect, this option provides a substantial number of jobs in locations that are accessible to deprived communities. However, the variety of employment provision would be more limited than Option 2a, thus both options are ranked similarly with moderate positive effects.
- 7.14.4 Option 2c involves a balanced approach which delivers a variety of land to suit different emerging growth sectors. Some sites have good access to deprived communities, whilst others will need links to be strengthened. Nevertheless, this balanced approach could be more likely to give rise to major positive effects on the economy.
- 7.14.5 Option 3 would maximise employment growth options across a range of locations. This would be likely to have major positive effects on the economy and the provision of employment opportunities for a range of communities.

	Option 1 No sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral / minor-ve	Moderate +ve	Moderate +ve	Major +ve?	Major +ve
Rank	4	3	3	2	1

7.15 Town and Local Centres

IA Objective - *To improve the vitality and viability of our town and local centres.*

- 7.15.1 Option 1 involves no additional employment land provision, including potential town centre uses. As such, there is unlikely to be competing pressures for town centre uses. This is the current policy position so neutral effects might be anticipated, but a conscious effort to direct growth away from peripheral locations could possibly have some minor benefits for town centres across the borough.
- 7.15.2 Options 2a and 2c involve one site at Astley / Bridgewater that could potentially incorporate retail and small office units. In this respect, there could be some minor competing uses with nearby centres. These are potential / uncertain minor negative effects.
- 7.15.3 Option 2b involves one site at Warrington Road that could potentially incorporate small office units. In this respect, there could be some minor competing uses with the town centre. These are potential/ uncertain minor negative effects.
- 7.15.4 Option 3 involves two sites that could potentially incorporate retail and small office units. In this respect, this option performs least well with regards to town centres.
- 7.15.5 In addition to the negative effects identified above, the options which involve land north of M6 Junction 26 could generate positive effects on the town centres of Orrell and Pemberton as a result of a new link road through the site north of the M6 Junction 26 (i.e. Options 2b, 2c, and 3).
- 7.15.6 It is also important to recognise that increased employment land could lead to more business and workplace trips through town and local centres, but given the peripheral location of these sites and access to the strategic road network, this is less likely to have significant negative effects on town and local centres.

	Option 1 No sites	Option 2a East Lancs	Option 2b M6 focus	Option 2c Balanced	Option 3 All sites
Significance	Neutral / minor +ve	Minor-ve?	Minor-ve? Minor +ve	Minor-ve? Minor +ve	Minor -ve Minor +ve
Rank	1	3	2	2	3

7.16 Summary

7.16.1 Table 7.1 below sets out a summary of the effects for each of the strategic employment options.

7.16.2 Option 1 is predicted to have mostly neutral effects, which is to be expected given that it is essentially a 'business as usual' approach. For the economy topic, a minor negative effect could arise, should there be delays to development of currently allocated employment sites or a redevelopment of existing sites for housing. Conversely, there is potential for minor positive effects in the town centres as limiting the release of further land could lead to businesses looking to town centres to support business growth (though this would likely be limited to small scale sectors and office space).

Table 7.1: Summary of effects for the strategic options

	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 2c	Option 3
Housing	Neutral	Minor +ve ?	Minor +ve ?	Minor +ve ?	Minor +ve ?
Health and communities	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Moderate -ve	Moderate -ve	Major -ve
Equalities	Neutral	Minor +ve	Major +ve	Major +ve	Major +ve
Climate change	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Water quality	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Neutral	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve
Environmental quality	Neutral	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve ?
Historic environment	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Neutral	Neutral	Moderate -ve
Landscapes and townscapes	Neutral	Moderate -ve	Major -ve	Moderate -ve	Major -ve
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Neutral	Moderate -ve ?	Minor / Moderate -ve	Minor / Moderate -ve	Moderate -ve
Resource efficiency	Neutral	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve
Land and soil	Neutral	Major -ve	Major -ve	Major -ve	Major -ve
Transportation	Neutral	Moderate +ve	Moderate +ve	Major +ve	Major +ve
		Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Minor -ve	Moderate -ve
Economy	Neutral / minor -ve	Moderate +ve	Moderate +ve	Major +ve?	Major +ve
Town centres	Minor +ve?	Minor -ve?	Minor -ve?	Minor -ve?	Minor -ve?
			Minor +ve	Minor +ve	Minor +ve

7.16.3 The options involving further site allocations result in a range of predicted effects. Options 2a, 2b and 2c involve a similar number of sites and in relation to several of the SA topics, the effects are difficult to differentiate.

- These three options are predicted to have the same overall effects in terms of climate change (i.e. neutral effects), as each site ought to be able to deliver sustainable design and to avoid areas of flood risk or other resilience issues.
- The effects in terms of resource efficiency are the same as a similar amount of growth would occur and similar demands on materials and resource use would be generated. These are minor negative effects and are unavoidable.
- The options all lead to a loss of greenfield land, much of which is in agricultural use (or has the potential to be). In this respect, major negative effects are predicted, and these are largely unavoidable and difficult to mitigate.
- The options are all likely to involve a degree of environmental concern with regards to noise, light, and amenity. However, it ought to be possible to avoid major issues, and with mitigation only minor negative (or neutral) effects would be anticipated.
- Minor negative effects are predicted in relation to town centres for each of the options.
- All three options are predicted to have moderate negative effects in terms of health and wellbeing as there will be disruption to existing uses of the sites involved and / or amenity effects. High quality design and the inclusion of green infrastructure features will be key to limiting negative effects.
- All three options are likely to have minor positive effects with regards to housing as they involve sites that could involve an element of residential.

7.16.4 Whilst there are some slight differences between the options with regards to the above listed factors, the key topics where the options perform more, or less favourable are as follows:

- Option 2c is predicted to have major positive effects in terms of the economy, which makes it more favourable than options 2a and 2b which only record moderate positive effects. The key reason for this is the inclusion of a range of significant opportunity sites in areas with good access to public transport and deprived communities.
- Option 2c is predicted to have major positive effects with regards to equalities, which makes it more favourable than options 2a and 2b which record minor and moderate positive effects respectively. The key reason for this is the inclusion of both sites which are relatively well located with regards to deprived communities.
- Option 2b is predicted to have major negative effects in terms of landscape and townscapes, which makes it less favourable than options 2a and 2c which both record moderate negative effects.
- Option 2b is predicted to have neutral effects in terms of water quality, which makes it more favourable to options 1a and 2c which both record negative effects.

- Option 2a involves moderate negative effects on the historic environment given that a listed building could be lost or the setting substantially affected. This makes it less favourable than Options 2b and 2c which both involve neutral effects (due to effects being unlikely to be significant).
- Options 2b and 2c perform better than Option 2a with regards to town centres, as they would help to relieve pressure on Orrell and Pemberton centres due to the delivery of a through road from the M6 J26 to Martland Park.

7.16.5 Option 3 is likely to bring about the most significant effects with regards to the economy, and growth is also most likely to support transport infrastructure enhancements (through more developer-funded schemes). However, this option has the potential for more significant negative effects on a range of factors compared to lower growth options. Of note, this option has major negative effects in terms of health, which are not seen for the lower growth options. A major negative effect on land and soil, and landscapes and townscapes are also recorded. There could be significant effects at Junction 25 of the M6 on Green Belt with regards to coalescence. This option also has a more prominent effect in terms of resource use and environmental quality.

7.16.6 Whilst the options are predicted to have broadly similar effects for some sustainability topics, it is possible to differentiate them in terms of their relative performance (or 'ranking'). Table 7.2 summarises the rank of each option against the appraisal topics.

Table 7.2: Relative ranking for the strategic options

	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 2c	Option 3
Housing	4	3	2	2	1
Health and communities	1	3	3	2	4
Equalities	5	4	3	2	1
Climate change	1	2	2	2	3
Water quality	1	4	2	3	4
Environmental quality	1	2	3	2	4
Historic environment	1	2	1	1	2
Landscapes and townscapes	1	2	3	2	4
Biodiversity and geodiversity	1	3	2	2	4
Resource efficiency	1	2	2	2	3
Land and soil	1	4	2	3	5
Transportation	3	2	2	1	2
Economy	4	3	3	2	1
Town and local centres	1	3	2	2	3

7.17 The proposed approach

- 7.17.1 The Council initially proposed an approach corresponding with Option 2c, which was selected due to the significant positive effects it would bring for economic growth, and knock-on benefits for a range of communities. Despite recognising that there could be some negative implications on environmental factors, it was considered that Option 2c struck an appropriate balance between competing sustainability topics.
- 7.17.2 This approach informed the Initial Draft Local Plan which the council consulted upon, under Regulation 18, in April-June 2025.
- 7.17.3 Following consultation on the Initial Draft Local Plan, the Council has further considered the key planning issues in relation to employment and housing needs, and its potential implications on the Green Belt. Consequently, a new preferred approach has been identified at this stage.
- 7.17.4 The Council's new preferred approach is to defer consideration of longer-term housing and employment land requirements until an early update of the Local Plan; which is broadly aligned with Option 1.
- 7.17.5 The Council recognises that this does not provide an immediate response to the borough's economic potential as evidenced in the Wigan Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment. However, this approach reflects the fact that current development requirements are derived from the adopted Places for Everyone Plan, whilst further Greater Manchester-wide work is expected to establish future housing and employment needs through a sub-regional evidence base. In these circumstances, the Council considers that it would be premature to make additional strategic allocations now, before there is greater certainty regarding the scale and distribution of future growth.
- 7.17.6 The appraisal findings support this position, identifying no significant adverse effects from deferring these strategic matters to a future update. Given this, there is limited justification for bringing forward further allocations at this stage, particularly where doing so could result in unnecessary impacts and constrain future options.
- 7.17.7 An update undertaken in the context of updated evidence and Greater Manchester-wide planning will provide an opportunity to consider housing, employment, infrastructure, transport and environmental matters in a more integrated way. This will help ensure that future growth is planned comprehensively, enabling the borough to maximise the benefits associated with aligning homes and jobs, whilst avoiding piecemeal decision-making and the potential for multiple rounds of Green Belt review.

Part 3: What are the IA Findings at this Stage?

8. Introduction (to Part 3)

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 This part of the IA Report sets out the appraisal findings at the current stage of plan making (i.e. pre-submission stage).
- 8.1.2 Chapter 9 presents an appraisal of the draft Plan against the IA Framework, concluding on the significance of predicted effects when considering the Plan 'as a whole'.
- 8.1.3 Chapter 10 brings together all the mitigation and enhancement measures that have been made in the IA throughout the plan-making process.
- 8.1.4 Chapter 11 discusses the next steps in the plan making and IA process including consultation arrangements and potential monitoring measures.

9. Appraisal of the Draft Plan

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 This section presents an appraisal of the Pre Submission Plan considered ‘as a whole’ (i.e. the proposed strategy including the site allocations and all the supporting policies that will shape future development). The full list of Plan policies can be found in table 9.1 for reference.
- 9.1.2 It is worth noting that a whole-plan appraisal was undertaken at the initial Draft Plan stage, but this has been superseded by the assessment presented in this section at the most recent stage.

9.2 Appraisal methods

- 9.2.1 It is important to undertake the appraisal in the context of the Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan as it forms part of the wider development plan for the borough to which the Local Plan must be in conformity. An assumption has been made that the policies in the PfE Plan will be applied, and the associated effects should not be attributed directly to the Wigan Borough Local Plan (unless it expands upon / provides further detail to PfE policies). This applies as follows:
- The approach to housing growth and distribution is set in the PfE Plan, and so the implications for Wigan Borough are already ‘locked in’.
 - Sites allocated through the PfE Plan or adopted Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy are already on the table as key sources of supply, and the effects have been taken into consideration as part of the ‘baseline position’.
 - A number of the broad locations in the Local Plan Core Strategy, which are proposed for allocation in the Local Plan, are subject to planning applications, including at South Hindley and East of Atherton (for around 550 homes). The broad location identified in the Core Strategy at Landgate is already under development and likely to be completed in due course regardless of the Plan update.
 - The NPPF and PfE include policies that guide development on a range of thematic issues such as energy performance, affordable housing, density, flood risk, design etc. These will be applied as a minimum, and therefore, it is not necessary to duplicate such policies in the Wigan Borough Local Plan. The focus of the appraisal should be on any additional details or new policies that are introduced that provide local context.
- 9.2.2 Likewise, sites with planning permission are assumed to be part of the baseline position, as they have been through the planning system and been approved, acknowledging the likely impacts.

- 9.2.3 However, it is possible that allocating such sites can have some impacts if there is still scope to influence detailed planning applications and / or if the delivery of the sites is stalled.
- 9.2.4 The appraisals have been undertaken by qualified professionals in impact assessment and plan-making, employing the following methods:
- Drawing upon information within the [Scoping Report](#) in relation to baseline data, trends, sensitive environmental receptors and key sustainability issues. Where updated data is available, this has been used proportionately where possible.
 - Utilising Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to identify spatial features, environmentally sensitive areas and relationships between development locations and likely effects.
 - Cross referencing information from supporting pieces of evidence.
 - Undertaking site / location visits.
- 9.2.5 Each Plan policy has been considered in the appraisal, but the findings have been discussed on a 'whole plan' basis (rather than commenting on every policy individually in the plan appraisal narrative set out in this section). This is important as policies should be read in the context of the whole Plan and not in isolation. Policies can interact with one another to create cumulative effects, synergistic effects and to help mitigate potential negative effects. Where this is the case, such factors are discussed in the appraisal findings, including reference to individual policies as relevant.
- 9.2.6 To aid in interpretation, of the overall findings, **Appendix B** sets out a matrix that concludes on the broad implications of each policy (i.e. whether it is broadly positive, negative or neutral). As outlined above, it is not necessary to determine the significance of individual policies, but this 'policy screening' exercise allows for a focus on policies that are likely to be more relevant for the different IA topics.
- 9.2.7 To determine the significance of effects, account is taken of a range of characteristics referred to in Schedule 2 of the Regulations. This includes magnitude, duration, frequency, likelihood, permanence. and timescale. The potential for cumulative and synergistic effects is also considered by taking account of how the different proposals within the Plan interact. Consideration is also given to the interaction of the Plan with other plans, policies and programmes that affect the baseline position.
- 9.2.8 The characteristics of effects are discussed in the appraisal text in a proportionate manner, only where relevant to help conclude on the significance of effects. As discussed above, it is not considered to be appropriate to conclude on the significance of effects for individual elements of the Plan (i.e. for individual policies). It can therefore be assumed that where effects have not been discussed within the appraisal text for certain policies, that these were not important factors in determining overall significance. Likewise, it is not proportionate or necessary to go through a 'tick box' exercise for every effect characteristic to conclude on significance.

- 9.2.9 Taking account of the above factors, a conclusion is reached for each IA Topic with regards to the significance of effects, ranging from neutral, minor, moderate, and major. The table below sets out the scale that has been used to record effects.

Major positive		Major negative	
Moderate positive		Moderate negative	
Minor positive		Minor negative	
Neutral		Uncertainty	?

Table 9.1 List of policies in the Draft Plan

Policy	Policy name
People	
PE1	Planning for healthier living
PE2	New hot food takeaways
PE3	Gambling and short term loan establishments
PE4	Protection of open space, sport and recreation provision
PE5	Open space and play provision in new developments
PE6	Delivering infrastructure
PE7	Community Facilities
PE8	Development supporting users of publicly provided support services
Homes	
H1	Housing delivery
H2	Housing mix
H3	Remaining land at North Leigh Park
H4	South Hindley
H5	Remaining land South of Atherton
H6	East of Atherton
H7	Remaining Land at Landgate, Ashton in Makerfield
H8	Remaining land at Westwood Park, Wigan
H9	Sustainable housing growth in Standish
H10	Houses in multiple occupation
H11	Homes for looked after children
H12	Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers
H13	Accommodation for Travelling Showpeople
Jobs	
J1	Supporting economic growth
J2	Employment Areas
J3	The green economy
J4	The visitor economy
J5	Digital and telecommunications infrastructure
Transport	
T1	Safeguarding Future Transport Priorities
T2	Determining the transport implications of new developments
T3	Parking provision at new developments
T4	Design and layout of parking
T5	Aerodrome Safeguarding (Manchester and Liverpool Airports)
Places	
PL1	Securing High quality Design an Inclusive Design

PL2	Our historic environment
PL3	Heritage assets at risk
PL4	Development within our Conservation Areas
PL5	Non-designated heritage assets
PL6	The Borough's canals
PL7	Extension, alteration or conversion of existing buildings in the Green Belt
Town and Local centres	
TC1	Hierarchy of town and local centres
TC2	Wigan Town Centre
TC3	Leigh Town Centre
TC4	Ashton in Makerfield Town Centre
TC5	Atherton Town Centre
TC6	Golborne Town Centre
TC7	Hindley Town Centre
TC8	Pemberton Town Centre
TC9	Platt Bridge Town Centre
TC10	Standish Town Centre
TC11	Tyldesley Town Centre
TC12	Local centres supporting thriving communities
TC13	Gaps in the provision of Local Centres
TC14	Convenience shops outside of Designated Centres
Environment	
EN1	Our Natural Environment
EN2	Development and Green Infrastructure
EN3	Blue infrastructure network
EN4	Nature Recovery and Improvement
EN5	Chat Moss
EN6	Safeguarding Soil Resources
EN7	Protecting amenity and the environment
EN8	Land reclamation and renewal
EN9	Low carbon heat and energy
EN10	Development and Flood Risk
EN11	Flood water storage areas
EN12	Groundwater source protection zones
EN13	Water efficiency
Update	
UP1	Commitment to an early update of the Local Plan

9.3 Housing

- 9.3.1 The housing strategy for the Plan is set within the context of the PfE, which provides the housing requirement for Wigan Borough. The Council has identified sufficient housing supply to meet its requirement, and therefore no entirely new housing allocations are proposed in the Plan update. Having said this, the Plan confirms the support for development opportunities that were either allocated or identified as longer term opportunities in the Core Strategy. In this respect, minor positive effects can be assumed, as there are policies that continue to promote strategic opportunities such as South Hindley, North Leigh, East of Atherton and remaining land at Landgate, South of Atherton and Westwood Park.
- 9.3.2 Policy H9 provides clarity that new housing development on safeguarded land in Standish will be acceptable in principle, subject to it being supported by appropriate infrastructure.
- 9.3.3 The Plan seeks to sustain and enhance the residential offer in town centres across the borough. There is a focus on supporting the use of vacant upper floors and creating new residential markets in and around town centres.
- 9.3.4 This approach is reflective of PfE policy JP-Strat12 which supports the development of residential markets in the main town centres (which includes Wigan). The Wigan Borough Local Plan expands this principle to all its other town centres, whilst being mindful of their individual characteristics.
- 9.3.5 The Local Plan update includes several policies that deal with specific housing needs such as people using support services (PE7), looked after children (H11), HMOs (H10), gypsies and travellers (H12) and travelling showpeople (H13). These are all likely to lead to positive effects in terms of housing provision.
- 9.3.6 Policy EN8 could have some positive effects for housing if land reclamation and renewal involve an element of residential. However, there is uncertainty in this regard as residential-led schemes are unlikely.
- 9.3.7 Policy EN9 could have indirect positive effects upon housing as the delivery of low carbon heat and energy should help to improve housing quality. Likewise, policy PE1 which requires health impact assessments to be undertaken in support of new large developments will include consideration of housing standards and affordability (leading to an improvement in housing stock in the longer term). Policy PL1 also sets the framework for achieving high quality design, which will help to improve the quality of housing.
- 9.3.8 Policy PE6 requires new development to contribute financially towards social infrastructure, which could possibly have a minor negative effect in terms of viability. However, the amount charged reflects viability evidence and is unlikely to significantly affect housing delivery. Therefore, an uncertain minor negative effects is highlighted.
- 9.3.9 Policy T1 is positive with regards to housing as it safeguards several link roads that will likely be reliant upon residential development for funding.

- 9.3.10 Finally, it is worth noting that Policy UP1 commits to an early plan update, which gives a clear direction in relation to meeting housing needs in the longer term. This will also give the opportunity to review the balance of housing and employment land provision.

Overall effects

- 9.3.11 The housing strategy is largely determined by the PfE, and there is a healthy supply of housing when considering longstanding inclusions in the SHLAA. Therefore, significant effects are unlikely to arise in terms of housing delivery.
- 9.3.12 However, the Plan update continues support for existing strategic allocations and broad locations, promotes residential markets in town centres, and is likely to improve the quality of housing stock. The Plan also makes provision for specific community groups including gypsies, travellers, travelling show people and children in care. In combination, **minor positive effects** are predicted to arise.

9.4 Health and Communities

- 9.4.1 The housing strategy of the Plan is set within the context of the PfE, which supports the continuation of the spatial strategy of the core strategy. Therefore, no significant effects are predicted through the support for housing development. However, the accompanying housing policies (Policies H2-H8) provide ongoing commitment to long standing strategic sites and set out policy detail; including a requirement for the housing type and size to meet local needs, which should derive positive effects.
- 9.4.2 Requirements under Policy H2 for developers of housing for older people and specialist housing to demonstrate how their site meets the needs of older people and people with disabilities should help deliver suitable neighbourhoods and encourage healthy lifestyles for these protected groups. Policies H12 and H13 also seek to protect residential amenity and ensure suitable provision and access to public transport, education, health and community facilities for gypsy sites and travelling showpeople accommodation, which should support the wellbeing of these communities.
- 9.4.3 Policy H7 (Land remaining at Landgate) states that sports pitches need to be retained and enhanced, including parking. This is positive, as sports pitches used by teams are typically accessed using cars on game days in particular, and such facilities are required to support their effective use. Though parking encourages car use (which is contrary to the health benefits associated with walking and active modes of travel), it is considered necessary.
- 9.4.4 With regards to employment, no additional land is proposed for allocation in this version of the Plan. In this respect, opportunities to create additional jobs will not be pursued in the short term (at least until the update of the Plan). Any knock-on benefits (or negative effects on amenity) with regards to health outcomes would therefore be limited in this regard.

- 9.4.5 Policy PE1 requires all major development to demonstrate that due consideration has been given to potential impacts on health and community wellbeing through a Health Impact Assessment or a Planning for Health Checklist.
- 9.4.6 The policy also does not support development which would have adverse effects on health unless where over-riding reasons of public interest can be demonstrated. Whilst this will help identify and thus safeguard against unsuitable development, this requirement will also encourage developers to consider health and community wellbeing early in the design process and encourage higher quality design which minimises adverse impacts on health and amenity and maximises opportunities for healthy lifestyles.
- 9.4.7 Policy PL1 requires all new development to include accessible and easy to move places, integrate green and blue infrastructure, public spaces and healthy homes and buildings.
- 9.4.8 Policy PE4 seeks to protect open space, sport and recreational provision and Policy PE5 requires large housing developments to incorporate open space or deliver improvements to open space nearby. These policies should help create sustainable communities with good access to open space, sport and recreational opportunities.
- 9.4.9 The specific mention of community and grassroots use of facilities at the Robin Park Complex and Leigh Sports Village is highlighted as being positive as this can facilitate active lifestyles and a sense of belonging between community groups (in locations that are close to areas of multiple deprivation).
- 9.4.10 Policies that seek to protect the amenity and liveability of existing and future residents should have positive effects on health and the wellbeing of communities by safeguarding them from adverse impacts. This includes Policies TC2 and TC5 which seeks to protect the amenity of future residents in Wigan and Atherton town centres and Policies TC2, TC4 and TC7 which seek to improve liveability in Wigan, Ashton-in-Makerfield and Hindley town centres by addressing traffic and thus relate noise and air pollution. This also includes Policy PE2 which addresses the over-concentration of hot food takeaways by requiring applicants to demonstrate there would be no unacceptable impact on amenity and to financially contribute to offset unavoidable impacts on nuisance and amenity in the local area, such as through payments towards bin maintenance and street cleaning.
- 9.4.11 Policies that seek to improve access and provision to health and community facilities are predicted to enhance community wellbeing and derive positive effects. This includes Policy PE6 which requires developers to contribute towards new social infrastructure including health, education and community facilities based on local need. Requirements for developers to have direct discussions with local organisations providing social infrastructure should help deliver enhancements that make a meaningful contribution to improving the wellbeing of existing communities. Improvements to the provision of community facilities is also proposed in Policy PE6. Furthermore, Policy J1 seeks to bring together new job opportunities and nearby residents, which will help to secure health benefits locally.

- 9.4.12 Policy TC12 also encourages health centres and community services in local centres. These locations benefit from greater access to communities.
- 9.4.13 The transport policies are likely to have some positive effects for health and communities. Requirements under Policy T2 for all major developments to maximise opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling should support active travel and healthier lifestyles.
- 9.4.14 The cycle parking standards under Policy T3 and support for cycle parking in new homes and other uses including requirement for new residential development to have garages or alternative secure cycle storage will support the uptake of cycling as a method of transport and for leisure, supporting active and healthier lifestyles. Similarly, the town centre policies (TC2-TC10) support improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling within town centres and to neighbouring areas and Policy PL6 requires development to provide safe and convenient access to canal towpaths for walking, wheeling and cycling. This should also improve opportunities for active travel and healthy lifestyles.
- 9.4.15 There are several policies in the Plan that seek to improve recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors which should help to improve access to nature, cultural and sporting facilities.
- 9.4.16 This is another determinant of health that is likely to improve and will contribute towards positive effects on health and wellbeing.
- 9.4.17 Environmental policies are likely to contribute positively to health in several ways. There is support for nature recovery, which includes reference to improving access to nature, the need to provide accessible open space, and promotion of walking, cycling and other forms of recreation in nature. These measures will help to provide a higher quality environment but also encourage healthier more active lifestyles. There are also policies that seek to ensure that development is safe, does not cause amenity impacts and manage pollution. Support for reclamation schemes is also positive, as this could provide better access to homes, jobs or recreation, with many areas being close to deprived communities.
- 9.4.18 Policy H9 provides clarity that housing development on safeguarded land in Standish needs to be supported by appropriate infrastructure (as per the Neighbourhood Plan policies). This is positive in relation to health and wellbeing as it ensures that services are not overwhelmed.

Overall effects

- 9.4.19 Several policies in the Plan seek to address health inequalities and safeguard the wellbeing of communities through improvements to health and community infrastructure, open space, nature and through identifying and minimising potential impacts of new development on health and amenity. Overall, a **minor positive effect** is predicted for health and communities.

9.5 Equalities

- 9.5.1 The 'housing strategy' of the Plan is set within the context of the PfE, which supports the continuation of the spatial strategy of the core strategy. Therefore, no significant effects are predicted through the support for housing development including in areas with high levels of deprivation and communities with protected characteristics. However, the accompanying housing policies (Policies H2-H8) set out policy detail including new provision for bus services and good walking wheeling and cycling routes which should improve accessibility for all communities including those on low incomes and with protected characteristics which are least likely to have access to a private car.
- 9.5.2 Policy H2 sets out policy detail on the housing mix and for affordable housing including 75% for affordable rent with social rent prioritised, which will benefit all communities particularly those on low income. The policy further requires developers for housing for older people and other specialist housing to show how their site meets the needs of older people and people with disabilities. This should help deliver suitable neighbourhoods and encourage healthy lifestyles for these protected groups.
- 9.5.3 The policy also requires 4% of residential schemes of 20 or more homes to be wheelchair accessible, which should improve housing choice and options for those with mobility impairments.
- 9.5.4 Policies H11 and H12 are also predicted to derive positive effects, as these policies seek to ensure the adequate provision of housing for vulnerable and protected groups including looked after children and gypsies and travellers.
- 9.5.5 Requirements in Policy H12 for gypsy and traveller sites to be accessible by active travel and public transport to key local services including education, health and community facilities should improve access to provision for these communities which are known to have lower literacy rates.
- 9.5.6 Policy H10 which deals with HMOs is likely to have some minor benefits for community groups that more regularly reside in such properties (by supporting 'acceptable' standards and managing the concentration of properties). This typically includes low-income groups, students and ethnic minorities, several of which have protected characteristics. It is worth noting that HMOs will need to be of a high quality, with permission only being granted where all issues are addressed. This will ensure that residents of HMOs gain access to better living environments, and that any community concerns are minimised, which is positive for health all round.
- 9.5.7 Several of the policies that are focuses on 'people' are likely to have benefits for people with protected characteristics. From a general perspective, PE1 requires Health Impact Assessments (HIA) for new developments meeting certain specifications. HIA is likely to include consideration of factors that will benefit communities of need, and these often overlap with protected characteristics, helping to reduce inequalities. Policies PE4 and PE5 are also likely to have broad reaching benefits for a range of communities by seeking to protect and enhance open space and play provision.

- 9.5.8 By setting standards and directing attention to deficits in provision, this will help to reduce inequalities amongst communities in the borough in this respect. Likewise, Policy PL1 seeks to provide high quality design, that includes safe and inclusive public spaces.
- 9.5.9 Specific benefits are likely to arise for young people by seeking to manage hot food takeaway outlets (Policy PE2) as it will help to discourage unhealthy eating on a regular basis.
- 9.5.10 Plan policies that seek to improve access and the provision of social infrastructure are predicted to derive positive effects. This includes Policy PE6 which requires development to contribute towards new social infrastructure including health, education and community facilities to meet local needs. The policy further requires developers to engage with representatives of local organisations to address priorities of the local area. In areas with high levels of deprivation or a high concentration of communities with protected characteristics, this enables development to provide a meaningful contribution towards addressing social issues at a localised scale and make targeted improvements to the wellbeing of existing communities.
- 9.5.11 Plan policies that support the provision of new and the diversification of community uses in local centres (Policies TC12 and TC13) should help improve access to services and jobs for all communities, including deprived communities and those with protected characteristics. These communities are most likely to have fewer means for travel and thus most likely to benefit from new local provision.
- 9.5.12 Policy TC13 further identifies site allocations that could support local centres including at West of Gibfield, North Leigh Park and South Hindley, which are immediately adjacent to communities with high levels of deprivation and protected characteristics.
- 9.5.13 Policy TC2 seeks to improve education facilities in Wigan town centre which should improve education opportunities for all people.
- 9.5.14 The Transport policies are all likely to have positive effects in terms of accessibility for all users. TC1 safeguards strategic priorities that will help to improve movement across the borough, whilst TC2 seeks to ensure that transport assessments and travel plans are in place to help deliver safe, accessible and sustainable communities. Such measures are likely to be beneficial for all people, but especially those that do not have a private car. Policies TC3 and TC4 are concerned with suitable parking, which is important to acknowledge that some people need to be able to access facilities by car in a safe and convenient way. Whilst the town and local centre policies seek to manage car parking and promote a preference for sustainable and active modes of travel, they still acknowledge the need to support an appropriate level of parking, which should ensure that no groups are disadvantaged in this respect.
- 9.5.15 Policy EN8 supports and identifies sites for land reclamation and renewal for development, active travel and nature recovery. Many of the identified sites are in proximity to deprived communities which should improve access for these communities to green infrastructure, recreation and new homes.

Overall effects

9.5.16 Some policies seek to address inequalities including through improvements in the provision of social infrastructure, improvements in bus and active transport and improvements in accommodation and services for vulnerable and protected groups including looked after children and gypsies and travellers. Whilst the overall thrust of the Plan is positive with regards to equalities, the significance of effects is limited by the lack of additional planned growth in housing and employment land. Overall, **minor positive effects** are predicted.

Protected Characteristics	Summary of impacts
Age	Positive effects are likely for younger people through support for open space, play space, community facilities and schools. Positive effects are also likely for health through measures to control hot food take aways. Delivering only high-quality HMOs should ensure that groups that tend to reside in these (which includes students / young adults) are not disadvantaged by poor living environments. It will also help to reduce community tensions and any issues relating to HMOs not being well integrated into communities.
Sex	Women are perhaps more likely to benefit from the town centre policies which should create more active places that feel safer in the day and night time. This could help to reduce inequalities in this respect.
Sexual orientation	The plan is unlikely to have any direct effects or lead to inequality.
Disability	Positive effects are likely as there is support for improved accessibility standards in new homes. Town centre policies are likely to be beneficial through provision of appropriate parking, but also supporting improved accessibility to public transport, walking and wheeling.
Gender reassignment	The Plan is unlikely to have any direct effects or lead to inequality.
Marriage and civil partnership	The Plan is unlikely to have any direct effects or lead to inequality.
Pregnancy and maternity	The Plan is unlikely to have any direct effects or lead to inequality.
Race	The town centres (and surrounding areas) of Wigan and Leigh contain the greatest concentration of ethnic minority populations. The town centre policies for these areas seek to provide enhanced environments, more housing options and improved accessibility, which is positive for these groups.

Protected Characteristics	Summary of impacts
	Delivering only high-quality HMOs should ensure that groups that tend to reside in these (which includes ethnic minorities) are not disadvantaged by poor living environments. It will also help to reduce community tensions and any issues relating to HMOs not being well integrated into communities.
Religion and belief	The Plan supports the retention and development of community facilities, which are likely to include places of worship for different religions. This is positive and unlikely to lead to inequalities.

9.6 Climate change

- 9.6.1 Policies PE1 and PL1 seek for development to support climate change resilience. No specific measures are set out explicitly, but these policies are broadly supportive of measures that will achieve this aim.
- 9.6.2 Policy J3 supports the green economy across the borough and is likely to have positive effects in terms of both climate change mitigation and resilience.
- 9.6.3 A range of plan policies seek to protect and enhance natural environments, and this is likely to have positive effects in terms of ensuring that carbon remains stored in soil and vegetation. Policy EN5 has relevance as it is concerned with the protection of peat reserves at Chat Moss. Also important is Policy EN6, which seeks to preserve wider soil resources across the borough.
- 9.6.4 The policies that support new and enhanced habitats, tree and hedgerow planting are beneficial in terms of sequestering carbon, which should help to further contribute towards a reduction in emissions. These policies are also helpful with regards to climate change resilience by ensuring that places are not exposed / vulnerable to more extreme weather. For example, Policy EN2 explicitly mentions the role that trees can have in improving resilience to climate change.
- 9.6.5 With regards to energy efficiency in new developments, this is dealt with primarily through JP-S2 in the PfE. Policy EN13 has positive synergies by requiring a higher standard of water efficiency (which also contributes to carbon emission savings).
- 9.6.6 In terms of low carbon energy schemes, policy EN9 builds upon the framework set out in JP-S3 and will support an increase in installed capacity of low carbon energy across the borough. Ultimately, this will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions in the longer term.
- 9.6.7 Several other policies are also likely to contribute to a reduction in emissions. Though the contribution made by these measures are fairly small, the cumulative effects could be significant. For example:

- There is a focus on the reuse of buildings and land, which will limit embodied carbon emissions in future developments.
- There is a focus on sustainable modes of travel and transport, which will help to reduce emissions from transport (somewhat offsetting an increase in employment related traffic that could otherwise be expected from economy growth).
- Town centre policies facilitate a shift to the electrification of vehicles.
- Concentration of services, retail and housing in town and local centres is likely to support sustainable travel and increase the potential for viable district energy schemes in such locations.
- Ensuring adequate provision of open space will help to reduce transport-based emissions and store carbon in soil and vegetation.
- Support for low carbon energy schemes that make use of mine water and canal water opportunities.

9.6.8 Policy T1 which safeguards important transport schemes involves several road-based schemes, which are likely to involve an increase in greenhouse gas emissions during construction and through increased road capacity and consequent trips. The effects are predicted to be minor in the long term as it is expected that routes will need to be supported by public transport and an increasing number of vehicles will be low carbon.

Overall effects

9.6.9 With regards to climate change mitigation, the Plan is predicted to have mixed effects. On one hand, the plan promotes the continued strategy for housing development and support for infrastructure. These measures are likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions at construction stage and operationally. However, the Plan is also supportive of low carbon energy schemes, the growth of the green economy and carbon sequestration. On balance, **minor positive effects** are predicted.

9.6.10 In terms of adaptation and resilience, the Plan is very supportive of green and blue infrastructure delivery. Flood risk associated with climate change is unlikely to increase as a result of the plan. Therefore, overall, **minor positive effects** are predicted with regards to resilience.

9.7 Water

9.7.1 Most of the environmental policies will contribute positively towards the management of water resources. There is an overall focus on protecting and enhancing the natural environment and green/ blue infrastructure, which is generally beneficial with regards to flood risk and the management of pollution to water. In addition, there are measures that explicitly mention the need to protect and enhance water quality and manage flooding.

9.7.2 Policies EN3 and EN10 are particularly beneficial for the management of water catchments in terms of flooding and water quality, ensuring that the wider riparian environment is considered in development decisions.

- 9.7.3 There is a requirement for development to achieve greenfield run-off rates unless it is demonstrated to be impracticable, which is in line with the PFE policies. It is worth noting that the current Core Strategy for Wigan takes a more prescriptive approach to surface water run off rates by requiring a % reduction on brownfield sites. However, there is more emphasis (in the local plan) on the need for developments upstream of flood vulnerable areas to improve resilience beyond the baseline. In this respect, positive effects are still likely to arise for flooding and water management.
- 9.7.4 Though EN13 is more likely to have effects on resource use by reducing water usage in new development, this should have some benefits for water resources, as it reduces demand for abstraction.
- 9.7.5 Plan policies that support open space retention and environmental quality schemes (e.g. PE4 and PE5) are also likely to make a small contribution towards the management of flooding and water quality by protecting greenspace.
- 9.7.6 Policy EN9 supports renewable energy schemes, including mine water heating. These schemes can be intrusive and cause disturbance to habitats and pollution to the environment, particularly groundwater. It is expected that mitigation measures would need to be secured, so significant negative effects are not likely, but there is a degree of uncertainty.
- 9.7.7 Policy J4 encourages increased visitation to natural environments that provide important sources of recreation and tourism. This includes important water environments such as the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh, and the canal network. This presents the potential for increased pressure on such environments, which could lead to pollution of water habitats and surrounding areas. However, this is considered unlikely because Policy EN3 seeks to protect and enhance its assets alongside a range of other plan policies that will safeguard environmental quality and support sustainable management of water resources.
- 9.7.8 Policy PL6 is likely to have a direct positive effect on water quality of the canal network as it seeks to improve environmental quality along the waterway. However, other aspects of the policy could contradict this aim as they seek to increase recreational use and maximise their use for using water source heat pumps. It will be important to ensure that these activities are sensitive to the environment.
- 9.7.9 Policies TC7 and TC9 both include reference to flood risk management measures in Hindley and Platt Bridge town centres respectively. This should reduce the potential for pollution arising from flooding events. These measures would have synergies with wider efforts to implement natural sustainable drainage in new developments.
- 9.7.10 With regards to planned development, housing policies H3 and H4 refer to the need to manage surface water run off which will help to ensure that new development in North Leigh and South of Atherton do not contribute to flood risk or water pollution.

Overall effects

- 9.7.11 Some of the policy measures and developments supported by the Plan have the potential to increase pressure on water resources (for example recreational pressure from tourism, pollution and surface water changes resulting from employment allocations). However, there are appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures in place, and the likelihood of negative effects arising is considered to be low. Furthermore, the Plan includes a range of measures that seek to enhance the natural environment, which will have secondary benefits for flood management and water quality.
- 9.7.12 Direct positive effects are also likely to arise through a focus on the enhancement of riparian environments, reduction in surface water run off rates from brownfield development, and better management of flood risk in Hindley and Platt Bridge Town centres. Overall, this is considered to constitute **minor positive effects** in terms of water resources across the Borough.

9.8 Environmental quality

- 9.8.1 The environment policies promote green and blue infrastructure enhancement, which ultimately is positive in terms of environmental quality. Increased green space and natural habitats can help to regulate air quality, screen intrusive development, reduce noise and light pollution. Policy EN7 specifically deals with 'amenity' and 'pollution' and sets a broad framework to ensure that potential issues are explored and dealt with.
- 9.8.2 Policy PE1 plans for healthier living, with a range of measures set out that would contribute positively to environmental quality. The need for a health impact assessment and/or a Planning for Health checklist provides a mechanism for ensuring such factors are considered, and therefore it is likely that positive effects will arise. This policy is likely to work well in tandem with Policy PL1 which supports high quality and inclusive design, including measures that will encourage the creation of more environmentally friendly places.
- 9.8.3 PE2 deals with hot food takeaways, which can have specific amenity and environmental health issues. PE4, PE5, PE6 and PE7 will all contribute to the protection and enhancement of open space, amenity space and other community facilities and features that help to screen and reduce environmental quality issues such as air, noise and light pollution. These are all positive measures with regards to environmental quality, but such policy measures are largely a continuation of current practice, so effects would not be expected to be significant.
- 9.8.4 Policy PE8 is also likely to help address amenity concerns by helping to coordinate where support facilities are located (because associated activity could lead to community safety and amenity concerns).
- 9.8.5 Policy T1 is predicted to have mixed effects. Many of the safeguarded schemes involve road building, which will cause short term disruptions and have negative effects on amenity and environmental quality (noise, dust, congestion). Supporting a wider road network could also inadvertently increase car usage and subsequent air quality issues.

- 9.8.6 However, the roads in question will also serve the purpose of diverting traffic away from town centres, which would have benefits for environmental quality in those locations (e.g. Hindley, Leigh, Pemberton, Orrell). Other transport priorities will help to support sustainable travel, which will help to limit increases in car usage.
- 9.8.7 It is also worth noting that the schemes supported and safeguarded in Policy T1 emanate from Greater Manchester and Wigan transport plan priorities and / or allocated strategic sites. Therefore, these schemes are not 'new proposals' as such.
- 9.8.8 Policies T3 and T4 relate to parking standards and design. Whilst parking provision supports car use (which affects environmental quality), it would be unrealistic not to provide appropriate parking and would likely lead to greater amenity issues due to on street parking, poorly designed surfaces etc. Therefore, positive effects are more likely by carefully managing the amount, location and quality of parking facilities.
- 9.8.9 The Town Centre policies are likely to bring more people into town centres to live, work and for leisure purposes. Part of the strategy to enable the centres to remain vibrant is to improve the public realm, encourage walking, cycling and wheeling, promoting appropriate uses for buildings and managing traffic and parking. These measures are all likely to improve the environment and provide amenity benefits. However, it should be acknowledged that an unwanted outcome could be increased car trips, noise and other environmental quality issues in the town centres. The Plan clearly seeks to achieve positive effects, but some residual negative effects cannot be ruled out if car travel remains a dominant mode of travel.

Overall effects

- 9.8.10 A wide range of plan policies are likely to support an improvement in environmental quality as there is an emphasis on improving the public realm, enhancing green / blue infrastructure and promoting sustainable travel. The town centre policies should also have positive effects, but there is a potential for increased traffic that needs to be managed. On balance, potential **minor positive effects** are predicted overall. Whilst the policy framework has been strengthened with regards to environmental improvement, there are no targeted schemes (or enabling developments) that would help to drive a more significant positive effect.

9.9 Historic environment

- 9.9.1 Though there are housing and mixed-use allocation policies within the Plan, these are a continuation of existing sites and broad locations in the Core Strategy and PfE (and longer-term inclusions in the SHLAA). The Local Plan Update is not driving growth in these locations, nor should it be attributed the associated effects in this respect.
- 9.9.2 However, where the corresponding site allocations provide additional guidance and direction, this has the potential to have implications. With regards to heritage, policies H5 and H8 refer to important heritage assets present at Land South of Atherton and Westwood Park. There is a requirement for development to take account of the heritage assets and their settings, which is a minor positive effect.
- 9.9.3 Policy H10 which deals with Houses of Multiple Occupation is also considered to be beneficial as it will help to manage the appearance and number of HMOs that are permitted (a proliferation of which can have effects on the built environment, the character and functioning of neighbourhoods).
- 9.9.4 The PfE sets the framework for managing heritage impacts from development. These are complemented by Policy PL2 which identifies the important features that contribute towards Wigan's historic environment and seeks to conserve and enhance them.
- 9.9.5 Policies PL3, PL4 and PL5 provide further local context and policy guidance with regards to heritage at risk, conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets, all of which will help to conserve and enhance heritage assets and the historic environment across Wigan Borough. Policy PL1 also outlines the principles for good design, with an explicit emphasis on reflecting heritage, local history and culture. This is likely to ensure that more developments are designed so that they more closely reflect locally important features.
- 9.9.6 The Town and Local Centre policies are considered most likely to bring about significant effects as these areas overlap with listed buildings and in some instances have historic cores. Given that a range of priorities and schemes are listed for each town centre, these are discussed in turn below for each location.
- 9.9.7 In Wigan Town Centre a substantial amount of redevelopment is supported, including in areas that contain historic features. The policy acknowledges the need for redevelopment to be done in a sensitive way that respects and enhances heritage. Several areas of focus directly involve the repurposing of listed buildings, which would otherwise risk falling into further disrepair. In this respect, it is considered that the town centre strategy is positive. The large regeneration scheme on the former Galleries site has the potential to significantly alter the character of the town and the setting of various heritage assets. However, this is an opportunity to improve the town centre fabric, so the presumption is that positive effects are more likely to arise.
- 9.9.8 For Leigh Town Centre there is mention of the historic value of Bradshawgate, and an emphasis on protecting this through an emphasis on improving shop frontages and supporting independent traders.

- 9.9.9 There is also a focus on introducing more green infrastructure to the town centre, which will complement the historic environment. Positive effects are likely to arise.
- 9.9.10 A key outcome for Ashton-in-Makerfield would be to divert traffic from the town centre and make it a more pedestrian friendly environment. Alongside measures to improve the street scene, and the use of shops and upper floors, this would help to enhance the historic value of the core area around Bryn Street, Gerrard Street and Wigan Road.
- 9.9.11 The Town Centre Policy for Atherton does not refer to any major regeneration schemes or land use changes. The focus is more on improving the appearance and function of the town centre. Nevertheless, such measures are likely to improve the setting of heritage assets slightly, including Ena Mill and the Church of St John the Baptist.
- 9.9.12 A similar approach is proposed for Golborne Town Centre, with a focus on managing traffic, supporting the use of ground and upper floors, enhancing environmental quality and making the most of a possible new rail station. There is reference to the need to protect and enhance the 'historic value' of certain streets.
- 9.9.13 The town centre policy for Hindley focuses on enhancing the appearance and function of Market Street, recognising that it has some historic value. Investing in shop frontage improvements, public realm and traffic management will all be beneficial to the character of the settlement, which currently experiences heavy traffic at peak times.
- 9.9.14 Pemberton Town Centre does not have a significant historic core, but an improvement in environment quality, traffic management and pedestrian links will help to protect the settlement. Improvements to the environs behind town centre shops in parking areas could also help to improve the setting of the Grade II listed Church of St John the Divine.
- 9.9.15 Platt Bridge Town Centre does not have a significant historic core, but an improvement in environment quality, traffic management and pedestrian links will help to protect the settlement. Broadly speaking, neutral effects are likely here.
- 9.9.16 The policy for Standish Town Centre seeks to better manage traffic and parking, improve the public realm, improve accessibility and consolidate its role for retail, leisure and residential uses. The area around St Wilfrid's Church has historic value, and this is recognised in the policy through a commitment to protect and enhance this area in particular.
- 9.9.17 Tyldesley Town Centre Conservation Area is on Historic England's heritage at risk list and is identified as being in very bad condition. It is acknowledged that there have been improvements on the heritage list, and this is reflected in the Town Centre policy which seeks to support further regeneration and improvement. This includes improvements to the street scene, supporting the continued use and reuse of buildings for a range of uses, and better managing traffic and parking. This is likely to contribute to significant positive effects.

- 9.9.18 Environment policies are unlikely to have significant effects on heritage when considering policies individually. However, in combination, there is the potential for minor positive effects. This relates to the focus on achieving green and blue infrastructure enhancements, protection of open space and improving the quality of water, air and soils. Higher quality environments are more likely to complement the setting of heritage assets, and likewise, minimising pollution has some indirect benefits for assets. In this respect an uncertain minor positive effect is predicted.
- 9.9.19 PE2 is potentially positive for heritage as it will ensure that town and local centres retain a mix of uses which reflect their character. A proliferation of hot food takeaways could otherwise be negative in terms of the role of centres and amenity impacts.

Policy JP-P2 (Heritage) within the PfE states that where heritage assets have been identified as being at risk, Local Plans should identify specific opportunities for them to contribute to regeneration and placemaking, and they should set out strategies for their repair and re-use. **Overall effects**

- 9.9.20 The Plan focuses on preserving and enhancing town centres across the borough, which is likely to bring about positive effects on settlement character and historic features, particularly where the productive reuse of historic buildings is involved.
- 9.9.21 Overall, the Plan is predicted to have **minor positive effects** as it supports measures that should help to improve settlement character and the historic value of places.

9.10 Landscapes and townscapes

- 9.10.1 The Local Plan continues to support existing site allocations for housing and mixed-use developments, and the accompanying policies set out the importance of high-quality landscaping.
- 9.10.2 Particular benefits could be seen where policies seek to enhance the quality and experience of existing landscapes such as at Westwood Flash (through Policy H8).
- 9.10.3 The policies supporting named town and local centres are all likely to have positive effects on townscape as they seek to maintain and enhance the vitality of these locations. Each policy highlights the need to improve elements of public realm, accessibility and pedestrian environments, and to seek appropriate use and reuse of buildings and land. This is all likely to contribute towards more attractive townscapes across the borough. Complimenting the town centre policies are those which seek to manage the proliferation of certain types of development that can be detrimental to townscape such as hot food takeaways (PE2) and HMOs (H10).
- 9.10.4 Several of the 'Places' policies are likely to be beneficial with regards to townscape as they provide protection for historic features, which contribute significantly to settlement character. In addition, the policies that support the role of the canal network and manage development in the Green Belt are likely to have positive effects upon landscapes throughout the Borough.

- 9.10.5 Several of the environmental policies promote the enhancement of green and blue infrastructure. This is likely to lead to improvements with regards to both landscape and townscapes. For example, there is support for expanded tree cover, urban greening, enhancement of riparian corridors and habitat enhancement. There is also support for schemes which improve recreational opportunities in nature and open space, all of which are likely to lead to positive effects. Policy EN8 provides ongoing support for reclamation and renewal schemes in several locations that would lead to improved landscape and community environments.
- 9.10.6 Policy EN9 is supportive of low carbon energy schemes, some of which could have implications for landscape on the urban fringes. However, effects are likely to be minor and are uncertain because the policy states that locations need to be appropriate and the other plan policies will ensure that environmental factors are considered and addressed for low carbon energy schemes.
- 9.10.7 Policy T4 is concerned with parking design and layout and is likely to have positive effects upon townscape by reducing on street parking.
- 9.10.8 Policy T5 (by safeguarding aerodromes and flight paths) prevent large scale structures in built up areas, with reduced heights in areas of higher elevation. This is likely to be beneficial for townscapes and landscapes in Wigan, but the policy is largely reflective of other requirements and is essentially a continuation of the status quo, so broadly neutral effects are recorded.
- 9.10.9 Policy J4 seeks to protect and enhance the visitor economy, which is likely to have benefits for natural environment attractions (e.g. Haigh Woodland Park, the canal network, the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh, Chat Moss). This will protect and enhance landscapes associated with these attractions provided that ancillary facilities are appropriately designed and visitation is well managed.

Overall effects

- 9.10.10 The Plan is predominately positive with regards to townscape and landscape as there is a focus on enhancing green and blue infrastructure, town and local centre improvements and valuing natural environments. In this respect, cumulative **moderate positive effects** are predicted.

9.11 Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 9.11.1 The environment policies provide a wide range of measures that seek to protect and enhance the natural environment. The policies help to build upon the framework provided by the NPPF and PfE by identifying locally important features and supporting the local nature recovery strategy.
- 9.11.2 There is clear intent to protect and enhance biodiversity habitats directly and indirectly through the environment policies, but it is noted that if viability is a barrier, this could be a justification for not delivering the desired improvements to green infrastructure (For example in EN2).

- 9.11.3 Given that there are a range of ‘competing’ development requirements such as affordable housing, transport infrastructure and contributions to community facilities, there is potential for higher levels of environmental enhancement to be challenging. Nonetheless, the plan policies have positive intentions.
- 9.11.4 Policy EN4 encourages impacts to be addressed closer to source of impact, which is beneficial for biodiversity across the borough. However, this could mean slightly less investment is directed toward the Wigan Greenheart locations, which have been identified for strategic enhancement. As a larger established area of importance for biodiversity, this area will still see investment in nature protection and enhancement, and potentially from other sources of funding other than new development. However, on-site measures would be mostly dependent on individual site developments, so this is an important addition to ensure that local connectivity is maintained.
- 9.11.5 In addition to policies that explicitly focus on biodiversity protection and enhancement, there are wider policy aspirations to deliver improved green and blue infrastructure across the borough, all of which should have positive effects on biodiversity networks and species. The policies should help to guide developments to be more sensitive to habitats and species and provide opportunities to create new habitats as part of new developments and through reclamation schemes.
- 9.11.6 Several policies are likely to have further indirect positive effects on wildlife through the management of pollution and supporting natural processes. For example, the blue infrastructure policy seeks to manage water quality, re-naturalise modified waterways and maintain buffer strips in riparian zones.
- 9.11.7 Policy J4 highlights the importance of the natural environment to Wigan’s visitor economy. Whilst an increase in tourism and visitor activities could potentially lead to more disturbance, the policy states that there is a need to protect and enhance assets. Therefore, it is assumed that effects would be positive in this respect.
- 9.11.8 There are specific measures included within some of the town centre policies that will have a positive effect on biodiversity. For example:
- TC3 promotes the ‘greening’ of Leigh town centre
 - TC7 seeks to improve flood risk management at Borsdane Brook and creating associated nature and recreation benefits.
 - TC12 supports environmental improvements in local centres including through tree planting.
- 9.11.9 Though policies PE1 and PE4 are primarily focused on ‘people’, there could be some indirect positive effects on biodiversity as a result of the focus on creating high quality environments and through the protection of open space.
- 9.11.10 Policy PL1 sets out the key characteristics of developments that will be expected to achieve high quality design; one of which is ‘nature’. This will help to ensure that development incorporates principles that respect biodiversity.

- 9.11.11 Policy PL6 seeks to protect canals, with a key principle being the need to enhance environmental quality, ecological connectivity and biodiversity value. This links to the blue infrastructure policy and is likely to have positive synergies.
- 9.11.12 The only policy highlighted as potentially bringing about negative effects is EN9, which supports renewable energy schemes, including mine water heating. These schemes can be intrusive and cause disturbance to habitats and pollution to the environment. However, it is expected that mitigation measures would need to be secured, so significant negative effects are not likely, but there is a degree of uncertainty.
- 9.11.13 Policy T1: Safeguarding Future Transport Priorities contains a list of road schemes, some of which overlap with natural habitats. Whilst this policy seeks to safeguard land to allow these schemes to progress, they are already long-established schemes that have been introduced through other plans (for example the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Places for Everyone Plan). The effects of the scheme have been tested through SEA alongside these plans, and will also need to be addressed through project level studies. Therefore, such effects should not be attributed directly to the Local Plan.

Overall effects

- 9.11.14 The Plan identifies biodiversity assets of importance to Wigan and outlines a framework for protection and enhancement that builds upon the PfE policies. In particular, there is a focus on urban greening, enhancement of green and blue infrastructure networks, and recognising the role of nature for the visitor economy. In combination, these policies are predicted to bring about positive effects on biodiversity and help contribute towards a more resilient ecological network in the borough.
- 9.11.15 Taking the above factors into consideration, it is predicted that the net effect on biodiversity as a result of the plan will be positive. In the short term, **minor positive effects** are predicted, but these ought to increase in the long term as enhancement schemes and net gain projects come to fruition.

9.12 Resource efficiency

- 9.12.1 Development of new buildings and infrastructure will lead to a use of resources and the generation of construction and operational wastes. In the short term, this is a negative effect. However, new developments will be more modern and efficient compared to existing employment stock, and this should mean that in the longer term, negative effects from operations are minor. The Plan also seeks to retain existing employment land, which is performing well, which reduces pressure for further new premises and associated resource use.
- 9.12.2 PL1 sets out the framework for achieving high quality design, with a key principle being 'efficient and resilient'. Though the policy does not specify what this means, it highlights the importance of these factors, which are reflected in more detailed policies (such detail is also provided in the National Design Guide).

- 9.12.3 For example, EN13 sets a higher standard for water efficiency in new developments, building upon policies in PfE.
- 9.12.4 Several policies promote the reuse of buildings and land, which will reduce demolition waste and the need for new materials and resources for new developments. For example, PL4 seeks to resist demolition of buildings in Conservation areas, and the town centre policies all seek to maximise the use of vacant land and buildings.
- 9.12.5 The reuse of vacant land is also supported in specific locations, which is positive in terms of reducing pressure for greenfield development and the use of virgin materials.
- 9.12.6 Policy EN9 provides support for low carbon heat and energy schemes. The policy mainly consolidates PfE policies JP-S2 and JP-S3 and so is unlikely to have significant effects. However, it does add some local context by identifying opportunities pertinent to Wigan such as mine water heating, wind energy at the urban fringes and battery energy storage schemes. Policy PL6 supports the use of canals to reduce carbon emissions. In combination, these policies are predicted to bring about positive effects.
- 9.12.7 Policy EN13 sets out a higher requirement for water efficiency in new developments, which will also have benefits with regards to reduced energy and carbon emissions.
- 9.12.8 Policy J3 is likely to support the development of the green economy, which will contribute towards a reduction in carbon emissions in the longer term.
- 9.12.9 Policy J5 is likely to have indirect positive effects with regards to carbon emissions, as an improvement in digital and tele communications should help to reduce the need to travel and allow businesses to operate more efficiently, which ultimately should help to reduce carbon emissions.

Overall effects

- 9.12.10 However, the quality of new developments will be higher and operationally there should be resource efficiencies. In particular, the standards for water efficiency will be higher, and there is support for the provision of high-quality developments. The Plan also supports growth of the green economy, the use of low carbon energy schemes and the reuse of land and buildings. Together, these measures will have positive effects in terms of resource efficiency. Overall, the positive effects are considered to offset the negatives, and so **neutral to minor positive effects** are predicted.

9.13 Land and soil

- 9.13.1 Though there will also be a large amount of land lost at housing allocations and the PfE allocations, these are already 'committed' through existing plans and / or planning permissions. Therefore, these effects are not attributable to the Wigan Borough Local Plan. In the context of the remaining agricultural land resources in the borough (and that which is already likely to be lost as a result of other plans and programmes), there is still a large amount of greenfield / agricultural land resource in the borough.
- 9.13.2 Several other plan policies are likely to have implications for land and soil. Those of note are discussed below.
- 9.13.3 Policy J4 concerns the visitor economy and recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing the borough's natural environments. This will have positive secondary effects in terms of protecting land and soil resources.
- 9.13.4 The Town Centre policies all seek to support the ongoing vitality of town and local centres, with the intention of promoting regeneration. Likewise, policies that support heritage (e.g. PL2, PL4) encourage the reuse of buildings and resist demolition. This will help to direct development away from greenfield land as well as leading to a greater reuse of land and buildings. Together, these policies are predicted to have indirect positive effects in terms of soil and land. However, the approach to town centres and heritage is broadly reflective of the NPPF, PfE and adopted Plan for Wigan, and so the effects are not likely to be significant compared to the baseline position.
- 9.13.5 Policy EN5 is concerned with the protection and enhancement of Chat Moss, which will have positive effects in terms of peat reserves. The policy provides a proactive approach to the management of the Moss, which constitutes a minor positive effect.
- 9.13.6 Policy EN6 is important for the protection of soil resources as it introduces the need for a soil survey, handling and management plan when best and most versatile agricultural land is involved. This provides a mechanism for protecting soil resources, helping to add local detail to NPPF requirements.
- 9.13.7 Policy EN7 and EN8 are both supportive of land reclamation, managing and tackling contamination, which is positive for this SA topic. The identification of specific locations as opportunity sites is a proactive approach that is more likely to lead to schemes materialising.
- 9.13.8 Policies PE4 and PE5 seek to ensure that open space is protected and enhanced, which has secondary benefits for soil and land resources.

Overall effects

- 9.13.9 The Plan is broadly positive with regards to soil and land resources by promoting the reuse of land and buildings, preserving and enhancing open space and addressing contamination. Though there is continued support for the development of key strategic sites, the principle of development in these locations is well established (or has planning permission) and the effects on land are considered to be part of the 'baseline position'. Therefore, no additional loss of greenfield land is expected as a result of this Plan. Overall, a **minor positive effect** is predicted.

9.14 Transportation

- 9.14.1 Whilst the Plan includes housing and mixed-use allocation policies, the Local Plan Update is not driving growth at these locations as these are a continuation of existing sites in the Core Strategy and PfE. Therefore, the potential effects of these policies are limited to the additional guidance and direction and the implications this is likely to have for the transportation objective. Policies H3, H4, H6 - H8 include additional measures which should derive minor positive effects. This includes a requirement for the new link road between the A578 and A579 to be suitable to accommodate bus services (H3 and H4); good walking, wheeling and cycling provision within the South Hindley site and to Hindley town centre and elsewhere (H4); requirement for financial contributions to improve pedestrian routes from the site East of Atherton to Atherton Rail Station and nearby bus stops (H6); extending the new road and establishing a recreation connection between fishing ponds and the countryside at Landgate (H7); and to enhance the public rights of way network and improve pedestrian and cycling links to Wigan town centre from Westwood Park (H8).
- 9.14.2 The Plan seeks to minimise the need to travel by locating development in sustainable locations. There is also a broad aim to achieve development that promotes accessibility and mobility (PL1). Policy T2 also requires development to be supported (as necessary) with a transport assessment, travel plan and transport statement. A key aim is to ensure that there are no significant effects on the transport network, to encourage walking, cycling and wheeling, and to ensure that developments are served by high quality sustainable transport networks. These should all help to ensure that new developments have positive effects with regards to transportation objectives.
- 9.14.3 Policy T1 safeguards strategic transport infrastructure, which will help to support more effective transport movements across the borough. However, this could lead to an increase in car trips.
- 9.14.4 Some of the schemes support public transport expansion, which will help to support modal shift. However, several link roads are earmarked, which could encourage / enable continued car usage. On one hand this is negative, as it could lead to more trips and car dependency. On the other hand, it will help to reduce congestion along existing routes, and could make sustainable transport, walking and cycling more attractive in those locations.
- 9.14.5 Policies T3 and T4 deal with parking standards and design. The aim is to achieve an appropriate balance between the need for developments to be supported by parking and trying to discourage overuse of cars. In this respect, neutral effects are predicted.
- 9.14.6 The Plan also seeks to encourage active and sustainable travel. This includes improving walking, wheeling and cycling connections within, between and to communities outside town and local centres (Policies TC2-TC12). This also includes improving access to tourism, sporting and cultural assets by walking, wheeling, cycling, bus and rail and for improvements to public rights of way (Policy J4) and support for walking and cycling within green and blue infrastructure. Cumulatively, this should support a modal shift towards active travel and help increase its desirability as a preferred mode for transport.

- 9.14.7 There are several policies that are supportive of improved / increased parking provision in town centres and leisure facilities, including in Standish (which already suffers from congestion issues at peak times). It is acknowledged that this could facilitate continued car usage, but in the context of wider efforts to drive a shift towards sustainable and active modes of transport and travel, the effects are unlikely to be significant.
- 9.14.8 Due to the nature of the accommodation and parking requirements for vehicles and equipment, travelling showpeople accommodation is often located in peripheral locations or in poorly accessible locations for community facilities and services. Requirements in Policy H13 for travelling showpeople accommodation to be accessible by active travel and to be served by public transport to key local services including education, health and community facilities should provide sustainable transport options to these communities.
- 9.14.9 Other Plan policies are likely to indirectly have positive effects on transportation. This includes Policy J5 which supports in principle improvements to digital and telecommunications infrastructure, which should support remote working and reduce the need for travel. Policy PL6 specifically seeks to improve access to the borough's canal networks by walking, cycling and wheeling.
- 9.14.10 Policy PE7 is likely to reduce the need to travel cross boundaries by helping to coordinate where support facilities (for service users) are located.

Overall effects

- 9.14.11 The Plan is supportive of sustainable transport networks and active travel enhancements and will require suitable mitigation to address potential negative impacts. There is also support provided to facilitate important transport infrastructure schemes. Overall, **minor positive effects** are predicted.

9.15 Economy

- 9.15.1 The Wigan Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment identifies opportunities to strengthen the borough's economic competitiveness within the region, reduce levels of out-commuting and help address socio-economic inequalities. However, the Plan does not proactively allocate land to respond to this evidence. As a result, the Plan is likely to have only a limited influence on the delivery of employment land and job creation within key growth sectors.
- 9.15.2 Policy UP1 is particularly relevant in this regard, as it commits the Council to undertaking an early update of the Plan. Through this policy, the Council recognises the importance of considering housing and employment needs in an integrated and comprehensive manner. This will provide an opportunity to explore the most appropriate strategy for accommodating future housing and employment growth both within the borough and across Greater Manchester.
- 9.15.3 Therefore, whilst the current Plan is likely to have limited effects on employment land provision, future opportunities for employment growth would not be precluded and could be considered through a subsequent plan update / review. Nevertheless, a potential negative effect is the delay in bringing forward employment growth opportunities, which could result in the borough's economic performance temporarily lagging behind comparable locations that are responding more proactively to changing economic circumstances.
- 9.15.4 Several of the 'environment' policies are predicted to have positive effects with regards to the economy. Together, policies EN1-EN5 seek to protect and enhance the natural environment for the benefit of biodiversity recovery. Habitats play an important role in Wigan Borough for recreation, which supports economic activity at visitor centres, cafés etc. The enhancement of green infrastructure will also contribute towards greater climate change resilience, which reduces disruption to businesses. Creating attractive developments that are environmentally friendly is also likely to attract high quality employment.
- 9.15.5 Several policies promote the development of the green economy (Policy J3) and a move towards low carbon developments (Policy EN9), which will help with energy security as well as taking advantage of a growing market sector.
- 9.15.6 The Town and Local Centres policies are predicted to have positive effects for the economy. Important regeneration and investment schemes are promoted in each of the town centres which will support economic activity in these locations. Improvements to transport infrastructure will further benefit economic activity and facilitate access to jobs in town centres and further afield. For some town centres there is also direct reference to the need to safeguard and enhance existing employment areas, to reinforce areas of retail use that remain viable, to support the night time economy and make the most of culture and leisure opportunities and events. All these factors will contribute to a healthy economy in the town centres across the borough, which will in turn contribute towards wider economic growth. As accessible locations, the town centres are also likely to provide job opportunities and business growth opportunities for a wider range of communities.

- 9.15.7 There is overlap with most of the town centres and deprived communities, and therefore the potential to address inequalities also exists.
- 9.15.8 Transport Policy T1 safeguards a list of important transport improvement schemes which are likely to be beneficial to the economy in several ways. There will be benefits for businesses involved in design and construction stages in the short term. In the longer term, the delivery of new transport links will facilitate new housing at strategic sites and will also help to improve transport flows across the borough, which will assist businesses to operate more effectively.
- 9.15.9 Policy T2 requires certain developments to be supported by a transport assessment and travel plan to ensure that impacts on transport networks are mitigated and sustainable transport is promoted. This will help to ensure that development does not have a detrimental effect on movement, which is positive for the economy.
- 9.15.10 Policy PE1 supports healthy living, which is likely to have secondary benefits with regards to ensuring a healthy workforce, a resilient environment and active travel infrastructure.
- 9.15.11 Policy PE2 seeks to manage the proliferation of hot food takeaway establishments, which in the long term should be positive as it contributes towards healthier living (and thus a healthier workforce).
- 9.15.12 Conversely, this policy prevents economic activity associated with such uses, so could be perceived as being negative in this respect.
- 9.15.13 Policy EN7 seeks to avoid the 'sterilisation' of business growth by managing the development of new homes in areas that are near to existing or planned business developments which might not be compatible with residential uses. This is positive for the economy.

Overall effects

- 9.15.14 The Plan seeks to protect and enhance existing employment areas, support the vitality and vibrancy of town and local centres, improve transport infrastructure and secure environmental improvements. All these factors have a cost but ultimately should contribute to sustainable economic growth.
- 9.15.15 Positive effects are not likely to be significant overall because, although the evidence identifies opportunities for economic growth, the Plan does not proactively allocate employment land to facilitate their delivery, meaning potential benefits are deferred until a future plan update.
- 9.15.16 A minor negative effect is predicted in relation to the hot food takeaway policy, but this does not detract from the overall **minor positive effects**.

9.16 Town centres

- 9.16.1 Schemes that will deliver benefits by diverting traffic from town and local centres include South Hindley, North Leigh and Landgate. Whilst these schemes are already allocated and committed in existing plans, the update provides ongoing support to help ensure they come to fruition. Policy T1, which seeks to safeguard important transport schemes (such as link roads), will also contribute towards positive effects in this respect.
- 9.16.2 The town centre policies are predicted to have positive effects on town centres. Significant effects are likely to arise in all the centres with a corresponding policy as the focus is on sustaining and enhancing town centres and responding to changing trends.
- 9.16.3 Each town and local centre policy is geared towards issues that need to be addressed in those locations, but there is a common thread that the residential offer should be increased, and improvements achieved to the public realm. An increase in homes will bring footfall and increased presence in the centres, which is beneficial for businesses and for creating more active places. The policies also seek to enhance accessibility and create more attractive environments for pedestrians, which should make the town centres more attractive places to live, visit and work.
- 9.16.4 Policy TC1 applies a tiered approach to impact assessments for out of town retail proposals. This reflects the increased vulnerability of smaller centres to out-of-centre retail and leisure uses. The approach will capture a wider range of proposals and not just the larger developments, so should better protect smaller centres from cumulative pressures.
- 9.16.5 Substantial regeneration and renewal schemes are supported in Wigan Town Centre in particular, which is likely to see significant positive effects arise in the longer term as the town centre and surrounding areas continues to be transformed. The smaller centres will also see benefits with regards to the function and health of the centres, but to a lesser magnitude compared to Wigan Town Centre.
- 9.16.6 Policies that seek to proactively manage certain uses which are often found in town centres (such as hot food take aways, HMOs and community facilities) are predicted to be positive, as they will help to ensure that town and local centres retain a variety of uses.
- 9.16.7 Policies EN1 and EN2 are concerned with the enhancement of the natural environment and green infrastructure, and there is recognition that town and local centres should be made more environmentally attractive. The need to increase street trees, sustainable drainage and other urban greening measures is highlighted.
- 9.16.8 Policy J4 complements the town centre policies as it supports the visitor economy and recognises the role of historic town centres. Several of the facilities explicitly referred to in the policy are located within town centres, and support is given to the expansion of such facilities and ancillary uses.

- 9.16.9 Though some of the boroughs key attractions are not within town centres (for example Haigh Hall and the Flashes), there is a recognition that access to these locations needs to be improved by sustainable modes, which should help to improve linkages between town and local centres and tourism activities that are out of town centres.
- 9.16.10 Policy J5 is likely to have positive effects for town centres in two ways. First, improved digital and telecommunications infrastructure will allow town centres to function more efficiently. Second, there is a requirement for any infrastructure to be appropriately designed to avoid impacts on townscape.
- 9.16.11 Policy T2 requires that new development is supported by appropriate transport assessments and travel plans, which is important for town and local centres that are usually an attractor of travel. There will also be a need to manage car parking through policy T3. On one hand, these policies are likely to have positive effects by ensuring that the transport network can accommodate development and promoting sustainable modes of travel. However, the use of private vehicles to visit town and local centres is a preference for many residents, and several policies seek to provide additional car parking as appropriate (TC6, TC10 for example). Therefore, uncertain minor negative effects are highlighted to reflect this possible issue (though also acknowledging that adequate car parking will help to maintain the attractiveness and accessibility of centres to a wider range of people).

Overall effects

- 9.16.12 There is a strong focus on sustaining vibrant town and local centres by supporting environmental improvements, facilitating residential markets, making positive use of land and buildings, improving accessibility, promoting visitor activities and protecting heritage and townscape features.
- 9.16.13 There could be some minor negative effects if residents prefer private car trips to access town and local centres. However, this should be offset by an improved sustainable transport offer and residential development in and around the centres.
- 9.16.14 Overall, the Plan policies are predicted to have a **moderate positive effect** upon town and local centres.

9.17 Summary of effects

- 9.17.1 Table 9.1 below presents a summary of the overall effects of the plan (i.e. the significance of effects predicted when taking account of all the plan policies in combination). The effects are predicted in the context of the 'future baseline', taking into account other plans, programmes and projects that are expected to be in place alongside the Local Plan update.
- 9.17.2 The Plan is predicted to have mostly positive effects, with these being of greatest (moderate) significance in terms of 'Town Centre' and 'Landscape and Townscapes' IA topics. This is largely due to the focus on town / local centre regeneration and vitality.

- 9.17.3 The Plan is predicted to generate minor positive effects for the majority of IA topics. This is mainly due to measures that seek to enhance green/blue infrastructure, protect and enhance environmental quality and deliver high standards of design.
- 9.17.4 Collectively, the policies are likely to have benefits for environmental factors, which has secondary benefits for social objectives relating to health and equalities.
- 9.17.5 Whilst there are no new housing allocations, the Plan reaffirms commitments to long term strategic allocations, as well as supporting windfall development in accessible locations. These are minor positive effects.
- 9.17.6 There is also an aim to support new infrastructure that could help to promote sustainable travel and reduce congestion. In addition, the Plan supports town and local centre vitality, sustainable and active transport networks.
- 9.17.7 The Plan safeguards existing employment land, supports business growth and investment, and provides additional employment opportunities through a range of policies and 'rolled-forward' allocations. However, positive effects are not expected to be significant as the Plan does not proactively respond to all of the opportunities identified through the Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment and instead defers wider strategic consideration to a future review.
- 9.17.8 The Plan is not expected to give rise to any significant negative effects because it largely maintains the existing spatial strategy, safeguards environmental and community assets, and strengthens the policy framework rather than introducing substantial new development pressures; however, positive effects are generally assessed as minor as the overarching growth strategy is largely established through existing plans and the Local Plan primarily provides incremental improvements to the current policy position.

Table 9.2: *Summary of effects for the Draft Plan*

IA Topic	Summary of effects
Housing	Minor positive effects ?
Health and communities	Minor positive effects
Equalities	Minor positive effects
Climate change	Minor positive effects
Water quality	Minor positive effects
Environmental quality	Minor positive effects ?
Historic environment	Minor positive effects
Landscapes and townscapes	Moderate positive effects
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Minor positive effects
Resource efficiency	Neutral effects
Land and soil	Minor positive effects
Transportation	Minor positive effects
Economy	Minor positive effects
Town Centres	Moderate positive effects

10. Mitigation and Enhancement

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 Given the iterative nature of plan-making, consideration of mitigation and enhancement measures has featured throughout the IA process. This section sets out a summary of how the IA addressed mitigation and enhancement at key stages in the plan-making process.
- 10.1.2 When making recommendations it is recognised that the new Local Plan for Wigan Borough needs to be read in the context of the Places for Everyone Plan, which already sets out policy measures in relation to a range of factors. These matters are therefore considered to be addressed satisfactorily already and (are not repeated in this IA).

10.2 Options and Preferences

- 10.2.1 The focus at this stage was to provide early engagement with the emerging plan policies and evidence gathering to ensure that sustainability issues are identified and addressed up front. The following recommendations were made and reported to the Council in an Interim IA Report prepared in October 2023 in relation to the consultation document prepared at the 'Options and Preferences' stage.
- As the evidence base progresses, it would be useful to revisit the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and whether there are alternative locations for accommodating needs.
 - Explore the potential for setting higher environmental / sustainability standards for the strategic growth locations as appropriate.
 - The effects of employment growth on road traffic and carbon emissions need to be explored further once a strategy and reasonable alternatives are clearer.
 - Seek an overall improvement in the quality of Wigan's watercourses and other water resources.
 - Set out the priority of actively enhancing local amenity and environmental protection, rather than only protecting present levels from unacceptable harm.
 - Consider policy requirements for public art, exhibitions and civic spaces that ensure town and local centres do not lose their sense of identity and community spirit.
 - The stated preference for North Leigh Park specifies a requirement for high standards regarding energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies. The policy proposals for the other five strategic locations could do the same.
 - There are specific guiding principles for landscape proposed for all the strategic locations with the exception of land South of Atherton. Consider articulating similar policy preferences for this location.

- Elements of the stated preferences regarding HS2 need to be reconsidered given recent government announcements.

Employment options

10.2.2 The following recommendations were made from integrated appraisal work, recognising that it was still early in the plan-making process and policies and approaches were not finalised. It was intended that these measures would be considered by the Council before the full draft of the Local Plan was prepared. The focus at this stage was on identifying recommendations to address site specific issues. Given that this exercise was undertaken before allocations were proposed, recommendations were intended to influence site selection and corresponding policies. The following measures were suggested to the Council in an internal Interim IA Report.

- Seek to enhance public rights of way at Moss Industrial Estate, which are currently difficult to use in parts.
- Seek to enhance public transport connections and active transport links to sites within the A580 East Lancashire Road Corridor.
- Ensure that residential development on the Bridgewater West site is accessible to nearby local services by walking and cycling and are not reliant on private travel to access local services.
- Celebrate the mining legacy of Astley throughout the wider development of the Bridgewater West site by supporting public art, signage and features that reflect the history of the area.
- Support access to economic growth sectors to underrepresented groups such as women and disabled people, for example:
 - By specifying the need to provide onsite childcare facilities where there is no suitable provision nearby.
 - Supporting the highest standards of accessibility and adaptations that support those with disabilities to work at these locations.
 - Supporting the development of local skills and training programmes.

Initial Draft Plan

10.2.3 The table below sets out the recommendations made in response to the appraisal of the initial draft Plan policies. The Council's response is provided for each recommendation. In some cases, the Council amended policies accordingly, whereas in others, it considered that no further action was necessary.

Table 10.1: Recommendations at Initial draft plan stage

Recommendation	Council response
Flood risk management is mentioned explicitly for Platt Bridge but there is flooding risk in all the town centres to varying extents. It would be useful to require / encourage (where possible) surface water management in all the town centres.	Specific mention is given to Platt Bridge as it is a significant issue in this location. General flood policies are considered sufficient to deal with flood risk in other centres.
Some town centre policies mention urban greening, others don't. It would be beneficial to promote / support such approaches across the board in town centres.	Urban greening is specifically mentioned in town centre policies where there is a particular need for intervention to address deficits. As such, inclusion in all town centre policies is not considered necessary.
Some town centre policies state the need to address the environs behind main shopping streets, whilst others don't. Most of the town centres have poor quality environs behind shops / main streets that could be improved.	This is only specifically addressed in town centre policies where there is considered to be an issue that needs to be addressed. As such, it is not considered appropriate to include in all town centre policies.
Policy J8 clause D highlights some of the key cultural assets in Wigan. The Old Courts is considered to be an important community asset that should be added to this policy.	Agree. The Old Courts has been added to Policy J8, now J4.
The self-build and custom build housing policy would benefit from a more objective target underpinned by evidence.	The policy has been amended to make specific reference to the Self Build Register.
Policy EN4, clearly prioritises on site net gain in a hierarchy of interventions. This helps to ensure that biodiversity value in development locations does not decrease. However, it could potentially prevent solutions that would offer a greater amount of net gain from being implemented. Consider adding the following wording. Off-site alternatives will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that Biodiversity Net Gain, that contributes to the green	The policy has been amended as considered appropriate.

Recommendation	Council response
infrastructure network, cannot be practically and/or feasibly achieved within the site boundary <u>(or it is demonstrable that a higher amount of net gain could be achieved off-site more effectively)</u>	
For Winwick Lane Policy J6 - it is recommended that the policy refers to the need to protect the amenity of standalone and small clusters of homes which could potentially be adversely affected by transported related air pollution.	The Council considered that this would be suitably dealt with through Policy EN6, now EN7. NB: The site is not proposed for allocation in the latest version of the Plan.
There are discrepancies between the employment site allocation policies on improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling. Policy J3 performs best by seeking improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling access. Policies J5 and J6 seek improvements to walking and cycling access only.	Policies J4, J5 and J6 amended to include 'walking, wheeling and cycling' (as per Policy J3). NB: The plan no longer proposes to allocate any employment sites.
For the Bridgewater West allocation policy, it would be beneficial to explore how 'investment' can support efforts to maintain the winding tower (which is a heritage asset identified as 'at risk').	Investment in the mining museum is mentioned in Policy J5 but does not include detail on maintaining the winding tower. NB: The plan no longer proposes to allocate any employment sites.

Regulation 19 Local Plan

- 10.2.4 Following consultation on the initial draft Plan, the Council has made focused changes to policies. The integrated assessment has been updated to take account of these changes (including further consideration of mitigation and enhancement measures).
- 10.2.5 At this stage, no further measures have been identified as the changes made to policies do not lead to significant negative effects.

11. Monitoring and next steps

11.1 Monitoring

- 11.1.1 There is a requirement to outline the measures envisaged to monitor the predicted effects of a Plan. The Regulations suggest that there is a need to focus on the significant effects that are identified (rather than all effects).
- 11.1.2 It is important to identify monitoring measures that are appropriate, which includes consideration of the practicality of collecting data. In this regard, it is important to consider existing monitoring regimes that cover similar topics and issues.
- 11.1.3 The Local Plan is accompanied by a set of monitoring measures and there are also indicators and targets within related strategies and plans across Greater Manchester such as the Places for Everyone Plan and the Five-Year Environment Plan. To reduce duplication of effort, these sources of monitoring indicators have been utilised in the first instance. Where necessary, new indicators are proposed to complement any existing / proposed monitoring measures.
- 11.1.4 Table 10.1 below summarises the effects of the Plan and a set of indicators that are proposed to monitor the predicted effects. Measures will be finalised once the Plan is adopted and will be set out in an SA Statement in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

IA Topic and summary of effects	Potential monitoring indicators
Housing Minor positive effects?	• Net additional new homes built • Deliverable supply of housing
Health and communities Minor positive effects	• Number and % of qualifying developments providing a Health Impact Assessment. • Managing the provision of new hot food takeaways. • Creation of open space provision delivered through new development (Ha).
Equalities Minor positive effects	• Number of new HMOs each year. • % of homes meeting Part M4(3) on new build schemes of 20 homes or more. • Net additional gypsy and traveller pitches delivered.

IA Topic and summary of effects	Potential monitoring indicators
Climate change Minor positive effects	• Annual greenhouse gas emissions from traffic. • Annual greenhouse gas emissions by sector. • Number of planning permissions approved against Environment Agency advice.
Water quality Minor positive effects	• Pollution entering Wigan Borough main rivers. • Number of planning permissions approved against Environment Agency advice.
Environmental quality Minor positive effects	• Annual Mean NO₂ monitoring results – Wigan monitoring station (µg/m³) • Annual Mean NO₂ monitoring results – Leigh monitoring station (µg/m³)
Historic environment Minor positive effects	• Ongoing review of the borough's Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans
Landscapes and townscapes Moderate positive effects	• G1a – Changes in the landscape characteristics of National Character Areas (NCAs).
Biodiversity and geodiversity Minor positive effects	• Number of SBIs in positive conservation management • Gross area of habitat created from the application of biodiversity net gain
Resource efficiency Neutral effects	• % of new homes completed with an EPC rating of A or B • % of new non-domestic developments completed with an EPC rating of A or B.
Land and soil Moderate positive effects	• % of housing completions on previously developed land. • Percentage of vacant town centre premises reused for residential or mixed-use development. • Development on best and most versatile agricultural land.

IA Topic and summary of effects	Potential monitoring indicators
Transportation Minor positive effects	• % of housing within 800m of good public transport accessibility • % of journeys made by active travel and public transport
Economy Minor positive effects	• Net employment floorspace delivered (Class B2/B8/E(g)) • Loss of employment land in Employment Areas to other uses • % of working age population in employment
Town Centres Moderate positive effects	• Vacancy rates within town centres • Vacancy rates within local centres • Net additional homes delivered in town centres

11.2 Next steps

- 11.2.1 This IA Report will be consulted upon with the statutory bodies and wider stakeholders alongside the Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan under Regulation 19.
- 11.2.2 Any comments received will be reviewed and then taken into account prior to the Plan being submitted for examination.

Appendix A Options and Preferences Appraisal

Approach and methodology

This appendix presents an appraisal of the ‘content’ of the options and preferences document. This focussed on the indicative content and scope of policies under the seven planning themes.

A narrative discussion is presented under the ‘IA framework’, which essentially comprises a list of sustainability objectives. Under each of the IA framework objectives, the aim is to present an informal discussion highlighting the merits and drawbacks of the preferences and broad commentary on the ‘options as relevant.

A narrative appraisal is considered appropriate given the early, high-level nature of the policy preferences presented for consultation, and on the basis that the options presented were not in the form of mutually exclusive alternatives.

The aim at this stage was to ensure that IA work is focused, concise and proportionate, focusing only on effects judged to be potentially ‘significant’ (as opposed to every conceivable effect). This is a key element of best practice in the opinion of AECOM, mindful of recent experience and the Planning White Paper (2020).

Housing

IA Objective: *To provide an appropriate quantity and quality of new homes to meet needs.*

The current housing position suggests that there is sufficient supply in Wigan to meet the housing need set out in the emerging Places for Everyone Plan (972 new homes per year on average). Therefore, at this stage, there is no intention to allocate new sites in the new Wigan Borough Local Plan. The exception is to provide policies to support the remaining strategic site allocations which would benefit from coordinated approaches to growth. This is considered to be an appropriate approach to housing delivery, as the current distribution of supply will provide a mix of housing in a range of locations. It is recognised that careful planning is necessary to ensure sufficient infrastructure is delivered alongside such development, an acknowledgement of one of Wigan's key issues.

The borough possesses diverse housing needs, meaning there is a demand for a variety of housing types and tenures, as well as affordable housing. The borough's age profile is becoming older, which will have implications for the development types necessary. It is noted however in the Options and Preferences consultation document that responses to the earlier Issues and Opportunities consultation highlighted desires for more housing for first-time buyers, more family homes and more social housing alongside increased accommodation for older people. With this in mind, the Council intends to bring forward a policy on 'providing an appropriate mix of housing', to influence the mix of housing types, tenures and affordability. This is likely to have positive effects in terms of delivering housing to meet community needs (and is broadly reflective of the issues and needs identified by respondents to the Issues and Opportunities consultation and in the IA Scoping Report).

There is also a focus in the document upon the role that residential development can have to support the vitality and viability of town centres. This should provide opportunities to further boost housing and create a market for specific types of new homes. Given the changing role of centres, it would be a disadvantageous approach to take a more restrictive approach to residential development in town centres. The preferred approach is therefore likely to have positive effects.

Though there is a preference to include a specific policy that will seek to manage HMOs, this is considered appropriate and unlikely to significantly affect housing delivery.

In terms of gypsy and traveller provision, the option to expand existing sites is likely to perform well in terms of accommodating pitches in established locations. There may be other suitable locations to explore, but at this stage none have been identified, and it would be premature to appraise such an option without knowing the sites that could be involved. As the evidence base progresses, it would be useful to revisit this issue.

Health and Community

IA Objective: *Enable and support people to be active, safe and healthy by ensuring good access to a range of services / facilities and the natural environment, and creation of well designed, inclusive and beautiful places.*

The Options and Preference document states the Council's intention to strongly support the delivery and upgrading of digital infrastructure across the whole borough. Although it does not quantify future requirements, the stated preference is to require that new development has the capacity to accommodate existing and future needs. This ought to have positive effects for all communities by improving access to high-speed broadband and other digital facilities.

Acknowledging responses to the Issues and Opportunities consultation which demonstrated the value of having shops and services close to home, the stated preference for local centres is to support the development of community hubs including convenience retail and other services such as cafes and health and social care. Similarly, the 'sustainable communities' policy preference seeks to deliver community provision in which friends and neighbours can interact. No specific commitment is made regarding the protection or provision of places of worship or libraries though, which could be an area for improvement. Nevertheless, the emerging approach is likely to help sustain strong communities and build community capacity.

Stated preferences for 'sustainable communities' and 'planning for healthier living' include enhancing the safety of places, in order to reduce the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as the fear of it. It is noted that such efforts should not detract from the overall quality of design.

The 'active travel' preferences include making local streets and roads in town centres feel safer and more appealing to those not travelling by car. These measures could be particularly beneficial for groups that experience greater fear of crime and feel unsafe in public spaces such as women, elderly and young people. Policy preferences to continue investment and repurposing of town centres should also help in this respect, given that there is an emphasis on supporting active uses, residential and safe access throughout centres.

Equality of access to health and social care services as well as community groups and facilities is an important element of the stated preferences of 'planning for healthier living' and 'sustainable communities'. Access to green infrastructure and suitable work and training is also sought to be ensured. The promotion of economic inclusion, including physical access to on-site training, is also included in a proposed policy on 'community wealth building'.

The 'sustainable design' proposals include several good design principles with the intention of delivering high-quality development, integrating with local characteristics and adopting good landscape design. The alternative options for proposals relating to conservation areas and amenity include their being covered by this more general good design policy – this is a procedural matter and should not detract from positive effects arising, whichever approach is decided upon. Moving forward, it would be helpful to ensure that policies regarding design support measures that reduce fuel poverty and improve living environments.

A focus on active and healthy lifestyles can be found throughout the Options and Preferences document. The preference for 'sustainable communities' seeks to provide access to sport and recreation, while it is sought to promote healthy and active lifestyles through good landscape design. Other preferences include ensuring universal access to healthier food options, limiting the availability of hot food takeaways to school children (and such shops' dominance in local/town centres), and requiring a Health Impact Assessment (or completion of the Council's Planning for Health Checklist) be undertaken as part of proposals for development. It is also a stated preference to seek developer contributions to new health facilities, following a four-step process.

Articulating the mechanisms and requirements for HIA within the policy will help to ensure that in practice this policy is used effectively and does not add undue burden on developers or Wigan Council planners / public health officers. There is already a supplementary planning document in place that addresses such factors, and this will remain to be used, so no further detail is considered necessary in the new Local Plan.

There is an appropriate emphasis on encouraging active travel, through new development and in town/local centre regeneration. Active travel is identified as one of the benefits of multifunctional green infrastructure.

Overall, the preferences identified are likely to lead to positive effects with regards to health and wellbeing.

Equality and Diversity

IA Objective: *To provide equality of opportunity for people with a protected characteristic whilst celebrating diversity.*

There is no explicit commitment within the Options and Preferences document to providing equality of opportunity based on protected characteristics, however there is also nothing that obviously suggests that any person or group might be put at a disadvantage by the proposals as a result of their protected characteristics). Indeed, there are several policy preferences that are likely to have some positive indirect effects upon particular community groups. For example:

- by seeking to improve accessibility by public transport and active travel, groups with lower incomes should see inequalities reduce in this respect.
- ethnic minority groups could benefit from increased provision of affordable housing and local facilities within the town centres of Wigan and Leigh in particular (given that there are concentrations of these groups in these locations).
- young people could benefit from improved education and leisure facilities being delivered as part of strategic developments and town centre investment.

As part of community wealth building, the Council's preference is *"to facilitate the ability of residents and vulnerable groups to participate in society"*. Under 'planning for healthier living', it is also emphasised that everyone should be able to access provisions such as secure, comfortable and affordable housing, as well as health and social care services. The accommodation needs of gypsies and travelling show people are discussed, with the Council preferring to expand existing sites in the case of the former and seek clarification on the needs of the latter. This may need to be revisited in response to any new evidence about needs or consultation feedback from these communities.

With regards to housing provision, the preferences are unlikely to significantly exclude any particular groups as a range of types, tenures and locations for growth would be supported. Restriction of HMOs could potentially affect groups that rely on such accommodation more disproportionately, meaning that access to an affordable home is more difficult. However, the provision of a wider range of housing in town centres (as well as supporting an appropriate delivery of HMOs) should ensure that this is not a significant issue.

Climate change

IA Objective: *To adapt to, mitigate and be resilient to the impacts of climate change.*

A key element of the options and preferences document in relation to climate change is a preference for a sustainable design policy that seeks energy efficient and resilient developments. This is also supported by the preference to work with partner authorities to ensure major developments are supported by whole life cycle carbon assessments. Though the level of detail and specific requirements are limited, it is acknowledged that the Places for Everyone Plan proposes to set a strong framework to achieve a carbon neutral Manchester by 2038. The Wigan Borough Local Plan sits within this context.

For the North Leigh Park location, the preference is to seek higher standards of energy efficiency, design and low carbon technologies, which is likely to encourage lower per capita emissions for new development. There are no such policy preferences for the other five strategic locations for growth, which is perhaps a missed opportunity given the desire to achieve net zero carbon across Manchester. The Local Plan also provides the opportunity to explore and require new developments to implement district energy schemes.

Preferences in favour of encouraging active travel and increased public transport provision will contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The nationwide ending of sales of new petrol/diesel cars expected within the likely local plan period should also contribute to this effort.

A benefit of multifunctional green infrastructure is the sequestration and storage of carbon, so the support given to wildlife corridors, protection and enhancement of the Greenheart, and restoration of Chat Moss peatlands, should all contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere. This builds upon the priorities in the Places for Everyone Plan that seek to restore and expand lowland raised bog resources across the region.

It is a stated preference to support and encourage green sector businesses to locate in the borough and to support businesses to move towards zero-carbon production. Furthermore, the proposals seek to support the transition and provision within the borough to renewable energy generation, reducing the need for carbon-emitting energy generation.

Town centre regeneration is likely to play a positive role in terms of managing carbon emissions from new development. This relates to the reuse of land and buildings, and the higher density / lower resource intensity that such development usually exhibits. Furthermore, the emphasis on increased green infrastructure provision in town and local centres – urban greening measures such as street trees, green walls and green roofs – should, in addition to sequestering carbon, better regulate the temperature of urban areas. This will be important given an increased support for residential development in town centres (which are typically more sensitive to urban heating effects).

It is recognised that SuDS can provide urban cooling as well. Several preferences within the Options and Preferences document refer to the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts.

Doing so is a principle of the preferred option for a policy on landscape design of new development, as well as an element of proposals to support nature recovery and improvement (delivering climate-resilient ecosystems).

With regards to employment land and economic growth, the preferred approach may involve new employment locations being identified or a change of use in land. This could lead to significant increases in emissions from traffic depending upon locations and sectors for growth. Until further clarity and detail is provided regarding an employment land strategy, it is difficult to understand the effects. These issues will therefore need to be explored further as the plan is progressed and supporting evidence is finalised.

Water

IA Objective - *To positively address the issues of water quality and quantity and manage flood risk.*

The stated preference for a policy on development and flood risk is to ensure development does not have an adverse impact on the status of water bodies in the borough.

It is an objective however of the North West River Basin Management Plan to aim to achieve good status for all water bodies. At present, all water bodies with catchments in Wigan borough have a chemical status of 'fail', while all but one have a 'moderate' ecological status. The River Glaze has a 'bad' ecological status. The proposed policy preference could therefore seek to improve the status of Wigan's water bodies, not just ensure there is no deterioration (this would be in greater alignment with the Places for Everyone Plan, which does mention the need for enhancement/improvement in several policies).

The stated preference is to maintain the current policy position to ensure there are no unacceptable increases in water pollution because of development. The alternative option – to strengthen the policy position – would most likely improve the quality of water in the borough and would be preferable from a water quality perspective.

The Options and Preferences document proposes to safeguard the flood water storage area at Lilford Park so that its function is not limited by new development. This will continue to minimise flood risk to the existing population. While it is a stated preference to safeguard other areas for the future, more detail is necessary in order to determine if this will account for increased population and increased flood risk caused by climate change in the future.

The flood retention reservoir above Bottling Wood Dam, Wigan – the borough's other water storage area according to 'flood map for planning' – is not mentioned.

More broadly, there is a commitment to ensure that new development delivers greenfield run-off rates, that redevelopment on brownfield land delivers a 30% reduction in run-off, and that development in critical drainage areas delivers a 50% reduction. Additionally, there is a stated preference to ensure development moves away from combined sewerage and drainage towards a surface water drainage hierarchy, and that it incorporates 'green' SuDS. All these measures are likely to improve the baseline situation in terms of minimising flood risk and improving water quality.

Stated preferences regarding nature recovery, particularly relating to wetland habitats, could help to manage drainage and flood risk on a catchment wide basis. This is advocated in the National Character Area profile for the Lancashire Coal Measures, which covers much of the borough.

Four of the sites included in the housing land section of the Options and Preferences document either include or are immediately bounded by areas in flood zones 2 or 3 – South Hindley, Remaining Land South of Atherton, East of Atherton, and Westwood Park. However, of the four, only the stated preference for Remaining Land South of Atherton acknowledges the presence of flood risk constraints.

The proposed policies could be clearer in seeking to mitigate any increases in flood risk, as is the case for North Leigh Park.

It is acknowledged that these sites are already allocated/ identified in the current local plan, and the principles of development are already established, but the review presents an opportunity to strengthen policy direction regarding flood risk and water quality.

There is a commitment within the stated preference regarding groundwater quality to ensure development in the source protection zones in the south of the borough does not have any adverse impacts on groundwater quality, however there is no reference to the drinking water protected area in the north of the borough nor the drinking water safeguard zone for ground water in the south of the borough.

Environmental quality

IA Objective - *To minimise the adverse impacts of development on environmental resources and amenity.*

The Options and Preferences document describes amenity as accounting for air quality, noise and sun/daylight among others. Such topics do not have their own policies and are instead covered by an overall 'amenity' policy. The content of the policy is broad enough to ensure that these individual elements are adequately covered though.

New development will be required to ensure it does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on amenity. The meaning of unacceptable here could benefit from clarification to ensure that no significant negative effects arise. Furthermore, there could be a greater commitment to actively enhance local amenity, not just protect present levels. Though 'amenity' and different elements are discussed separately in the Places for Everyone Plan, making environmental quality a local priority would help to manage the effects of development, particularly in the town and local centres.

Likewise, the stated preference for 'planning for healthier living' includes a commitment to minimise impacts of development on air quality and noise, rather than avoid impacts or actively improve amenity. The preference for a specific policy on amenity, rather than its inclusion in a general good design policy, is largely a procedural matter, but does perhaps bring greater focus to the issue.

On pollution control, the preference is to maintain the current position in ensuring that development does not cause unacceptable levels of pollution, and that development does not introduce receptors to unacceptable levels of pollution from neighbouring land uses. Again, the meaning of unacceptable could be clarified to ensure that negative effects do not arise. One of the alternative options is to strengthen the policy position, which could include actively improving the environmental quality of the borough, as far as pollution control is concerned. This would be a more proactive approach and could achieve heightened positive effects.

There is no reference to the part of the Greater Manchester AQMA located within the borough, nor to the Noise Action Plan Important Areas for Road and Rail found within the borough. There may therefore be room for improvement with regards to the contribution of proposals to the management of air and noise pollution at priority locations. However, measures ought to be locally specific and build upon the framework set in the Places for Everyone, which already sets out ambitious requirements in relation to managing air quality (through a 'clean air' policy).

With regards to the focus on town centre regeneration and investment, a range of impacts on amenity could arise depending on the nature of development. Large scale demolition and repurposing of buildings and land has the potential to have negative short-term effects with regards to amenity, including noise, air quality, dust and vibration. Conversely, an increase in active frontages, public realm improvements, urban greening and a focus on sustainable transport should all help to improve amenity in the longer term.

Moving forward it will be important to explore how economic growth sectors will affect key environmental factors such as air quality, particularly if this involves increased HGV movements.

Historic Environment

IA Objective - *To protect and enhance the quality, integrity and distinctiveness of the historic environment of Wigan.*

One of the Council's stated preferences is "to protect and conserve the historic built environment in the borough", primarily through the requirement that proposals for development near heritage assets include detailed Heritage Impact Assessments.

In addition to a clear commitment to protect the historic environment, it is also a stated preference to facilitate "the restoration, renovation and/or sensitive regeneration of heritage assets at risk", addressing the need to go further than protection and to enhance the historic environment of the borough. Examples of heritage assets at risk are not given at this stage. It would be beneficial to expand the definition beyond those included on the Historic England List (i.e., to increase the potential for a wider range of heritage assets to be addressed).

Not facilitating the restoration, renovation and/or regeneration of heritage assets at risk is one of the stated alternative options, but this would not bring about the same benefits as the preferred approach with regards to heritage.

The considerations applied within the Council's stated preference to "retain our approach to development in Conservation Areas" demonstrate a commitment to preserve the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, of which there are 23, comprising an important element of the borough's historic environment. The stated preference also demonstrates consistency with the NPPF's encouragement of enhancement of Conservation Areas, by encouraging "the improvement or appropriate replacement of buildings detrimental to their character".

Several of the assets listed under the 'Our Historic Environment' policy are also proposed as priority locations for green infrastructure, such as:

- the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh;
- the Leeds and Liverpool and Bridgewater Canals; and
- town centres.

There is therefore a need for sensitivity towards the historic value of such assets when developing green infrastructure, however the multi-functional benefits spoken of in the stated preference could include enhancing the setting of heritage assets. The increased provision of street trees, as is another stated preference, could serve to do the same.

Another stated preference is "to support the growth of our visitor economy by focusing on protecting and enhancing the special features of the borough that attract visitors". Many of the listed special features are also heritage assets, such as Haigh Hall, town centres and the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh.

This preference would contribute, in a multi-functional way, to the protection and enhancement of Wigan's historic environment.

Of the nine town centres (Wigan, Leigh, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Standish, Tyldesley) proposed for regeneration, all but one (Pemberton) include Conservation Areas. All include, or are in close proximity to, listed buildings. Furthermore, Wigan's only registered park or garden – Mesnes Park – is situated on the edge of Wigan town centre.

The settings of all such assets may be potentially affected (either positively or negatively) by the preferred policies. This is recognised however, with an emphasis placed on “conservation-led regeneration” in places such as Wigan’s King Street, Wigan Pier Quarter, Atherton’s Market Place and Hindley’s Market Street. This should represent a positive contribution to the settings of the heritage assets. The condition of buildings themselves is also likely to be improved and protected by finding active uses for buildings that are currently unused, this should help to prevent buildings falling into disrepair.

Landscape and Townscape

IA Objective - *To protect and enhance the quality, integrity and distinctiveness of the borough’s landscapes and townscapes.*

There is an emphasis in the Options and Preferences document on the regeneration or improvement of underused, hidden and derelict areas of Wigan’s town and district centres. This would likely be a positive contribution to the fabric and cohesion of the borough’s townscapes, such as through landscaping and the provision of street trees in places such as Leigh and Atherton. There is also a focus on supporting independent retailers and services, to better integrate disparate parts of town centre with one another, and to create residential markets in the towns to help support their vitality. These measures should all help to improve townscapes in the key centres within the borough.

On the contrary, it is possible that changes to the fabric of town centres and district centres could be perceived negatively by local communities. It will therefore be important to ensure that important local buildings, cultural and historic features are respected and incorporated into the re-purposing of centres. This could include policy requirements for public art, exhibitions and civic spaces that capture the character of centres (building upon the ‘sustainable places’ policy in the Places for Everyone Plan).

Efforts to conserve or enhance the setting of historical assets such as listed buildings and conservation areas should contribute to the maintenance or enhancement of its distinctive townscapes. Similarly, stated preferences to protect and enhance the historical environment outside the major settlements should contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of the borough’s landscapes, for example the Greenheart – historically industrial, now a provider of green infrastructure.

It is another stated preference to continue to require development proposals to deliver and maintain landscaping measures which enhance landscape character and identity.

The stated preference seeks to “sympathetically manage” appropriate development in the green belt, rather than avoid it outright, ensuring though that any new development complements existing landscape/townscape character and minimises its impact on green belt openness. It is also a stated preference to amend the boundaries of the settlements of Haigh and Bickershaw, though this will not result in a net shrinking or expansion of the green belt. The preference with regards to extensions and alterations in the Green Belt is to limit developments to no more than a 30% increase in cubic content. This is more limiting compared to the existing policy position and ought to better preserve the character of settlements and landscape in the countryside.

The stated preference regarding development and green infrastructure includes requiring that development proposals consider and respond positively to landscape character.

Many of the sites included in the Homes section of the Options and Preferences document fall within landscape character areas of the Greater Manchester Landscape Character Assessment. These sites are already designated for development in the current Wigan Borough Local Plan and some are partially developed. The principle of growth here is therefore established, but there is an opportunity to ensure landscape is protected and enhanced through policy.

Both the South Hindley and East Atherton sites are situated within the Reclaimed Land/Wetlands Landscape Character Type, the former in a landscape character area with moderate sensitivity to housing development and the latter in one that is of low-moderate sensitivity.

‘Remaining Land South of Atherton’ is covered by the Historic Parks and Wooded Estate Farmland Landscape Character Type, in a landscape character area assessed as having moderate-high sensitivity to housing development, while ‘Remaining Land at Landgate, Ashton-in-Makerfield’ is situated in Urban Fringe Farmland, in a landscape character area with moderate sensitivity.

While proposed policies for South Hindley, East Atherton and Remaining Land at Landgate speak of the need to ensure physical/visual connections with countryside, maintain existing green infrastructure, and safeguard/enhance settings, no such commitment is made clear for Remaining Land South of Atherton (the most sensitive of the four). It is recommended that greater attention is given to the potential effects of development of the referred-to sites on the distinctiveness of the landscape character. Though the sites are already identified for development in the current plan and are committed to growth, the Plan update offers the opportunity to enhance consideration of landscape matters through updated policy to guide remaining development.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

IA Objective - *To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, ensuring that current ecological networks and future improvements in habitat connectivity are not compromised.*

Nature recovery, ecological enhancement and green infrastructure feature heavily in the Environment and other themes of the Options and Preferences document.

One stated preference is to restore and enhance biodiversity throughout the borough, particularly in the Greater Manchester Wetlands Nature Improvement Area, strengthening current commitments. The proposed policy commits to protecting designated and other non-designated ecological sites in the borough as well as supporting the designation of new sites and wider connectivity.

The Options and Preferences document also promotes a cores-and-corridors approach to nature recovery, with the stated preference being to create buffers and linkages of sites. This should help to ensure improvements in habitat connectivity and improve resilience to climate change (which is important given that wetlands are more vulnerable to changes). Proposed policy on wildlife corridors seeks to revise the existing network of corridors and focus BNG offsets on these corridors, which is likely to lead to long term enhancements.

The consultation document acknowledges mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements but goes further by requiring specific provisions for certain species through new development, such as for hedgehogs, birds, bees, bats and bugs.

Chat Moss is an important area of peatland with value for ecology. The preferred option is to restore, protect and enhance the peat habitats, which is positive.

Regarding green infrastructure, the stated preference is to both support the existing network of green infrastructure in the borough, and to further develop the network. There is a clear emphasis on the commitment to maximise multifunctionality, demonstrated by proposed requirements of new development, for a combination of SuDS, BNG, active travel, play space etc. Multifunctional green infrastructure is referred to in five of the six housing land sites (all but Remaining Land South of Atherton).

The only reference to geodiversity is in the stated preference for nature recovery and improvement, in which there is a commitment to protect the regionally important geology of Haigh Plantations.

Resource Efficiency

IA Objective: *To improve resource efficiency in design, construction and operation, increase energy generation from renewable sources and support the circular economy.*

The strategic objective for 'Environment' includes ensuring new development utilises greener building methods. Specifically, the Options and Preferences document proposes following the Places for Everyone Plan in promoting the retrofitting of existing buildings with more energy efficient, low-carbon energy, heating and cooling measures. This will both encourage the more efficient use/reuse of land and buildings and make more efficient the use of natural resources. A commitment to require life-cycle carbon assessments of some new development will contribute to this effort, though it should be clearer which are the relevant development types/thresholds.

The stated preference for North Leigh Park specifies a requirement for high standards regarding energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies. The policy proposals for the other five sites could do the same.

Proposals to support, and therefore encourage, a mix of renewable energy provision in the borough – including solar, hydro, wind and hydrogen – should also reduce the use of natural resources, while the principled support of district heating schemes utilising spare heat from industrial processes should allow for a more efficient consumption of resources.

Land and Soil Resources

IA Objective - *Protect, preserve and promote the efficient use of land, soil and other natural resources.*

The stated preference regarding soils is to ensure they are protected, and their functionality retained during development. There is no commitment at present to enhancing the integrity of soil, which could form part of a comprehensive policy on environmental net gain, the opportunities of which it is the stated preference to investigate further.

It is proposed to continue the promotion of reclamation/renewal of several priority sites, to make them suitable for development, for active travel provision, or for nature improvement. This represents an encouragement of the positive remediation of sites.

The Options and Preferences document makes no reference to the protection of best and most versatile agricultural land, nor to the protection of mineral resources. However, the broad locations for growth are already established in principle as areas for growth, so it is difficult to avoid effects in these areas. Furthermore, the Places for Everyone Plan sets out principles for development in terms of avoiding the loss of soil resources and targeting biodiversity enhancement in areas with poorer soil quality. In the absence of further allocations in the Wigan Borough Local Plan, effects on soil and land resources are therefore expected to be minimal.

Transportation

IA Objective - *To support the delivery of an improved and integrated transport system that provides good alternative choices to travel by car.*

Residents of the borough currently have a greater preference on the use of private vehicles compared to public transport, walking and cycling. The stated preference is to ensure that, for shorter journeys, active travel is the obvious choice, which will help to challenge the status quo. It is proposed to do this through establishing or reallocating existing road space for active travel infrastructure, and through ensuring new development incentivises active travel and use of public transport, by providing facilities aside from traditional car parking.

Stated preferences for North Leigh Park, South Hindley, East of Atherton, Remaining Land at Landgate, and Westwood Park include requirements for bus and/or active travel infrastructure provision. In addition, these sites will support new road infrastructure that will improve east-west links across the borough. This will help with the preference to drive private vehicle traffic away from town centres and onto strategic roads instead.

In terms of rail infrastructure, the preferred option is to secure improvements to capacity, services and stations within the borough (including a new station at Golborne). Elements of the stated preference regarding HS2 need to be reconsidered given recent government announcements.

Regarding the 2035 cessation of sales of new petrol/diesel cars, it is proposed to develop the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the borough, which will help in this transition.

There is an emphasis placed on establishing a more connected active travel and public transport network within the borough (and with destinations further afield), connecting new development to existing and planned future active travel networks. Better connections should help to encourage the feasibility of not using, and therefore a reduction in use of, private vehicles to travel within the borough. Proposals focused on improving the provision of community services and facilities and retail provision within local centres should additionally reduce the need to travel beyond the immediate area as frequently as at present. Respondent's desire for a more integrated public transport network is recognised, however there could be more explicit commitment made towards better integration between public transport and active travel modes.

Economy

IA Objective - *To support the development of an innovative, diverse, competitive, higher value and low-carbon economy locally that supports job Equality,*

A principle of the stated preference for ‘sustainable communities’ is that the borough’s communities are resourceful meaning they are ecologically and economically sustainable and support the building of community wealth – by prioritising the use of supply chains and labour within the borough. Another principle is that communities are accessible – ensuring fair/equal access to employment and training opportunities.

Foundation sectors include health and care services, food, retail, housing and tourism. It is a stated preference to grow such sectors – in which the borough has existing strengths. Policy proposals for town and local centres seek to ensure a mix of such business types is available in most communities (for example, not allowing high streets to be dominated by hot food takeaways), and therefore a range of business types. It is proposed to protect and enhance employment areas in 11 of the borough’s settlements as hubs for foundation businesses. A stated preference is to support the visitor economy by promoting the capitalisation of the borough’s cultural and natural assets.

Preferences regarding the green economy support both the creation of opportunities in a frontier sector, as well as the achievement of a low-carbon, competitive economy. There is also a commitment to support the establishment and growth of frontier sectors in the borough such as advanced manufacturing. The stated preference for Westwood Park, Wigan, includes establishing new employment space designed to cater for modern businesses. Part of the proposal for the East of Atherton site is to extend the existing industrial area, which contains more traditional industry. This is evidence of a commitment to support both traditional and frontier sectors.

Regarding education and skills, attention is given to ensuring capacity is increased as necessary. The stated preference is to secure contributions from developers to cater for increased demand for education and training that results from development.

There is a clear emphasis on enhancing transport networks, prioritising public transport and active travel through existing centres, whilst diverting car trips to new road infrastructure. There is also mention of improving key motorway junctions and the provision of parking facilities for lorries. Such measures are likely to support the economy by providing better conditions for existing businesses and attracting new investment in growing industries.

Wigan has higher levels of deprivation than the UK average, with some ingrained inequality in particular communities. However, deprivation and inequality are only addressed through forming part of one of the principles of the stated preference for ‘sustainable communities’, which calls for reduced poverty and unemployment. More detail regarding how the borough’s deprivation issues are to be tackled could be beneficial.

Town and Local Centres

IA Objective - To improve the vitality and viability of our town and local centres.

The town and local centre's objective of the IA is highly compatible with the town and district centres strategic objective of the Options and Preferences consultation document, which seeks to support town and local centres to thrive (=viability) and become vibrant and attractive spaces (=vitality). The stated preference is to continue a hierarchical approach to the borough's town and local centres, with Wigan being the foremost town centre, followed by Leigh and seven other towns, and then by 43 local/neighbourhood centres across Wigan borough. More detail, understandably, is provided regarding the regeneration and improvement of Wigan, Leigh and the other seven town centres. The main focus of a proposed policy for local centres is ensuring there is an appropriate balance of business types providing a retail function, as well as supporting housing markets and other complementary uses that ensure vitality.

The stated preference for the town and local centres is to establish them as the settings for a mix of retail, leisure, cultural, educational, health-related and residential provisions. This should help to ensure such town/local centres have a good offering to residents, workers and visitors, and encourage the building of community wealth, creating an element of self-sustainability. There may be some resistance to change in centres from parts of the community, so it will be important to ensure that important functions are retained or restored if possible (for example the stated preference for re-introducing a regular market in Hindley).

Although the six sites under the homes theme of the Options and Preferences document are not located in any town/local centre, the preferences for South Hindley and Westwood Park are to deliver connections with Hindley and Wigan town centres, respectively. This should ensure these developments contribute to the vitality of their centres rather than detract from them.

Conversely, an approach that seeks to divert road traffic away from town centres (and manage parking) could be counterproductive to the preference to re-invigorate town centres / attract visitors. The solution is to make the centres places to live and extremely accessible by public transport – which is clearly emphasised through the document. Therefore, whilst there is an element of uncertainty, it is likely that significant benefits would arise for town and local centres.

Appendix B Policy Screening Matrix

People Policies

	Housing	Health and Community	Equality and Diversity	Climate Change	Water	Environment Quality	Historic Environment	Landscape / Townscape	Biodiversity Geodiversity	Resource Efficiency	Land and Soil	Transport	Economy	Town Centres
PE1	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	—
PE2	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓?	✓?	—	—	—	—	✗	✓
PE3	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	?
PE4	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—
PE5	✗?	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PE6	—	✓	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—
PE7	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
PE8	✓	✓?	✓?	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓

Broadly Neutral —

Broadly Positive ✓

Broadly Negative ✗

Homes Policies

	Housing	Health and Community	Equality and Diversity	Climate Change	Water	Environment Quality	Historic Environment	Landscape / Townscape	Biodiversity Geodiversity	Resource Efficiency	Land and Soil	Transport	Economy	Town Centres
H1	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
H2	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
H3	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	—
H4	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓
H5	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—
H6	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	—
H7	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	—
H8	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓
H9	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓
H10	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓
H11	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
H12	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—
H13	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—

Broadly Neutral —

Broadly Positive ✓

Broadly Negative ✕

Jobs Policies

	Housing	Health and Community	Equality and Diversity	Climate Change	Water	Environment Quality	Historic Environment	Landscape / Townscape	Biodiversity Geodiversity	Resource Efficiency	Land and Soil	Transport	Economy	Town Centres
J1	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓
J2	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	—
J3	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	—
J4	—	✓	✓	—	✖ ?	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓?	✓	✓
J5	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓

Broadly Neutral —
Broadly Positive ✓
Broadly Negative ✖

Transport Policies

	Housing	Health and Community	Equality and Diversity	Climate Change	Water	Environment Quality	Historic Environment	Landscape / Townscape	Biodiversity Geodiversity	Resource Efficiency	Land and Soil	Transport	Economy	Town Centres
T1	✓	✓	✓	✗?	—	?	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓
T2	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓
T3	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✗?
T4	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	—
T5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Places Policies

	Housing	Health and Community	Equality and Diversity	Climate Change	Water	Environment Quality	Historic Environment	Landscape / Townscape	Biodiversity Geodiversity	Resource Efficiency	Land and Soil	Transport	Economy	Town Centres
PL1	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—
PL2	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓
PL3	—	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PL4	—	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓
PL5	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	✓
PL6	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—
PL7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—

Broadly Neutral —

Broadly Positive ✓

Broadly Negative ✗

Town and Local Centre Policies

	Housing	Health and Community	Equality and Diversity	Climate Change	Water	Environment Quality	Historic Environment	Landscape / Townscape	Biodiversity Geodiversity	Resource Efficiency	Land and Soil	Transport	Economy	Town Centres
TC1	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓
TC2	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC3	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC4	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC5	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC6	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC7	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC8	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC10	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC11	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
TC12	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓
TC13	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓
TC14	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓

Broadly Neutral —

Broadly Positive ✓

Broadly Negative ✗

Environment Policies

	Housing	Health and Community	Equality and Diversity	Climate Change	Water	Environment Quality	Historic Environment	Landscape / Townscape	Biodiversity Geodiversity	Resource Efficiency	Land and Soil	Transport	Economy	Town Centres
EN1	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓
EN2	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓
EN3	—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	—
EN4	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—
EN5	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—
EN6	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—
EN7	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—
EN8	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—
EN9	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	—	—	?	?	✓	—	—	✓	—
EN10	—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—
EN11	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
EN12	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
EN13	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—

Broadly Neutral —

Broadly Positive ✓

Broadly Negative ✕

Plan Update Policy

	Housing	Health and Community	Equality and Diversity	Climate Change	Water	Environment Quality	Historic Environment	Landscape / Townscape	Biodiversity Geodiversity	Resource Efficiency	Land and Soil	Transport	Economy	Town Centres
UP1	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—

Broadly Neutral –

Broadly Positive ✓

Broadly Negative ✖

