



Wigan Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework

January 2019

Change starts here.
Right here. Right now.

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Foreword

Wigan Town Centre is by far the largest town centre in the borough for shopping, services and employment with over 120,000 square metres of retail floor space, over 300,000 visitors per week and supporting 10,000 jobs. However, in recent years there has been a significant change in the number of visitors to high streets up and down the country and Wigan Town Centre is no different. Technology has meant that more people shop online and want more from their local high street; more of a leisure and cultural experience as opposed to just a retail offer. Whilst Town Centres continue to play an important role to support social interaction, a sense of community and business growth, people also want variety and a reason to come back.

Wigan Town Centre has to transform into a destination of choice and whilst continuing to be proud of its heritage, it also has to adapt to satisfy the demands of today's consumer.

Significant work is already underway to put Wigan Town Centre on a more sustainable footing including investment into our highways; the A49 and M58 link roads will create a new route towards the Town Centre from the M6 and M58 reducing journey times. Investment into the Innovation and Learning Quarter with improvements to Wigan and Leigh College, The University Technology Centre (UTC), Wigan Youth Zone and the Deanery High School means the area is appealing to our younger generation. Private investment has been made to The Old Courts and we have a development partner on board to regenerate the former Wigan Pier buildings giving the town a much needed lift in cultural events, arts and boosting our night time offer.

Now is the time to build on this work and move forward with our vision to maintain the vitality and viability for our visitors, residents and local businesses. The purchase of The Galleries has meant that we have the opportunity to revitalise and redevelop Wigan Town Centre, to encourage new businesses and futureproof existing companies who have aspirations of growth. There needs to be investment into the creation of enterprise hubs to inspire our residents and young people within the borough to start up their own businesses and provide them with opportunities for new, exciting local jobs.

In addition to this there is growing demand for more residential conversions and Wigan Town Centre has an abundance of buildings that could potentially be redeveloped to help drive forward new and original homes. The Town Centre is ideally situated with good transport links, access to all major rail networks including HS2 and plans to ease traffic flow in and around the Town Centre.

This Strategic Regeneration Framework sets out our vision, plans and our ambitions to ensure the future sustainability of Wigan Town Centre.

David Molyneux
Leader of the Council

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) is to provide Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council ("Wigan Council") with a single integrated plan for the strategic redevelopment of Wigan Town Centre. It identifies a clear set of interventions in the short, medium and long term to guide growth and to help deliver the transformational change that is required through regeneration in the town.
2. Significant work has already taken place or is underway to drive growth in the town centre. This has included substantial investment by Wigan Council in facilities at the Wigan Life Centre, the delivery of public realm at Believe Square, and the recently opened Wigan Bus Station. Despite this, the town is facing challenges relating to a lack of investment and opportunity for growth and employment in key sectors including retail, residential, and commercial. Added to this, Wigan is presented with an increasingly ageing population and a brain drain towards larger settlements with changes in retail trends also significantly impacting on the town.
3. These challenges, however, are not solely a 'Wigan problem' but are faced by towns nationwide with local authorities across the country working hard to establish their own strategies to counter them.
4. Wigan is in an advantageous position to react to these challenges with a Local Authority that is ready to take the lead. A coordinated effort with strategic partners, underpinned by the vision and interventions set out in this Framework, will provide a focus for growth in the town. Ultimately, the patterns of demand within the town centre will need to change so that revitalised town centre uses can emerge.
5. This means curating a successful residential, office, leisure, and retail market that is supplemented by strong place-making and active town centre management. The town centre must aspire to be distinctive to succeed and differentiate itself from other Greater Manchester ("GM") towns.
6. An urban design and place making analysis has informed the preparation of this SRF. A key conclusion from this was that, to date, the town has been arbitrarily subdivided into character areas which was not conducive to a joined up approach to regeneration.
7. In this SRF we have expanded awareness of the physical and environmental opportunities and challenges to be found. Analysing and understanding the town as a whole has led to the promotion of a 'one town centre' approach. This will help better connect key opportunities, existing infrastructure, and surrounding communities; delivering more joined up growth.
8. This Framework responds to the aforementioned challenges that the town faces and presents a blueprint towards a future, successful Wigan Town Centre.
9. The Framework presents an analysis on how the town is experienced today at section 3. This includes understanding the strategic regeneration context, making overarching observations about the town centre, providing a market assessment of the town, and describing and understanding the town centre from an urban design perspective.
10. This understanding of Wigan Town Centre has informed the key priorities, the overall vision and the proposed interventions that are laid out in this Framework.

11. It is recognised that the equity values in the town are currently challenging, therefore, Wigan Council can't rely on the private sector to drive change and deliver growth at this stage in the town's life cycle. On this basis, the SRF identifies the need for a transitional phase of 24 months (built around a series of key strategic priorities established in this Framework) to disrupt the current pattern of demand. Both the strategic priorities and the transitional phase interventions are summarised in Diagram 1 and 2. Further detail is contained within Section 4 of this Framework.
12. The interventions in this phase could begin to drive up values and lay the important foundations for future commercially driven proposals to come forward in the short, medium, and long term. This will drive further growth of the town and wider borough and bring the transformative changes that are required.
13. There is currently no urban design and place-making policy in place to guide the kind of development set out within this Framework for the town as a whole. The development toolkit presented in section 5 provides the foundations from which appropriate design led policies can be created to guide future development.
14. It is critical to consider how to deliver against the aspirations of this Framework. It is envisaged that a Delivery Strategy will be required to outline how each priority project identified within the transitional phase will be implemented. Section 6 presents the key considerations that Wigan Council should consider when preparing this Delivery Strategy.

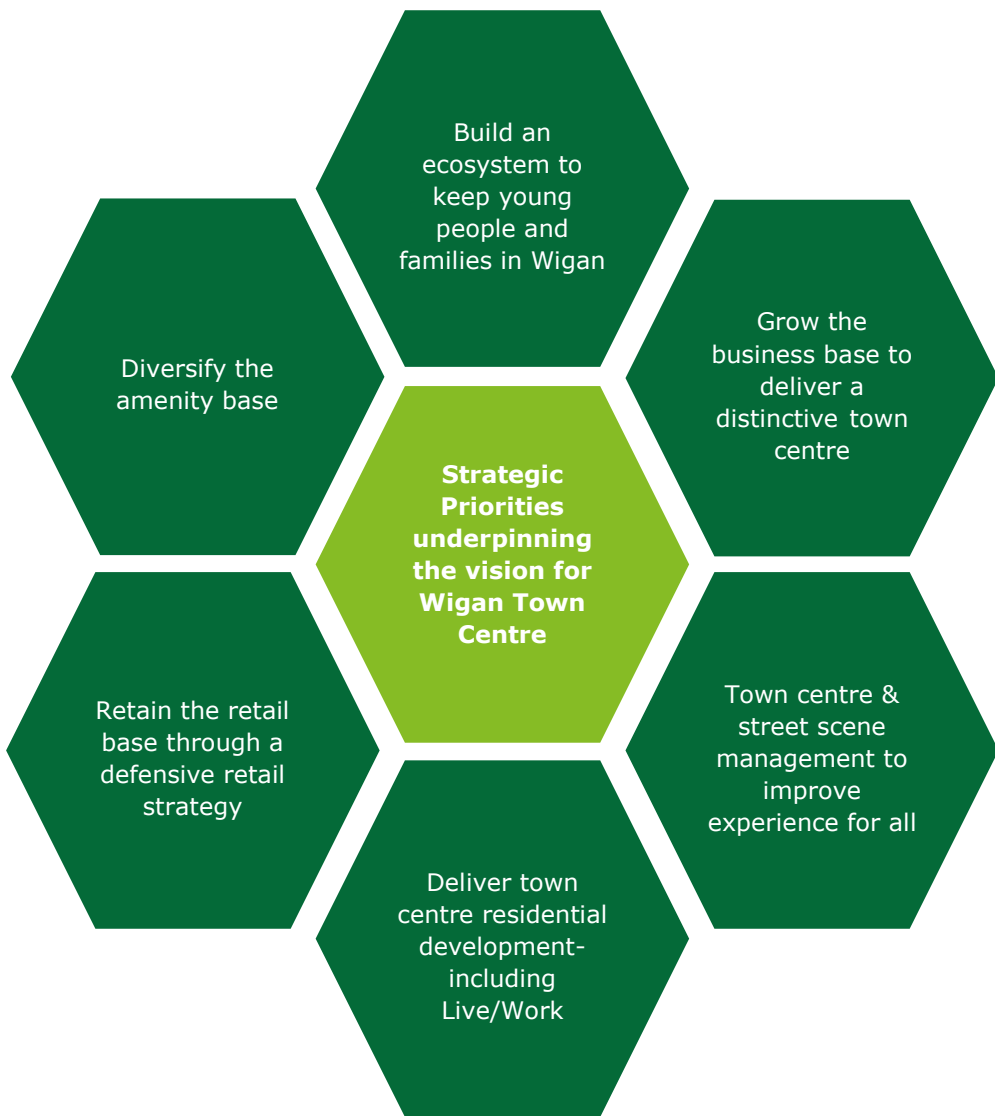


Diagram 1 - Strategic priorities for Wigan Town Centre

-  **Creation of hubs** - Existing buildings such as the Civic Centre within the council's ownership will be repurposed to create start up space with fast broadband connection in the digital, technology, arts and cultural sectors in particular.
-  **The Galleries** - Early action will be taken to pave the way for a major development scheme or series of schemes on the site.
-  **Market Hall** - a new market proposition will need to be developed that would involve refreshing the offer and relocating the market.
-  **Wigan Pier Quarter** – this is a major regeneration area. It is crucial to plan for how this area can be linked to the town centre.
-  **HS2 Opportunity** – to define the development opportunity of the wider area through the preparation of a HS2 Growth Strategy.
-  **Car parking strategy** – review of existing car park utilisation and the current distribution across the town and whether consolidation of surface car parks in the medium to long term is necessary to offer additional development platforms to bring to market at the appropriate time.
-  **Live/Work** – explore the delivery of a live and work concept in Wigan Town Centre in conjunction with a partner.
-  **Borough wide skills strategy** - to provide a deeper understanding of the existing skills provision and gaps.
-  **Defensive Retail Strategy** - Developing a strategy which protects a redefined retail core. It should also set out what the future 'High Street' should be and what its role needs to be in stimulating footfall and activity levels.
-  **Town Centre Management** - The town should be actively managed working with partners to ensure all residents feel they can engage with and enjoy what the centre has to offer during the day and at night.

Diagram 2 – Summary of priority projects identified in the transitional phase

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Wigan Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) has been prepared for Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council (“Wigan Council”) by Deloitte with urban design and place making input from Gleave23 Ltd.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Framework is to provide Wigan Council with a single integrated plan for the strategic redevelopment of Wigan Town Centre. It also identifies a clear set of interventions in the short, medium and long term to guide growth and to help deliver further transformational change through regeneration in the town.
- 1.3 Significant work has already taken place or is underway to drive growth in the town centre, as set out below. This framework seeks to build on these achievements to create a distinctive town centre that helps Wigan stand out from other Greater Manchester towns:
- Significant investment has been made at Wigan and Leigh College, The University Technology Centre (UTC), Wigan Youth Zone and at the Deanery High School.
 - Wigan Hall which is now the location for a premium digital business.
 - The Old Courts and Grand Hotel are supporting digital, creative, arts and culture events and activities.
 - The development of the Life Centre and Believe Square provides a home for Wigan Council as well as a community leisure centre at the heart of the town.
 - Redevelopment of Wigan Bus Station provides a much improved user experience and a gateway into the town.
 - Wigan Council’s acquisition of The Galleries shopping centre which has potential for a major redevelopment scheme in the town centre.
 - Wigan Pier Quarter has seen the development of The Edge, a

conference and performance venue which seats 1,000 people, together with residential and commercial development, and an arts and commercial space at Trencherfield Mill. Further planning applications are expected in 2019 following the procurement of a preferred developer.

- Investment in cycle routes.
- Investment in highways such as the A49 and M6-M58 strategic link roads.
- A HS2 Growth Strategy is being prepared which will outline wider proposals to ensure that the arrival of HS2 acts as a catalyst for growth.
- Work has been undertaken to understand the barriers to town centre housing growth as well as identifying opportunities to stimulate the residential market.

Defining the town centre

- 1.4 The most recent strategic documentation covering Wigan Town Centre is the Wigan Works suite of documents that provide an aspirational framework for growth. Further detail is provided within Section 3.
- 1.5 The current understanding of the town centre is as described in Wigan Works: Volume 1 Wigan Town Centre, which follows an investment framework boundary built around 8 character areas - this looks beyond the traditional definition of the town centre, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.



Figure 1.1 - Character Areas

1.6 Section 4 of this Framework discusses in more detail the approach that has been taken to defining the town centre so that future growth within it can be focused. This approach recognises the potential of all the areas within the investment framework boundary but stresses that the focus of development in the short term needs to be within the town centre core.

1.7 This is because a 'one town' approach will facilitate better linkages between key opportunity areas and existing and proposed infrastructure. It will reduce an approach which sees a particular form of development being suitable for a particular character area and encourages a more joined-up approach to driving the town centre's future growth. This is illustrated within Figure 1.2 at the end of this section.

Town Centre Challenges and Opportunities

1.8 It should be recognised that the challenges faced by town centres are not solely a 'Wigan problem' but are faced by towns nationwide. The Launch Briefing report prepared by the Centre of Towns (2017) acknowledges in particular the challenges towns face by an ageing population. When combined with a 'brain drain' towards larger settlements (as is the case in Wigan), the resultant age profile presents a challenge faced by towns.

1.9 Well documented changes in retail trends also significantly impact on towns. Anchor tenants who may have acted as the main driver of footfall within towns are becoming less and less secure. Large vacant units and a general oversupply of retail floorspace are becoming more common trends. With a typically less diverse business base, towns are more likely to be adversely affected.

1.10 Based on the challenges identified above Local Authorities need to redefine the role and function of the town centre. Wigan is no different in this respect.

1.11 As cities grow they become more attractive to investment and services. This makes it harder for towns to compete and highlights the need to reinvent themselves. A balance needs to be found so that towns and cities can co-exist and thrive as places to live, work, and play within the regional economy. The challenge to achieve this is greater for towns but not impossible.

1.12 Wigan has already had some success in standing out from the crowd.

- A pioneering Local Authority who championed The Deal alongside positive public sector interventions in developing the Life Centre and its own offices at the heart of the town centre are good foundations. It also has a strong reputation for supporting digital businesses, a critical part of the modern economy. Sporting achievement and Wigan are synonymous with the FA Cup winning Wigan Athletic playing in the Football League Championship and under exciting, new ownership. Wigan Warriors are one of the world’s best Rugby League teams with the 2018 Super League Champions also holding the record for most top flight domestic Championships.
- 1.13 Wigan is an attractive place to live, has excellent connectivity via the rail network, a performing education system, and strong health and social care sectors. The town has a successful industrious history and therefore experiences net migration in the borough as a result.
- 1.14 One of Wigan’s biggest assets is its people – residents are proud, loyal and hard-working individuals. Putting people first is therefore an important part of the overall vision.
- 1.15 However, more still needs to– and can– be done to respond to future challenges that towns will face. These include continued demographic pressure from an older population and a challenging retail position as identified earlier in this section. However, in the future, towns will need to play a role in responding to challenges in the housing market; including providing a mix of accommodation to meet changing household formation and a larger number of older people.
- 1.16 Wigan is in an advantageous position to react to these challenges; the extent of public sector land ownership in the town centre means that Wigan Council can be a driver of change and shape development rather than being reliant solely on the private sector’s support.
- 1.17 Wigan Council is also ready to take the lead. A joined up effort with strategic partners, underpinned by the vision and interventions set out in this Framework, will provide a focus for growth in the town. Wigan Council will utilise its own assets and experience to provide support for development. Ultimately, the patterns of demand within the town centre will need to change so that revitalised town centre uses can emerge.
- 1.18 This means curating a successful residential, office, leisure, and retail market that is supplemented by strong place-making and active town centre management. The town centre must aspire to be distinctive to succeed and differentiate itself from other Greater Manchester (“GM”) towns - more of the same development won’t change the existing pattern of demand and won’t drive the growth that is needed.
- 1.19 A support system to help businesses succeed and facilitate innovation will be necessary. It must become a place for all people, in particular for aspirational young people whom the future of the town centre relies on.
- 1.20 This Framework has been prepared in collaboration with Wigan Council, which included detailed discussions with internal departments as well as discussion and debate with a Steering Group purposefully set up in relation to this Framework. This has helped shape the key priorities for the town which underpins this Framework.
- 1.21 Deloitte has also engaged with key individuals, organisations and businesses within Wigan across a range of industries which has helped develop a picture of what opportunities can be delivered within Wigan.
- 1.22 The remainder of this Framework comprises the following sections:
- **Section 2 – Town Centre Vision** presents an outline of what a future Wigan Town Centre could look like.
 - **Section 3 – The Town Today** provides an analysis of the existing situation in Wigan Town Centre from a strategic and

economic perspective.

- **Section 4 – Town Centre Strategy** – Drivers for Change which outlines strategic objectives for the town centre to deliver change. This section also illustrates spatially the principles for change.
- **Section 5 – Development Toolkit** outlines key principles to guide future design-led policy to guide future development.
- **Section 6 – Implementation Plan** highlights the steps needed to support the ambitions of this Framework.



Figure 1.2 - Town Centre Boundary

2 Town Centre Vision

2.1 This Framework presents a blueprint towards a future, successful Wigan Town Centre. It includes a number of short, medium, and long-term interventions to change the drivers of demand for uses in the town centre. These will be led by Wigan Council in conjunction with strategic partners in the public and private sector.

2.2 The Framework is deliberately aspirational but achievable; however, it is recognised that the town centre is facing considerable challenges that will need to be overcome to drive economic growth. As described in Section 1, this is not just a “Wigan problem” but one faced by towns around the country who are trying to re-imagine themselves in the wake of challenging business and social environments. Towns must also find a balanced approach to ensure that they benefit from the opportunity of being located close to bigger cities whilst ensuring that they seek out their own path to economic prosperity.

2.3 Wigan is well placed to address these challenges head on by taking a strategic approach. Wholesale change won’t be achieved overnight but it is important to spell out what a successful Wigan Town Centre will look like.

2.4 This Section explains that Vision and, as a result of the realisation of this Framework, Wigan Town Centre will become:



A place to live, work, and visit – a successful town centre will include a mix of uses and be seen as an attractive place for all to enjoy. As an attractive place to live for aspirational young people, growing families, and the elderly there will be greater potential for retail and leisure uses to succeed, the business community in the town centre will have grown in recognition of the advantages of being located centrally, and there will be an increased number of visitors both from within Wigan and further afield. Wigan will be known for

delivering an innovative ‘live-work’ model that provides a link between work and living accommodation for those looking to establish a foothold in the town centre.



A place to achieve – with a strong town centre that presents opportunities Wigan will be seen as a place to achieve. The right mix of educational offer and business opportunity will mean that a young person in Wigan will feel that they can achieve their ambitions without needing to leave. Wigan Council and its strategic partners will support those who want to achieve through programmes for assisting business growth and using its own land holdings to provide suitable facilities where possible.



A place for entrepreneurialism and creativity – the modern economy is increasingly driven by entrepreneurialism and creativity led by small and medium sized enterprises. Wigan will have built on its foundations for supporting this part of the economy and become a place where the space, skills, and support for emerging entrepreneurs and creative businesses is available. It will be a place that is open for business but represents more than just a place to work from.



A place that seizes opportunity from digital and technology – Wigan already has a strong reputation for digital but this will be improved through better facilities and support for these businesses, as alluded to above. This will support a diversification of the business base in the town centre and better align the economy with emerging business sectors.



A diverse leisure and retail offer that is attractive to all – despite changing and challenging market conditions in this industry the town will retain a strong but condensed retail offer in the core town centre. A diverse leisure offer will mean more people choose to visit and stay longer – an evening economy will exist that is attractive to all residents.



A place where people are put first – the town should be a place of opportunity and relevance to the needs of Wigan residents - a true

place to live, work and visit. Improved synergies between business and education providers will offer young people work experience and job opportunities. Space will be available for residents to start a business and expand an existing one. Provision of new residential models will provide quality housing in the town as well as offering people the ability to live and work in the centre. Residents will want to utilise the established leisure offer and socialise and spend time in the town which is an attractive, safe environment during the day and evening.



A better connected town – building from the recently opened bus station and other committed infrastructure investments, Wigan will be more accessible, permeable, and legible. It will be easier to move between key assets and Wigan Pier will be connected both spatially and physically with the core of the Town. There will be improved pedestrian linkages between residential areas and the town centre.



A place that maximises the potential from its key assets – Wigan's key town centre assets including its heritage assets will be fully utilised and will play an important role in the overall success of the town. The Galleries will act as a focal point providing a new distinctive role in its economy, the ambition to create one connected railway station and development opportunities as a result of the future arrival of High Speed Two (HS2) will begin to be realised. Wigan Pier will also be a neighbourhood of choice in its own right that is connected to the core town centre.

2.5 The above interlinked objectives will all be underpinned by the Wigan Deal. An informal agreement between the council and everyone who lives or works in Wigan to work together to create a better borough. This aspires for residents to become involved in their communities and support local businesses, and believe in Wigan.

3 The Town Today

- 3.1 To plan for Wigan Town Centre's future it is critical that analysis is done on how the town is experienced today. This includes understanding the strategic regeneration context, making overarching observations about the town centre, providing a market assessment of the town, and describing and understanding the town centre from an urban design perspective.
- 3.2 This section explains our understanding of Wigan Town Centre which has informed the key priorities, the overall vision and the proposed interventions that are laid out in this Framework for the future.

Strategic Regeneration Context

Wigan Economic Vision

- 3.3 An Economic Prospectus was prepared in January 2015 and provided a borough-wide strategy for economic growth. This set out the Council's ambition to grow Wigan's economy, create jobs and attract investment; to create wealth and prosperity for local people and communities; and to promote Wigan as a key location for employment and for people to make their home.
- 3.4 A key theme within this was enabling growth of businesses and the economy, equipping local people with the skills to take advantage of work opportunities, ensuring the right connections are in place to support Wigan's ambitions for economic growth, and build pride and belief in Wigan as the borough of choice to live and enjoy an excellent quality of life.

- 3.5 In 2018, a new Economic Vision for Wigan was created by Creative Concern. This document uses similarly aspirational language to promote a positive outlook for Wigan in 2030. It includes several key themes that a successful borough will feature: good connections to cities whilst retaining a strong identity, realising the opportunity from HS2 and rethinking what Wigan's train stations looks like, a culture of innovation, building on its green and blue infrastructure and built heritage, being a magnet for young people, being a centre for enterprise, and being a balanced authority where environmental concerns and economic output are considered.
- 3.6 The themes within the Economic Vision are also reflected within this Framework.

Wigan Works: Volume 1 Wigan Town Centre

- 3.7 This document sets a vision for Wigan Town Centre and will be superseded by this SRF. Some of the key themes have been carried through in this Framework.
- 3.8 These include reflecting on the plans overall vision to enhance place-making in the town centre, strengthen enterprise, and provide supporting infrastructure. The plan also highlighted a partnership approach to achieving success which is promoted within this Framework.
- 3.9 This Framework presents an evolution and progress beyond what was previously promoted. In particular, the introduction of key interventions over the short, medium, and long-term will help turn principles into reality to drive transformative change in the town.

The Wigan Deal

- 3.10 The Wigan Deal (“the Deal”) is described at a high level in Section 2. It is a ground-breaking agreement between the Local Authority and its residents designed to create opportunity for all.
- 3.11 The vision for the borough – as envisaged within The Deal – is described through two key ambitions: Confident Place, Confident People. Underpinning this are a number of commitments for residents and the Council, as illustrated within Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1 - Wigan Deal Commitments

- 3.12 The ethos of The Deal flows through everything that this Framework aspires to. It sets out how the Council will proactively curate an environment for its residents to succeed. This will be through physical interventions – including using its own assets to drive change – and through supporting residents and businesses.
- 3.13 The Deal encourages residents to take control of their lives and help themselves and their communities. By placing ownership on the individual this empowers them to make the most of their opportunities to benefit personally and, in turn, act as a positive role model for those around them.
- 3.14 The principles and ethos of the deal can be applied widely to the recommendations and interventions within this Framework, especially where they are related to place, young people, and business. This might include the Council developing flexible commercial space which may be used by residents who strive to grow their ideas into businesses.

Overarching Observations

- 3.15 The analysis of Wigan Town Centre has identified a number of overarching themes that help explain the town today. These include:
- **People living near Wigan Town Centre predominately work within Wigan** – travel to work data focused on the areas around the town centre highlighted that people are not typically taking advantage of links to the regional centre and, instead, work within Wigan. Those who do work outside the borough typically work in authorities where there are higher median wages – these include Bolton, West Lancashire, Warrington, and Manchester.
 - **Wigan experiences net internal migration, but loses young people** – according to data from the ONS covering figures up from 2017 Wigan experiences a net inflow of 327 people per annum across all ages. However, there is a net outflow (-620) of

young people aged 16-19 which is attributed to this demographic seeking opportunities for further education that aren't available in Wigan. When looking at all age groups, Salford and Bolton (both with Universities) are top locations for outwards migration.

- **Transport Infrastructure** – Wigan benefits from good east-west railway links from Wigan Wallgate and Wigan North Western railway stations. These provide access to Greater Manchester and Merseyside. Wigan North Western benefits from being located on the West Coast Mainline, however, increased connectivity with the capital has not translated into spatial benefits around the station or the wider town centre as a result. Recent investment in a new bus interchange will support good, local bus connections; however, perceptions of bus travel reduce its impact.
- The east-west connections by car are poor, however, the car is the predominate mode of transport in the borough. As a result, localised congestion in and around the town centre is a problem.
- **HS2** – Wigan North Western will be a gateway station to the HS2 line. High Speed trains will utilise existing West Coast Mainline tracks from Carlisle through Wigan North Western where it will then join the High Speed network south of Golborne. With HS2, direct connection to Birmingham will fall to just 35 minutes, and London will be just over 80 minutes away.
- **Importance of cars** - car parking is a critical requirement for occupiers and consumers reflecting the predominate mode of transport in the borough. This impacts on decision making for where people want to live and where businesses chose to locate, with connections to the motorway network and free car parking directly outside the office seen as preferable.
- **Town Centre and Active Management** – the town centre is fragmented, the road and rail network in particular create severance issues making pedestrian connections between residential neighbourhoods challenging. Connections between key assets in the town such as the bus station, railway station,

Life Centre, Grand Arcade, The Galleries and the Pier Quarter could also be improved to provide better legibility and permeability through the town. Effective place management is necessary to ensure there is a network of safe and welcoming connected places through the day and evening.

- **Business start-up culture needs to be grown** – Wigan only experiences a business start-up rate in 2017 per of 6.2 per 1,000 of the population aged 16-64. Whilst this has grown from 4.7 per 1,000 in 2012, it does not compare strongly to other Greater Manchester towns – for example Oldham at 7.4 and Bolton at 10.5 per 1,000. However, there are some examples in the town Centre where a start-up culture is being fostered – most notable being The Old Courts.

3.16 These overarching themes highlight some of the key challenges together with some of the opportunities faced by Wigan Town Centre. These have been factored in the thinking when proposing interventions and have been supplemented by our understanding of the key market segments in Wigan Town Centre, as discussed below.

Summary of market indicators

Retail

- 3.17 Research on Wigan Town Centre's retail market by CBRE from 2017 identifies that there is 1.3m sq. ft of retail floorspace spread across the town centre, supporting 10,000 jobs, and servicing a catchment of c.270,000. The town has a strong catchment with limited leakage.
- 3.18 A major key asset in the town is the council owned The Galleries shopping centre. However, this is an underperforming centre with at least 35% of the retail floorspace lying vacant. The vacancy rate is expected to increase further over the next 12 months as more retailers leave the centre.

- 3.19 The town's indoor Market does not feature an offer that it is in line with other more modern markets, including a limited food and beverage offering.
- 3.20 The modern Grand Arcade is a strong shopping centre that has good levels of occupancy, however it is not immune from the pressures currently faced by retailers. This is particularly in the context of challenges faced by key anchor retail tenants such as Debenhams and M&S.
- 3.21 Primark occupies an off-centre location on Standishgate and performs well, acting as a draw for footfall in this part of the town centre.

Business

- 3.22 The town centre core is experiencing a 'hollowing out' of businesses – as evidenced by companies like Shearings who moved to Waterside House the edge of the town centre.
- 3.23 Feedback from stakeholders – including local agents – is that there is a lack of quality commercial stock within the Town Centre. The quality of the environment and pockets of anti-social behaviour has put off potential tenants and is driving down rents. However, equally, the office market is responding to demand for smaller workspace as evidenced by the success of operators like Office Bay in edge of town office parks.
- 3.24 There is a lack of quality space for start-up and digital businesses within the Town Centre core. The exception being The Old Courts.
- 3.25 Prime rents are quoted at £12psf, however most town centre deals were done at £10psf according to local agents which again suggests the quality is not good enough to achieve prime rents from higher quality office parks which are typically out of town. This is also a reflection of the aforementioned lack of quality stock in the town centre. Car parking provision important for deals and is not always available in the town.

- 3.26 Some positive clusters developing – for example The Old Courts in the Town Centre and at Trencherfield Mill. Furthermore, it was considered that quality stock would be attractive to occupiers. Agents identify that there is demand for smaller office sizes of c. 2,000 - 3,000 sq. ft.

Leisure and Culture

- 3.27 A positive picture for Wigan tourism borough-wide. Visitor numbers have risen from 6.4m (2011) to 7.6 (2016), Overnight Visitors rose from 735,000 (2011) to 820,000 (2016).
- 3.28 A limited evening economy, centred on cheaper drinking establishments characterised by King Street. This has a knock-on effect of making the town centre off-putting after work and during weekend evenings.
- 3.29 Significant conferencing and arena facilities at The Edge near Wigan Pier which can accommodate 1,000 attendees. Future developments at Wigan Pier are likely to include leisure and entertainment uses.
- 3.30 A strong sporting pedigree, anchored by Wigan Athletic (Football) and Wigan Warriors (Rugby League). Equally, investment by Wigan Council in the Wigan Life Centre has brought good quality facilities to the core of the town centre.
- 3.31 Establishments like the Wigan Little Theatre notwithstanding there is limited space for the arts, however there are early signs of an emerging media and film scene in Wigan.

Residential

- 3.32 A functional housing market across the authority, delivering c.800 per annum homes against a target of 1,000.

- 3.33 Limited residential development currently taking place within Wigan Town Centre principally due to viability concerns. Within the wider town centre only one site being delivered by Gleeson’s Homes at Frog Lane. This scheme for 51 homes is providing a lower cost / affordable housing offer. However, this has sold very successfully and, subsequently, Jigsaw Homes have submitted a planning application for 80 homes another plot.
- 3.34 No major house-builders are active within Wigan Town Centre – indicating a gap in current residential values and what is required for a successful scheme.
- 3.35 A common perception from local estate agents is that there is a lack of quality housing stock within the town centre itself. Furthermore, a lack of car parking means that the town centre is currently only seen as a place to rent.
- 3.36 However, the town centre core has all the ingredients to be a successful neighbourhood of choice. In addition to the typical amenity, commercial, and leisure offering within the town centre there are also strong connections to Greater Manchester and Merseyside, historic buildings of merit capable of conversion such as Eckersley Mill – this could make a valuable contribution to the town centre residential population, proximity to thriving residential areas in close proximity to the town centre such as Swinley, good school facilities, and nearby greenspace at Mesnes Park.

Education

- 3.37 The town centre benefits from proximity to at least three good and outstanding rated primary schools. The Deanery High School is also included within the town centre and is rated ‘Good’.
- 3.38 Further education facilities are also located within the town centre at University Technical College (UTC) Wigan and Wigan and Leigh College.

- 3.39 Wigan does not have any dedicated University offer but higher education courses are available from Wigan and Leigh College, including a partnership with the University of Central Lancashire. In addition, the Academy for Live and Recorded Arts’ (ARLA) Northern Campus is based at Trencherfield Mill.
- 3.40 Utilising higher education leavers’ data provided by HESA, covering 2014-2017, people from Wigan who complete higher education courses typically work within Greater Manchester with Manchester, Salford, and Bolton being top destinations rather than returning to Wigan.

Manufacturing

- 3.41 Wigan is recognised as a GM leader in Food Manufacturing with global leaders like Heinz and AB World Foods located in the borough.
- 3.42 According to data provided by Wigan Council, manufacturing employs 14,200 people in Wigan equating to 1.6% of the population, generating £876m of GVA. Manufacturing overall accounts for 12.6% of the employment composition of the borough.
- 3.43 There is limited interaction between the manufacturing industry and the Town Centre, however some prominent companies (e.g. Nice Pak) are based at Westwood Park near Wigan Pier.

Urban Design Appraisal

- 3.44 At significant points in history the town’s physical form has responded to events with changes which have had a lasting impact. The original hilltop settlement, the canal, industrial revolution, railways, highways, retail and sport; have all shaped the town. Infrastructure, in particular the railways, has created a disconnected centre, separating residential neighbourhoods from the core town and from each other as illustrated within Figure 3.4.
- 3.45 In understanding the town’s physical form it is important to consider the factors that influence place-making. These needs to be assessed

across the geography of the whole town and also at the local level of individual streets and buildings. For this SRF we have described this across:

- Character Areas
- Town wide place-making layers

Character Areas

- 3.46 In recent publications including 'Wigan Works' eight separate character areas have been identified. These are:
- 1 - Station Gateway
 - 2 - Retail and Leisure District
 - 3 - Innovation and Learning district
 - 4 - Central Park Gateway
 - 5 - River Douglas Quarter
 - 6 - Westwood Gateway
 - 7 - Pier Quarter
 - 8 - Wigan Central
- 3.47 These have been assessed in terms of strengths and weaknesses taking into consideration quality place making criteria which include: built form and continuity; character and heritage; movement and accessibility; diversity; adaptability; legibility and public realm. Each criteria is assessed where '0' is no quality at all and '5' is the very highest quality. The detail of this is found within Appendix A of this framework which provides a qualitative assessment drawing on recognised, good place making criteria.
- 3.48 The resultant spider diagram for each character area (contained at Appendix A) gives an impression of overall quality. The larger the shape created, the greater the quality of place. A summary of this analysis is presented in Figure 3.4 at the end of Section 3.
- 3.49 These character areas have been helpful for analysis in the Wigan Works suite of documents. However, these do not adequately address

the diversity of activities required within the town. They set arbitrary boundaries that, in reality, are not experienced and subdivide the town centre unnecessarily.

- 3.50 In this SRF we have expanded awareness of the physical and environmental opportunities and challenges to be found. Analysing and understanding the town as a whole – a 'one town centre' approach better connects key opportunities, existing infrastructure, and surrounding communities; delivering more joined up growth.
- 3.51 This consideration of the town has assisted in defining development and regeneration opportunities. These include sites, specific buildings and themes for improvement including the reuse of existing buildings, public realm, connecting routes (including the ring road) and the A49 approach.

Town wide place making layers

- 3.52 In analysing the town as a whole, a series of place making layers has been prepared (refer to Figures 3.5 to 3.8 to at the end of Section 3) which include:
1. Heritage assets including conservation area boundaries and listed buildings.
 2. Topography.
 3. Main pedestrian, cycle and highway movement routes.
 4. Historical growth patterns and built form.
 5. Open space- landscape and water courses including canals.
- 3.53 Viewing and understanding these layers of physical form helps appreciate the structural elements of the town centre as previously mentioned. The design team has looked in detail at the impact these place making layers have had on each of the eight character areas which is described in detail within Appendix A.

Place making conclusion

3.54 The stand out characteristic is that the town centre is not a concentric centre. The railway infrastructure of the 19th and 20th centuries creates a major severance between the historic core of Standishgate and the neighbourhoods to the south. This gives rise to the 'hour glass' shape which sees west to east movement channelled through the Wallgate area. This is illustrated in Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 overleaf.



Figure 3.2 - Town Centre Shape

- 3.55 This key west to east movement is important and has been recognised in part by Wigan Council through an existing commitment to improve the Boulevard from the Pier through the Stations and on into Standishgate. Any investment to further improve this route will have a positive impact on the environment on a key route into the town centre.
- 3.56 It is important to see unity across the town as a whole and not simply along a single Boulevard. There is a need for transformational new activity and connectivity taking full advantages of the town centre location.
- 3.57 Wigan is a stretched centre. When taking the stations as the centre it is more than 1 km from the Pier to The Galleries which represents more than the recognised 400-800m distance that is considered accessible on foot; as illustrated in Figure 3.2.
- 3.58 The town centre focus has shifted over time and a likely reality is that Wigan is a town with several hearts dependant on user, functions and time of day. This Framework takes the analysis and considers the whole 'one town' opportunity. It is important to take this broader view to build a sustainable and vibrant future for the town that contributes fully to the character and distinctiveness of Wigan.

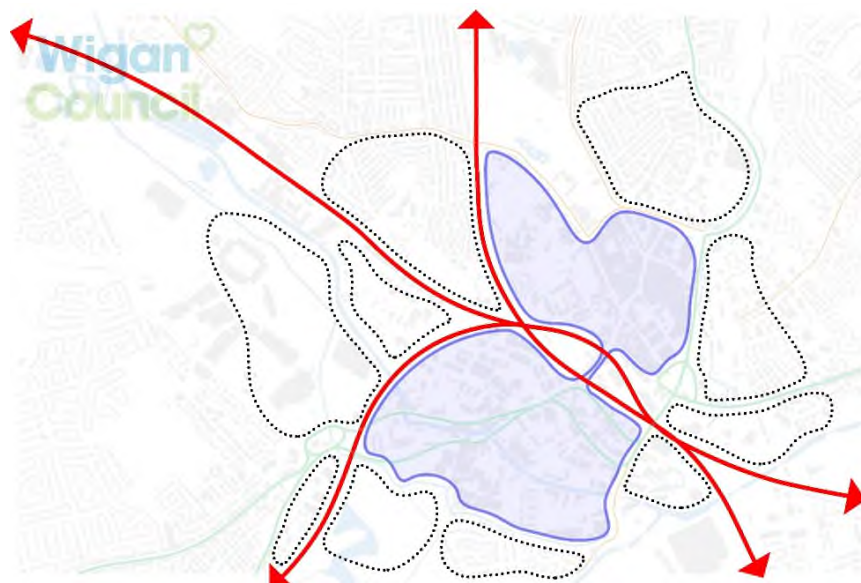


Figure 3.3 - Disconnected Core

3.59 An important conclusion from this analysis is that many of the neighbourhoods surrounding the centre are disconnected from the town as well as from each other, as denoted by the dotted lined areas in Figure 3.3. Future plans and development must seek to draw these neighbourhoods in. This is a real opportunity. It is important to ensure that the entity of the town centre is considered as a whole.

3.60 This one town approach will drive place making. The seven themes of quality place-making used for analysis within Appendix A provide a structure for overarching design guidance. When applying these to Wigan Town Centre the important conclusions are:

- **Built form and continuity** – buildings must address the streets and neighbourhoods where they are located but also how they relate to the form and activity of the wider town.

- **Character and heritage** – the historic core in the town has great value and must be protected and enhanced. Opportunities to draw on Listed Buildings and other historic assets beyond the core should be explored. Creative and contemporary interventions has the potential to uplift rather than simply preserve heritage.
- **Movement and accessibility** – the town is well connected but cars should not dominate. Pedestrian and cyclist movement across the town centre is an imperative with “access for all” an important consideration. In particular, ring road pedestrian crossings and junctions are an immediate opportunity to see change.
- **Diversity** - Great towns provide a variety of form and activity. Future interventions need to respect context and reinforce successful land use. Changes can take time and transitional uses can add to the dynamic of place making. The town will look to embrace high quality sustainable modern design and only use restrictive design guidance in special circumstances.
- **Legibility** - Wigan has a clarity of form around the historic centre. However, the outlying neighbourhoods do not. Arriving from the stations and the bus interchange will be important points of orientation. Future development and redevelopment need to reinforce the theme of this being “One Town”.
- **Public realm** - Public realm includes the spaces, footways and routes between buildings. It includes hard and soft landscape. The town should promote and enhance links between neighbourhoods and introduce high quality design into the public realm. This needs to be well managed and maintained. Such spaces define great towns. The public realm can unify and add character to the town. Treatments should not be intrusive. Providing meaningful green space within the urban environment will be a priority. A green strategy for the town is encouraged.
- **Adaptability** - Buildings and infrastructure are not short term investments. A sustainable town must make the most of its assets over time. Wigan will need to encourage new uses within the existing under-utilised fabric. This holds true also for the way in which spaces get used around the town and throughout the seasons.

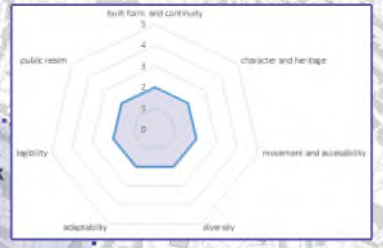
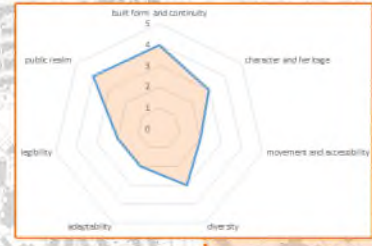
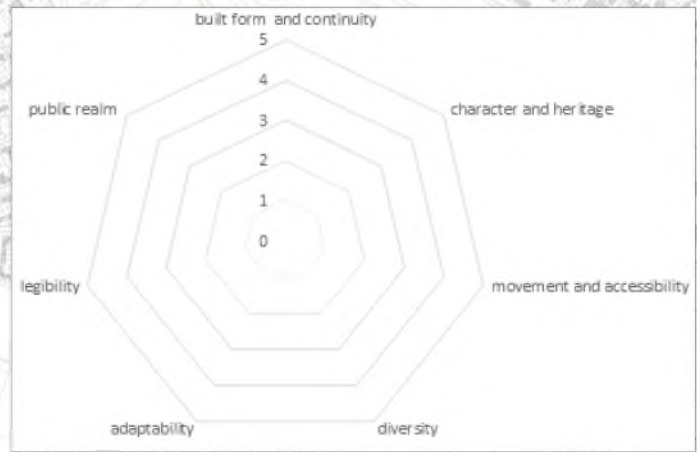
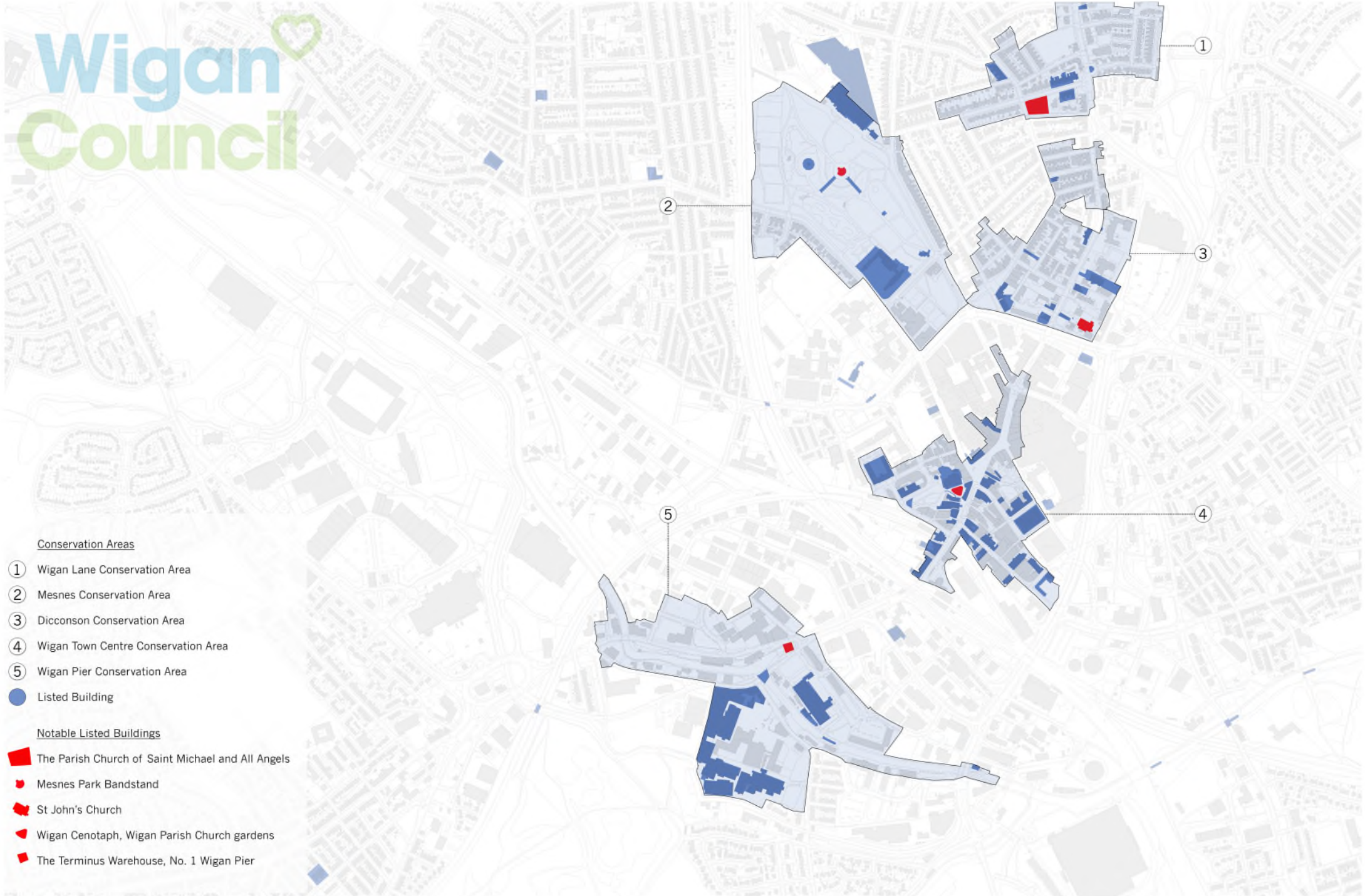


Figure 3.4 - Character Area Assessment



Conservation Areas

- ① Wigan Lane Conservation Area
- ② Mesnes Conservation Area
- ③ Dicconson Conservation Area
- ④ Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area
- ⑤ Wigan Pier Conservation Area
- Listed Building

Notable Listed Buildings

- The Parish Church of Saint Michael and All Angels
- Mesnes Park Bandstand
- ◆ St John's Church
- ▲ Wigan Cenotaph, Wigan Parish Church gardens
- The Terminus Warehouse, No. 1 Wigan Pier

Figure 3.5 - Historic Environment



Figure 3.6 - Place Structure
25

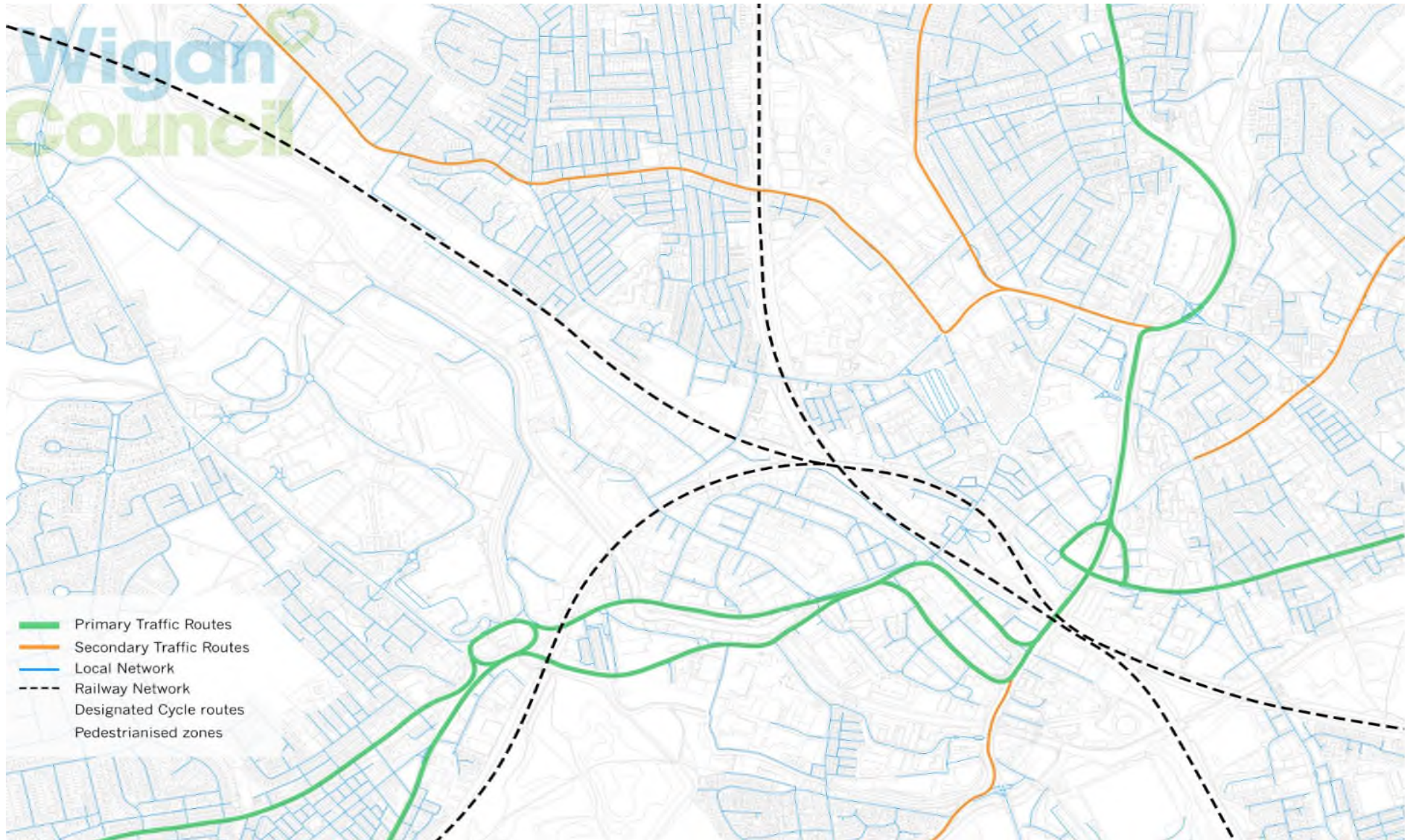


Figure 3.7 - Strategic Routes - Road and Rail



Figure 3.8 - Green and Blue Infrastructure

4 Town Centre Strategy - Drivers of change

- 4.1 To facilitate change in Wigan Town Centre there needs to shift in the drivers of demand that influence the local economy. This won't be a quick fix, many of these require significant and sustained interventions led by the Council with other strategic partners.
- 4.2 This section sets out the strategic priorities that need to be achieved to drive change, the short, medium, and long term interventions to make these happen, and the need for an immediate transitional period to ensure that the foundations are in place to support these interventions.

Strategic priorities

- 4.3 A series of key strategic priorities that underpin the overarching vision have been established:
- Build an ecosystem to keep young people and families in Wigan.
 - Grow and diversify the business and amenity base to deliver a distinctive town centre.
 - Introduce town centre and street scene management to improve the experience for residents, workers, visitors.
 - Retain the retail base through a defensive retail strategy.
 - Diversify the amenity base.

The need for a transitional phase

- 4.4 The equity values in the town are currently challenging, therefore, Wigan Council can't rely on the private sector to drive change and deliver growth at this stage in the town's life cycle.
- 4.5 A transitional phase of twenty-four months is therefore needed built around the key strategic priorities identified to disrupt the current pattern of demand. There is a lot of work to do but by repurposing the role and function of the centre, aiming to be a distinctive town and implementing the transitional phase interventions, this will help to create a new USP for the town. This will mean that people and the local community will be the heart and focus of the town.
- 4.6 The interventions in this phase could begin to drive up values and lay the important foundations for future commercially driven proposals to come forward in the short, medium, and long term. This will drive further growth of the town and wider borough and bring the transformative changes that are required.

Transitional phase interventions

- 4.7 Wigan Council has set itself an ambitious target to deliver these interventions during the transitional phase.

Creation of hubs

- Wigan Town Centre should be the place where business start up's and incubation is positively encouraged.
- Existing buildings such as the Civic Centre within Wigan Council's ownership should be repurposed to create start up space with fast broadband connection in the digital, technology, arts and cultural sectors in particular.
- It will be important to establish the feasibility of making interventions to the Civic Centre. This might allow a limited reduction in the overall footprint to enable a fuller integration of the public realm. Additionally, this has the value of giving the Grade II

Listed 48 Millgate a significantly better setting; providing greater visibility to the Grand Arcade and drawing in the Roman Baths artefact to a more visible and accessible place in the town.

- Seen in the broader context this is also an important project within the Pier-Station-Galleries axis. It completes a sequence of positive spatial experiences which should include; Standishgate, Believe Square, and All Saints.
- In addition to the Civic Centre, there are other under-utilised physical assets in the core town centre which are ideally placed to accelerate this process of change.

The Galleries

- The Galleries is a key asset within Wigan Council's ownership and given its scale and location in the heart of the town, it has the potential to have a fundamental role in driving economic growth – as such it is a major regeneration priority.
- Early action will be taken to carefully consolidate the amount of retail in the shopping centre to pave the way for a major development scheme or series of schemes in the town centre (this will be a key action in the Defensive Retail Strategy (as discussed below).
- Planning effectively to maximise opportunity and use during the short, medium, and long term will be critical. This may include an interim uses strategy.
- The buildings that make up The Galleries and the inter relationship between servicing, car parking, internal malls, access, and security is complex. Further work investigating this should be undertaken and should allow a reopening of historic routes and streets and better integration with adjoining streets and neighbourhoods.

Market Hall

- The scale and structure of The Galleries defines a significant part of the town, but the Market Hall and retail elements need rethinking.
- The market is key to underpinning the wider retail offer and should be a destination in its own right. It needs to deliver a mix of traders with a quality diverse offer at the heart of the town that provides a positive experience for families and all those who work

and visit during the day and night.

- A new market proposition will therefore be developed which would involve refreshing the offer and relocating the market into a more central location to help strengthen the existing retail core.
- Following the relocation of the market, a temporary 'pop up' leisure-led events strategy would be prepared and implemented for the vacant market hall to test the strength of this market. Interim uses to be considered include seasonal family activities and ways to 'competitively socialise' such as crazy golf or an Escape Room.
- A key factor will be transparency and legibility. The significant heavy and blank facades to the edge of the Market Hall could offer sight of activities within. Routes through the market hall should be considered, particularly the important cross town route from Bridgeman Terrace.
- An early priority could be the re-use of the presently vacant south west quadrant at the corner of Market Street and Standishgate called "Marketgate".

Live/Work

- In order to provide a model for access to Wigan Town Centre by aspirational young people thought should be given to developing a 'Live/Work' model. This, at a high level, would combine the provision of appropriately costed housing with employment opportunities within the town centre. It would align well with the principles set out within the Wigan Deal.
- Currently, the private sector will not be able to provide this type of innovative product in Wigan and it will need Wigan Council to take the lead. It will be important to make connections between RSLs to create a partnership with the objective of developing a Live/Work model could be operated as a prototype in Wigan. This would be the first step in a long term project that would have significant benefits in providing access to the town centre to those who may not have been able to access it ordinarily.

Defensive Retail Strategy

- There is a need to address changing retail patterns and the way people interact with the high street particularly as consumers

increasingly engage digitally and spend less in traditional high street stores.

- A defensive retail strategy is needed which seeks to protect a redefined retail core. It would also set out what the future 'High Street' should be and what its role needs to be in stimulating footfall and activity levels. This strategy should include an action plan to secure occupation of the M&S store in the Grand Arcade if the retailer formally confirms it is to exit from the shopping centre.

Town Centre Management

- The town centre should provide a network of safe, connected streets and spaces. The quality of the town environment should be an important focus as should actively managing any pockets of anti-social behaviour linked to a limited number of late nights bars and nightclubs.
- The town centre should be actively managed working with partners to ensure all residents feel they can engage with and enjoy what the centre has to offer during the day and at night.

Car Parking Strategy

- A strategy should be prepared to establish how new businesses can be supported in the short term as well as to understand current car park usage at all locations within the town.
- In addition to the major opportunities being progressed in the immediate term, the contribution of other potential sites is essential for sustained regeneration over time. These opportunities mostly include sites presently in use as surface car parks.
- Consideration should be given to the best way to potentially consolidate these surface car parks in the medium to long term which could offer additional development platforms to bring to market at the appropriate time.
- Consideration should also be given to the potential of an additional MSCP in the town to accommodate additional car parking demand as town centre businesses grow and develop.

Supplementary Planning Toolkit

- There will be a need to transpose the aspirations of the SRF into a

formal planning policy document so that policy is fully supportive, and protective, of development proposals in Wigan Town Centre.

- This could include work the delivery of Article 4 directions to protect against permitted development rights. These allow offices to residential conversions that have not delivered the quality of accommodation that is required. A town centre exclusion zone will be considered to assist in driving up the quality of residential conversions.

Borough wide skills strategy

- Further work should be undertaken to provide a deeper understanding of the existing skills provision and gaps. The needs and requirements of businesses including basic IT skills should be fully aligned with the education provider's curriculum where possible.

Defining the opportunity linked to the railway stations and future arrival of HS2

- From 2026, HS2 classic compatible trains will stop at Wigan North Western Station providing services to and from London, and joining the existing West Coast mainline until works on HS2 Phase 2b are completed in 2033. On completion of Phase 2b Wigan will become a gateway to high speed rail providing services to Birmingham in 35 minutes and London in 1 hour 23 minutes and a further 8,000 extra commuter seats per day. Services will continue on the West Coast Main Line providing additional connections from the borough through to northern England and Scotland.
- HS2 presents a significant opportunity to act as a catalyst for growth, further supporting the diversification of the town centre offer in terms of commercial - both traditional occupiers, the digital and technology sectors building on the hub concept as well as advanced manufacturing and research and development based businesses (linked to an emerging Technology Park). It would also consider higher value market housing and leisure provision.
- Wigan Council also has a long term aspiration to combine Wigan North Western and Wigan Wallgate stations as a single rail interchange; a unique opportunity in Greater Manchester.

- Comparisons with other town and city stations indicate similar walk distances between platforms and associated with this can come commercial opportunity. These include major stations including Stockport, Reading, Birmingham Snowhill, and Wolverhampton which have station infrastructure spanning large areas and multiple platforms.
- In Wigan, level changes between platforms and neighbouring streets offer potential to explore linking access with development across the tracks. The recently built station multi-storey car park could be embedded into any future development and a direct connection to King Street and the Town Hall area can be achieved. A significant new arrival space and reference point for the town can be provided.
- Aligned with the above, it will therefore be important at this stage to define what the opportunity is through the development of the HS2 Growth Strategy that is being prepared. This would also be supported by a wider Masterplan (likely to be in the short term – refer to Table 4.1 below) which includes land around the stations as well as land to the south – currently known as ‘Wigan Central’.
- The Masterplan and Growth Strategy would define what this regeneration area would become based on the opportunities alluded to above.

Pier Quarter

- Wigan Council has procured a preferred developer for the Pier Quarter who is working towards delivery within the timescales of this transition phase (first 24 months). This is a major regeneration site with potential to dramatically influence the future success of the town centre.
- The Pier Quarter has outstanding character but sits disconnected from the heart of the town. It will be crucial to plan at this stage for how this important regeneration site can be linked to the core town centre to offer an attractive link between the two and to establish how the two areas can provide a complimentary offer that draws people between the two.
- This needs to be supported by immediate physical improvements linking to the town centre core. These include development

opportunities as well as place-making improvements facilitating better connections between the town-centre and the Pier.

- The emerging proposals support other positive developments in this part of the town centre including The Edge and Westwood Park.
- In addition, the approach into town from the south and west along Wallgate from the Pier offers the chance for more substantial medium and long term transformational change.
- If there is opportunity for early land use change south of Wallgate to enhance the visual and functional approach to and from the Pier Quarter from the centre this would bring significant benefit beyond environmental and public realm improvements which are essential in any event.

Summary

- 4.8 The above early interventions, will lay the foundation for future growth and enable delivery of the short, medium and long term interventions detailed in Table 4.1 below.
- 4.9 The challenge and the aspiration for the town will be to create something distinctive that differentiates Wigan from other Greater Manchester towns as well as delivering the right product of the right quality within the current market conditions.
- 4.10 By implementing the above interventions, Wigan will be in an advantageous position, establishing an USP that differentiates the town from other GM towns building a basis for further growth. These advantages will include:
- A clearer vision on how to proceed with regenerating its key assets including The Galleries and the Railway Stations
 - A robust strategy to adapt the existing retail position and diversify this to strengthen the overall offer
 - Made significant steps to delivering a hub for SMEs that will support further growth
 - Taken early steps to improve the management and quality of the town centre environment; including establishing a public realm strategy that delivers high quality connected spaces, pathways, and streets. These

should be managed and maintained to support the life of the town.

- Delivering an accessible town centre, well connected to existing and emerging residential neighbourhoods where town centre living is encouraged and sought after.
- Developed a stronger undertaking of the skills position in Wigan and how these can be developed better
- Have an understanding of car parking usage and requirement within the town centre with a view to prioritise certain sites for development or intensification through delivering multi-storey car parks to support future growth.

Short, Medium, and Long-term interventions

4.11 Building on the successful delivery of the transitional phase interventions outlined above, the foundations will be in place to drive further growth of the town to bring the transformative changes that are required in the short, medium and long term. The interventions to be considered across each key sector are set out in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 – Short, medium and long term interventions

	Short Term (2-5 years) – interventions to be focused on after a successful transition period	Medium Term (5-10 years) – high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework	Long Term (10+ years) - high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework
Business – traditional, commercial occupiers	<p>Utilise the town’s existing underutilised assets (including historic buildings where appropriate) to provide larger floorplates for established SME’s (c. 8,000 sq ft) alongside further provision of smaller floorplates for start-ups (c.2-3,000 sq. ft) to attract businesses back into the town centre. Any refurbishment would include upgrading entrances to buildings and improving the street scene to offer a quality space in an attractive environment for potential occupiers.</p> <p>The core town centre should aspire to have a small established commercial quarter in this timeframe. This will also facilitate the growth of other service sector businesses who support commercial businesses, creating benefits across the supply chain.</p> <p>The potential for new Grade A offices should be explored around the railway stations linked to future opportunities as a result of the arrival of HS2. This should be considered further as part of the HS2 Growth Strategy that is being prepared.</p>	<p>Building on the small established commercial quarter, identify and plan for further opportunities to provide space for an expanded local commercial and professional sector to support a growing business base. Any expansion should consider land around the railway stations as a first priority (particularly land within council ownership).</p>	<p>To have an established commercial quarter within the core town centre that attracts and retains high quality operators looking for a central location in a successful and vibrant town.</p> <p>Deliver a first phase of a commercially driven Grade A office scheme on council land around the railway stations to capitalise on the benefits of the arrival of HS2.</p>

	Short Term (2-5 years) – interventions to be focused on after a successful transition period	Medium Term (5-10 years) – high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework	Long Term (10+ years) - high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework
Business – digital, technology, and start-ups	<p>Build upon and continue to develop the creation of hubs (as defined in the transitional phase above). This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing space for co-working memberships for entrepreneurs looking for flexible drop-in space. ▪ Working with arts and cultural organisations and new digital and technology businesses to identify appropriate space for these businesses to be provided. <p>Continue to support the digital community through outreach programmes like 'Destination Digital'.</p>	<p>Build on the experience gained and develop further creative hubs and co-working space as demand increases in the core town centre.</p> <p>Support growing enterprises in the digital and technology sector to ensure they remain in Wigan and ensure space is available as those businesses grow and expand. This space could be made available to the south of the station and form the basis of a future technology park.</p> <p>Become known as a destination for aspirational people working in the digital and technology sector.</p>	<p>A collective of hubs will cement Wigan's position as a digital and technology hub.</p> <p>Wigan will have an established arts and cultural sector and be a place for start-ups in all sectors to develop and grow.</p> <p>Delivery of a first phase of a technology park to the south of the railway stations potentially linked to an education institution(s). This would begin to curate a new commercial community (in addition to traditional occupiers) providing purpose built space for advanced manufacturing businesses, research and development and technology based businesses. This would need to be linked to the future HS2 growth strategy and Railway Masterplan (as detailed in the transport section) which will also consider developing higher density market led residential apartments and traditional commercial space around the station to capitalise on the future HS2 opportunity.</p> <p>This would also begin to provide activity along the boulevard linking the Pier Quarter to the core Town centre.</p>
Retail and leisure	<p>The Defensive Retail Strategy will be in place actively adapting the retail core to changing consumer shopping patterns. Early interventions will also have taken place (as outlined in the transitional phase above) which include a consolidated retail offer and a relocated market which will offer a development plot(s) for disposal by Wigan Council.</p> <p>A development brief will be prepared for the development plot(s) within The Galleries,</p>	<p>Work with the preferred development partner to deliver a major regeneration scheme on The Galleries site.</p> <p>Continue to support the diversification of the evening economy and deliver further leisure activities so more people from across Wigan and beyond choose to visit the town during the day and evening.</p>	<p>Constantly work to ensure Wigan Town Centre's retail and leisure offer is relevant and reactive to changes in trends in these markets.</p>

	Short Term (2-5 years) – interventions to be focused on after a successful transition period	Medium Term (5-10 years) – high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework	Long Term (10+ years) - high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework
	<p>including the Market Hall. A development partner will then be identified to take forward a proposed scheme through the planning process.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to what leisure opportunities would be a good fit for the town. This should specifically focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What role (if any) The Galleries disposal could have in enhancing the leisure offer– such as a cinema, bowling alley or indoor soft play centre. ▪ What role (if any) the land to the south of the railway station could have in providing a supporting leisure offer. ▪ How any successes following the programme of temporary ‘pop up’ leisure activity in the Market Hall can be developed further. <p>Opportunities to deliver additional amenity provision to support the developing hubs and the strengthened traditional businesses base in the town centre need to be explored. Introducing a new food and beverage offer to King Street is one consideration - this should be linked to the new refreshed Town Centre Events Strategy developed in the transitional phase.</p> <p>The sporting events at the DW Stadium and the theatre performances that take place also have potential to play a major role in supporting a refreshed food and beverage offer and an evening economy in the town centre.</p> <p>The demand for accommodation is high in the town when sporting events and theatre performances for example are taking place. Further hotels in the town will need to be planned for to support the growing demand.</p>	<p>Become known as a place where people want to stay after work.</p> <p>Deliver a quality hotel offer in the town to accommodate visitors travelling to watch sporting events or theatre performances as well as to support the town’s growing reputation for leisure and culture.</p>	

	Short Term (2-5 years) – interventions to be focused on after a successful transition period	Medium Term (5-10 years) – high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework	Long Term (10+ years) - high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework
Culture	<p>As set out in the leisure section, action should be taken to implement initiatives set out in the refreshed Town Centre Event Strategy that encourages more people to visit during the day and evening.</p> <p>As set out in the business section above, support will be given to emerging creative and cultural organisations looking for workshops and workspace in the town centre.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities to provide temporary filming locations and rehearsal space in the town centre for existing institutions.</p>	<p>Continue to support the growth of a film and media hub within the town centre.</p> <p>Grow the reputation of Wigan as a place where cultural organisations, start up's and related cultural activities can thrive.</p>	<p>Cement Wigan's position as an established cultural centre where start up's, established businesses and education providers in this sector have the supporting cultural community and facilities available to thrive and grow in the town Centre.</p>
Residential	<p>Identify a live and work opportunity in the town centre which delivers a new innovative rental product that is affordable for aspirational young people in work.</p> <p>At this stage it is not likely to be commercially driven and will likely need to be delivered as part of a joint venture between Wigan Council and a strategic partner, such as a Housing Association.</p>	<p>Establishing a live and work platform (in conjunction with the other short term interventions proposed) should assist in enabling the delivery of higher value market housing in the town. This could be medium or high density housing but crucially the quality will mean that it is attractive to a different demographic than is currently living in the centre. It will attract young professionals, key workers and growing families.</p> <p>Continue to look for further live and work opportunities to ensure that aspirational young people can continue to access affordable housing in the town.</p> <p>Explore the opportunities to deliver a residential product in the town built around the needs of an ageing population.</p>	<p>Deliver high density market housing (likely to be around the now integrated railway station) that supports the investment made in infrastructure and takes advantage of the opportunity presented by HS2.</p> <p>Have a successful live and work product and deliver a product that meets the housing needs of an ageing population.</p>
Education	<p>Building on the production of a refreshed Skills Strategy in the transitional phase, begin to implement the recommendations.</p>	<p>Identify a Higher Education / University provider who would be interested in establishing a campus in Wigan Town Centre.</p>	<p>Plan for the establishment of a University campus in the centre. Crucially a strategy should be developed alongside this initiative to ensure space is provided</p>

	Short Term (2-5 years) – interventions to be focused on after a successful transition period	Medium Term (5-10 years) – high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework	Long Term (10+ years) - high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework
	Actively support businesses and education providers to establish additional quality work experience placements and apprenticeships to provide work opportunities for young people.		for the follow on businesses and start-ups which will come out of the University.
Transport	<p>Work with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to improve the arrival experience by rail into Wigan and improve the station environment itself.</p> <p>Explore in detail how to maximise the land assets in and around the station in anticipation of the arrival of High Speed 2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail.</p> <p>Through instructing detailed feasibility studies understand the practicality of and barriers to combining Wigan North Western and Wigan Wallgate stations into a single integrated station.</p> <p>Following on from this work, a station masterplan will need to be developed for an integrated station which also identifies a mix of supporting uses that utilises the available land around the railway stations.</p> <p>Investigate the potential for a shuttle style service to link key transport infrastructure and the core town centre with Wigan Pier.</p> <p>Develop cycling routes that link the town centre with existing investment at the edge of the town centre.</p> <p>Following the completion of a car parking strategy identify sites where multi-storey car parks may be practical to unlock future development sites whilst understanding and</p>	<p>The arrival of classic compatible high speed trains in 2026 will represent an opportunity to maximise Wigan’s connectivity.</p> <p>Implement early interventions to enable the future delivery of an integrated station as well as implementing an early phase of the wider masterplan where feasible.</p>	<p>Delivery of one integrated railway station in Wigan Town Centre.</p> <p>Delivery of further supporting development schemes that capitalise on the arrival of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse rail.</p>

	Short Term (2-5 years) – interventions to be focused on after a successful transition period	Medium Term (5-10 years) – high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework	Long Term (10+ years) - high level aspirations which will be subject to evaluation of progress against this Framework
	seeking to address the car dominant nature of the town centre.		
Other	<p>Implement town centre public realm improvements to improve the street scene in general and, especially, where linked to other opportunities and interventions.</p> <p>Secure linkages between Wigan Pier and the town centre.</p> <p>Develop better links between authority wide strengths in Manufacturing and Industrial sectors and town centre businesses. This may be through working groups or joint enterprise.</p> <p>Look into the potential of setting up an Enterprise Zone or a Business Improvement District within the town centre core. This would be a signal of intent of support for business in the area but also facilitate a partnership between business and local government; each taking ownership of improving the town centre</p>	See the benefits from closer interaction between town-centre businesses and Manufacturers. This may lead to demand for specific manufacturing space, possibly as part of a technology park.	Delivery of the first phase of Technology Park in Wigan Town Centre, linked to existing education providers, businesses within the town centre and borough wide, and a potential University provider.

Historic Environment and Place making

- 4.12 In parallel with the site and building propositions outlined in the transitional phase and Table 4.2, it is essential for all users of the town to benefit from a consistently attractive and safe public realm. The following interventions should be explored to deliver an enhanced built environment in the town centre.
- 4.13 There are significant opportunities to improve existing pedestrian connections in the town especially in the historic core where important routes, for example to the station, are closed or are in poor condition making them impossible or unattractive to use.
- 4.14 There are places including the Civic Centre and Grand Arcade entrance but also in and around All Saints Church where potential building removal could exploit new townscape `place making` and make the town safer and more functional. Any such proposals need to be in balance with consideration of the historic fabric and character.
- 4.15 It will be important to understand the footfall implications of the new bus station interchange now this is fully operational. It will be critical to plan for connections between this asset and other opportunity sites. Indicatively these could include the route south Market Street to Standishgate and on towards the Town Hall. This must also take in the routes through to "Believe Square" and the proposed Civic Centre Hub beyond.
- 4.16 Within the buildings, sites and streets of the historic core there is already significant activity. However, there are also a significant number of underutilised assets that could be transformed into unique spaces for live, work, or play. Improvement, adaption, and reuse of individual buildings must be supported by enhancements to the public realm.
- 4.17 Signage and better illumination are important to assist orientation, movement, and connectivity. Improved legibility across the town

centre will greatly improve the quality of experience.

- 4.18 There should be a deliberate consideration of the way in which the interconnected public spaces work across town. Key questions include: how they function, what they offer, and how they are managed, overlooked and maintained. A Public Realm Strategy should be prepared that needs to go beyond the physical and embrace the activation of the public realm for the benefit of the town. Ensuring streets and public places can adapt to allow flexibility of purpose activation and creativity is an aspect of this.
- 4.19 Improving connections from the town centre to adjoining neighbourhoods and beyond is a priority. There is an existing strategy to enhance cycle and pedestrian crossings and each of these physical interventions is a chance to offer a positive town centre welcome. `Capturing` the town's ring road as an environmental space not just accepting it as a distributor of traffic is challenging but the future public realm strategy should address it.
- 4.20 Integral to all considerations for the public realm is a need to continue to rethink road space and the range of users. Mobility provision is a key factor as is amenity. In a successful town the car and future personal mobility will need to be in balance and not dictate the shape of the centre.

Bringing it together

- 4.21 Each intervention will contribute to the overarching theme of delivering a `one town` experience. The character area analysis, overlaid with town wide place making themes has shown that there is no shortage of physical opportunity.
- 4.22 These various spatial opportunities are the fabric on which the potential new social and economic interventions can be weaved. They need to integrate together – which when successful will improve the quality of place overall.

- 4.23 The location of these physical opportunity sites are all within the identified 'one town' centre, as illustrated overleaf in Figure 4.1 alongside an aspirational diagram showing what 'good could look like' in Figure 4.2.
- 4.24 The notion of 'mending' the fabric of the town is illustrated in these diagrams. This shows the potential to reconstruct and infill buildings and spaces on presently vacant and underused sites.

Figure 4.1 - Consolidated Opportunities

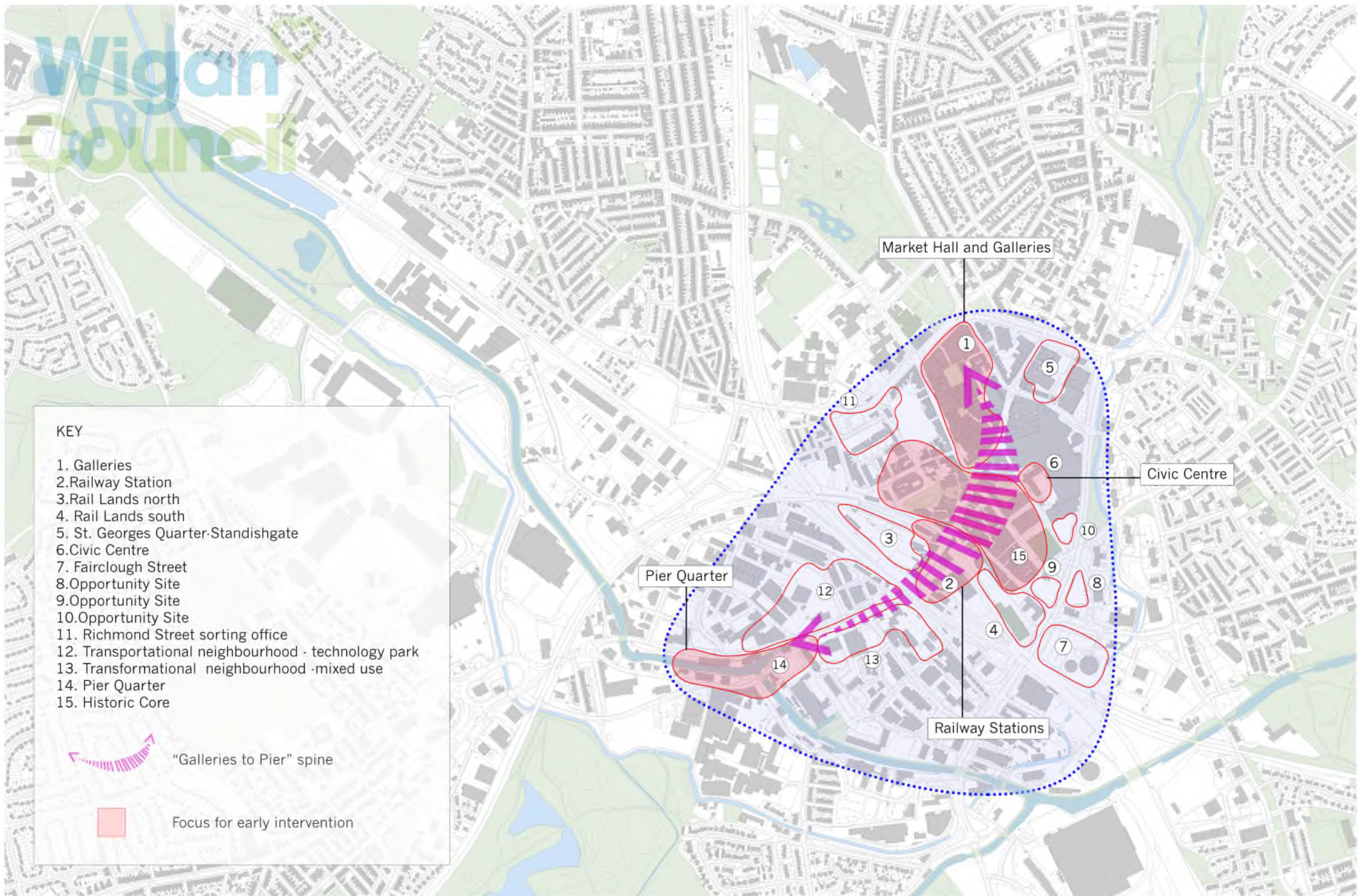
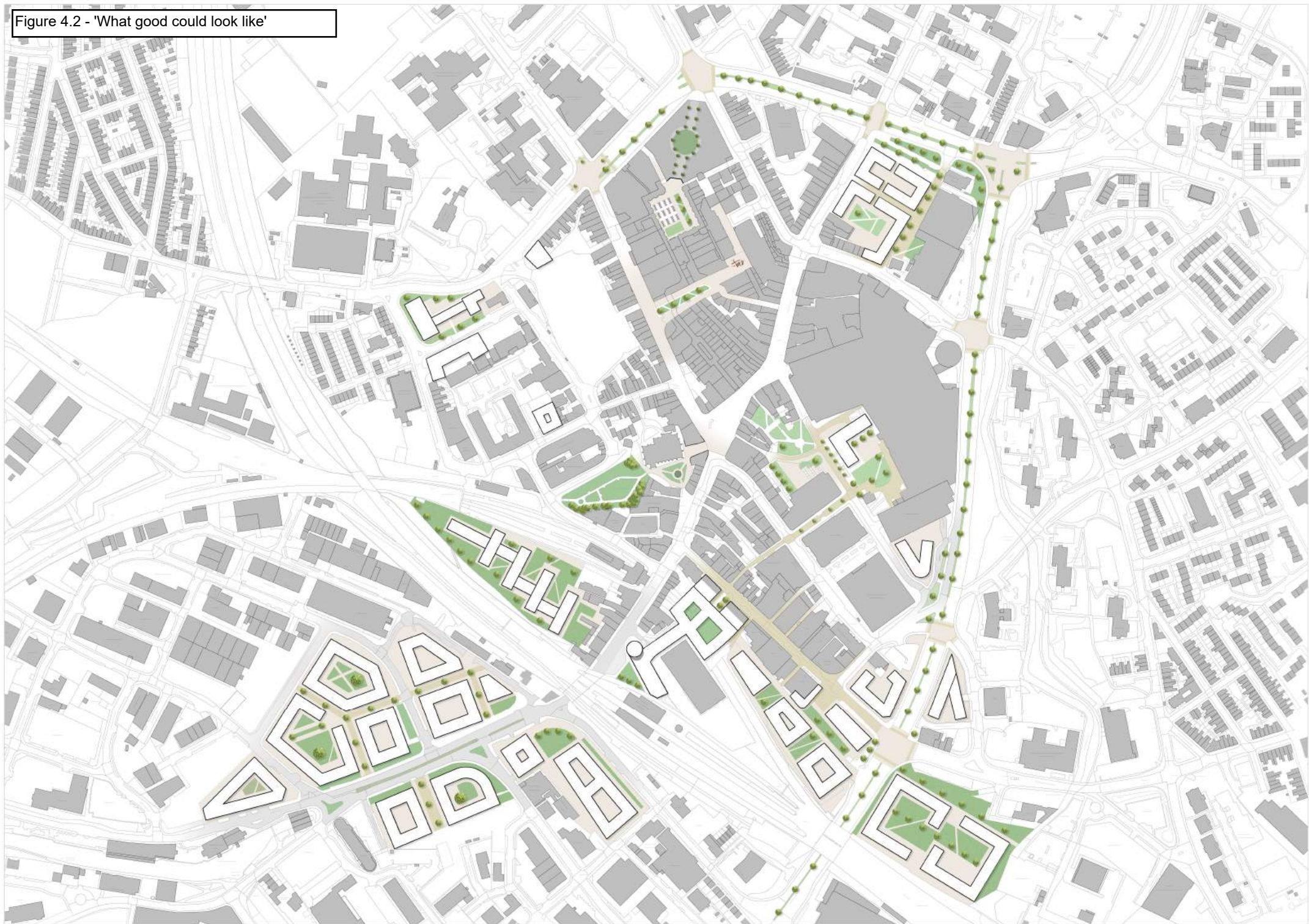


Figure 4.2 - 'What good could look like'



5 Development Toolkit

5.1 This Framework has set out a clear vision for the future development of Wigan Town Centre so that it becomes a vibrant urban environment. The town centre will have benefited from a commitment to strong place making combined with support for high quality development on opportunity sites that are aligned with vision and aspirations of this SRF.

5.2 There is currently no urban design and place-making policy in place to guide the development identified within this framework. This section provides a basis to build from and create appropriate design-led policy to guide future development.

5.3 This will allow Wigan Council to lead the quality of place agenda. Many existing initiatives exist in respect of public realm, highway and heritage investments.

Good Place Making

5.4 At the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that "*Good Design is a key aspect of sustainable development*". There is special mention of the vitality of town centres and of conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

5.5 In Wigan the town centre streets, historic buildings and network of urban spaces and pathways provide a visually attractive core. Recognition exists through designated conservation areas, Listed Buildings and through programmes for restoration, repair and

enhancement. Recent completed projects have drawn on the historic past and embraced contemporary new architecture.

5.6 There are significant opportunities for development and spatial change. There are sites, areas of the town, and general themes for enhancement which need to be considered as the entity of 'one town centre'. Not all will happen at once, but the ambition is to 'repair' and 'mend' the fabric of the town. This is illustrated in the comparison diagram (Figure 5.1 at the end of this section) between the current pattern of built and spatial form and that which might be achieved in the years ahead.

5.7 To ensure these challenges for achieving well-designed places are met development must:

- Look to find function and form which add to the positive elements of the built environment in both short and long term. These should allow for meanwhile activities to take place.
- Provide visual improvements through good quality architecture and landscape design. This includes hard and soft public spaces and public realm.
- Look at aspects of distinctiveness across the centre in terms of use and design and, where possible through new development, identify opportunities to reinforce this. This will be expected in each intervention and will be achieved through quality design intent for existing and new buildings, the streetscape, and the public spaces.
- Optimise site and development opportunity through detailed briefs to ensure contextual and comprehensive development comes forward.
- Ensure activities and form are inclusive and accessible. A 'one town centre' approach to healthy town centre living is imperative.

- Create a safe and secure environment. The night time environment and how the town works after dusk will be an important consideration.

Aspects of good place making

- 5.8 The place making conclusion at Section 3 applies the key urban design principles to Wigan Town Centre, however it is prudent to consider a wider list when developing schemes.
- 5.9 Applicants and developers will need to demonstrate how they are responding and improving existing elements and aspects of the urban form. Any development must reference an understanding and description of their proposals in respect of the eight aspects of good place-making detailed below.

1) Urban Structure

Major factors that structure the town-infrastructure-topography-water-open space-drainage and flooding

2) Urban Grain

Pattern and scale of streets
Rhythm of buildings
Plot size and scale

3) Density Mix and Adaptability

Intensity of activity
Place access
Vitality and uses
Development viability
Biodiversity

4) Visual clues-historic reference

Interpretation ` practicality `
Sustainable materials
Illumination - Including signage and advertising
A robust signage strategy that promotes consistency from retail units will be preferable for certain developments.
/private definition -public art- local clues and traditions
Maintenance-management-cleaning-refuse-recycling
Pedestrian and cycle priority

5) Building type

Building floorplates and access
Relationship with neighbours
Adaptability
Security

6) Facades and Street Presence

Street line-materials-corners-entrances-expression
Landmarks and Focal Points
Shop frontages and entrances
Footway activity

7) Details and materials

Visual clues-historic reference
Interpretation ` practicality `
Sustainable materials
Illumination - Including signage and advertising
A robust signage strategy that promotes consistency from retail units will be preferable for certain developments.

8) Ease of Movement: Streetscape and landscape

Choices of safe routes
Mobility-access-servicing
Public/private definition -public art- local clues and traditions
Maintenance-management-cleaning-refuse-recycling
Pedestrian and cycle priority
Car parking
Public and Private routes/demarcation
Place function including play
Night time illumination

Planning and Urban Design Tool Kit

- 5.10 An Urban Design toolkit approach will assist in bringing focus and consistency to the way in which development and regeneration opportunity full contributes to the quality of place being created across the town centre.
- 5.11 This Framework offers overall design principles to be pursued but a further level of detail will be required. This should include as a minimum:
- Design codes need to set specific parameters for sites undergoing development and redevelopment. These might be described as Urban Design Action Plans with priorities defined; including addressing neighbourhoods, buildings and spaces.
 - Conservation Area enhancement plans including guidance on buildings reuse and adaption including buildings at risk.
 - A Public Realm Strategy which takes into account links between public spaces and guidance on purpose; management and maintenance.
 - Adaptation of residential design and space standards, referencing BFL12¹ and/or Nationally Described Space Standards² as a starting point for new homes and establishing standards for the re-use of existing buildings. This could be adopted as Town Centre guidance for the range of hub uses, residential conversions, and mixed live work spaces.
- 5.12 In addition to the preparation and use of Supplementary Planning Documents an important aspect of driving the town towards greater design quality is to embed place making into the development management process. Initiatives to consider include:

- Ensuring an integrated approach to link planning, highways and construction with ongoing maintenance and town centre management functions.
- Using planning to streamline positive development in the town centre and protect against inappropriate development; for example through the use of an Article 4 Direction.
- Design training and awareness for decision makers including development management teams and elected Members.
- Providing access to independent Design Advisors, possibly establishing a Town Centre Design Panel or promoting greater use of PlacesMatter!, a design review panel operated by RIBA in the North West.



Figure 5.1 – Built form comparison diagram

¹ Building for Life 12 – <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

6 Implementation

6.1 To reiterate, the early priority projects identified within the transitional phase are as follows:

Creation of hubs - Existing buildings such as the Civic Centre within council ownership will be repurposed to create start up space with fast broadband connection in the digital, technology, arts and cultural sectors in particular.

The Galleries - Early action will be taken to pave the way for a major development scheme or series of schemes on the site.

Market Hall - a new market proposition will need to be developed that would involve refreshing the offer and relocating the market.

Pier Quarter - this is a major regeneration site. It is crucial to plan for how this site can be linked to the town centre.

HS2 Opportunity - to define the development opportunity of the wider area through the preparation of a HS2 Growth Strategy.

Borough wide skills strategy - to provide a deeper understanding of the existing skills provision and gaps.

Defensive Retail Strategy - Developing a strategy which protects a redefined retail core. It should also set out what the future 'High Street' should be and what its role needs to be in stimulating footfall and activity levels.

Town Centre Management - The town should be actively managed working with partners to ensure all residents feel they can engage with and enjoy what the centre has to offer during the day and at night.

Car parking strategy - review of existing car park utilisation and the current distribution across the town. This will outline whether consolidation of surface car parks in the medium to long term is necessary to offer additional development platforms to bring to market at the appropriate time.

Live/Work - explore the delivery of a live and work concept in Wigan Town Centre, in conjunction with a partner.

6.2 To guide transformational change and drive the growth that is required in the town centre, the next step will be to prepare a detailed delivery plan for each priority project identified. This should consider the following key themes:

Finances and funding



The formation of an Investment Fund which will be administered by the Council and designed to support interventions in the Town Centre which are considered necessary to achieve the outcomes as required by the Framework.

The Fund should seek to be self-sustainable over a period of years based on returns from uplift in land value captured by the Council, increased business rates, and returns from capital employed.

All proposals seeking access to the Investment Fund will require detailed submissions to be prepared demonstrating the relationship between proposals and outcomes including risk and return.



Proactively seek external funding from national and/or regional government to support the ambitions of the Framework. Wigan Council should also consider their ability to leverage funding from the Public Works Loan Office to obtaining funding where applicable.

Partnerships and process



Wigan Council must build partnerships across all sectors to provide the best opportunity and environment for success. This should include engaging with key businesses, education providers, and other stakeholders within the town centre to widen the Council's objectives and priorities. Where appropriate a working group for specific issues – for example, town centre management, should be set up. Wigan Council will need to be central to this process so that a clear road map can be created to move regeneration forward.

Partnership should also extend to developing links with the private sector. Wigan Council can, and should, lead on the delivery of the Framework's vision however cannot do it solely in-house. There needs to be a recognition that working in partnership with specialists including developers and operators will be critical to achieve success.



Wigan Council will need to run a proficient and robust procurement process to select its development partners.

Throughout this process sufficient rigour will be placed on assessing developer's proposals and support the delivery of quality development within Wigan Town Centre. Having the right advice to support this process will be critical.

Governance and benchmarking



Internally, **a Steering Group should be set up within Wigan Council with specific officers responsible for driving the ambition of the SRF.** This will necessitate regular reporting to Elected Members and Senior Management.



Performance should be regularly reviewed against the aspiration of the SRF. This will likely be measured in terms of jobs, business rate growth, activity levels generally including intelligence about business start-ups, young people in work, and, where appropriate, third party co-funding.



Regular review of this SRF should take place to ensure aims and aspirations remain relevant. The medium and long term interventions in particular will need updating as progress is made and priorities become clearer. An initial review should take place in two years.

Appendix A – Urban design appraisals of existing Town Centre Character Areas



Westwood Gateway

- South east edge of town centre
- No through routes
- No pedestrian connectivity
- No street structure
- Not a core town centre site
- Canalside frontage
- Bounded by heavy rail
- Employment focus



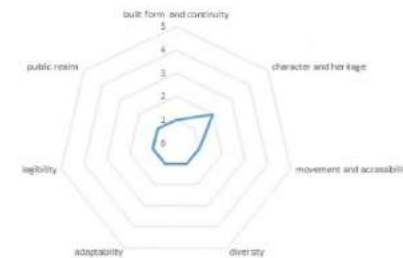


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Wigan Central

- South of the station and straddling the westward access approach to town.
- Traffic circulation dominates.
- Disparate "box" showroom and employment activity.
- Non "town centre" activities include cement works, yard storage and distribution activity.
- Vacant buildings and plots.
- No amenity.
- Separates Pier Quarter from the town.
- Far from "central".
- Very poor pedestrian environment.





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Station Gateway

- The gateway to town from the west by car/bus and from the rail network – regional and national.
- Historic street has presence
- North Western railway station a 1960's left over.
- Site opportunity is constrained.
- King Street not well connected.
- Large box retail as to ring road is a redevelopment opportunity.

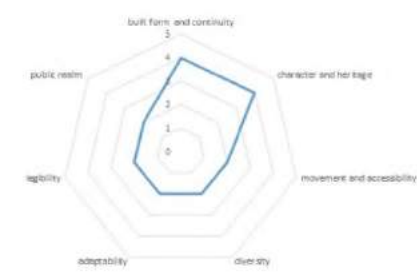


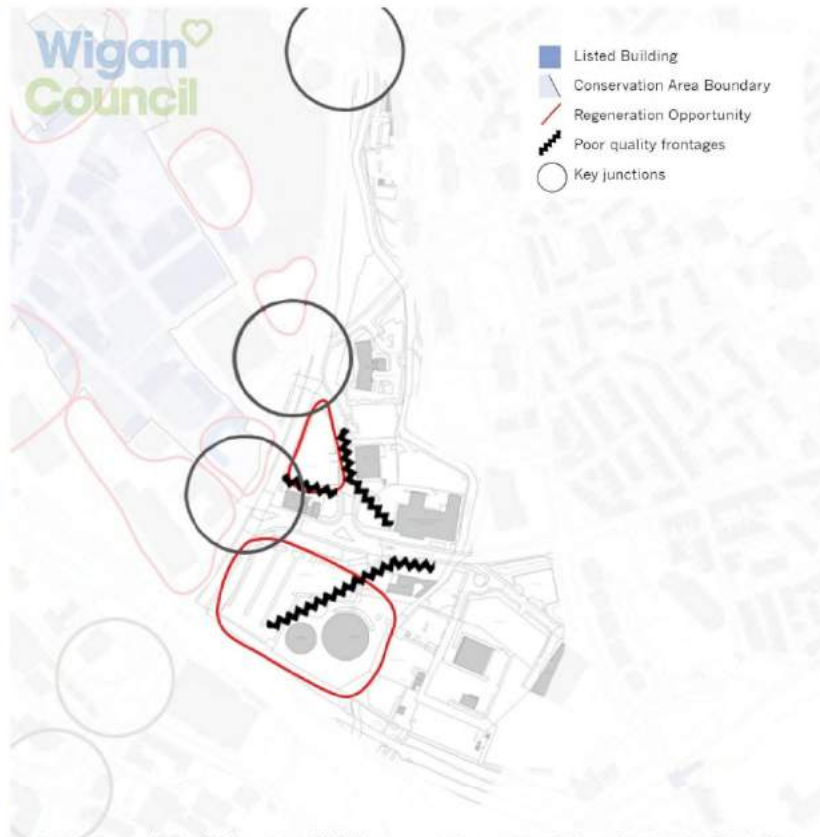


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Pier Quarter

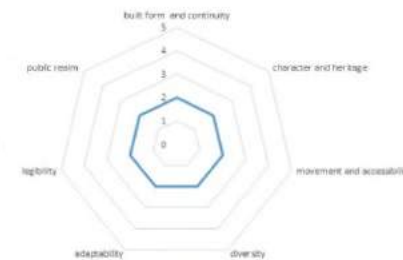
- A special building group associated with the canal.
- In need of fresh energy and activity.
- Dislocated from the centre (14 minute walk)
- No complementary physical form or activity in "Wigan Central".
- Unattractive night time connection to King Street via the railway station.
- Residential neighbourhood and mill has little amenity/activity.
- Canalside location not fully exploited.
- Traffic network dominant and damaging.
- Business Centre isolated.
- Major Eckersley Mill complex provides mixed use but is under utilised.

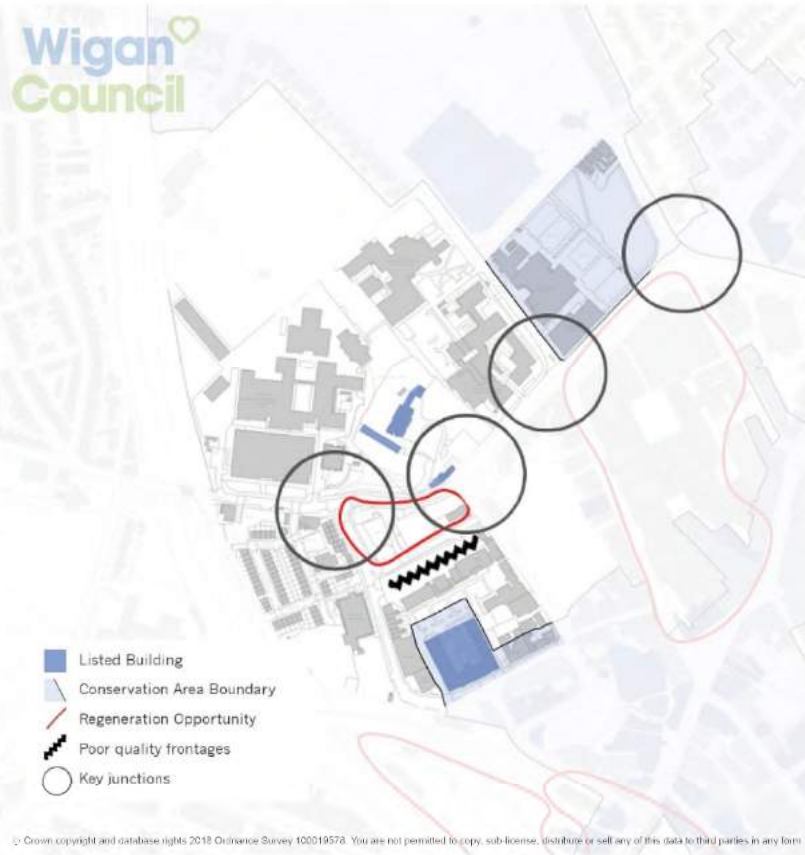




River Douglas Quarter

- Separation from town centre by 'over wide' ring road (A49 River Way)
- Major opportunity site given over to Council car parking
- There is a "disconnect" between Scholes and town centre.
- The "estate" is a blockage with the river also being a barrier to movement. Pedestrian and cycles have to funnel across principal traffic routes.

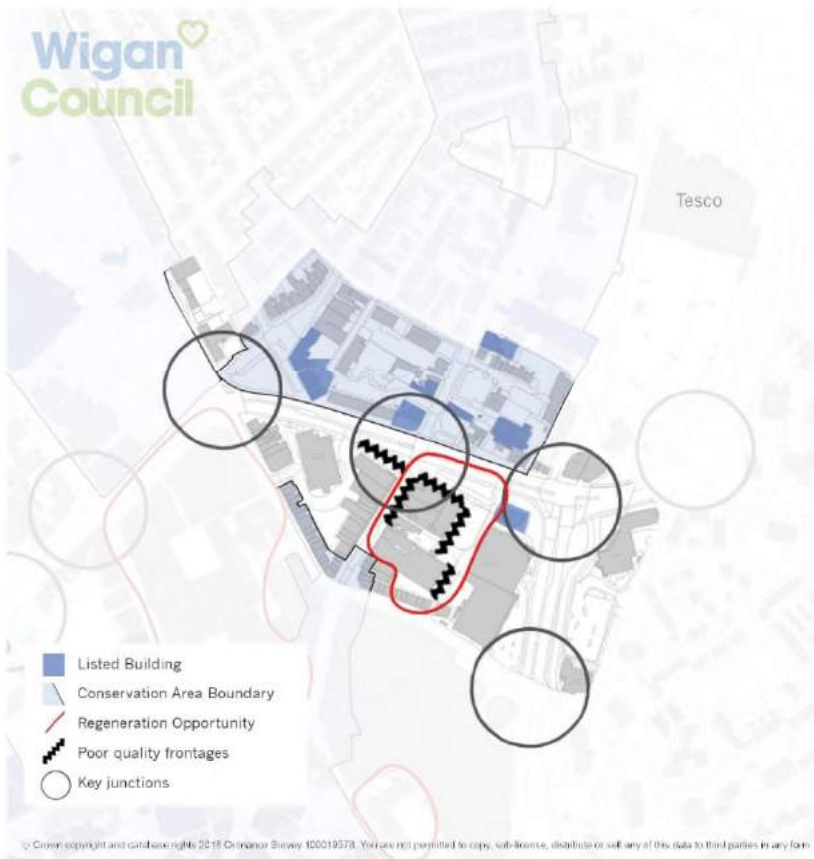




Innovation and Learning District

- Strong character around the education campus including new buildings for the college, school and youth zone.
- Disconnected from town centre.
- Isolated established residential neighbourhood.
- Older commercial buildings including sorting office ready for redevelopment/repurposing.
- Proximity to new bus station needs sensitive handling.
- Bus circulation and layover in adjacent streets is detrimental to amenity.
- Frog Lane and Market Street are unattractive key links to town for residents from the west including new homes.
- Opportunity to establish larger residential/ mixed use neighbourhood opposite attractive Wigan Hall.
- Continuity of the residential offer here will assist bringing forward refurbishment of historic terrace.

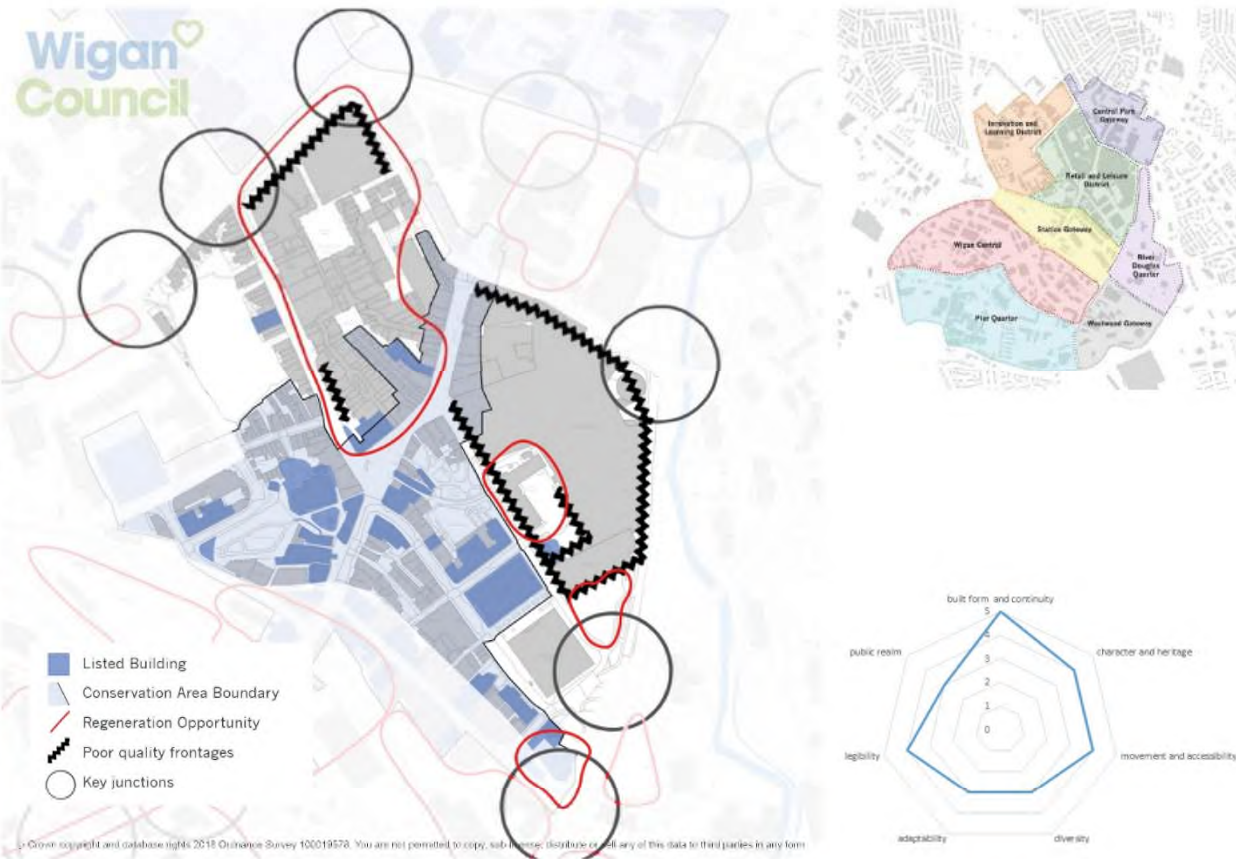




Central Park Gateway

- Includes part of "former" retail core set in ring road but now peripheral.
- Ring road forms barrier to residents accessing centre
- Tesco to centre footfall is a poor experience, yet popular.
- Good historic buildings north of ring road and "urban spaces" have unexploited character for "place identity"
- Route for town centre residents are weak; unattractive and inconvenient.
- Late 20th century built form fails to define town structure with no street presence.





Retail and Leisure District

- The 'town centre' core has strong physical character
- The topography ensures a clear understanding of the historic 'top of the town'.
- There is good physical continuity with characterful buildings, architectural detail and overall townscape quality.
- There is a lack of any environmental public space and few street trees.
- Links between blocks and the historic street pattern gives clarity.
- Not sure why the night time zone of King Street is excluded-clearly part of the whole town centre.
- Little Theatre south of ring road sits outside and physically separated.
- Pathways to railway station exist but are poor.
- Civic Centre is a barrier between Grand Arcade West and the Civic Space and Town Hall.

- Parish Church is hidden and major public space unattractive to town centre users.
- Old Court needs better 'visibility' from the centre.
- The Galleries is monolithic and impenetrable with underpass entrances unattractive. Blank façades to the north are oppressive.
- Vacant Morrisons facing colleges is depressing.
- Markets are over provided for, existing market building is out of scale with requirement.
- External markets dull and uninteresting.
- The new bus station will establish new footfall.
- The 'vacant' former Marketgate shopping centre on Standishgate element of the Galleries is a void in the centre at the physical heart of the town.
- Market Street elevation provides no active frontage.



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