

WIGAN EASTERN GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK **PLANNING GUIDANCE**

OCTOBER 2007

PREFACE

This document can be provided in alternative formats upon request.

Please contact the **Environmental Services Department** on **01942 404243**.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Gateway Development Framework has been prepared by the Environmental Services Department of Wigan Council.

The Eastern Gateway is a strategic area of land containing a diversity of land uses and built forms situated just 400 metres to the east of Wigan town centre. The area forms part of Wigan South Central, which is an initiative aimed at regenerating the wider area, south of the town centre.

Whilst many areas of Wigan have seen dramatic and successful regeneration initiatives, the Eastern Gateway has been left largely neglected. The A49 ring road has acted as an unwelcome physical barrier to economic activity and investment and has resulted in an under utilised quarter dominated by surface car parks, empty and dilapidated buildings and vacant and overgrown land.

Stimulated by the recent approval for Phase III of the Grand Arcade development, which includes a mixed use 18 storey tower block, the area has been receiving increased speculative development interest over recent months. It is essential that a holistic approach is adopted for the redevelopment of the area which brings together the many opportunity sites which lie on either side of the A49.

The number of low intensity land uses in the area and the amount of vacant and derelict properties, means that an excellent opportunity for the regeneration of the Eastern Gateway has arisen. The document seeks to build upon this opportunity and provide a clear framework to guide and inform future development.

AIMS

This guidance document aims to:

- provide a clear framework to guide future development and redevelopment;

- promote communities which are safe and sustainable;
- enhance and protect the biodiversity of the area;
- protect and encourage the innovative reuse of historic buildings;
- reduce the need for private travel and encouraging sustainable transport options;
- identify, protect and improve linkages and accessibility with the town centre and Scholes;
- encourage high quality urban design in both the built environment and public spaces; and
- identify potential redevelopment sites and produce guidance for their revitalisation.

The objectives and policies set out in the document are intended to provide clear guidance to stakeholders in the development process including landowners, local businesses and residents, statutory agencies, public sector organisations and private developers.

The guidance is set within the policy framework of the Wigan Unitary Development Plan (UDP), and supplements relevant UDP policies. If deemed necessary, the guidance will be incorporated within the Local Development Framework (LDF) at a later date.

The document is non-statutory and will be used as a material consideration in determining applications for planning permission and other matters in the Eastern Gateway area.

ANALYSIS

For clarity and ease of use, the Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework has been divided into two separate publications. The companion document to this guidance, the *Background and Analysis Report*, provides a detailed analysis of the existing make-up and characteristics of the Eastern Gateway. This is available on the Wigan Council website (www.wigan.gov.uk) and on request. The report identifies the main

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which the area exhibits.

Whilst the Eastern Gateway has many positive attributes, there are a number of weaknesses which are seen as key elements in the overall regeneration. These have been summarised as:

Access

The analysis has revealed that the A49 Riverway presents a major barrier to the successful redevelopment of the Eastern Gateway.

The road acts as an impediment to accessibility and is a hostile and intimidating environment for many pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists. Improved links across the A49 are seen as a vital component of the guidance which will ultimately determine the success or failure of the area.

Character

Due in part to the disjointed nature of this area, the Eastern Gateway currently lacks any real character or sense of place.

The main streets are unattractive and not well used by pedestrians.

Dereliction

The Eastern Gateway is characterised by large areas of derelict and underused land and buildings. Given its close proximity to the town centre this is seen as a poor use of prime land and a wasted opportunity to improve the offering of the town.

However, the area also exhibits many positive attributes which can be strengthened through the objectives of this document, these include:

Location

The Eastern Gateway is just 400 metres from the town centre with its range of employment, retail, commercial, transport and educational uses.

Environmental Attributes

The area has a range of environmental assets including the River Douglas and its banks. While some of these are not in optimum condition they can be sensitively improved along with redevelopment.

Redevelopment Potential

The Eastern Gateway has a large amount of vacant, underused and derelict land which will allow for a comprehensive redevelopment of the area. The recent opening of the Grand Arcade will stimulate further development interest in the area.

Based on these findings, the council has developed eight objectives to manage future development in the area. Under an overall vision, these will tackle the weaknesses of the area, whilst also building upon the existing strengths.

VISION

The vision for the Eastern Gateway is to create a dynamic, active, mixed use area which is of exceptional design quality with safe and efficient links to Wigan town centre and the wider area.

OBJECTIVES

Based on the vision, the eight key objectives are to create:

Objective 1

An area with a Dynamic Mixed Use

Create a dynamic mixed use area which is integrated with the town centre creating a sustainable community, where residential, retail, commercial, entertainment and leisure facilities are all located within close proximity.

Objective 2

An area which is a Gateway to Wigan Town Centre

Create an area which acts as the principle Gateway to the town from the south and east.

Objective 3

An area which is Accessible and Permeable

Create an accessible area which has safe and efficient links to and from the town centre and Scholes for pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists.

Objective 4

An area with a High Quality Design

Create a district which has a high standard of architecture and urban design, which can act as a catalyst for innovative design throughout the town.

Objective 5

An area with a Strong and Identifiable Heritage Value

Create a district where new development should not harm the character or appearance of listed buildings or their settings. Proposals should also preserve or enhance the character of the existing town centre conservation area.

Objective 6

An area with Environmental Diversity

Create a district which enhances the environmental diversity of the town by improving access to open spaces and developing new areas for improving environmental diversity.

Objective 7

An area that Embraces Sustainable Development

improve the weaknesses of the area whilst building upon the area's many strengths.

Create a district which promotes innovative, sustainable development techniques for all new developments and refurbishments.

Objective 8

An area that Embraces Sustainable Transport

Create a district which encourages the use of sustainable transport as a primary means of travel.

CONCLUSION

The regeneration of the Eastern Gateway presents huge opportunities for Wigan Council and its partners to develop the area as a new mixed use sustainable and liveable community. The policies which have been proposed are a direct result of detailed analysis and if implemented will

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 The Eastern Gateway is approximately 12.25 hectares in area and consists of land on either side of the A49 Riverway. It includes Wigan International Pool, the former police station, the old Town Hall and the Darlington Street gas works (Figure 1.1). It has suffered from a lack of major investment for many years and has in some respects been left behind with recent improvements to the town centre and Wigan Pier.

1.1.2 With a concentration of vacant sites and low intensity uses such as car parking, the eastern area of the town centre will be particularly vulnerable to speculative development, capitalising on recent investment in the town.

1.1.3 This document will provide clear guidance to stakeholders in the development process to ensure that identified development opportunity sites in the Eastern Gateway are not only of exceptional design quality but also that they are integrated with the surrounding area. The guidance provides the opportunity for the council to promote the revitalisation of the Eastern Gateway and to stimulate its redevelopment.



1.1.4 An extensive public consultation exercise was undertaken on the

Draft Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework prior to its adoption. This covered a three week period between June and July 2007 and involved contacting local strategic partners, key stakeholders, local businesses and groups, as well as the general public. All of the responses received were thoroughly considered and resulted in a revised draft document being prepared.

1.1.5 The Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework was adopted by Wigan Council on 18 October 2007.

1.1.6 The guidance is set within the policy framework of the Wigan Unitary Development Plan (UDP), and supplements relevant UDP policies. If deemed necessary, the guidance will be incorporated within the Local Development Framework (LDF) at a later date. The document will be used as a

material consideration in determining applications for planning permission and other matters in the Eastern Gateway area.

STRUCTURE

1.1.7 For clarity and ease of use, the Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework has been divided into two separate publications.

- The Background and Analysis Report; and
- The Planning Guidance. (Both available at www.wigan.gov.uk)

The structure of the framework is graphically illustrated in **Table I.1**

1.1.8 The *Background and Analysis Report* provides a detailed analysis of the existing make-up and characteristics of the Eastern Gateway. Whilst the area has many positive attributes, there are

a number of weaknesses which are seen as key elements in the overall regeneration. These can be summarised as:

Access

The analysis has revealed that the A49 Riverway presents a major barrier to the successful development of the Eastern Gateway.

The road acts as an impediment to accessibility and is a hostile and intimidating environment for many pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists. Improved links across the A49 are seen as a vital component of the Guidance which will ultimately determine the success or failure of the area.

Character

Due in part to the disjointed nature of this area, the Eastern Gateway currently lacks any real character or sense of place. The main streets are unattractive

and not well used by pedestrians.

Dereliction

The Eastern Gateway is characterised by large areas of derelict and underused land and buildings. Given its close proximity to the town centre this is seen as a poor use of prime land and a wasted opportunity to improve the offering of the town.



1.1.9 However, the area also exhibits many positive attributes which can be strengthened through the objectives of this document, these include:

Location

The Eastern Gateway is just 400 metres from the town centre with its range of employment, retail, commercial, transport and educational uses.

Environmental Attributes

The area has a range of environmental assets including the River Douglas and its banks. While some of these are not in optimum condition they can be sensitively improved along with redevelopment.

Redevelopment Potential

The Eastern Gateway has a large amount of vacant, underused and derelict land which will allow for a comprehensive redevelopment of the area. The recent opening of the Grand Arcade will stimulate further development interest in the area.

1.1.10 Based on these findings, the council has developed eight

objectives to manage future development in the Eastern Gateway. Based on an overall vision, these will tackle the weaknesses of the area, whilst also building upon the existing strengths.

AIMS

- 1.1.11 This guidance document aims to:
- provide a clear framework to guide future development and redevelopment;
 - promote communities which are safe and sustainable;
 - enhance and protect the biodiversity of the area;
 - protect and encourage the innovative reuse of historic buildings;
 - reduce the need for private travel and encouraging sustainable transport options;
 - identify, protect and improve linkages and accessibility with

the town centre and Scholes;

- encourage high quality urban design in both the built environment and public spaces; and
- identify potential redevelopment sites and produce guidance for their revitalisation.

1.1.12 From this point, the document has been prepared in two sections:

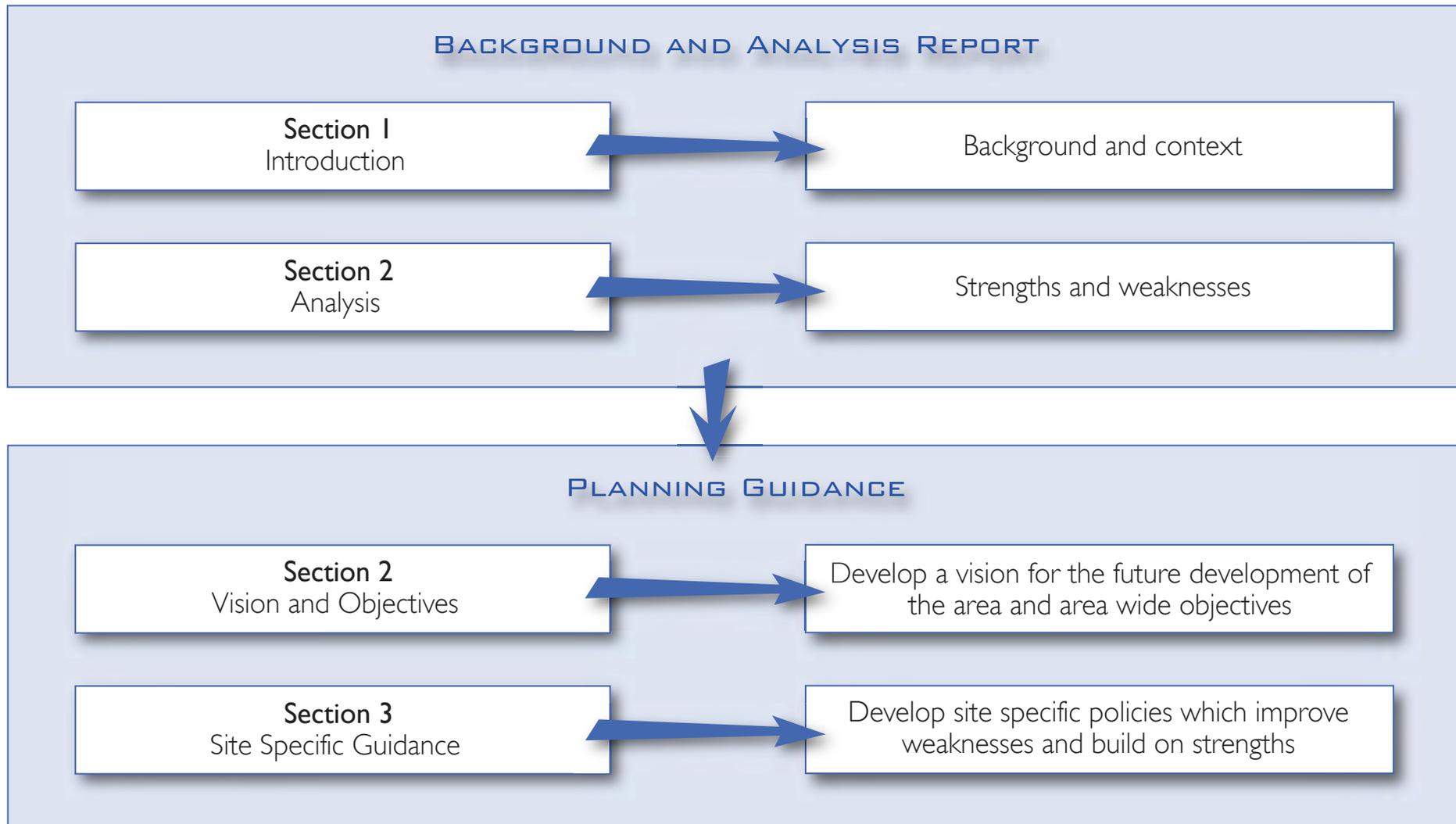
(a) Section Two

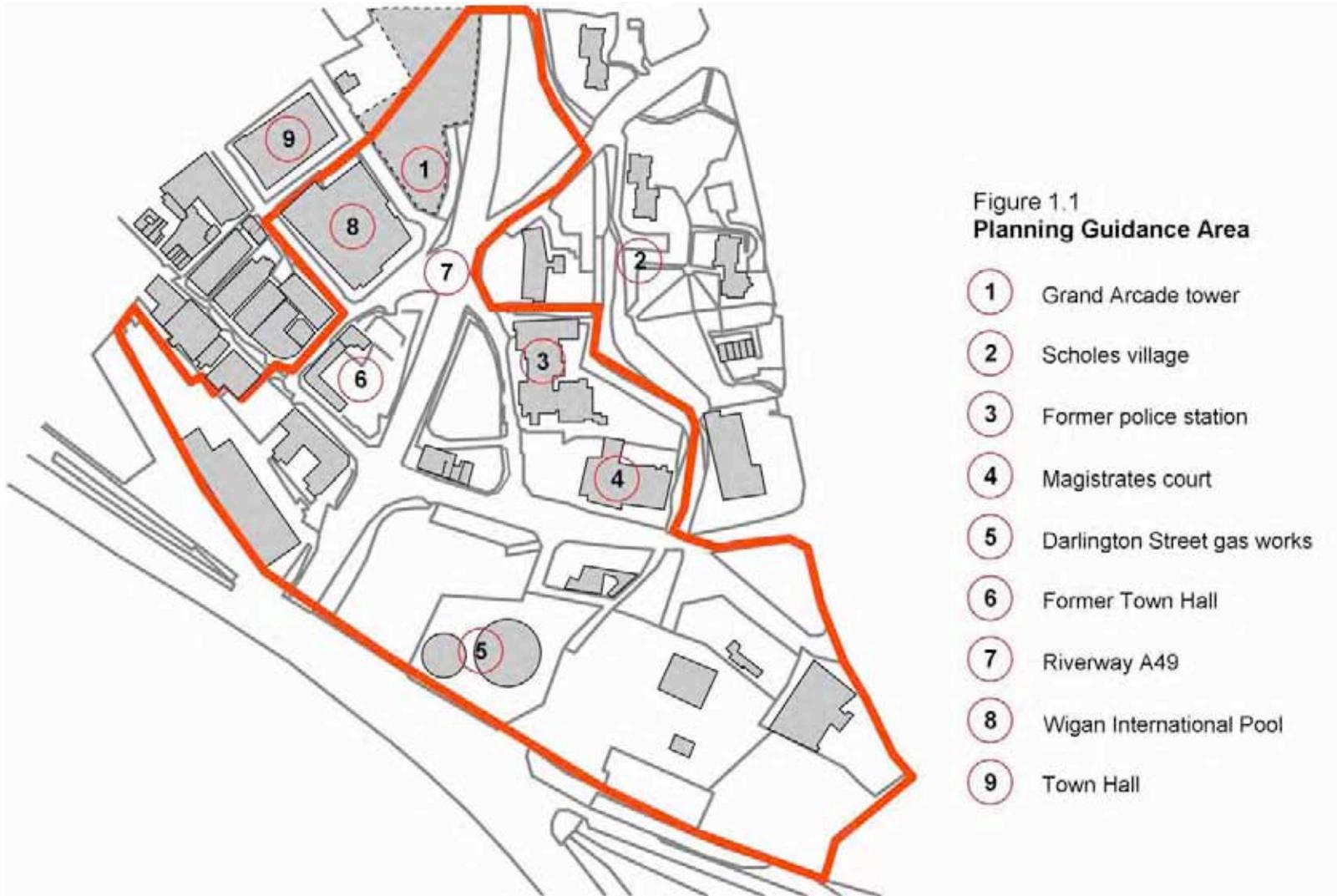
Section two will propose a vision and objectives for the development of the Eastern Gateway using the findings of the *Background and Analysis Report*.

(b) Section Three

In the third section and based on the vision and objectives, site specific development guidance will be established.

Table 1.1 Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework - Structure





SECTION 2 VISION & OBJECTIVES

2.1 VISION

The vision for the Eastern Gateway is to create a dynamic, active, mixed use area which is of exceptional design quality with safe and efficient links to Wigan town centre and the wider area.

- 2.1.1 This Planning Guidance hopes to balance the development potential of the Eastern Gateway with sustainable design principles and the protection and enhancement of the environment, heritage and of present and future residents.
- 2.1.2 The guidance aims to revitalise this area of Wigan in a manner which compliments and interacts with other more dominant town centre uses whilst still increasing its critical mass. It is important that the Eastern Gateway does not detract from the town centre but functions as a sustainable and distinct district of it.
- 2.1.3 It is anticipated that regeneration will attract a greater number of people and businesses into the area thereby increasing its overall appeal. Existing retail and entertainment uses will be strengthened by introducing additional commercial, retail (local order) and leisure opportunities and new residential communities.
- 2.1.4 As part of the vision, major gateways into the town centre should be reinforced with bold and innovative buildings. Gateway developments in combination with other buildings will create an interesting and varied urban environment. Balanced with this is the need to protect and enhance the strong heritage qualities of the area and its listed buildings through adaptive re-use and the construction of appropriate new built forms.
- 2.1.5 The guidance promotes best practice in urban design and sustainable development and will ensure a built form which is modern yet integrates into Wigan's historic pattern of development. The aim is to stimulate a built form which is of a high environmental quality, using the principles of sustainable development at its core. In addition, improvements will be made to the ecological environment in the Eastern Gateway, which includes the River Douglas.
- 2.1.6 The objectives seek to 'open up' the Eastern Gateway ensuring that pedestrian and cycling linkages to the town centre and Scholes are significantly improved. A key element of the document is to ensure that buildings on strategic sites fit into improving the overall accessibility of the area. Giving pedestrians and disabled people priority at major crossing points will improve the safety of

roads in the Eastern Gateway and will provide direct and easy access to the town centre.

- 2.1.7 It is considered that the Planning Guidance will bring a new vitality and viability to the area, and establish a high quality level of development which will be attractive to everyone.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 The vision for the Eastern Gateway is underpinned by eight key objectives which are:

OBJECTIVE 1 **An Area with a Dynamic Mixed Use**

Create a dynamic mixed use area which is integrated with the town centre creating a sustainable community, where residential, retail, commercial, entertainment and leisure facilities are all located within close proximity.

- 2.2.2 Different uses that successfully share sites and buildings add to the economic and social vitality of a town centre. The Eastern Gateway should provide a complementary mix of working, shopping, living and playing.
- 2.2.3 In the medium term, the Eastern Gateway has the potential to supply a large amount of

development floorspace on the fringe of Wigan town centre. In terms of the mix of uses, it is important to balance the use of potential development sites with other regeneration schemes underway in the borough, including Eckersley Mill, Trencherfield Mill and the Northern Crescent. Residents of the Eastern Gateway should have the opportunity to live, work, shop and play all within the same area without the need for private transportation. The appropriate mix of uses should relate to the findings of the Key Local Surveys prepared as part of the LDF process.

2.2.4 Parking is a crucial consideration for both mixed uses and the town centre generally, as is the breakdown between short and long stay spaces. The Eastern Gateway is highly accessible by public transport, walking and

cycling and this should be reflected in the amount of on-site car parking required for schemes.

Policy 1a

2.2.5 The Eastern Gateway should have an emphasis on providing a mix of quality residential units in a manner which promotes sustainable living. Residential development activity is driven by the need to establish a sense of place within the Eastern Gateway, an area that houses and supports a significant local population. It should also reflect the excellent location of the area, just 400 metres from the town centre.

Policy 1b

2.2.6 Single use residential schemes will generally not be acceptable and should include a proportion of non-residential uses. In particular, active uses should be located on the ground floor on principle vehicular and pedestrian routes and fronting public open spaces.

Policy Ic

2.2.7 The Eastern Gateway should contain an element of commercial development, mainly in the form of small and medium scale offices. There is potential demand for larger floorplate offices which requires that future developments be flexible and easily adaptable for new uses.

Policy Id

2.2.8 Where appropriate, retail facilities should consist predominately of ground floor units for small scale, local order shops. These should provide a service for the resident population and should in no way detract from the viability of the town centre. In particular, retail uses should be encouraged where there is high pedestrian footfall to activate street frontages.

Policy Ie

2.2.9 Leisure and community facilities which are appropriate for the

local area should be encouraged to broaden the offer for residents of the Eastern Gateway and surrounding areas.

Policy If

2.2.10 Other uses which may be considered appropriate include:

- Tourism, including hotels;
- Knowledge based employment including live/work units; and
- Essential infrastructure and facilities.

Policy Ig

2.2.11 Redevelopment should include provision and improvement of high quality multi-functional areas of open space, to include possible spaces for new pieces of public art.

Policy Ih

2.2.12 The redevelopment of the Eastern Gateway should allow for the complete reorganisation and rationalisation of the parking

supply in the Eastern Gateway. Not only does the area need to serve the demands of future uses but it also has an important role to play in providing general town centre parking. A Parking Strategy and a Transport and Access Assessment should be undertaken in the area.

Policy Ii

2.2.13 The potential for constructing a new multi-storey car park at a suitable location to replace the current piecemeal supply should be investigated as part of the Parking Strategy.

Relevant Policy Links

UDP: EM1B, EM1C, EM1D, EM2A, R1B, R1D, R1E, R1G, R1H, EV1A, EV1B, EV3A, EV3C, EV3D, EV4A, EV4B, A1C, A1D, A1E, A1U, S1E, S1F, C1A, C1H, G1A, G1B, G1C, G1D.

Local: Re-use of Employment Land SPD; Affordable Housing SPD; Local Key Studies. **National:** PPS1.

OBJECTIVE 2

An Area with a Gateway to Wigan Town Centre

Create an area which acts as the principle Gateway to the town from the south and east.

2.2.14 Gateway developments can act as important landmarks and entry points into urban areas. They can mark the transition point from the outlying residential and industrial areas into the town centre, providing residents and visitors with a sense of arrival. They can also increase the legibility of areas to improve navigation and direction around a town.

Policy 2a

2.2.15 A primary gateway into the town should be developed around the junction of Millgate and Riverway (**Figure 2.1**). The Gateway should be developed and further enhanced through junction and

road remodelling and the possible creation of new public spaces (See Objective 3). Taller buildings may be appropriate at this location, subject to surrounding context and environmental and design impacts (See **Objective 4**).

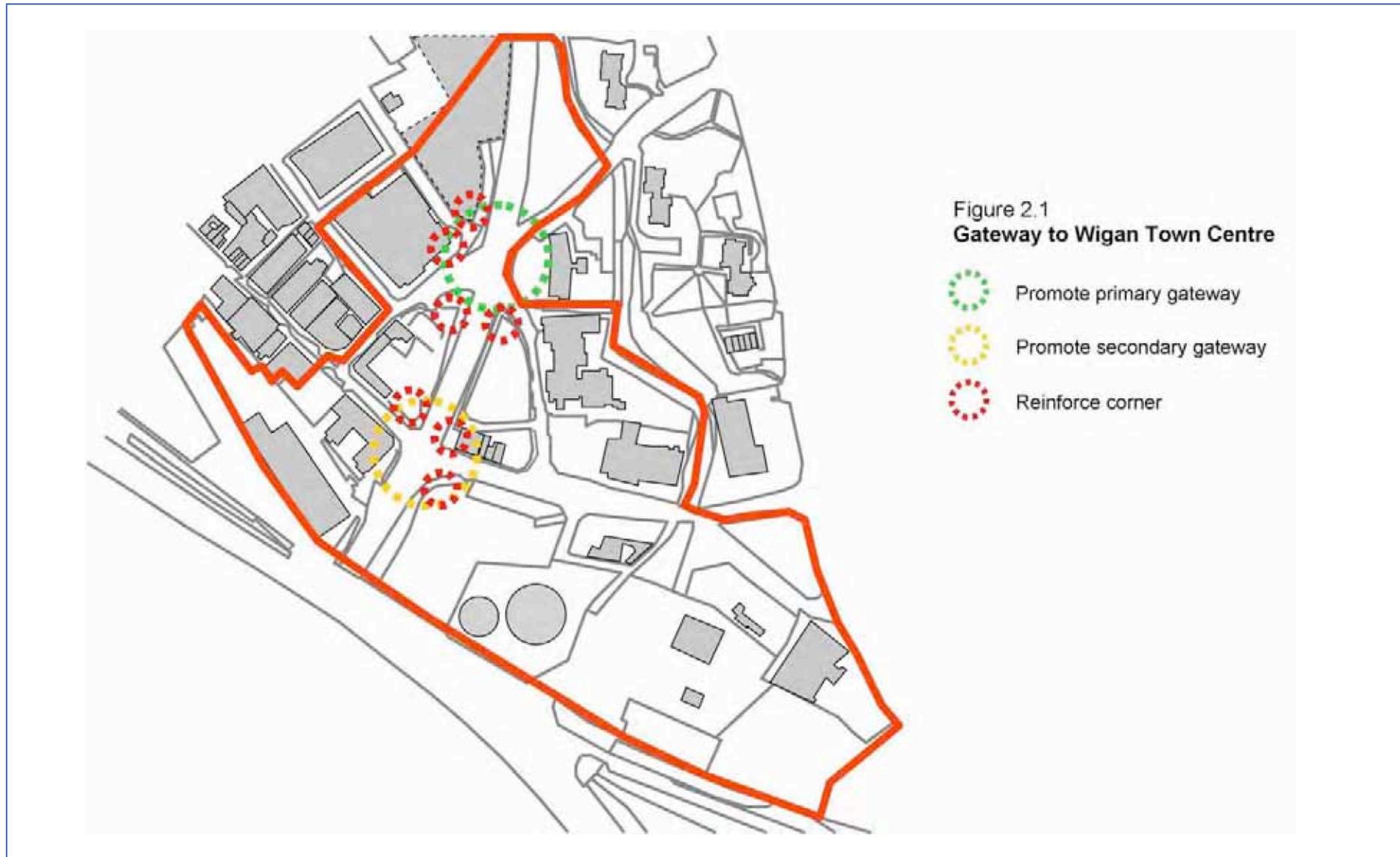
Policy 2b

2.2.16 A secondary gateway into the town should be developed at the junction of Riverway and Darlington Street (**Figure 2.1**). Street corners should be reinforced with landmark buildings at this location along with the addition of defined urban spaces.

Relevant Policy Links

UDP: EM1B, RID, EV3A, EV4A, A1A, A1B, A1D, A1E, A1F, A1G, A1R, A1S, A1U, S1E, S1F, C1A, G1A, G1B.

National: PPS1.



OBJECTIVE 3
An Area which is Accessible and Permeable

Create an accessible area which has safe and efficient links to and from the town centre and Scholes for pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists.

- 2.2.17 It is the presence of many people, not their cars, that makes an area successful, safe and sustainable. Connecting places for pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists, and improving their ability to move easily through and between them, is an important objective of this framework.
- 2.2.18 Clearly, the Eastern Gateway must continue to accommodate vehicular traffic. But in doing so, it is possible to reclaim for pedestrians and cyclists some of the space that is currently used to benefit motor vehicles which is no longer considered appropriate.

2.2.19 Pedestrian and cycle routes in the area are currently unattractive, indirect, or even non-existent. In the future, barriers to easy movement into, and throughout the Eastern Gateway, need to be broken down to give pedestrians, disabled people and cyclist’s real priority and make places accessible to all.

2.2.20 How we begin to reconnect the parts of the Eastern Gateway for pedestrians and cyclists is crucial to its potential for future expansion.

Policy 3a

2.2.21 The redevelopment of the Eastern Gateway should improve access and links across the area and particularly the A49 as identified in Figure 2.2. Safe and efficient access, above what is already in place should be provided for which can comfortably accommodate pedestrians, disabled people and

cyclists. The use of innovative techniques should be promoted which will increase the importance of the pedestrian and cyclist on the road network and can be achieved through measures such as the appropriate use of surfacing materials, public spaces, landscaping, lighting, signage and road crossings.

Policy 3b

2.2.22 Through Section 106 contributions (as set out in Policy G1B of the UDP) and other funds, the remodelling and redevelopment of existing junctions and pedestrian crossings along the A49 should be investigated and undertaken. New schemes should embrace modern design techniques, for example, the recommendations of the ‘Manual for Streets’. A Parking Strategy and a Transport and Access Assessment should be undertaken in the area to assess

appropriate options.

Policy 3c

2.2.23 The creation of a pedestrian and cyclist link through Scholes Village, Darlington Street car park and the Town Hall should be investigated and safeguarded to allow for improved cross town linkages and access to the River Douglas, in association with Objective 6 (**Figure 2.2**).

Policy 3d

2.2.24 Identified opportunity sites in different ownership should not prejudice the opportunity to improve linkages within the area. Development should be done in a holistic approach and should include provision for the links identified in **Figure 2.2**.

Policy 3e

2.2.25 The redevelopment of the Eastern Gateway should improve public car parking in the area, where possible rationalising the

current supply. Innovative parking solutions will be required to make the best use of available land.

Car parking should not compromise the use of strategic sites for other uses, activating street fronts or enabling a high standard of design.

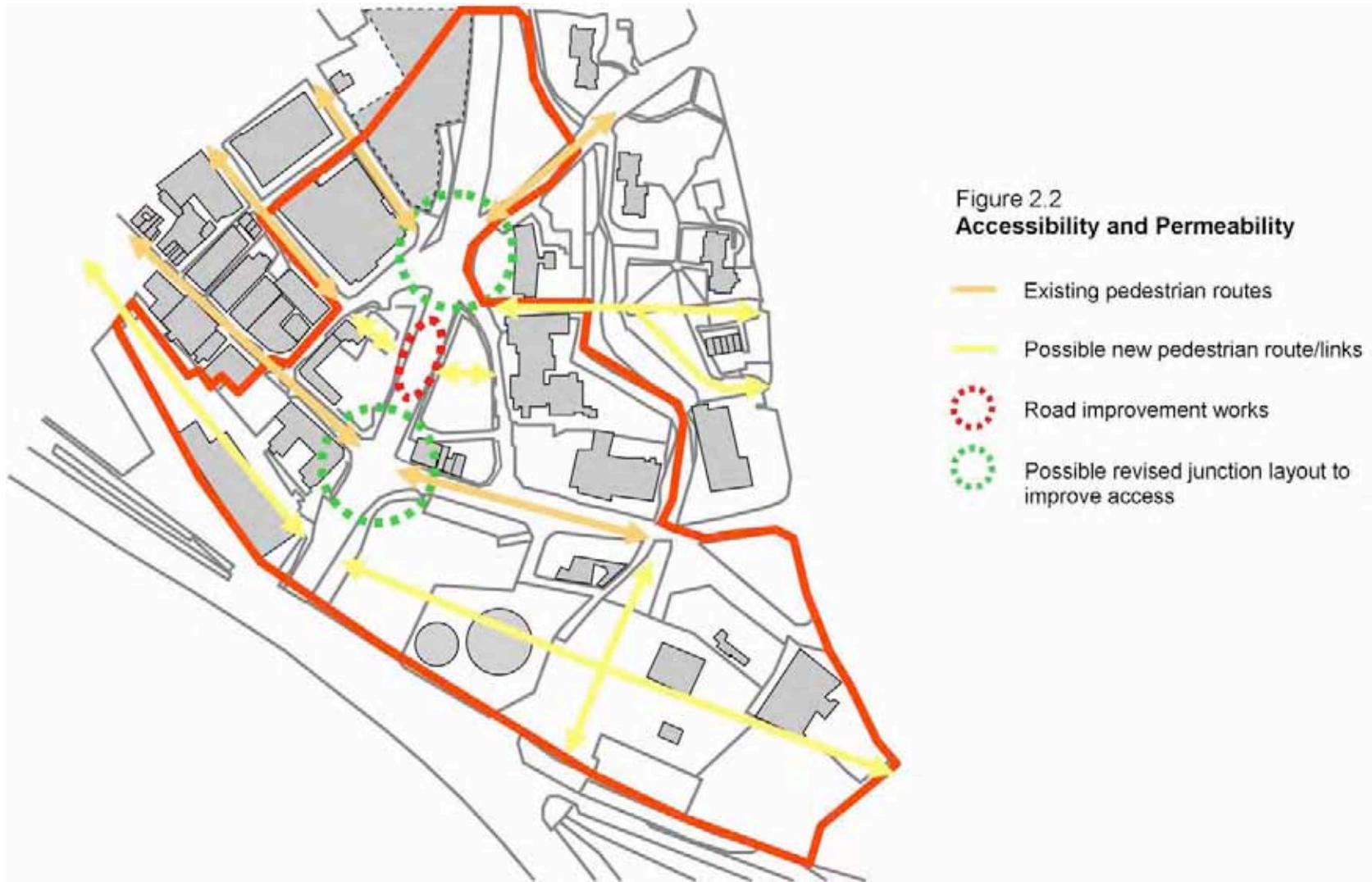
Relevant Policy Links

UDP: RIB, EV2C, EV3F, AIA, AIB, AIC, AID, AIE, AIF, AIG, AIR, AIS, AIU, SIE, CIF, CIH, GIA, GIB.

Local: Access for All SPD; Travel Plans SPD.

Sub regional: Local Transport Plan.

National: Car Parking: What Works Where; Manual for Streets; PPG13.



OBJECTIVE 4
An Area with a High Quality Design

Create a district which has a high standard of architecture and urban design, which can act as a catalyst for innovative design throughout the town.

2.2.26 The Eastern Gateway will require innovative, high quality and contemporary architectural design. Quality in buildings and public spaces can boost civic pride and perceptions of a place, and can provide an increased return on investment.

Policy 4a

2.2.27 In addition to being well designed, buildings should increase the attractiveness, vitality and safety of the streets and public spaces they enclose. Contemporary design of the highest quality will be required throughout the Eastern Gateway.

Policy 4b

2.2.28 Buildings of increased height will be acceptable in principle at the junctions of Riverway and Darlington Street and Riverway and Millgate which should help to create an identifiable and recognisable area functioning as Primary and Secondary Gateways into the town in accordance with Objective 2 (**Figure 2.1**). The highest design quality is of critical importance for all taller structures.

Policy 4c

2.2.29 Detailed guidance has been established for individual opportunity sites within the Eastern Gateway which is contained in Section 3 of this document. The policies noted for individual sites should be carried through in all new proposals.

Policy 4d

2.2.30 New buildings within the Eastern

Gateway should promote active street fronts particularly in areas where there is high pedestrian and vehicular activity (**Figure 2.3**). In particular, the activation of Millgate, Riverway, Library Street, Darlington Street and the new pedestrian routes should be encouraged in association with Objective 3 (**Figure 2.2**).

Policy 4e

2.2.31 Safety and security are vital elements in creating an attractive place to live, work and visit. Architecture and design should make a significant contribution to everyone's sense of security in the Eastern Gateway. New development should take into consideration the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). For all proposals the applicants should consult the Greater Manchester Police Architectural Liaison Unit to seek to achieve