

Planning for the Future to 2040 – local engagement in Autumn 2022

Key headlines from the questionnaire responses by theme

Homes

- Top priorities for housing: homes for first time buyers, social housing to rent, family homes, special accommodation for older people, and more affordable housing.
- Strong support for adaptable homes meeting people's needs over their lifetime.
- Many respondents believe that there is not a need for more homes and that there is insufficient supporting infrastructure and road capacity to support further development.

Jobs

- Priorities for business sectors to focus on: health and social care, green business sectors, general manufacturing, advanced manufacturing.
- Priorities to help attract and retain businesses: improve transport links, redevelop older industrial areas, make town centres more attractive for business to locate in.
- There was wide support for targeting jobs and training to people locally, providing better paid jobs and providing a wider range of job types from respondents of all age groups and from all areas.
- A number of respondents felt that higher paid jobs were needed in the borough to enable the retention of talented youngsters and graduates.
- Many respondents felt that local business growth would be encouraged through lower rents, reduced business rates and the provision of smaller units to facilitate business start-ups.

Town centres

- Priorities for attracting more visitors to our town centres: more independent shops, bars, cafes and restaurants, creating a safer environment.
- Better transport links to our town centres was also considered a priority
- Many respondents consider their local shops and services as important or very important for meeting their day to day needs.
- A number of respondents were concerned about the range of shops and about anti-social behaviour in town centres

- A number of respondents also wanted more free car parking in Wigan town centre, and more parking provision in many other centres.

Transport

- An integrated, affordable and effective public transport system was most likely to encourage around two-thirds of respondents to travel less by car. Safe, direct and attractive walking routes were also supported.
- A number of respondents however said that nothing would encourage them to reduce their car use, and that roads should not be designed to give more space to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and less to cars.

Places

- Making people feel safe, social and included, and having good quality greenspace and greenery were the consistent top two priorities for respondents for what new development should do to make places that you would like to live, work or spend time in.
- Many respondents think that conserving our historic buildings is important or very important in making places that they would like to live, work and spend time in.

Environment

- Optimising alternative energy sources, improving public transport, more green infrastructure and retrofitting existing buildings with low carbon / energy efficient measures were considered the priorities to help reduce carbon emissions.
- Improving existing wildlife sites; additional planting in urban areas (including green walls, green roofs, street trees); and increasing woodland and tree cover were considered the top three priorities for supporting wildlife in the borough.

People

- Better access to nature and the natural environment, and access to affordable healthy food were considered the most important factors in supporting people's health and wellbeing. Creating safer and more attractive routes for walking and cycling was also popular, as was the creation of spaces for people to meet and interact.
- Respondents felt that open space and sport provision for children and young people needed to be better provided for in their area.
- Parks and gardens, allotments and community gardens and accessible natural greenspace were also identified by many as needing to be better provided for.
- Additional healthcare provision was considered the top priority needed to support further housing development, with additional primary school provision being the second priority overall, and a community hall or centre the third priority overall.