



Abram Ward Baseline Evidence Report

For the Abram Ward Communities Together Neighbourhood Plan

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Contents

1. Introduction	p.3
2. Ward background: context, history and transport infrastructure	p.3
3. Landscape, habitats and green spaces	p.4
4. Population	p.9
5. Health	p.10
6. Housing	p.12
7. Employment and economy	p.15
8. Education	p.19
9. Heritage	p.20
10. Social spaces: sport, leisure, entertainment and faith	p.20
11. Provision for children and young people	p.21
Appendices	p.22

1. Introduction

1.1 This baseline evidence report was compiled to provide evidence to Abram Communities Together Neighbourhood Forum (ACT Forum) for the development of policies for the Abram Communities Together Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The Plan Area lies at the centre of Wigan Borough. It includes all of the electoral Ward of Abram, except for a number of streets within Chatsworth Fold housing estate in the north of the Ward, as half of this estate is in Ince Ward and the Ward boundary does not relate well to features on the ground.

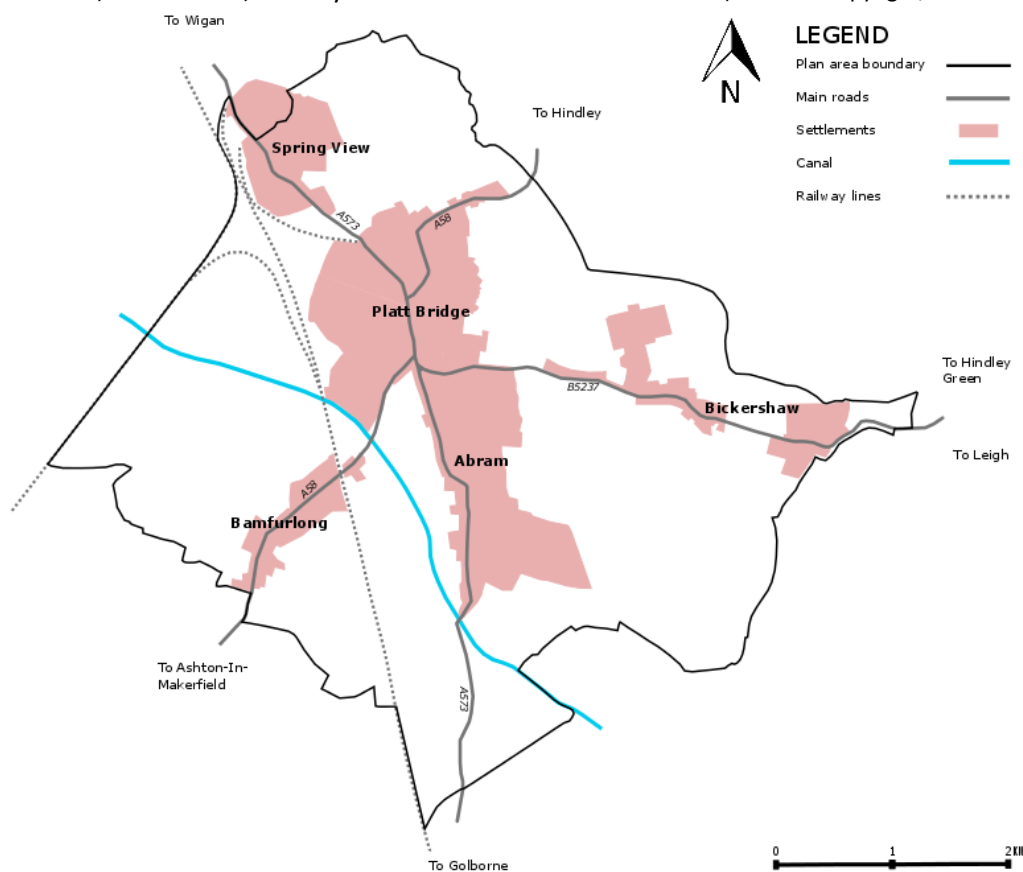
1.3 The approach to gathering evidence was mainly desk-based research, reading and analysing key documents and data pertaining to the ward-level in the Plan Area. The Plan Area includes the villages of Abram, Platt Bridge, Bickershaw, Bamfurlong, Bryn Gates and Spring View. Within this document, Bamfurlong and Bryn Gates are jointly known as Bamfurlong.

1.4 This Report was completed in 2018, with two sets of amendments added in 2019 pertaining to the *Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – Revised Draft – January 2019¹*, and additional evidence relating to the Platt Bridge Business Premises Report (2019).

2. Ward background: context, history and transport infrastructure

2.1 Abram Ward is the centre of the borough of Wigan, it covers an area of nearly 13 square kilometres (about 8 square miles). It is one of 25 wards in the borough of Wigan. The ward's five settlements – Abram, Bamfurlong, Bickershaw, Platt Bridge and Spring View – are positioned equidistant between the borough's two main towns, Wigan and Leigh. These five villages are almost completely surrounded by Green Belt and much of this open land comprises green spaces that are attractive and biodiverse. Abram Ward is well positioned in the borough as a convenient place to live, for an easy commute within the borough or to the surrounding cities of Manchester, Liverpool or Preston.

Figure 1 Settlements, main roads, railway lines and canal in Abram Ward (© Crown Copyright, Ordnance Survey)



¹ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2019), 'Greater Manchester's Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment; Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – Revised Draft – January 2019' - accessed 3.6.19

2.2 There are two key arterial A roads passing through and connecting the five settlements to each other and to other areas. They form key junction through the central village/township, Platt Bridge. The A537 leads from the A580 through Abram, Platt Bridge, Spring View to Lower Ince and then on to Wigan town centre, and the A58 links the M6 to Ashton in Makerfield to Hindley and Bolton. The B road the B5237 connects the A537 to Bickershaw and then south to Leigh or north to Hindley Green (Figure 1).

2.3 There have been farming settlements in the neighbourhood since the Middle Ages, with Abram first mentioned in records in 1212 and Platt Bridge in 1599; Bickershaw was named after Bickershaw Hall, built in the 1600s. The character of Abram Ward was formed in the 19th and 20th centuries through the Industrial Revolution and the coal mining industry, which was widespread across the Plan Area, including deep, shallow and surface level mining. Mining began in the Middle Ages and the Coal Authority identifies over 70 locations where mining took place in the area². Mining continued in the wider area until the 1990s; Bickershaw Colliery, which was located just south of the Plan Area closed in 1992. During the previous two centuries the five settlements grew mainly along the arterial roads to their current sizes.

2.4 The ward's character is also formed by the legacy of industrial transport infrastructure, with the Leeds–Liverpool canal, opened in 1816, bisecting the ward and by railway lines and former railway lines, including those built for coal transportation crossing the Plan Area. Abram Ward, however, no longer has a train station.

3. Landscape, habitats and green spaces

3.1 Following the severe degradation of parts of the ward's landscape during its coal mining history, which left spoil heaps, subsidence, polluted soil and waters, the Plan Area has benefitted from major reclamation and restoration projects since the 1970s³. Former industrial and mining sites that have been reclaimed in Abram Ward include Low Hall Park, Amberswood Common, Ince Moss and Viridor Woods. The ward is adjacent to the former Bickershaw Colliery, which is being restored as Bickershaw Country Park; the western and northern edges of this large site (including a main entrance) are located within the Abram Ward boundary⁴.

3.2 Not only are the five settlements almost entirely surrounded by Green Belt land (see Figure 2), but the ward's landscapes, green and open spaces are key to the identity of the borough⁵. Additionally, the ward sits at the centre of the borough's regional park The Greenheart⁶, where it is a key element of Wigan's ecological network, providing a vital habitat and Wildlife Corridor (EV2C) for the whole park area⁷. The local authority proposes to site a Greenheart Visitors Centre just North of the Plan Area in Lower Ince, close to Wigan Flashes⁸. The ward neighbours a number of other key habitats such as Three Sisters (comprising grassland, wetland and woodland), Wigan Flashes (comprising open water, grassland and woodland) and Pennington Flash (comprising open water, grassland and reedbeds).

3.3 The ward has significant wildlife and habitat assets including Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Biological Importance⁹ (SBIs), and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (with some assets having more than one designation – see Table 1 and Figure 3).

² The Coal Authority (2017), 'Interactive Map' @Crown Copyright <https://www.gov.uk/topic/coal/reports-data> - accessed 25.4.18

³ Wigan Council (2013), *Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy*

⁴ Wigan Council (2015), *Bickershaw Country Park Masterplan November 2015* & Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*

⁵ The Environment Partnership (2010), *Wigan's Biodiversity: An Audit of the Biodiversity Resource within the Borough* – available at <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Planning/Local-plan/Background/Key-Local-Studies/WiganBiodiversityEcologyStudy.aspx> - accessed 27.11.18

⁶ Wigan Council (2018), 'Greenheart on the map', <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Leisure/Greenheart/Greenheart-on-the-Map.aspx> - accessed 19.6.17 & Wigan Council (2013), *Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy*

⁷ Wigan Council (2013) *Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy* & Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan* & The Environment Partnership (2010), *Wigan's Biodiversity: An Audit of the Biodiversity Resource within the Borough*

⁸ From Martin Purcell, Wigan Council's Greenheart Officer, 2018

⁹ Greater Manchester has designated a number of sites of biological importance (SBIs). For more detail see Appendix 2.

- Three Local Nature Reserves: Ince Moss, Low Hall Park, Abram Flashes
- Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Ince Moss and Abram Flashes
- It has five Sites of Biological Importance: Amberswood Common, Abram Flashes, Low Hall Park, Horrocks Flash (within Ince Moss), and Maypole Wood¹⁰, the first four of which are identified as of regional importance¹¹, and the last having district level importance.

It also has a number of other local wildlife sites and other green spaces including Victoria Fields and Viridor Woods (see Appendix 1).

Figure 2 Plan Area and Green Belt¹² (© Crown Copyright, Ordnance Survey)

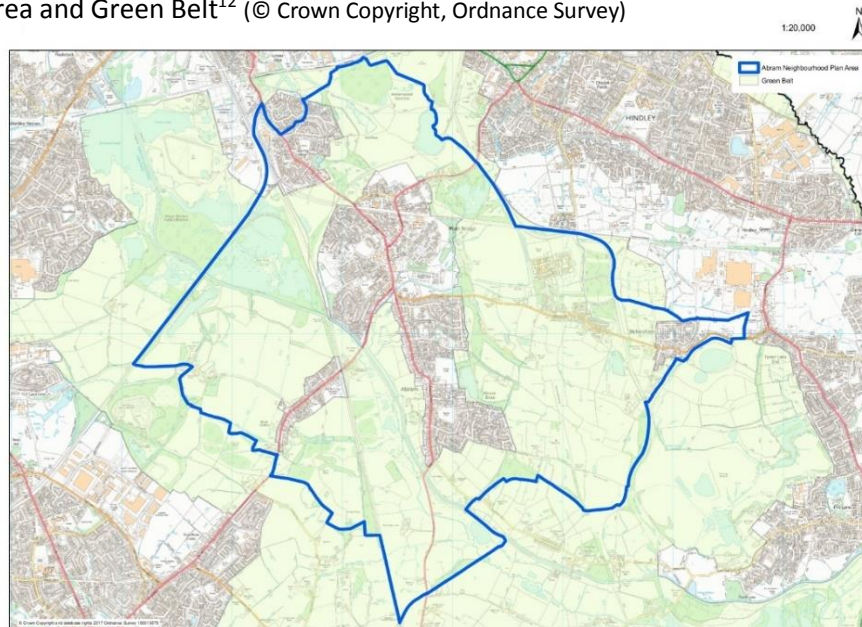


Table 1 Abram Ward designated wildlife and habitat assets¹³

	SBI (See footnotes for grading system)	SSSI	LNR
Low Hall Park	X A		X
Amberswood Common	X A		
Ince Moss (with Bryn Marsh) / Horrocks Flash is an SBI, and occupies the same physical area as Ince Moss ¹⁴	X A	X	X
Abram Flashes	X A	X	X
Barlow's Farm	X A		

The Environment Partnership (2010), *Wigan's Biodiversity: An Audit of the Biodiversity Resource within the Borough* – available at <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Docs/PDF/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Planning/Environment/Biodiversity-Ecology-Study/DesignatedSites301kb.pdf> - accessed 27.11.17

¹⁰ In Greater Manchester Ecology Unit's, 'Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines 2016 Version 2.0' Maypole Wood is identified as Park Lane Colliery. ACT Forum members have pointed out this is incorrect, the colliery located in this area was Maypole Colliery.

¹¹ Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (2018), 'Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines 2016 Version 2.0' available at <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit/sbi/guidelines.pdf> - accessed 21.2.18

¹² Produced by Wigan Council Planning Department, 2017

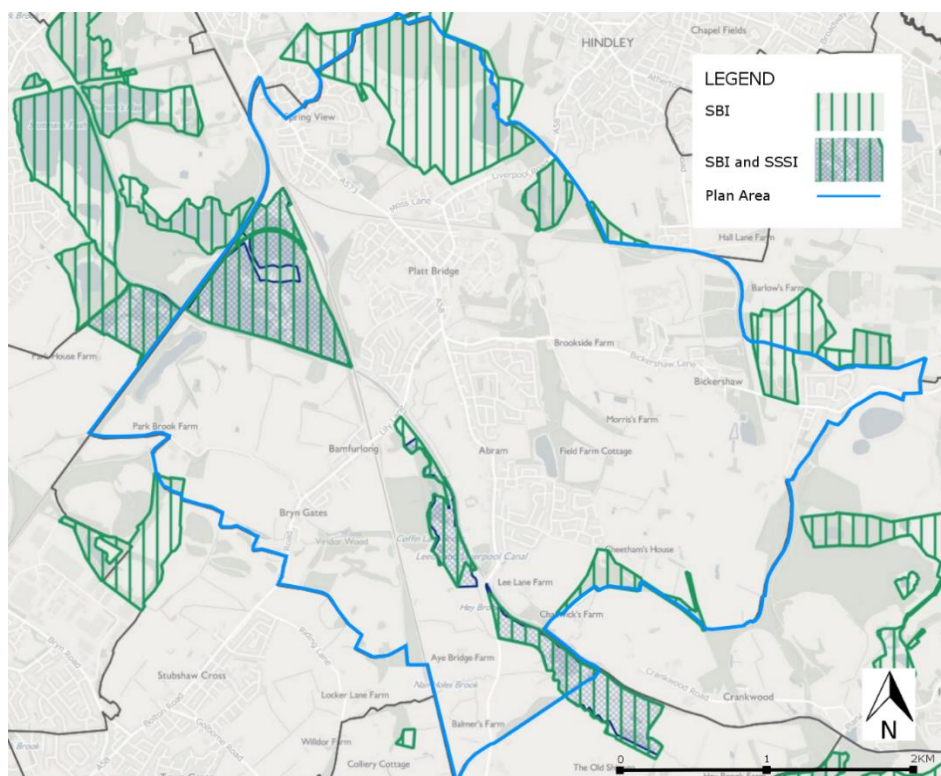
¹³ Ibid, 'Grade A - of Regional or County Importance, Grade B - of District Importance, Grade C – of importance within the *identified* geographical locality'

¹⁴ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2016), 'Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Consultation Map' – available at <https://mappinggm.org.uk/gmsf-consultation-2016/> - accessed 23.4.18

Maypole Wood ¹⁵	X B		
Platt Bridge Heath	X C		
Three Sisters	X ¹⁶		X

SBIs at Amberswood Common, Abram Flashes, Platt Bridge Heath, Barlow's Farm and Three Sisters all straddle the Plan Area boundary¹⁷ (see Appendix 2).

Figure 3 SBIs and SSSIs in Plan Area and adjacent areas¹⁸ (© Crown Copyright, Ordnance Survey, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Natural England, GMMapping.org.uk)



3.4 The landscape in Abram Ward is within the Makerfield Basin, which is characterised as generally open with some arable land, with Hey Brook forming a low-lying area in the south¹⁹. The ward is home to a wide range of habitats, many of these are priority ecological habitats for biodiversity in the borough and the region. These diverse range of habitats are crucial to resilience to climate change²⁰, they support plants, trees, birds, mammals, reptiles and insects, a number of which are considered endangered. The ward's habitats include grasslands, agricultural land, woodlands and scrub, water corridors, ponds and lakes, and wetlands²¹.

¹⁵ In Greater Manchester Ecology Unit's, 'Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines 2016 Version 2.0' Maypole Wood is identified as Park Lane Colliery, ACT Forum members have pointed out this is incorrect (see footnote 10).

¹⁶ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2016), 'Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Consultation Map' – available at <https://mappinggm.org.uk/gmsf-consultation-2016/> - accessed 23.4.18

& Wigan Council (2018), 'Greenheart on the map', <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Leisure/Greenheart/Greenheart-on-the-Map.aspx> - accessed 19.6.17

¹⁷ The Environment Partnership (2010), 'Appendix 2 Designated Sites' in *Wigan's Biodiversity: An Audit of the Biodiversity Resource*

¹⁸ MappingGM (2018) 'GMODIN' <https://mappinggm.org.uk/gmodin/> - accessed 23.4.18, © Crown copyright & database rights 2018. 'Sites of Biological Importance (SBI)', published by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit and 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest', published by Natural England.

¹⁹ Agathoclis Beckmann (2009), *Wigan: A Landscape Character Assessment*, published by Wigan Council

²⁰ The Environment Partnership (2010), *Wigan's Biodiversity: An Audit of the Biodiversity Resource within the Borough*

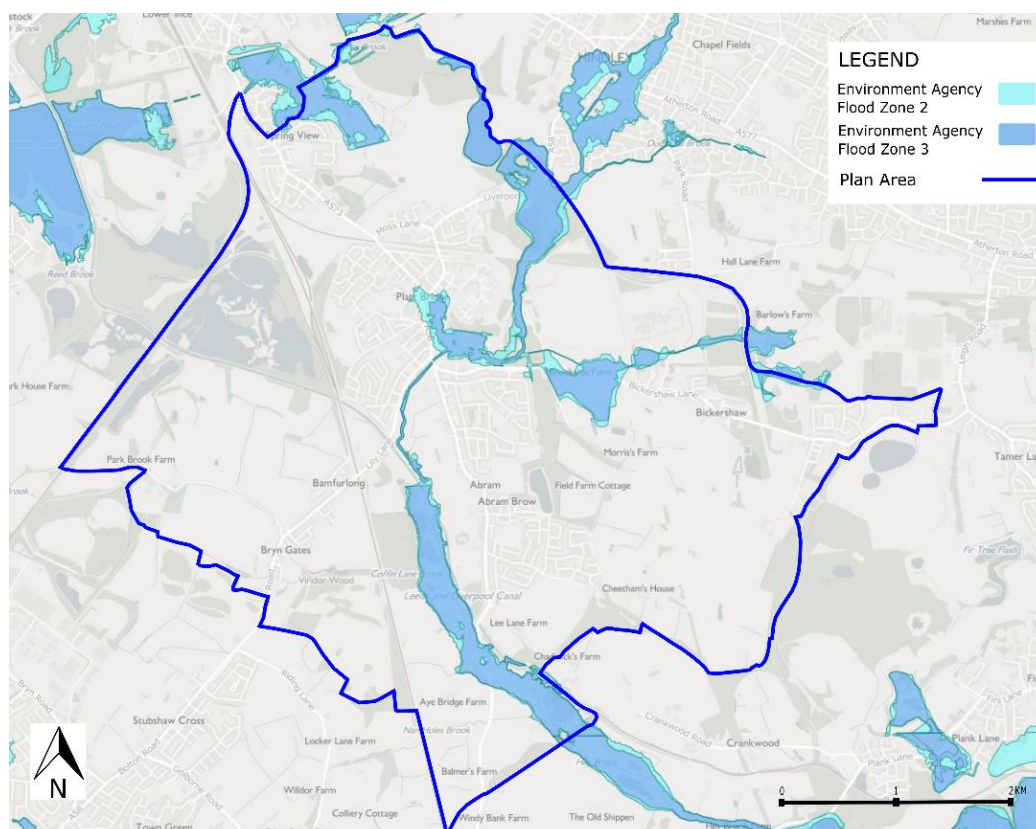
²¹ Ibid

3.5 The ward has different types of woodland including lowland deciduous woodlands (comprising species such as oak, birch, ash, alder), and rarer wet woodland (at Horrocks Flash and Low Hall Park) (which often occur over peaty soils, and feature willows, alder, ash, and birch)²². The area has a grassland type which is rare in Wigan, calcareous grassland at Horrocks Flash, which grows on boiler ash and lime dumps (such as former mining sites) and supports a range of mosses and liverworts²³.

3.6 The ward’s habitats create a corridor along the Leigh Branch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, through Ince Moss and Abram Flashes, linking key reedbed habitats at Wigan Flashes and Pennington Flash. This corridor is also the primary wetlands artery through the borough and the Greenheart, and is important within the Greater Manchester Wetlands²⁴ area. It is key to the Carbon Landscape Project, which covers parts of Warrington, Wigan and Salford, a partnership between Wigan Council and Wildlife Trust for Lancashire which aims to further restore the wetlands²⁵. Policy GM-G 8 of the 2019 Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) highlights the ward as being in ‘Greater Manchester Wetlands Nature Improvement Area’ identified as a key area for ongoing Green Infrastructure improvements²⁶.

3.7 Abram Ward has some areas considered by the Environment Agency as at high risk of flooding (see Figure 4). It has areas in Flood Zones 2 (0.1% chance of flooding each year from rivers each year) and 3 (a 1% chance). GMSF’s Policy GM-S 5 Flood Risk and the Water Environment also identifies climate change and surface water run-off as a risk for Greater Manchester and Wigan in particular, with 15% of its properties in Flood Zone 3. It seeks to address these issues by using ‘*natural flood management measures that work with natural processes can provide multiple benefits for people and wildlife, helping to restore habitats, improve water quality and reduce soil erosion, as well as lowering peak flows and flash flooding*’²⁷.

Figure 4 Flood Risk Map Zones 2 and 3 (© Environment Agency, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, NERC (CEH), Crown Copyright, Ordnance Survey, GMMapping.org.uk)



²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Great Manchester Wetland Partnership Technical Group (2014), *Interpretation Report, The Carbon Landscape*

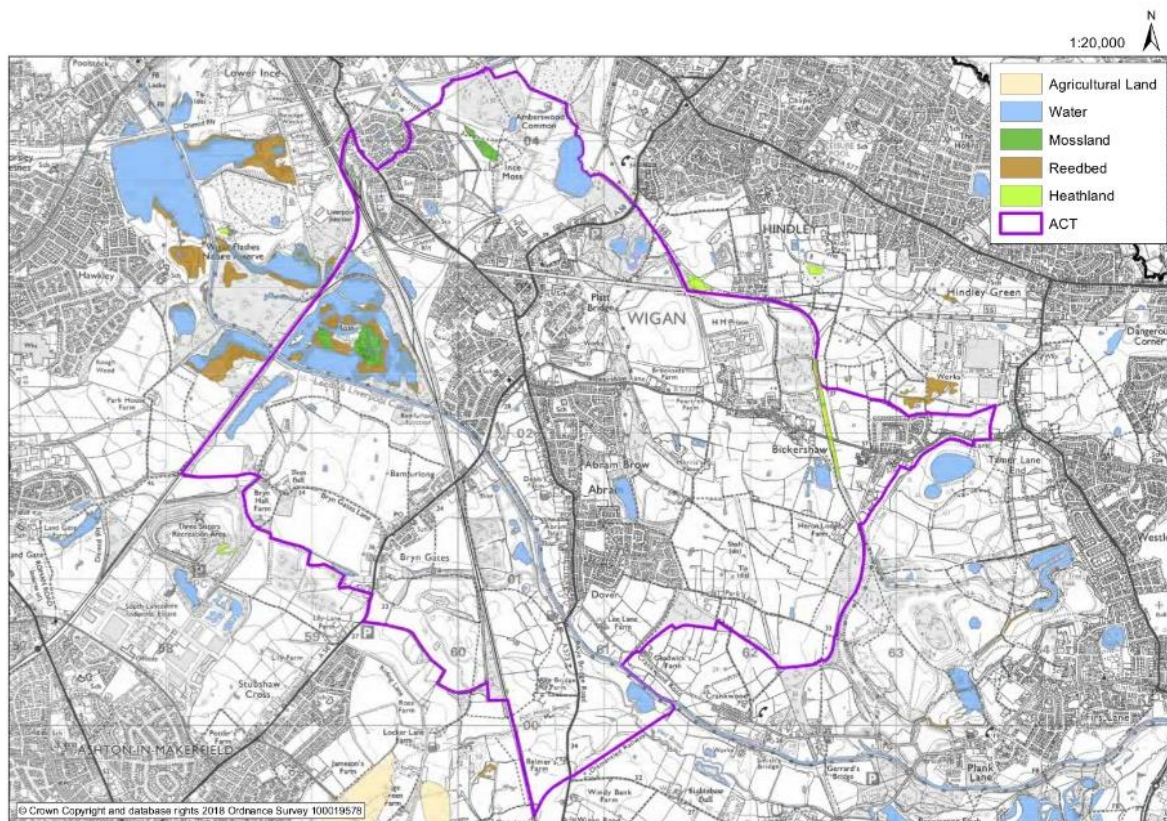
²⁵ Lancashire Wildlife Trust (2018), ‘Carbon Landscape Project’, <https://www.lancswt.org.uk/carbon-landscape-project> - accessed 5.2.18 & Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*

²⁶ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2019), ‘Greater Manchester’s Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment; Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – Revised Draft – January 2019’ - accessed 3.6.19

²⁷ Ibid

3.8 The area also has some small remnants of Mossland habitat at Ince Moss and Amberswood, which are considered of international importance, due to their scarcity in Europe²⁸ (Figure 5). Heath is another important habitat, the ward features a small site in Bickershaw – there are three sites featuring heath immediately adjacent to the Ward’s boundary (Platt Bridge Heath, Pearson’s Flash, Bickershaw Colliery – see Appendices 1 and 2).

Figure 5 Mossland, Reedbed and Heathland in Abram Ward²⁹ (© Crown Copyright, Ordnance Survey and Wigan Council)



3.9 Abram Ward supports the region and nation’s biodiversity with its habitats for a range of plants, birds, animals and insects, some of which are rare, and in some cases endangered: damselflies and dragonflies, water voles, marsh-orchids, bitterns³⁰ and kingfishers³¹, farmland birds and brown hare³².

3.10 The ward also has agricultural land being used for arable, grassland, pasture for livestock and ‘horsecultural’ uses³³.

3.11 The ward is home to one of the City of Trees sites³⁴, Viridor Woods, and along with other woodland sites such as Maypole Wood, the neighbourhood contributes significantly to Wigan’s woodland assets. These sites, along with its other green spaces means that 48.2% of the borough’s population have access to at least

²⁸ Whilst Abram doesn’t have any designated mosslands, it does have fragments of this habitat and which maybe be restored to their former states in time. These areas are protected, ‘Areas of raised bog still capable of restoration are of European Importance, notified under the European Habitats Directive’ in The Environment Partnership (2010), *Wigan’s Biodiversity: An Audit of the Biodiversity Resource within the Borough & Wigan Council* (2013) *Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy* CP12 p.93

²⁹ Produced by Wigan Council Planning Department, 2018 (based on The Environment Partnership (2010), *Wigan’s Biodiversity: An Audit of the Biodiversity Resource within the Borough*)

³⁰ Wigan Council (2013), *Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy*

³¹ The Environment Partnership (2010), *Wigan’s Biodiversity: An Audit of the Biodiversity Resource within the Borough*

³² Great Manchester Wetland Partnership Technical Group (2014), *Interpretation Report, The Carbon Landscape*

³³ The Environment Partnership (2010), *Wigan’s Biodiversity: An Audit of the Biodiversity Resource within the Borough*

³⁴ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2016), *Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework: Draft for Consultation* – available at https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/info/20081/draft_plan - accessed 30.3.17

2 hectares of woodland within a 500 m distance from home, and 99.9% have access to at least 2 hectares of woodland within a 4 km distance from home³⁵.

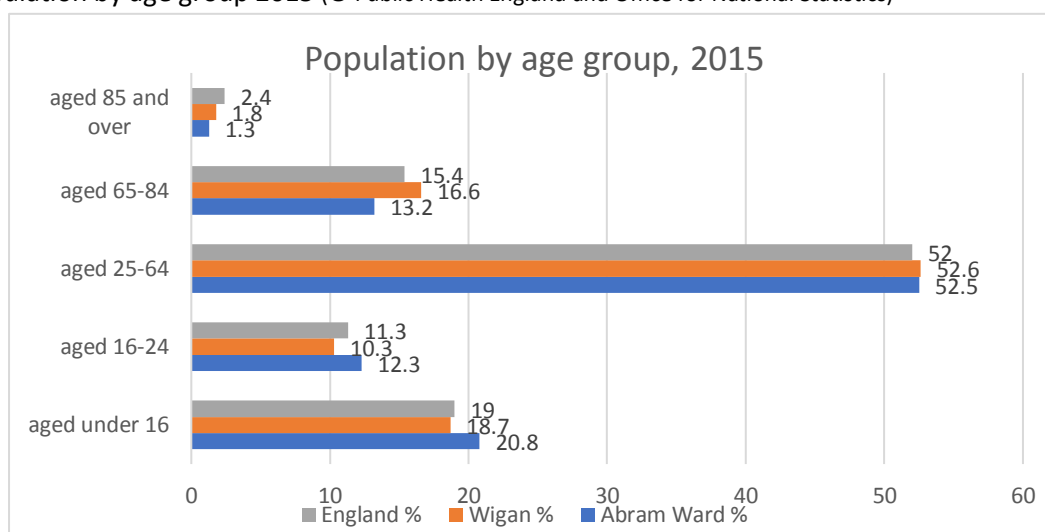
3.12 The residents living in Abram Ward have access to significant amounts of local green space, much of which is open to the public and free to access (see Appendices 1, 2, 3.1 and 3.2). The ward also has a number of footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways, some of which feature in the borough’s Greenway Network³⁶ (which includes the canal). Abram Park is the neighbourhood’s designated Township Park³⁷. These local green spaces and networks along with other forms of Green Infrastructure³⁸ such as recreation grounds (see Appendix 3.1 for detail), gardens, street trees, and roadside verges form a network of sites which are multi-functional and provide a range of social, environmental and economic benefits simultaneously, including health and wellbeing, leisure, sport, tourism, food production, biodiversity, improving air quality and water quality, flood mitigation and green economy jobs³⁹. See section 9.4 for the ward’s managed leisure-focused green spaces such as allotments.

4. Population

4.1 In 2015, there were 15,544 people living in Abram Ward, 4.8% of the total borough’s population of 322,022. In the same year, there were a total of 7979 males and 7565 females in the ward (males representing 51.3% and females 48.7% of the ward’s population)⁴⁰.

4.2 Of the total population in Abram Ward, the percentage of people in age grouping 25–64 (at 52.5%) is very similar to the total Wigan borough and England numbers of people in the same grouping (52.6% and 52% respectively). However, the percentage of children under 16 (at 20.8%) is higher than the Wigan and England percentages (18.7% and 19% respectively), meaning Abram Ward has more young people than some other wards. The percentage of people aged 85 and over is 1.3%, which is also lower than the Wigan and England percentages (1.8% and 2.4%)⁴¹, meaning Abram Ward has fewer older people than some wards (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Population by age group 2015 (© Public Health England and Office for National Statistics)



³⁵ Woodland Trust (2017), *Space for People; Targeting Action for Woodland Access*, available at <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/mediafile/100818946/pp-wt-010617-space-for-people-2017.pdf?cb=8cbbe491e88e47d7ab6193e4835280df> – accessed 19.2.18

³⁶ Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*

³⁷ Wigan Council (2013), *Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy*, designated Township Park

& Wigan Council (2017), *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision and Needs Assessment* – available at <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Planning/Local-plan/Background/Key-Local-Studies/OpenSpaceNeedsAssessment.aspx> - accessed 27.3.18.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Armour, T. and Tempany, A (2017), ‘Mainstreaming green infrastructure’, *Town and Country Planning* & Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*

⁴⁰ Public Health England (2018), ‘Public England Health: Local Health’ – available at <http://www.localhealth.org.uk/> - accessed 6.2.18, data source: Office for National Statistics 2016.

⁴¹ Ibid

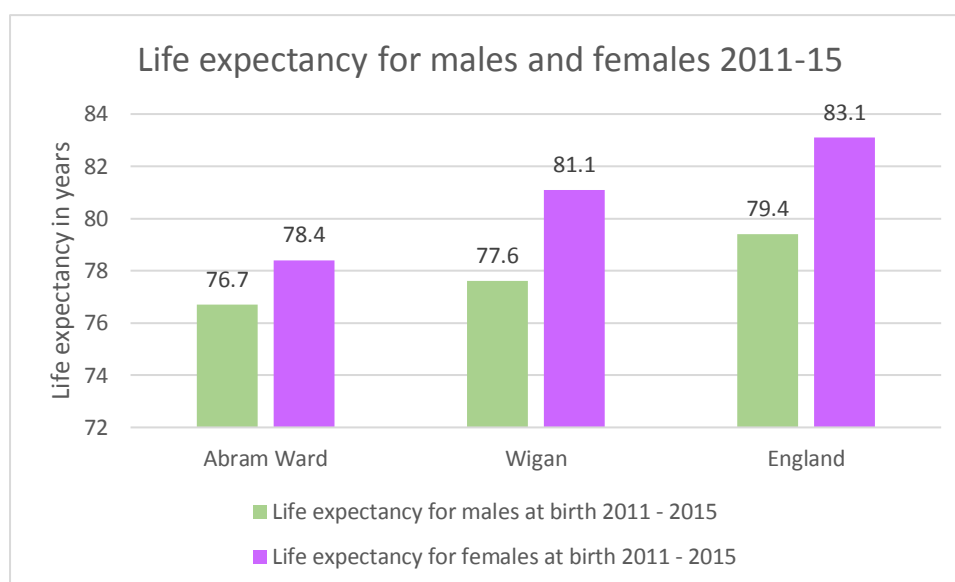
4.3 In terms of ethnicity, the 2011 Census data show that 94.8% of the population in Abram Ward identified as White British. The percentage of the population not identifying as White British (which includes for example White Irish and Asian British Indian) was 5.2%, and 3.1% of the total population identified as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)⁴².

5. Health

5.1 Life expectancy for males at birth in the ward is at 76.7 years. This is worse than the overall Wigan borough age of 77.6 and considered significantly worse by Public Health England (PHE) than the overall England lifespan of 79.4⁴³. Life expectancy for females at birth is at 78.4 years. Again, this is worse than the overall Wigan borough age of 81.1 and considered significantly worse by PHE than the overall England age of 83.1⁴⁴ (Figure 7).

5.2 Health is a concern in both the ward and the borough as a whole⁴⁵. Levels of deprivation vary across Abram Ward. However, of the nine Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs⁴⁶) in Abram Ward there are five which rank in the 20% most deprived LSOAs in England, based on the English Indices of Deprivation 2015⁴⁷. PHE identifies that in 2015 Abram Ward was significantly worse than England in the areas of income deprivation, child poverty and older people in deprivation⁴⁸.

Figure 7 Life expectancy for males and females 2011–15 (© Public Health England and Office for National Statistics)



5.3 In adults, indicators of health levels include emergency hospital admissions. In Abram Ward, levels of emergency hospital admissions for strokes, coronary heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are all significantly worse than the England and Wigan borough averages⁴⁹. The number of children who are obese or have excess weight in their reception year (11.8% and 27.5%) is considered significantly worse than the England average percentages of 9.3% and 22.2%, the percentages for the borough as whole

⁴² Census UK (2018), 'Abram', available at <http://www.ukcensusdata.com>, accessed 14.2.18. Data source: Office for National Statistics, 2012.

⁴³ Public Health England (2018), 'Public England Health: Local Health' – available at <http://www.localhealth.org.uk/> - accessed 6.2.18. Data source: Office for National Statistics 2011 – 2015.

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Wigan Council (2013) *Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy*

⁴⁶ Neighbourhoods are broken down into smaller areas known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in order to analyse data gathered from evidence such as the census.

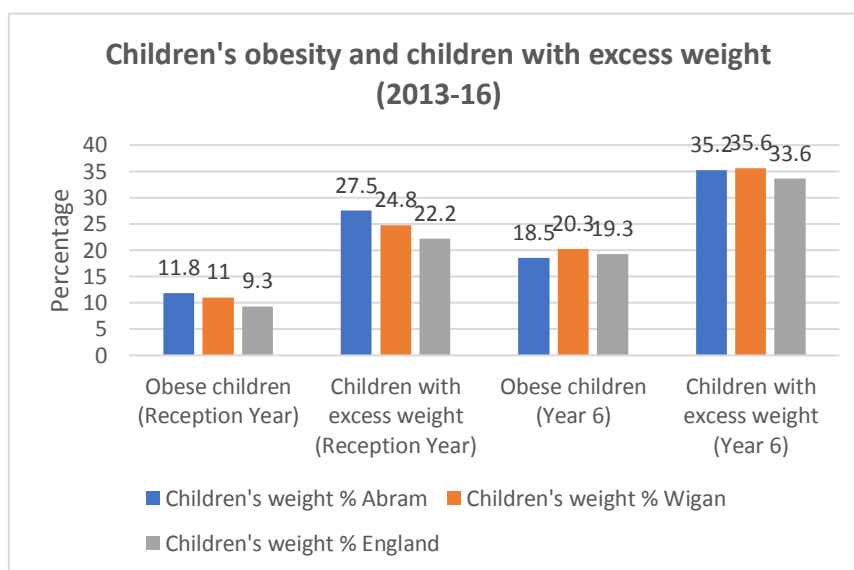
⁴⁷ Gov.uk (2018), 'English Indices of Deprivation 2015', <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015> - accessed 6.2.18. Data source: DCLG © Copyright 2015. The English Indices of Deprivation 2015, combines income, employment, education skills and training, health and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment deprivation.

⁴⁸ Public Health England (2018), 'Public England Health: Local Health' – available at <http://www.localhealth.org.uk/> - accessed 6.2.18. Data source: DCLG @ Copyright 2015

⁴⁹ Ibid. Data source: NHS Digital, based on data from 2011/12 to 2015/16 estimated using MSOA level data.

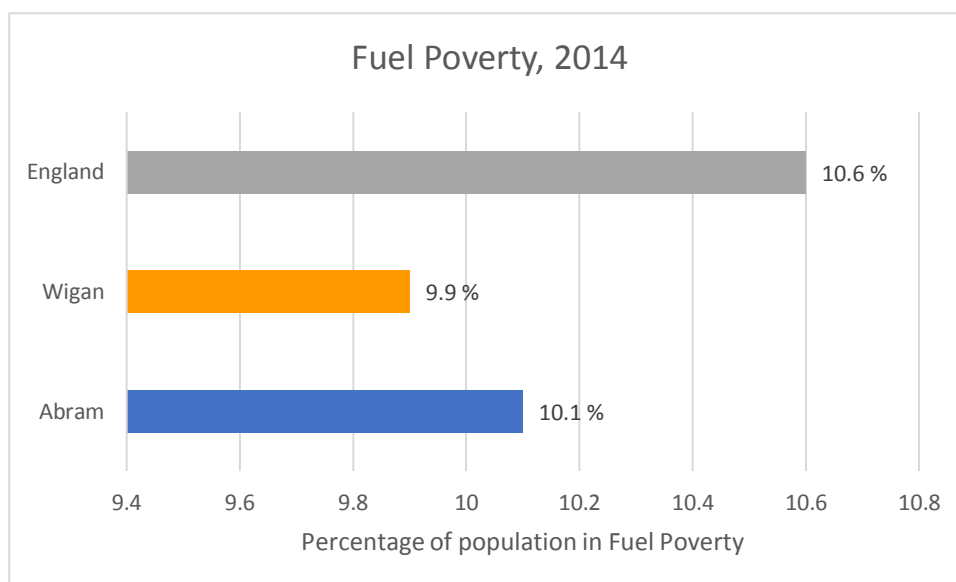
are 11% and 24.8%. However, at Year 6 the percentage of obese children and children who have excess weight (18.5% and 35.2%) is no longer significantly different than the England percentages (20.3% and 35.6%)⁵⁰ (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Children’s obesity and children with excess weight in Abram Ward, 2013–16
(© Public Health England and NHS Digital)



5.4 Fuel poverty levels in 2014 in Abram Ward were, at 10.1%, higher than the average percentage for Wigan as a whole, which was at 9.9%. However, the percentage living in fuel poverty is higher in England, at 10.6%⁵¹ (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Fuel Poverty, 2014 (© Office for National Statistics and Department for Energy and Climate Change)



5.5 The centre of Platt Bridge has three Air Quality Management Areas, which have been set up to improve air quality to acceptable levels⁵². GMSF Policy GM-S 6 Clean Air notes that air quality targets are set up improve air quality particularly where people live, children play and where targets are not being met.,

⁵⁰ Ibid. Data Source: National Child Measurement Programme, NHS Digital 2013-2016 based on 2013-4 and 2015-6 MSOA level data.

⁵¹ Public Health England (2018), 'Public England Health: Local Health' – available at <http://www.localhealth.org.uk/> - accessed 6.2.18, data source: Office for National Statistics 2011 and Department for Energy and Climate Change 2014.

⁵² GMCA (2016), Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2016), *Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework: Draft for Consultation*, Policy GM17 & Wigan Council (2018), 'Air Quality', <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Environmental-Problems/Smoke/Air-quality.aspx> - accessed 11.4.18

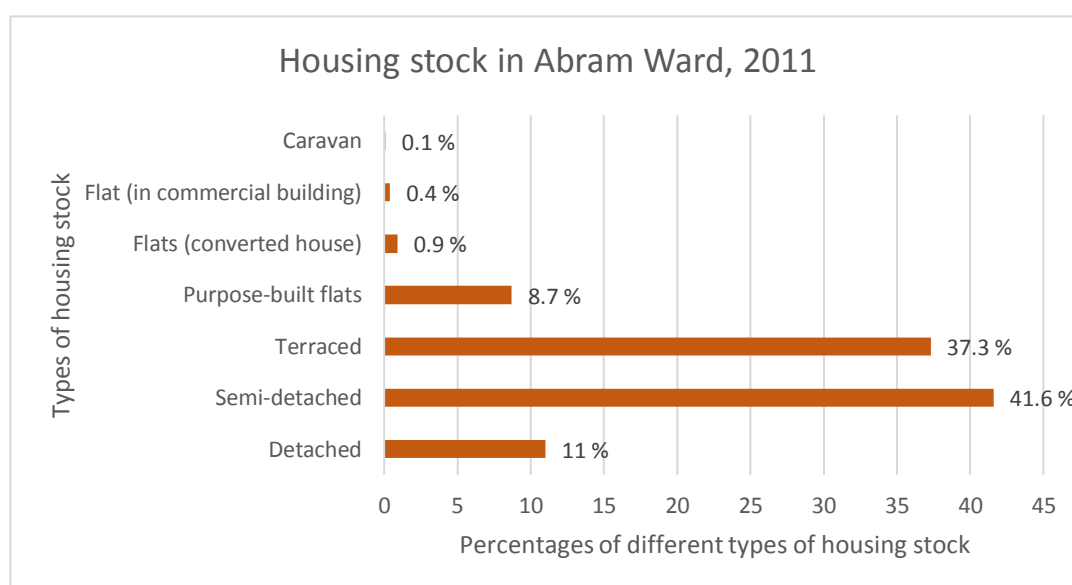
reducing forms of transport which produce air pollution, designing streets to avoid trapping air pollution and increasing the Green Infrastructure network are some of the city-regions priorities⁵³.

5.6 Health centres and facilities, such as GP practices, dentists and pharmacies, are mainly centred on Platt Bridge, with some services available in Abram. There are four GP practices in Platt Bridge and one in Abram. There are two pharmacies in Platt Bridge, one in Abram and one dentist’s practice in Platt Bridge.

6. Housing

6.1 In 2011 within the ward as a whole, 11% of all homes were detached (houses and bungalows), 41.6% were semi-detached (houses and bungalows), and 37.3% were terraced houses. 10% were flats (including purpose-built, in converted houses and in commercial buildings)⁵⁴ (Figure 10).

Figure 10 Housing stock in Abram Ward, 2011 (© Crown Copyright, Office for National Statistics)



6.2 Housing character differs within each of the five villages. Although, all five settlements feature Victorian terraces. Developments in the last 40 years have clarified no overall typical housing typology in any of the villages. However, Policy GM-E 1 Sustainable Places of the GMSF states that ‘Greater Manchester will aim to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places⁵⁵’ and that new development should wherever possible, be distinctive with a clear identity, responding to local history and culture.

6.3 The village of Abram also has detached houses built in the 1930s, bungalows and some prefabs built in and around the 1950s, and semi-detached houses built in the 1970s and 2000s.

6.4 Bamfurlong also has semi-detached houses, bungalows and terraces built in the 1970s, as well as recently built apartments and detached houses from the 2000s.

6.5 Bickershaw also features semi-detached housing and maisonettes built in the 1950s, homes built for Hindley prison staff in the 1960s, detached and semi-detached homes built throughout the 1970s to the 1990s and recently built apartments and semi-detached homes.

⁵³ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2019), ‘Greater Manchester’s Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment; Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – Revised Draft – January 2019’ - accessed 3.6.19

⁵⁴ Office for National Statistics (2012) ‘KS401EW - Dwellings, household spaces and accommodation type’ from the 2011 Census, ONS Crown Copyright. Provided by Wigan Council planning department (2018). Terraced house data includes end-of-terraces, caravans includes mobile or temporary structures, flats refers to flats, maisonettes or apartments.

⁵⁵ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2019), ‘Greater Manchester’s Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment; Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – Revised Draft – January 2019’ - accessed 3.6.19

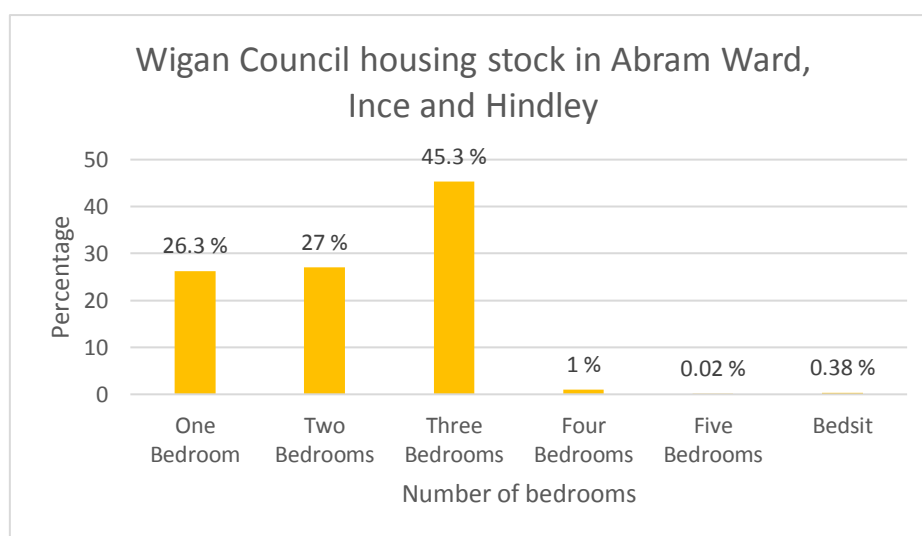
6.6 Platt Bridge also has semi-detached homes built in the 1930s and 1970s, as well as semi-detached, terraces and apartments built in the 2000s.

6.7 Spring View also has semi-detached homes built in the 1930s, 1940s and 2000s.

6.8 In 2011, 61.5% of households in the ward were owner occupied, with 35.9% having a mortgage. 20.5% of households were socially renting (with 16% of these renting from the local authority, and 4% renting from others) and 16.5% were privately renting⁵⁶.

6.9 Social housing in the ward is owned and managed by Wigan Council, Your Housing and Jigsaw Housing (formerly Adactus Housing Association). Of the local authority-owned homes in the area covering Ince, Hindley, Abram and Platt Bridge, 32.5% are flats, 12.5% are bungalows and 55% are houses⁵⁷. 26.3% of the total number of bungalows, flats and houses have one bedroom, 27% have two bedrooms, 45.3% have three bedrooms and 1% or fewer are bedsits or have four or five bedrooms⁵⁸ (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Wigan Council housing stock in Abram Ward, Ince and Hindley (© Crown Copyright, Office for National Statistics)



6.10 In 2016, Wigan Council's housing priorities included maximising the building of general housing and of affordable housing, connecting housing with care provision and providing housing opportunities in the most deprived areas, of which Abram is one⁵⁹.

6.11 In 2015, it was identified that in the previous 10 years Abram Ward had seen the second highest level of house building in the borough, with 542 completions between 2005 and 2014, 6.6% of total completions across the borough during that time period⁶⁰.

6.12 Wigan's housing market is mainly self-contained, with most moves occurring within the borough and to or from an adjacent neighbourhood⁶¹. The housing market in Abram is within the sphere of influence of Leigh, and the nearest estate agent offices are based in Hindley and Ince in Makerfield. In 2017, the average price paid in the Plan Area was between £59,911 and £131,659 (see Figure 12)⁶². Average prices paid in wards across the borough as a whole in 2017 were evenly split between categories Low and Low to Medium,

⁵⁶ Office for National Statistics (2012), 'KS402EW – Tenure', from the 2011 Census, ONS Crown Copyright. Available from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> - accessed 3.5.18.

⁵⁷ From Wigan Council Joint Intelligence Unit (2018). Data was not available at ward level.

⁵⁸ Office for National Statistics (2012), 'KS401EW - Dwellings, household spaces and accommodation type', from the 2011 Census, ONS Crown Copyright. Provided by Wigan Council planning department (2018).

⁵⁹ Wigan Council (2015), *Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Draft for Consultation*

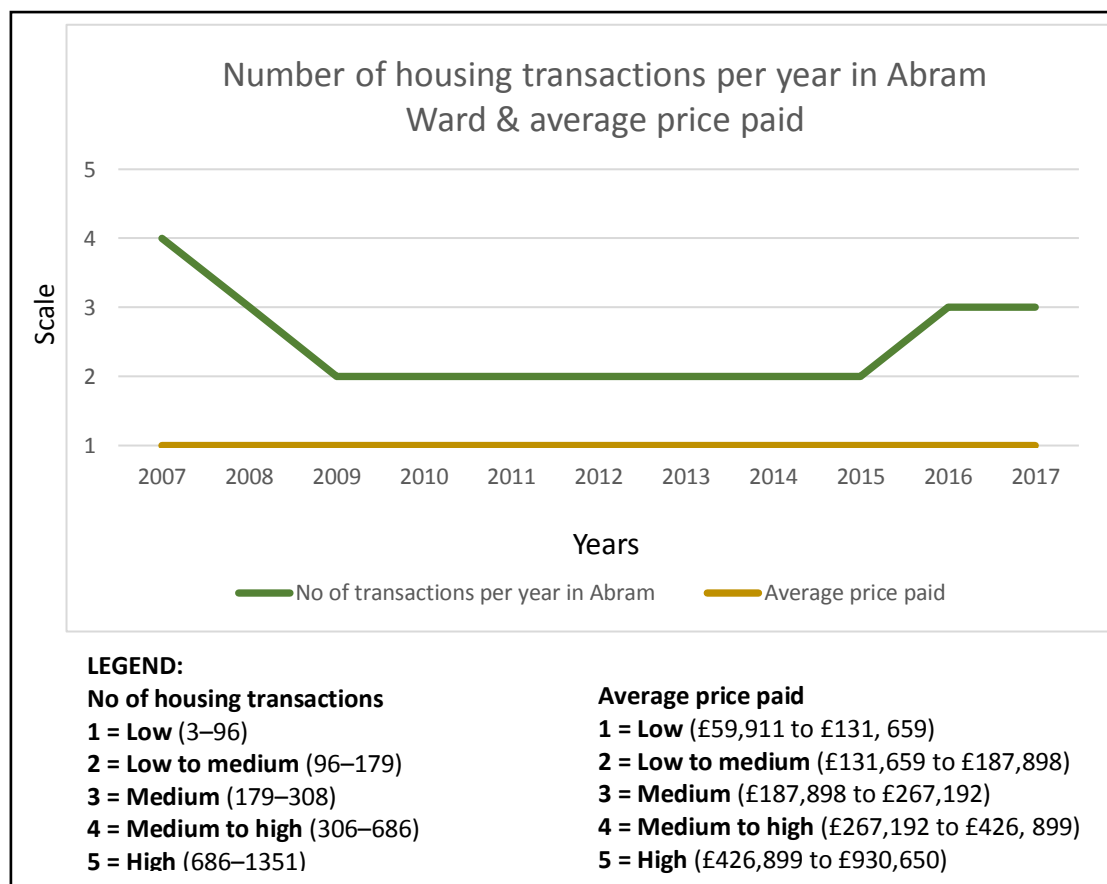
⁶⁰ Ibid, p.69

⁶¹ Wigan Council (2015), *Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Draft for Consultation*

⁶² MappingGM (2018) 'GMODIN' <https://mappinggm.org.uk/gmodin/> - accessed 23.4.18 © Crown copyright & database rights 2017, 'HM Land Registry – average price paid', published Land Registry. This is national Land Registry price paid data for 2007 to 2017. Aggregated by wards, middle layer super output areas (MSOAs), lower layer super output areas (LSOAs).

with the exception of Standish with Langtree, where average prices paid were between £187,898 and £267,192. Whilst the average house price paid has remained low over the last 10 years, the number of housing transactions declined from 2007's range of between 308 and 686 a year, to 96–179 for 7 years (2009–2015), rising again to 179–308 in 2016 and 2017⁶³.

Figure 12 Number of housing transactions per year in Abram Ward & average price paid
(© Crown Copyright, Land Registry)



6.13 House affordability in Abram Ward is a mixed picture. Home ownership is considered affordable in some respects, because house prices are quite low (see 6.12). In 2015, it was identified that the ratio of house price affordability (based on house prices in the lowest ranges) and residents' average incomes was 5, the lowest in the borough. This meant that households with an income of £14,000 would have been able to afford to buy a low-value property in Abram; however, this house price was unaffordable to 27.5% of the resident population. It was also identified that 35.5% of the population in Abram Ward would not have been able to afford to privately rent a two-bedroom house in the ward⁶⁴.

6.14 In 2011, the percentage of pensioner households in Abram Ward was 15.2%, at that time the lowest percentage in the borough. The ward's over 65s population is expected to increase by 15.6% by 2026⁶⁵. The ward has some specialist housing: three sets of extra care housing, one in Spring View, two in Platt Bridge; three care homes (two in Platt Bridge, one in Spring View); and accommodation for young people with mental health needs (in Spring View).

6.15 The Plan Area has one permanent traveller site with 16 pitches. It is in the Bickershaw area, is local authority owned⁶⁶ and is one of three sites in the borough.

⁶³ MappingGM (2018) 'GMODIN' <https://mappinggm.org.uk/gmodin/> - accessed 23.4.48 © Crown copyright & database rights 2017. 'HM Land Registry – number of transactions', published by Land Registry. This is national Land Registry number of transactions data for 2007 to 2017.

⁶⁴ Wigan Council (2015), *Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Draft for Consultation* (from 2011 Census).

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Arc4 Ltd (2014), *Greater Manchester Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment*, published by Wigan Council

7. Employment and economy

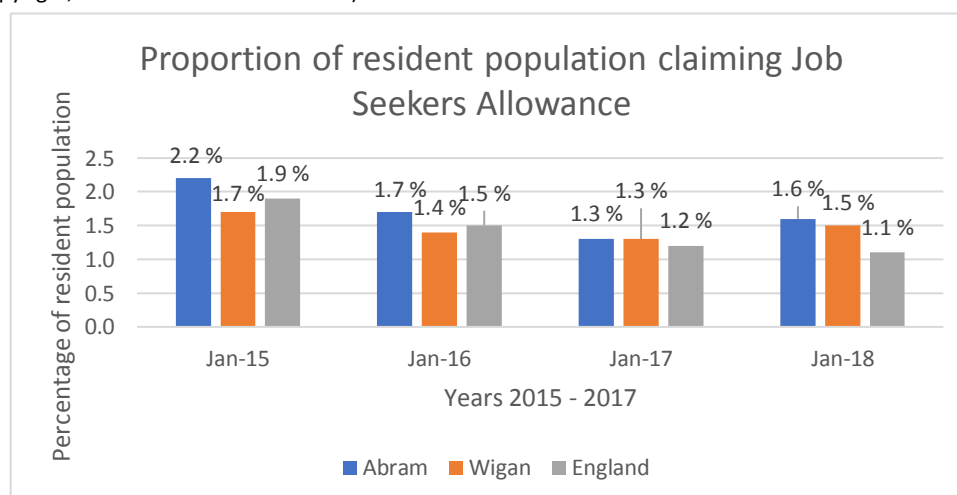
7.1 In Abram Ward in 2011, 66.3% of residents aged between 16 and 64 were in employment, lower than the Wigan figure of 71.2% and 71% in England and Wales. Of these 73% were in full-time employment and 27% in part-time employment. Of those in employment 7% were self-employed, compared to 8.2% in Wigan and 10.4% in England and Wales (Figure 13)⁶⁷.

Figure 13 Employment in Abram Ward, 2011 (© Crown Copyright, Office for National Statistics)



7.2 In March 2018, 1.6% of the resident population aged 16–64 in Abram Ward were claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), the proportion in Wigan borough overall was 1.5%, compared to England at 1.1%. In the same month in Abram Ward, 14.9% of those claiming JSA were young people aged 16–24, compared to 14.4% and 12.2% in Wigan and England respectively⁶⁸. The proportion of people claiming JSA has decreased in the last 4 years (Figure 14).

Figure 14 Proportion of resident population claiming Job Seekers Allowance (© Crown Copyright, Office for National Statistics)



7.3 In 2011, in relation to types of employment undertaken by people who live in Abram Ward, 14.3% were process plant and machine operatives, compared to 10.4% in Wigan and 7.2% in England and Wales; 13.4%

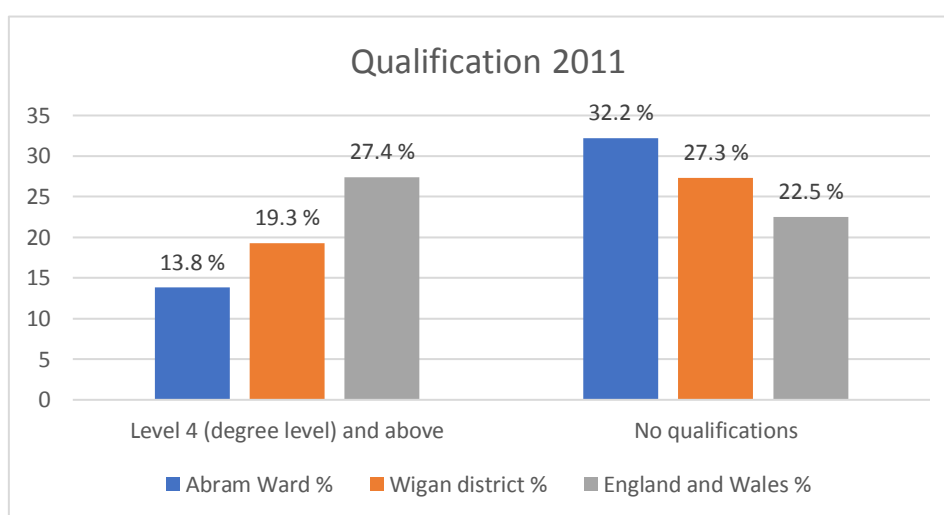
⁶⁷ Office for National Statistics (2012), 'DC6107EW - Economic Activity by sex by age' from the 2011 Census, ONS Crown Copyright. Available from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> - accessed 21.2.18.

⁶⁸ Office for National Statistics (2018), 'Job Seekers Allowance by Age and Occupation', ONS Crown Copyright. Available from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk> - accessed 23.4.18.

were in skilled trades (including agricultural, electronic, construction and textiles), compared to 12.8% in Wigan, and 11.5% in England and Wales; and 9.8% were in professional jobs (such as science, health, teaching, business) compared to 13.4% in Wigan and 17.4% in England and Wales⁶⁹.

7.4 In 2011, 32.2% of the population aged over 16 in Abram had no qualifications, compared to 27.3% in Wigan borough and 22.5% in England. In the same year, while 27.4% of the England population over 16 had qualifications of degree level and above, 13.8% of the population over 16 had the same level of qualifications (lower than Wigan borough's 19.3%)⁷⁰. Improving levels of qualifications is a borough-wide priority⁷¹ (Figure 15).

Figure 15 Qualifications in Abram Ward, 2011 (© Crown Copyright, Office for National Statistics)



7.5 There are number of key businesses, public sector organisations and institutions which provide employment in Abram Ward, these include Hindley Prison, Biffa Waste Management site, local schools (see section 7) and local health and social care services (see sections 4.6 and 5.15). There are a range of local independent businesses (of different scales) providing employment in the area including Bickershaw Nurseries. Wigan Council has not identified any new designated employment sites within the ward⁷².

7.6 Abram Ward is located midway between the three main towns in the borough – Wigan, Leigh and Ashton in Makerfield – the borough’s Primary Shopping Centres⁷³. It also has borders with two Smaller Town Centres, Hindley and Golborne. Platt Bridge is designated a Local Centre in Wigan Council’s 2015 Draft Allocations and Development Management Plan⁷⁴, the other four settlements provide ‘small shops and services’.

7.7 In terms of opportunities to access shops for both convenience goods (food, drinks, newspapers etc) and comparison shopping (everything else)⁷⁵, in the borough as a whole, 91% of residents shop locally for convenience goods⁷⁶. It has been identified at borough level that 60% of people in Wigan shop locally for comparison goods⁷⁷.

⁶⁹ Office for National Statistics (2012), ‘DC6112EW - Occupation by sex by age’ from the 2011 Census, ONS Crown Copyright, available from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk> – accessed 21.2.18.

⁷⁰ Office for National Statistics (2012), ‘QS501EW – Highest level of qualification’, from the 2011 Census, ONS Crown Copyright, available at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk> - accessed 14.2.18.

⁷¹ Wigan Council (2013) *Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy*

⁷² Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*

⁷³ Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*, & Wigan Council (2016), *Wigan Borough Retail and Centres Evidence, 2016*.

⁷⁴ Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*

⁷⁵ Wigan Council (2016), *Wigan Borough Retail and Centres Evidence, 2016*. Convenience goods are ‘Broadly defined as food, drinks, tobacco, newspapers, magazines, cleaning materials, toilet articles’. Comparison goods are ‘Other goods not classified as convenience goods’.

⁷⁶ Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*,

⁷⁷ Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*

7.8 Abram Ward Community Cooperative (AWCC) is based in Platt Bridge at Platt Bridge Community Zone (PBCZ)⁷⁸. AWCC and ACT Forum jointly commissioned a Platt Bridge Business Premises Report to understand the business and retail character of this largest of the five villages, the only designated Local Centre which is located centrally within the ward, at the key junction which connects all five villages (see Figure 1).

7.9 Wigan Council supports the development of enterprise culture and local independent businesses, and aims to develop incubator spaces for business start-ups and micro-enterprises⁷⁹. It has identified that 87% of all businesses in Wigan are micro-enterprises⁸⁰.

7.10 AWCC manages PBCZ which is an enterprise and community business hub. AWCC offers start-up and business support and skills development via its Made in Wigan programme⁸¹, and PBCZ and is a base for a range of small social enterprises and community organisations. AWCC uses a community wealth building approach where people and places are seen as assets not deficits⁸², with an equal emphasis on economic, social, environmental outcomes⁸³, embedding the principles of active participation, collaboration, and active democratic ownership. It aims to raise local people's aspirations and build a stronger local economy in Abram Ward, by developing more community businesses and social enterprises which trade for the benefit of the community, creating more local jobs and training, ensuring more people shop and spend locally, with less money leaking out of the area⁸⁴.

7.11 Key findings from the Platt Bridge Business Premises Report (see full Report for detailed analysis and conclusions) are that:

- There are 61 business premises in Platt Bridge Centre, 50 (82%) of these are in active business use, 11 (18%) are vacant and not in business use. (It is noted that outside the centre there are approximately another 20 active businesses in Platt Bridge).
- 49 individual businesses are based in the 50 active business premises. These include both retail and other businesses selling goods and services.
- 35% of all businesses are in the Food and drink category, which includes supermarkets, off licences and takeaways. 53% of these businesses are takeaways (a total of nine premises).
- 18.5% of all businesses are in the Health and beauty category, which includes hairdressers, beauticians and dentists.
- In terms of use class, 39% of all business premises are in A1 Shop use class and 17% of all business premises are in A5 Hot food takeaway use class. 16% of all business premises are sui generis, 8% are B1 Business light industry, 6% are B8 Storage, 5% are D1 non-residential institutions, 2% are A3 Restaurant and cafes (see Section 8 of Business Premises Report).
- Whilst business premises in B2 General Industrial and A4 Drinking establishments use classes exist, there are no active businesses in either use class. There is only one active business with the A3 use class Restaurant and cafes. There are no business premises in A2 Financial and professional services D2 Assembly and leisure use classes.

⁷⁸ www.madeinwigan.org

⁷⁹ Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Economic Prospectus*, available at www.wiganworks.com/Docs/Economic/Economic-prospectus-screen - accessed 27.11.17

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ www.madeinwigan.org

⁸² CLES, (2015), *CLES 10: Developing a Green Local Economy*, Centre for Local Economic Strategies, Manchester, <https://cles.org.uk/our-work/publications/developing-a-green-local-economy/> – accessed 26.6.16

⁸³ Pike, A., Rodriguez-Posé, J. and Tomaney, J. (2006), *Local and Regional Development*, Routledge, Abingdon

⁸⁴ NEF (2011), *Ten Steps to Save the Cities: The New Economics Agenda for Thriving Local Economies*, 'http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/ten-steps-to-save-the-cities' – accessed 28.5.15

- Of the 49 active businesses based in Platt Bridge Centre, 75% are local, independent businesses (including Handymans, Pooles Domestics, Wigan Foot Clinic and Independent Jaguar Specialists). 6% of businesses are regional (including Millercare Ltd and Galloways), 19% of the businesses are national or international (including Cooperative Food, Home Bargains, McDonald's and BetFred).

7.12 ACT Forum members undertook an exterior survey of business premises in each of the other four villages in June 2019.

- Abram has around 18 business premises (active businesses include Alema Hair Salon and Abram Village Convenience Store).
- Bamfurlong has two business premises (active businesses include Bryn Hall Pub).
- Bickershaw has around 12 business premises (active businesses include Bickershaw Post Office and Griffiths and Roper Garage).
- Spring View has around 9 business premises (active businesses include Every Occasion Florists and Happy Fish Takeaway).

7.13 Local people are able to access financial and banking services via post offices in Abram, Bamfurlong, Bickershaw and Platt Bridge. There are no bank branches in the ward, the closest are in Hindley (RBS), Ashton (Barclays, Nat West) and Higher Ince (RBS). There are three free-to-use cash machines in Platt Bridge and one in Bickershaw. There are charging cash machines in Abram (two), Bamfurlong, (one), Platt Bridge (one) and Spring View (one).

7.14 Wigan as a whole has a high rate of commuting out of the borough for work, over half of these commute to other boroughs in Greater Manchester, as well as destinations such as Warrington⁸⁵. Private car usage is high in the ward, and conditions are generally poor for walking and cycling, this is in line with the wider borough which has issues of considerable traffic congestion⁸⁶. Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) identifies Spring View as rating 5 (out of 8, where 8 is high) and Platt Bridge 4–5 in their GM Accessibility Levels, which measure accessibility to the public transport network, taking into consideration walking time and service availability⁸⁷. The other three villages rate 3 (out of 8) for transport availability.

7.15 The local community identifies the bus service as poor; there are four services running through the ward, operated by a range of companies⁸⁸. Three of these run fairly frequently on weekdays and into the evenings, as well as weekends. All of them pass through Platt Bridge in the centre of the ward, reaching the final destinations of Leigh, Wigan, Hindley, Golborne, Ashton in Makerfield, St Helens, Bolton, Newton Le Willows and Warrington. The nearest train connections can be made in Bryn, Ince, Hindley and Wigan.

7.16 The ward has many footpaths and bridleways running across it, some of which are Designated Rights of Way (DROW), several of which are not in good condition. TfGM provides several cycle network paths running through the Plan Area, these paths are all off-road, such as in and around Amberswood Common and on the canal towpath (Figure 16)⁸⁹. This key cycle path runs along the length of the canal between Wigan and Pennington Flashes and Leigh. Sustrans Cycle Route 55 passes along the North East edge of the ward, when complete this route will link Preston to Stoke on Trent, via Wigan and Manchester⁹⁰.

⁸⁵ Wigan Council (2015), *Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Draft for Consultation*. Data based on the Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey 2011.

⁸⁶ Wigan Council (2013) *Wigan Local Plan: Core Strategy*

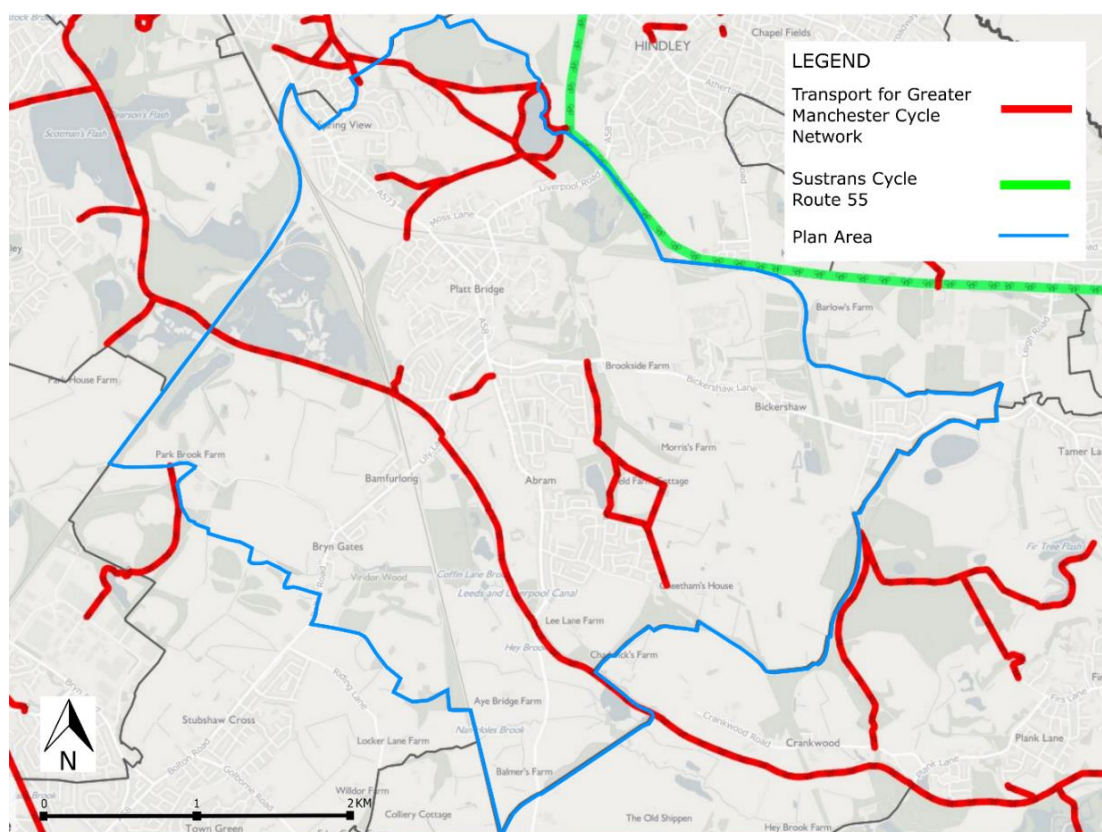
⁸⁷ MappingGM (2018) 'GMODIN' <https://mappinggm.org.uk/gmodin/> - accessed 23.4.18. © Crown copyright & database rights 2016 'Greater Manchester Accessibility Levels (GMAL)', published by TfGM.

⁸⁸ Evidence from Abram Communities Together Forum, February 2018.

⁸⁹ MappingGM (2018) 'GMODIN' <https://mappinggm.org.uk/gmodin/> - accessed 23.4.18. © Crown copyright & database rights 2017 'TfGM Cycle Network', published by TfGM and 'Sustrans Cycle Network' published by Sustrans.

⁹⁰ Wigan Council (2015), *Wigan Allocations and Development Management Local Plan: Initial Draft Plan*

Figure 16 Transport for Greater Manchester Cycle Network and Sustrans Cycle Route 55
 (© Crown Copyright, Ordnance Survey, GMMapping.org.uk)



8. Education

8.1 Platt Bridge has three primary schools, with Ofsted ratings of Outstanding, Good and Inadequate⁹¹. Abram, Bamfurlong and Bickershaw have one primary school each, with Ofsted ratings of Good, Good and Outstanding respectively⁹². There are no schools in Spring View.

8.2 There are no mainstream secondary schools in the ward – young people travel to schools in Leigh, Hindley and Ashton in Macclesfield. However, there is one specialist secondary school for young people with social, emotional and mental health needs (Newbridge Learning Community), based in Platt Bridge, catering for young people from across the Wigan Borough.

8.3 Pre-school and nursery provision is provided on five sites in Platt Bridge, two sites in Abram, and one in Bamfurlong and Bickershaw. There is no pre-school and nursery provision in Spring View. A limited number of adult education courses are offered at Platt Bridge Start Well Centre (based at Platt Bridge Community School)⁹³.

8.4 The ward has a public library housed within Platt Bridge Community School.

⁹¹ Ofsted (2018), 'St Mary's CofE Primary School', <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/106447> - accessed 14.2.18

Ofsted (2018), 'Holy Family Catholic Primary School Platt Bridge', <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/106496> - accessed 14.2.18

Ofsted (2018), 'Platt Bridge Community Primary School', <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/139300> - accessed 14.2.18

⁹² Ofsted (2018), 'St John's Church of England Primary School, Abram', <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/141641> - accessed 14.2.18

Ofsted (2018), 'Bickershaw CofE Primary School', <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/106470> - accessed 14.2.18

Ofsted (2018), 'Abram Bryn Gates Primary School', <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/106414>

- accessed 14.2.18

⁹³ Wigan Council (2018), 'Platt Bridge Start Well Centre', <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Health-Social-Care/Children-and-young-people/Childrens-Centres/Platt-Bridge-Start-Well-Centre.aspx> - accessed 14.2.18

9. Heritage

9.1 Much of the history of the neighbourhood is no longer visible through its buildings⁹⁴. However, the heritage of the mining industry is preserved through the naming of streets and sites in the area after historic events and significant citizens such as Maypole Crescent in Abram (named after Maypole Colliery) and Johnson Avenue in Bickershaw, (named after local colliery owners Heyes and Johnson).

9.2 The ward has two listed buildings, they are a mid 18th-century detached house, No. 126, Warrington Road, in Abram and Brookside Farmhouse, in Bickershaw built in 1716.

9.3 Significant historic events in the area include the Maypole Colliery disaster where 76 men died following an explosion in 1908, and the holding of Bickershaw Festival in 1972, a significant national cultural event that featured bands such as The Grateful Dead, Captain Beefheart and The Kinks. There is a tradition of Morris Dancing in the area and there is a fenced off dedicated ground on Park Lane, Abram near to Maypole Wood⁹⁵. One historical incident is remembered through an interpretation board at Low Hall Park, which outlines the history of the Hall and how the mining caused subsidence, leading to the ponds on the site⁹⁶.

10. Social spaces: sport, leisure, entertainment and faith

10.1 Of the five villages, Platt Bridge and Abram as the larger settlements, have more leisure, sport, fitness, culture and entertainment facilities, (see Appendices 4 and 5 for details). There are three pubs and bars in the ward including Bryn Hall Pub (Abram has one, Bamfurlong one, Platt Bridge has two). There are additionally three membership-based bars or clubs (Bickershaw has one, and Spring View two). Three pubs have recently closed, The Dover Lock (Abram), King William Hotel (Platt Bridge) and Walmsley Arms (Spring View), significantly reducing the number of community and social spaces in the neighbourhood.

10.2 There is a range of sports and fitness-based organisations in the ward: Abram Hall Riding Centre, Abram Motopark (Motocross), Wigan Table Tennis Club (Platt Bridge), Cricket and Recreation Club (Spring View) and Spring View Community Sport Association (Amateur Rugby League Club)⁹⁷ (see Appendix 5 for detail). These are predominantly private facilities and local people's ability to afford to access is an issue in the ward.

10.3 Some additional adult fitness and sports facilities exist in Platt Bridge; Belong Village (exercise studio) and Newbridge Learning Community (hireable sports hall and ¾-size football pitch). There are some other sites where fitness and leisure activities take place including Abram Community Centre (exercise, dance, art, bingo) and Bickershaw Village Community Club (Keep Fit), (Appendix 5).

10.4 Outdoor leisure sites include community allotment sites in Abram, Bamfurlong (two) and Platt Bridge (three)⁹⁸. The ward has one public bowling green at Platt Bridge Community Centre, and one private one, at Spring View Cricket and Recreation Club⁹⁹. Fishing takes place at a number of ponds in the ward including Queens Fishery, Bickershaw and Two Ponds, Spring View (see Appendix 6). Only three of the villages have sites for outdoor public congregation (Platt Bridge –Community Green; Bickershaw – Village Club; Abram – Abram Park).

10.5 Each settlement has at least one place of Christian worship, Abram, Platt Bridge and Bamfurlong have two. There is one cemetery in the ward at St John's C of E Church, Abram¹⁰⁰.

10.6 Each of the five settlements in Abram Ward has a number of building-based community assets and managed leisure-focused green space assets (see Appendix 6 for details). Table 2 identifies key community assets in each village.

⁹⁴ Bickershaw Residents Association (2013), *Bickershaw Heritage Project: Telling Tales*

⁹⁵ Abram Morris Dancers (2018), 'Abram Morris Dancers' - <http://www.abram-morris-dancers.org.uk> - accessed 3.3.18

⁹⁶ Friends of Low Hall (2018), 'Friends of Low Hall Nature Reserve', <http://www.friendsoflowhall.co.uk/> - accessed 3.3.18

⁹⁷ Wigan Council (2017), *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision and Needs Assessment*

⁹⁸ Wigan Council (2017), 'Appendix B' in *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision and Needs Assessment*

⁹⁹ Wigan Council (2017), *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision and Needs Assessment*

¹⁰⁰ Wigan Council (2017), 'Appendix B' in *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision and Needs Assessment*

Table 2 Key community assets

Village	Site	Assets which are managed, leisure-focussed green space
Abram	Abram Community Centre	
	Morris Dancing Ground	x
	Abram Park	x
	Community Garden	x
	Polly's Pond (also known as Kingsdown Flash ¹⁰¹)	x
Bamfurlong	Bryn Hall Pub	
	Church of the Good Shepherd	
	Bamfurlong Methodist Church	
	Abram Bryn Gates Primary School	
Bickershaw	Bickershaw Village Community Club	
	Bickershaw C of E Infants and Junior School	
	Bickershaw Parish Church	
Platt Bridge	Platt Bridge Community Zone	
	Platt Bridge Community Centre	
	Platt Bridge Community Green – Templeton Street	x
	Gone Fishing	x
Spring View	Cricket & Recreation Club	
	Spring View Community Sport Association	
	Walmsley Arms Pub	

11. Provision for children and young people

11.1 There are 20 play areas, recreation grounds and playing fields in the ward area¹⁰². Of these, 13 have a range of play equipment (in varying degrees of condition). Key sites include Abram Park, Spring View Community Association Recreation Ground and Stratton Drive Recreation Ground. These sites provide unsupervised outdoor play areas for children under 5, between 5 and 11 and over 11. Additionally, four of the primary schools have playing grounds or playing fields which are not freely available for public access (see Appendix 3).

11.2 For the under 5's, some indoor play provision takes place at Abram St Johns The Evangelist Church (Toddler Group), Platt Bridge Community Centre (Tumble Time soft play). Organised children's provision takes place at Bickershaw C of E Primary School (Rainbows and Brownies), Newbridge Learning Community (Hindley Juniors Football Team). Young people's supervised provision takes place in Platt Bridge at Holy Family Roman Catholic Church (Adventure Service Challenge) and St Nathaniel's Parish Church (Boys Brigade), Abram Scouts meet at the Scout Club in Abram. Given the number of children and young people in the neighbourhood, there are a limited number of facilities centred on sport, fitness, leisure, culture or entertainment that young people can access (Appendix 3.2).

¹⁰¹ Known as Kingsdown Flash in Wigan Council's (2017), *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision and Needs Assessment*

¹⁰² Wigan Council (2017), *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision and Needs Assessment*

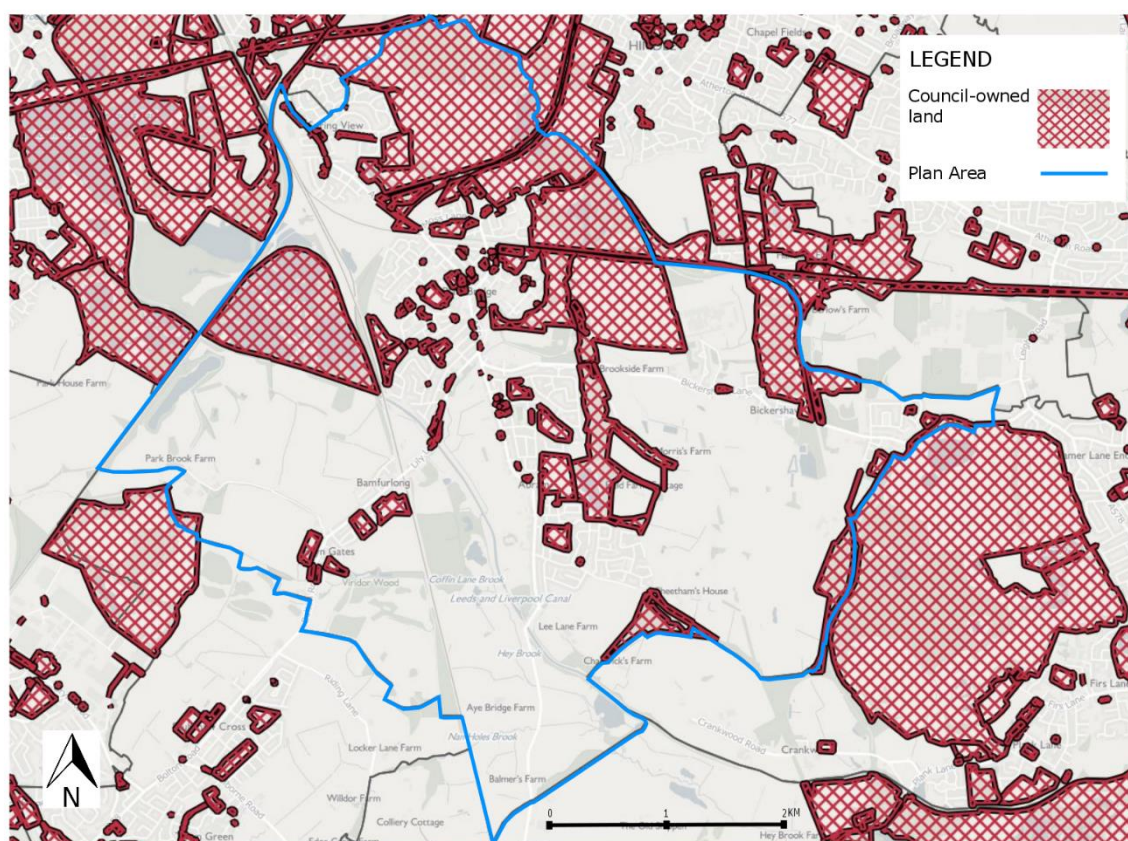
Appendices

Appendix 1 Green spaces

Green Spaces	Wigan Council Local Plan Policies Map ¹⁰³ - these sites form part of:	Council-owned land (Figure 16)
Viridor Woods (4)	A wildlife corridor	
Victoria Fields (8)	A greenway network	X
Western edge of Bickershaw Country Park ¹⁰⁴ (6)		X
East of Abram (9)	A greenway network A wildlife corridor	X
East of Platt Bridge (12)	A greenway network A wildlife corridor	X
West of Platt Bridge (11)	A greenway network	

These sites are all within the Green Belt, and are mainly recently restored landscapes.

Figure 16 Council-owned land in Plan Area¹⁰⁵ (© Crown Copyright, Ordnance Survey and GMMapping.org.uk)



¹⁰³ Wigan Council (2018), 'Policies Map', available at <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Planning/Local-plan/Policies-map.aspx> - accessed 24.4.18

¹⁰⁴ Wigan Council (2015), *Bickershaw Country Park Masterplan November*

¹⁰⁵ MappingGM (2018) 'GMODIN' <https://mappinggm.org.uk/gmodin/> - accessed 23.4.18, © Crown copyright & database rights 2018. 'Greater Manchester council land and building assets', published by Wigan Council

Appendix 2 Habitats and biodiversity in Abram Ward

Table 3 Habitats and biodiversity types in Abram Ward and adjacent neighbourhoods

In Plan Area	Habitats/Biodiversity Types ¹⁰⁶	Site of Biological Importance (SBI)	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
Low Hall Park	Fw1 (Reedbed, Swamp & Fen); Open water (Fw3); Birds (Br6)	X A		x
Amberswood Common	Grasslands (Gr2), Birds (Br5 & 6), Ponds (Fw2)	X A		
Horrocks Flash / Ince Moss ¹⁰⁷	Wet Woodland (Wd1); Open Water (Fw3); Bird (Br6 & Br2)	X A	x	x
Abram Flashes	Reedbed (Fw1); Birds (Br 3, Br4 & Br6)	X A	x	x
Maypole Wood ¹⁰⁸	Grassland (Gr2)	X B		
Adjacent to Plan Area				
Barlow's Farm	Swamp (Fw1); Ponds (Fw2); Aquatic invertebrates (Al1); Amphibians (Am1); Birds (Br4 & Br6)	X A		
Platt Bridge Heath	Heathland (HB1)	X C		
Pennington Flash	Grassland (Gr2); Reedbed & Swamp (Fw1); Open water (Fw3); Birds (Br1, Br3, Br4, Br5 & Br6)	x		x
Three Sisters	Ponds & Small Lodges (Fw2); Grassland (Gr2); Woodland (Wd1); Birds (Br5 & Br6)	X		x
Wigan Flashes (see below)				x
Pearsons Flash (in Wigan Flashes)	Reedbed & Swamp (Fw1); Open Water (Fw3); Birds (Br4, Br5 & Br6)	X A		
Scotsman's Flash (in Wigan Flashes)	Reedbed & Swamp (Fw1) ; Open water (Fw2); Birds (Br3, Br4 & Br6)	X A		
Turner's Flash (in Wigan Flashes)	Reedbed & Swamp (Fw1); Open water (Fw3); Birds (Br6)	X A		
Westwood Flash (in Wigan Flashes)	Reedbed & Swamp (Fw1); Scrub (Wd3); Open Water (Fw3); Dragonflies (Dr1); Birds (Br6)	X A		
Bryn Marsh (links to Ince Moss)	Reedbed & Swamp (Fw1); Open water (Fw3); Birds (Br4)	X A		
Bickershaw Colliery	Grassland (Gr2); Reedbed (Fw1); Ponds (Fw2); Open water (Fw3); Running water (Rw4); Urban (Ur1); Birds (Br4, Br5 & Br6)	X B		

¹⁰⁶ For details of codes such as Fw1, which identify types of habitats and species: Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (2018), 'Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines 2016 Version 2.0' available at <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit/sbi/guidelines.pdf> - accessed 21.2.18

¹⁰⁷ Horrocks Flash SBI covers the same area as Ince Moss LNR and SSSI

¹⁰⁸ In Greater Manchester Ecology Unit's, 'Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines 2016 Version 2.0' Maypole Wood is identified as Park Lane Colliery. Forum members have pointed out this is incorrect, the colliery located in this area was Maypole Colliery.

Appendix 3 Provision for children and young people

3.1 Play areas, recreation grounds, playing fields

Table 4 Play areas, recreation grounds, playing fields

	Village	With play equipment ¹⁰⁹	Without play equipment	With sports pitches marked/unmarked
	Abram			
1	Abram Labour Club Play Area	x	x	x
2	St Johns Street Recreation Ground		x	x ¹¹⁰
3	Abram Park	x	x	x
4	Abram C of E Primary School playing fields (not freely accessible)		x	
	Bamfurlong			
5	Bryn Gates Play Area	x	x	x
6	Furlong Close Play Area	x	x	x
7	Abram Bryn Gates Primary School playing fields (not freely accessible)		x	
	Bickershaw			
8	Barracks Road Play Area (2)	x	x	
9	Beacon Road Play Area	x		
10	Bickershaw Lane Play Area (1)	x		
11	St James Crescent Play Area		x	
12	Bickershaw C of E Infants and Junior School playing fields (not freely accessible)		x	
	Platt Bridge			
13	Stratton Drive/Fogg Folds Recreation Ground	x	x	
14	Kent Avenue Play Area	x		
15	Neville Street Play Area	x		
16	Westcroft Play Area	x		
17	Platt Bridge Teen Meet	x		
18	Scafell Grove Recreation Ground		x	
19	Woodcock Drive Recreation Ground		x	
20	Holy Family Catholic Primary playing fields (not freely accessible)		x	
21	Miners Welfare Recreation Ground		x	x
22	Warrington Road Recreation Ground		x	
	Spring View			
23	Spring View Community Association Play Area (Repton Avenue)	x		
24	Taylors Lane recreation grounds		x	

¹⁰⁹ Wigan Council (2017), *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision and Needs Assessment*

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Of the six sites listed as having sports pitches, only one, St John's Street Recreation Ground has a marked football pitch.

3.2 Further young people and children’s facilities/activities

These further young people and children’s facilities/activities are in addition to sports facilities and play areas, recreation grounds, and play grounds (Appendices 3.1 and 5).

Table 5 Further young people and children’s facilities/activities

Village	Place/venue	What children’s /young people’s activity
Abram	Abram St Johns The Evangelist Church	Church Mice Parent & Toddler Group
	Abram Community Centre	
	Abram Scout Hut, Fisher Ave	1st Abram Beavers and Scouts
Bamfurlong	NA	
Bickershaw	Bickershaw Village Community Club	
	Bickershaw C of E Primary School	Rainbows and Brownies
Platt Bridge	Platt Bridge Community Centre	Tumble Time - Soft play activity
		Dance
		Platt Bridge Youth Project
	Holy Family RC Church	Adventure Service Challenge
	Platt Bridge Community Centre	
	St Nathaniel’s Parish Church	Boys Brigade
	Platt Bridge Start Well Centre	
Spring View	NA	

Appendix 4 General adult culture, leisure and entertainment facilities

Table 6 General adult culture, leisure and entertainment facilities

Village	Place/venue	Notes on activities/facilities
Abram	Abram Community Centre	Craft classes, art classes, dance classes, Morris dancing, Bingo
	The Bucks Head	Pub
	The Dover Lock Inn	RECENTLY CLOSED
	Morris Dancing Ground	Non-designated heritage asset
Bamfurlong	Bryn Hall Pub	Pub
Bickershaw	Bickershaw Village Community Club	Bar and social activities
Platt Bridge	Holy Family CMS Club, Tram St	Social activities
	King William Hotel	RECENTLY CLOSED
	Kes's Public House	Bar
Spring View	Cricket & Recreation Club	Private bar
	Spring View Community Sport Association	Private bar
	Walmsley Arms Pub	RECENTLY CLOSED

Appendix 5 Sports and fitness facilities

This appendix identifies adult focussed sports and fitness facilities, Appendix 3.1 also identifies play areas, playing fields, recreation grounds, some of which are suitable for adult sort and fitness activity.

Table 7 Sports and fitness facilities

Village	Place/venue	What sport/fitness activity
Abram	Abram Hall Riding Centre	Riding club
	Abram Motopark, Park Lane	Motocross riding
	Abram Community Centre	Exercise classes/Zumba
Bamfurlong	NA	
Bickershaw	Bickershaw Village Community Club	Keep fit
Platt Bridge	Belong Village	Keep fit in exercise studio
	Newbridge Learning Community Sports Hall	Evenings and Saturdays sports hall, for basketball, volleyball, netball, cricket and badminton. ¾-size football pitch. Available for hire
	Newbridge Learning Community Sports Hall	Hindley Juniors Football Team
	Platt Bridge Community Centre	Wigan Table Tennis Club Bowling greens, Victoria Street
Spring View	Cricket & Recreation Club	Members club Cricket pitch Bowling green
	Spring View Community Sport Association	Amateur Rugby League Club

Appendix 6 Community assets

Table 8 comprises community assets identified by the Abram Ward Communities Together Neighbourhood Forum. These are building-based and those focussed on managed leisure activities, such as allotments, bowling greens, fisheries. Nature reserve green spaces and playing fields are listed in other tables (Appendices 1, 2, 3.1 and 3.2).

Table 8 Building-based and managed leisure-focussed green space community assets

Village	Site	Notes	Managed leisure-focussed green space
Abram	Abram Hall Riding Centre	Horse riding club	
	Abram Motopark, Park Lane	Motocross riding	
	The Bucks Head	Pub	
	The Dover Lock Inn	RECENTLY CLOSED	
	Abram Community Centre	Exercise classes/Zumba Craft classes, art classes, dance classes, Morris dancing, bingo	
	Abram Scout Hut	1st Abram Beavers and Scouts	
	St John's C of E Primary School		
	Morris Dancing Ground	Non-designated heritage asset	x
	Abram St Johns the Evangelist Church and cemetery	Church Mice Parent & Toddler Group	x
	Abram Park		x
	Community Garden		x
	Cook Street Allotments	Allotments	x
	Polly's Pond (also known as Kingsdown Flash)	Pond	x
Bamfurlong	Bryn Hall Pub	Pub	
	Church of the Good Shepherd		
	Bamfurlong Methodist Church		
	Abram Bryn Gates Primary School		
	Bryn Gates Allotments	Allotments	x
	James Streets Allotments	Allotments	x
Bickershaw	Bickershaw Village Community Club	Keep fit Bar and social activities	

	Bickershaw C of E Infants and Junior School	Rainbows and Brownies	
	Bickershaw Parish Church		
	Queens Fishery	Pond	x
	Fan Lodge Fishery	Pond	x
	Pond near Morris Farm	Pond	x
Platt Bridge	Belong Village	Keep fit in exercise studio	
	Newbridge Learning Community & Sports Hall	Evenings and Saturdays sports hall, for basketball, volleyball, netball, cricket and badminton. ¾-size football pitch. Available for hire. Hindley Juniors Football Team	
	Holy Family Roman Catholic Church		
	Holy Family CMS Club, Tram St	Social activities Adventure Service Challenge	
	Holy Family Catholic Primary School		
	St Marys C of E Primary School		
	Platt Bridge Community School		
	King William Hotel	RECENTLY CLOSED	
	Kes's Public House	Bar	
	Platt Bridge Community Zone	Enterprise Hub	
	Platt Bridge Community Centre		
	St Nathaniel's Parish Church	Boys Brigade	
	Platt Bridge Community Centre	Wigan Table Tennis Club	
		Tumble Time – soft play activity Dance	
		Platt Bridge Youth Project	
		Bowling greens, Victoria Street	x
	Wright Street/Kingsdown Road Allotments	Allotments	x
	Low Hall Park Allotments	Allotments	x
	Crompton Street Allotments	Allotments	x
	Community Green – Templeton Street		x

	Gone Fishing	Course fishing fishery / pond	x
Spring View	Cricket & Recreation Club	Members club Cricket pitch Bowling green	x
	Spring View Community Sport Association	Amateur Rugby League Club	x
	Walmsley Arms Pub	RECENTLY CLOSED	
	Spring View United Methodist Church		
	Two Ponds Fishery	Pond	x