

Leigh Civic Square

We are progressing plans to enhance Leigh Civic Square, and we would like your views to develop the designs further to make sure we reflect what local people want to see.

About the project

You may be aware that the UK Government awarded Wigan Council £11.4 million in November 2023. There are 3 projects which are part of this funding:

1. Improvements to Leigh Civic Square, Market Street and Market Place
2. Leigh building grants scheme
3. Refurbishing Leigh Market

This consultation focuses on Leigh Civic Square.

Wigan Council has been working with a team of landscape architects, urban designers, engagement specialists and technical consultants to create designs for Leigh Civic Square.

Previous community engagement

We have been actively engaging with the community to ensure their views shape the design process. This has included:

- A pop-up stall in Leigh Civic Square to ask about different design options and what people would like to change. This included an online version for those who couldn't attend.

- Two drop-ins and one-on-one chats with Leigh Library, The Turnpike Gallery, Wigan and Leigh Archives, as well as other users of the area.
- Three workshops with nearby primary schools and we joined two local youth clubs to gather young people's views.

We are really grateful to everyone who participated. Your input has been essential to shape the design and to make sure the design works for local people. We've summarised some of the feedback we received on the following display boards.

Share your views

Now that we have a draft design we'd like your feedback. The following display boards show the current draft design, focusing on items like layout and design features.

Please add your feedback comments in the spaces provided or complete the online survey by scanning the QR code or visiting:

<https://bit.ly/LeighCivicSquare>



Community engagement

You said, we did...

We spoke to over 450 people in Leigh through our community events and we learnt a lot about what people think is right for the future of the Civic Square. Below is a brief summary of some of the feedback we gathered while engaging with local residents.

Leigh Civic Square now and in the past

Many people told us the square looked a little dull and uninspiring, and felt dated and tired. We also had lots of conversations about how Leigh Civic Square was a good focal point and meeting place in the town, and that the square definitely had potential.

Some people raised concerns about anti-social behaviour, but also highlighted the need for spaces where people can spend time without it costing money.

Many people had fond memories of events held in the square, like Leigh Leopards' Challenge Cup victory events in 1971 and 2003, or childhood memories of playing after a visit to the library. Others were just discovering events like Leigh Feast and other seasonal events.

Leigh Civic Square in the future

We shared and asked for feedback on lots of different design choices. These are some of the top results showing local preferences.

Materials

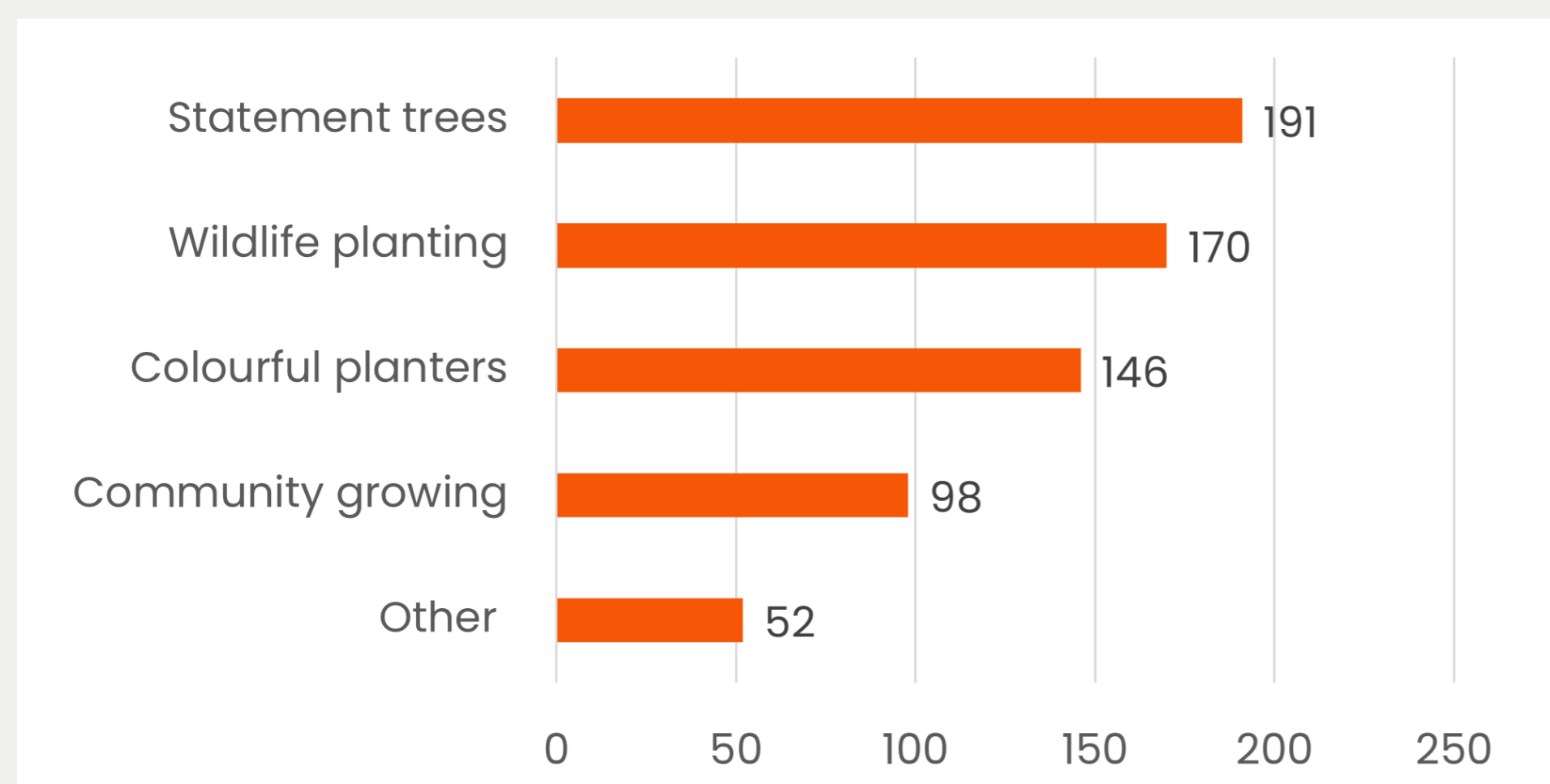
Wood and natural stone were the most popular material choices, so these have been incorporated into the design. Maintaining and keeping the Civic Square tidy was important, so these materials also need to be robust.

Lighting

Spotlighting, traditional and colourful lighting were all popular choices. Fewer people liked modern options.

Landscaping

Many people were positive about statement trees and wildlife planting. A smaller number of people liked the idea of community growing.



Responses to 'What landscaping do you want to see?'

Play, Fun and Events

Many people enjoy the events that happen now and lots of people want more pop-up markets and events. A small nature path was also popular, and in our workshops with local children ideas for play spaces like chalk drawing were popular.

Make it Leigh

Many people want the design to reflect local heritage. Including the Believe Stars was also important. Finding ways to incorporate heritage and local talent, potentially featuring local artists, was also supported.

Seating

People told us how important seating was. Particularly seating which allowed for people to gather in small groups and chat as well as find their own quiet spot.

All of the local feedback was collected and reported to the designers and Wigan Council who have used that to reflect local views into their design.



Image of young people visiting the site



Image of the pop-up stall event

Design Proposal

The key design features are:

- A clear, uncluttered central events space.
- Resurfacing across the square with simple, robust and high-quality materials.
- Curved seating designed into planted areas, facing onto the square but away from the main routes of movement, to enable sitting in a group as well as individual seating options.
- Spaces for learning and play across the square including informal elements through planted areas and interpretative signage around the square.
- Updated and accessible entrance to Leigh Library and The Turnpike Gallery to create an outdoor classroom and informal performance space.
- Naturalistic planting to encourage wildlife in raised planters at different heights to allow all visitors contact with nature.
- Planters and street furniture to control access points into the square during events.
- Living Christmas tree.
- Keeping healthy existing trees, where possible, and replacing some that are no longer growing. There will be at least the same number of trees as now.

Masterplan Key:

1. Seating steps with wooden tops
2. Living Christmas tree
3. Stone planters with seating
4. Cycle racks
5. Existing Pete Shelley memorial bench
6. Outdoor tables and benches
7. Access slope
8. Step access
9. Balance beam and stepping logs play features
10. Metal planters
11. Existing trees
12. Existing Obelisk
13. Stone paving slabs
14. Stone paving setts
15. Bollards
16. Wayfinding / signage
17. New lighting
18. Existing disabled parking



Design Proposal

These images show how Leigh Civic Square could look at different times of day or for events.



Small group seating



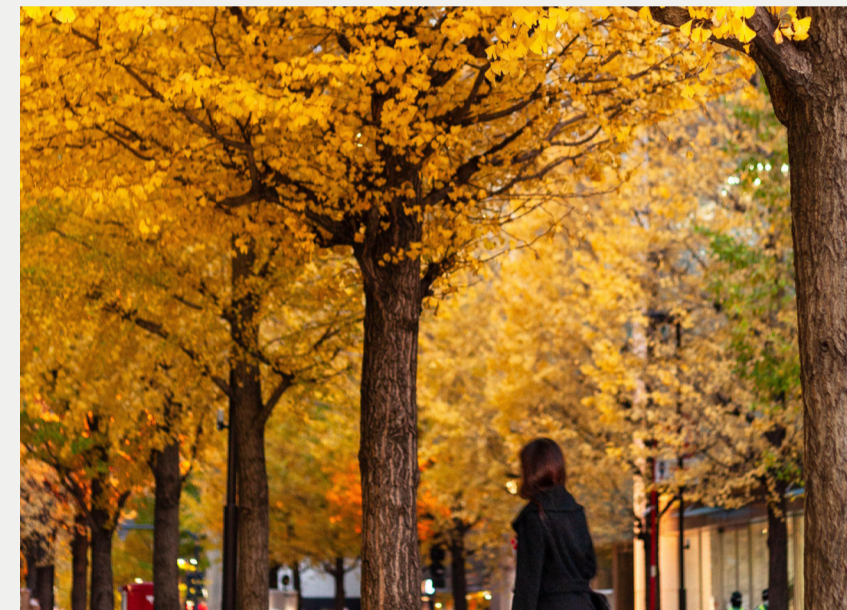
Seating amongst plants



Play and plants
(BD Landscape Architects)



Learning information



Statement trees



Living Christmas tree



Illustrative view across Leigh Civic Square on an autumn day looking towards Leigh Town Hall and The Turnpike Gallery



Illustrative view across Leigh Civic Square on a winter's evening looking towards Leigh Town Hall



Illustrative view across Leigh Civic Square on a summer's day looking towards Leigh Town Hall and The Turnpike Gallery