



Resident Survey: Synthesis of key findings

Compiled by Collaborate CIC
2023/24



What things do you like most about the borough?

Residents of Wigan Borough expressed a strong appreciation for the borough's greenspaces, parks, and natural environments, such as Haigh Hall, Pennington Flash, Mesnes Park, and the canal pathways.

These areas are valued for their beauty, recreational opportunities, and positive impact on physical and mental well-being.

The community spirit and friendliness of the people in the borough are also highlighted as positive aspects.

Transport links are mentioned frequently, with residents appreciating the convenience of bus services, including the V1 & V2 to Manchester, and the borough's proximity to major cities and the countryside. However, there are concerns about the cost of train travel and the reliability of public transport.

Educational opportunities, particularly at Wigan and Leigh College, are seen as good, and there is a sense of pride in the local sports teams and cultural events. The borough's history and heritage are also important to residents, with many expressing a desire to preserve this aspect of their community.

Job opportunities within the borough are acknowledged, although some note that they work outside of the borough due to the nature of their industries. Housing is considered affordable, and there is a recognition of new housing developments, including affordable housing projects.

Residents have mixed feelings about town centres, including Wigan and Leigh town centres, with some lamenting the loss of shops and the decline of the area, while others are hopeful about redevelopment plans.

The council's efforts in engaging with local communities, supporting volunteer groups, and maintaining services such as refuse collection are generally well-regarded.

Overall, while there are areas of concern and a desire for improvements, the citizens of Wigan Borough cherish their green spaces and community spirit.



Looking ahead to the next ten years, what would a good life in the borough look like for you?

People connected a good life to the revitalising of the borough's town centres. This would see the centres full of local businesses with accessible facilities and offers for people of different ages, historic buildings being preserved and clean and well-maintained public spaces. Wider than town centres people want improved public transport and safety, with anti-social behaviour being addressed, more affordable housing along with good education and employment opportunities with more investment in training including apprenticeships and career pathways. Some respondents also mentioned the need for better adult social care provisions and support for those less well off. In terms of skill-building, there is a call for education on money management, cooking skills, basic repair (clothing / electricals), DIY, and more support for young parents. Finally, there is a desire for the creation of high-grade employment through investment in green energy companies, renewable energy and climate change tech and development. There is also a strong desire to protect and enhance green spaces. This includes rewilding local spaces, maintaining paths for walkers and cyclists, and preserving natural habitats.

Town centres:

Based on the responses, people want their town centres to be:

1. Clean and well-maintained
2. Safe, with reduced anti-social behaviour and drug use
3. Thriving and vibrant, with a variety of shops and businesses
4. Free from homelessness and rough sleeping
5. Accessible, with good transport links and parking facilities
6. Revitalized, with the return of shops and markets
7. Improved road infrastructure and maintenance
8. More green spaces and parks
9. Better facilities and support for older people



10. Reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour

What would make Wigan a place people want to visit as tourists and live in as residents?

1. A thriving and vibrant town centre with a variety of shops, independent businesses, and restaurants.
2. Clean streets and well-maintained public spaces.
3. Reduction in crime, anti-social behaviour, and drug-related issues.
4. Improved transport links, including better road infrastructure and public transport options.
5. More green spaces, parks, and leisure facilities.
6. Affordable housing options and improved employment opportunities.
7. Cultural attractions, such as museums, galleries, and historical buildings.
8. Community activities, events, and socializing opportunities for all ages.
9. Improved amenities and services, including healthcare, education, and public facilities.
10. Reduction in litter, graffiti, and anti-social behaviour.

These factors were mentioned multiple times by different respondents, indicating their importance in making Wigan Borough an attractive place for both tourists and residents.



What do you think are the main challenges facing the borough and the people that live and work here, now and in the next ten years?

People expressed a wide range of concerns and challenges they foresee for the present and the coming decade.

A recurring theme is the cost of living crisis, which is affecting both individuals and families, as well as the local economy.

Many are worried about the impact of rising food, petrol, bills, and mortgage rates, especially since wages are not keeping pace with these increases.

Another significant concern is the deterioration of town centres and the loss of retail spaces, which is linked to the broader economic challenges and changing shopping habits. The lack of secure employment and the high level of homelessness and drug abuse are also mentioned as key issues.

Traffic congestion and inadequate public transport are highlighted as major problems, with calls for better and safer cycling paths and improved travel links. The loss of greenspace due to housing developments is another concern, with citizens worried about the environmental impact and the strain on local infrastructure.

Healthcare is a pressing issue, with underfunding of the NHS leading to health problems and inadequate resources to cope with an ageing population, mental health and suicide are also mentioned as significant challenges.

Crime, pollution, anti-social behaviour, and the need for more policing are frequently cited as challenges that need addressing. Finally, the challenges of climate change and the need for the borough to adapt and mitigate its impacts are recognized as critical for the future.

In summary, the citizens of Wigan Borough are calling for a focus on economic stability, environmental preservation, improved infrastructure, and social welfare to address the challenges they face now and in the years to come.



What personal experience have you had of the Council and what was it like?

People report positive experiences with their council including:

Councillors: Many respondents mentioned positive experiences with their local councillors, describing them as responsive, helpful, and supportive.

Waste Management: Several respondents mentioned positive experiences with waste management services, including bin collections and bulky waste removal. They described the services as prompt, efficient, and easy to use.

Adult Social Care: Some respondents mentioned positive experiences with adult social care services, particularly in relation to supporting individuals with dementia and providing adaptations for elderly individuals.

They described the services as understanding, supportive, and helpful.

Libraries: Several respondents mentioned positive experiences with library services, describing the staff as helpful, pleasant, and knowledgeable.

These primary categories of services with positive experiences are based on the responses provided and may not represent an exhaustive list of all the services that people have had good experiences with.

Council Website and Online Services: Many respondents mentioned positive experiences with the council's website and online services. They found the website helpful, easy to use, and informative. Some specific services mentioned include reporting fly tipping, requesting new bins, and accessing information about council tax and events.

We can also see the impacts of understaffing and high turnover can include lengthy processes, inconsistent support, and a lack of communication.

Examples of how the council could improve include:

- 1. Slow response and lack of action:** Several respondents mentioned that when they reported problems or complaints to the council, it took a long time for them to be dealt with or no action was taken at all.
- 2. Lack of communication and accountability:** Some respondents mentioned that they did not receive replies or proper communication from the council when they reported issues or made complaints.



3. Lack of coordination and resources: Some respondents mentioned that there is a lack of coordination and resources within the council to address issues effectively. They felt that the Council was not allocating enough resources to deal with problems such as nuisance behaviour, anti-social behaviour, and maintenance issues.



What (if any) changes have you noticed in how the Council delivers services and works with communities over the last 10 years?

Over the past decade, residents observed a variety of changes in how Wigan Council delivers services and works with communities. A significant trend is the shift towards digital and online services, which has been met with mixed reactions. While some appreciate the convenience of digital access others express concern that it excludes those who are not tech-savvy, particularly the elderly. The difficulty in speaking to a real person and the impersonal nature of online forms is a recurring complaint.

Community engagement and feedback initiatives have been noticed and are generally seen as positive but there is a call for more genuine interaction and less tokenism. The Deal initiative is mentioned as a positive step towards community pride and involvement although some feel it has not lived up to its promise.

Residents perceived a decline in the condition of roads and public spaces and an increase in litter and fly-tipping. There is a sense that the council is not as responsive or effective as it could be in addressing these issues.

Some positive changes include improvements in recycling, support for food banks, and assistance with household bills. However, there is also frustration over increased council tax without a corresponding improvement in services.

Overall, while there are some positive notes regarding community engagement and digital access, there is a clear call for more personal interaction, better maintenance of public spaces, and a more inclusive approach that considers the needs of all citizens, especially those who are not comfortable with technology.



How could the Council improve the way it works with and supports the community?

A recurring theme was the need for better communication and accessibility, with many residents expressing a desire for more direct contact with council staff and officials, rather than relying solely on digital platforms. There is a call for more transparency and responsiveness to community feedback, particularly regarding planning and infrastructure decisions. Residents also suggest that the council should provide more support for local businesses, invest in core services like waste management and street cleaning, and offer more activities for both young and old. The need for more local activities and community centres is highlighted, with suggestions for the council to create more focus groups and involve the community in shaping services.

There is a strong sentiment that the council should invest in workers at lower levels and reduce the number of higher-paid staff to improve service delivery. Some responses indicate that the council is doing a good job in certain areas, while others feel that the council should focus on improving the basics before embarking on new projects.

The need for more local events where residents can speak to their councillors is mentioned, as well as the idea of a reward scheme for residents who contribute to their community. Some residents feel that the outer parts of the borough are disconnected and lack communication from the council.

Overall, the feedback suggests a desire for a more engaged, responsive, and transparent council that values direct communication and community involvement in decision-making processes. Residents want the council to be more proactive in addressing local issues and to provide equitable support and investment across all areas of the borough.