

Improvement

Customer led transformation programme

Case study – Wigan Council

Capital asset pathfinder customer insight project

Contents

About Wigan	3
Background	4
Objective	5
Approach	6
Findings	14
Outcomes	18
Benefits	20
Governance	21
Resourcing	22
Challenges and lessons learnt	22
Next steps	23

The Customer Led Transformation Programme

Wigan's work has been funded under the customer led transformation programme. The fund aims to embed the use of customer insight and social media tools and techniques as strategic management capabilities across the public sector family in order to support place-based working.

The customer led transformation programme is overseen by the Local Government Delivery Council (supported by the Local Government Association).

The fund was established specifically to support collaborative working between local authorities and their partners focused on using customer insight and social media tools and techniques to improve service outcomes. These approaches offer public services bodies the opportunity to engage customers and gather insight into their preferences and needs, and thereby provide the evidence and intelligence needed to redesign services to be more targeted, effective and efficient.

About Wigan

The Metropolitan Borough of Wigan consists of the town of Wigan itself, (the largest constituent town) as well as the smaller towns of Leigh, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Ince-in-Makerfield and Hindley. It is the second most populous local authority in Greater Manchester, with a population of 317,800 (making up 12 per cent of the total population of Greater Manchester as a whole.). The borough is located on the north-western side of Greater Manchester on the M6 corridor and covers 77 square miles, 70 per cent of which is green or open space.

Wigan faces many challenges including high levels of deprivation and worklessness. According to the Indices of Deprivation LA Summary measures, Wigan is ranked as the 67th most deprived local authority out of the 354 local authority districts in England. 29 of Wigan's 200 neighbourhoods fall within the 10 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods in England. This equates to somewhere in the region of 49,400 people - or around 16 per cent of Wigan's total population.

The unemployment rate in Wigan is 9.6 per cent, compared to an average of 8.1 per cent for the whole of Great Britain.¹ These figures reflect the fact that Wigan suffers from a legacy of low skills and worklessness. Fewer of the Borough's residents hold NVQ Level 4+ qualifications than either Greater Manchester as a whole or the UK in general, particularly in the 25–29 year old age group. (The current figure stands at only 20.7 per cent compared to 32.1 per cent for Greater Manchester). This skills gap serves as a significant barrier to creating higher paid and higher value employment within Wigan or for residents to take advantage of such employment opportunities in other areas.

¹ April 1022 to March 2012 figure from NOMIS

An analysis undertaken as part of this project identified that the public sector own 15 per cent of local assets and have an interest in 40 per cent (either as leaseholder or freeholder) in the Wigan borough area.

Background

During 2011, Wigan was selected to be one of the UK government's "Total Capital and Asset Pilot Pathfinder" projects. For further information on the Pathfinder Programme, see Text Box 1.

As part of this pilot, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) facilitated a pan public sector review of the properties owned by the public sector across the Borough. The objective was to identify and map all public sector buildings in Wigan, and then to work with partners to assess whether the buildings met the needs of the local community.

The participants in this process included:

- Wigan Council
- Wigan Lift Co
- The Homes and Communities Agency
- Job Centre Plus / Department for Work and Pensions
- Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust
- Greater Manchester Police,
- Ashton, Leigh and Wigan PCT
- the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS)
- Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- Wigan And Leigh Housing.

This exercise produced a map of public sector assets (see "Findings"), and revealed that the public sector owned 15 per cent of these assets and had an interest in 40 per cent (either as leaseholder or freeholder) of properties and land in the Wigan borough area. Initial calculations show the value of the public estate in Wigan, excluding Central Government buildings, to be nearly £750 million, with social housing being valued at a further £800 million.

To understand how to make the best use of the public estate for the residents and businesses of Wigan, the council recognised that they needed to understand how the residents of Wigan use the public estate and what impact it has on their lives. Hence, the project employed a range of customer insight tools and techniques in order to both understand customers' use of the public estate and also to establish what their needs were going forward.

Given the high rate of unemployment in Wigan, a particular focus of the work was on worklessness, and on identifying opportunities to use the estate to improve access to support and guidance relating to employment and / or training opportunities.

Text Box 1: The Capital and Assets Pathfinder Programme

Councils are facing financial challenges as a result of the cuts in local government funding, announced in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review. They need to make savings while continuing to provide services that meet their customers' needs and deliver on-going improvements.

In 2010, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) initiated the Capital and Assets Pathfinder programme, the aim of which is:

“...to test how a customer-centric and place-based approach to asset management and capital investment could improve local outcomes and generate significant savings.”

The pathfinder explores methods to use capital (funding that results in a tangible asset with a defined life span) and assets (in this case usually buildings and land) across the public sector, in a more joined up way using customer information to determine what and where services should be delivered.

Based on an estimate that the size of public estate is valued at around £370bn, and that around two-thirds of this is owned by local authorities, DCLG estimate that this approach could release £35 billion in capital receipts over ten years, reducing revenue expenditure by £1.5 billion per annum through reduced running costs and delivering 10 per cent savings on procurement.

Objective

A key objective of the work summarised here was to provide customer insight to inform and influence the formation the long-term strategies of the Wigan Capital and Asset Pathfinder. This objective would be achieved by:

- integrating customer insight into Wigan's Capital Asset Management Processes to make more informed decisions about how to best use buildings as well as identifying which buildings could be released or were in need of redevelopment
- ensuring that the use of assets in the future both improves the experience of customers while simultaneously delivers cost efficiencies to the public sector
- understanding customer's journeys - particularly those experiencing worklessness - with the aim of improving access to relevant support at a single point of contact

Wigan Council and partners (see below) recognised that in order to understand how best to make use of the public estate they needed first to understand how the residents of Wigan were using the existing public estate to access services and information. It was necessary not only to map their journeys to these different buildings but also to make an assessment of the impact such journeys were having on their lives.

The intention was to use the insight generated to shape future plans and to facilitate the joining up of related services., This would ultimately lead to a redesigning of processes and the rationalisation and reconfiguration of the local public estate.

Over time, Wigan’s pathfinder focused on re-generation rather than releasing assets. This is because the pathfinder found many of the buildings in question to be in poor condition in areas with little market for property and hence of low financial value to the public sector.,. The partners also became aware that if they released too many buildings too soon they could end up introducing areas of blight into the local economy.

Approach

Wigan’s CAP project comprises two broad work streams. The first was to:

- understand and map the assets owned by the public sector and
- identify opportunities to rationalise that portfolio.

The second stream of activities sought to understand how customers access and experience services - particularly those experiencing worklessness. This involved understanding:

- who they are and where they live
- what services they accessed and from which buildings
- how they preferred to interact and communicate with service providers
- how they travelled to services.

The work identified opportunities to rationalise services and has culminated in the transfer and re-purposing of assets between public sector partners. It has also helped to make the case for co-locating services relating to worklessness at a single access point in the town centre.

Wigan Council and partners progressed through the following steps:

- mapping assets
- identifying opportunities
- data gathering and segmentation analysis
- mapping service providers relating to worklessness
- researching transport and accessibility
- understanding demand.

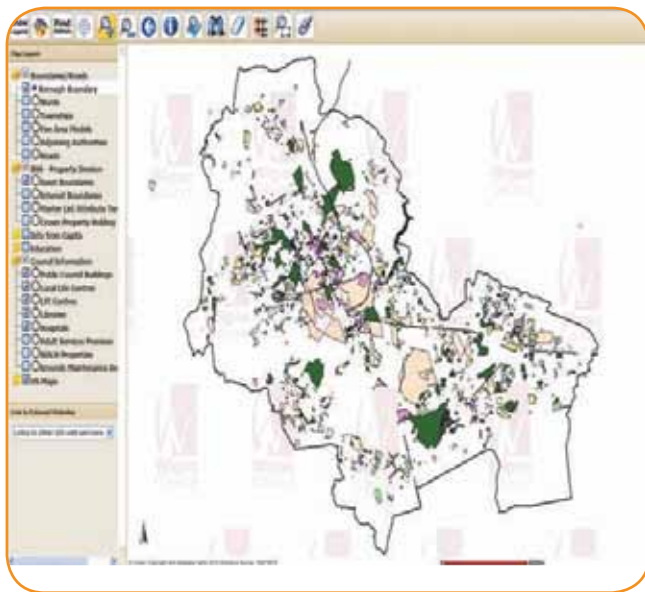
Mapping assets

To begin, all public sector partners provided information on property assets to Wigan’s project team. The project team used this information to create and share a GIS based map of asset ownership across Wigan.

To assemble the data, Wigan worked with CLG to develop a set of 28 property attributes relevant to decision-making regarding property assets. The attribute table was agreed with CLG, and these are outlined in the table below:

Post town	Reason for holding asset
Postcode	FTE
Asset tenure	Year asset was built
Asset owner	Asset condition
Asset user	Rateable value
Building/land	Fair value
Meter squared	Alternative use value
Services offered	Revenue costs
Historic sites listed buildings	Backlog maintenance

The mapping exercise also collected together both the National Land & Property Gazetteer's Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN), and the Valuation Office Agency's UPRN. These attributes were loaded into Wigan's Geographical Information System and a map of public sector property in Wigan, including the Crown Estate, was created (see map below). The results were then mapped to Ordnance Survey maps (displayed in "Findings").



Initial calculations show the value of the public estate in Wigan, excluding Central Government buildings, is nearly £750 million, with social housing being valued at a further £800 million.

Mapping service providers

Worklessness is a long-standing issue in Wigan, and the area suffers from unemployment rates higher than both the North West and Great Britain as a whole. By understanding what services were provided, and from what locations, the council sought both to redesign services in order to improve access, and to realise efficiencies in their use of property.

As part of this effort, the project began mapping the key service providers serving the workless population. These included:

- Job Centre Plus
- Council Tax and Housing Benefit Services
- Training and Skills Providers
- Local voluntary youth organisations such as the YMCA
- Local Colleges
- The Skills Shop.

As part of this assessment, Wigan conducted a "mystery shopper" exercise whereby a Director role-played the part of an unemployed person seeking advice and support on a range of related issues. The Director began by visiting the job centre in the town and asking for advice on housing benefit. Because he had no money, he could not use public transport.

On attending the Job Centre, staff directed him to the housing benefit office half a mile down the road. He was then directed back to the job centre following a subsequent inquiry. The job centre dealt with this enquiry before sending him to a third location (a council office) to ask about council tax benefit. In total, the resolution of these enquiries required the individual to explain their circumstances four different times in three different locations and took a total of three hours.

This work regarding worklessness was prematurely brought to a halt by the Coalition Government's welfare reform and the introduction of the Work Programme, whereby the provision of services was brought under the purview of a single provider in each area. In Wigan's case this was G4S.

However, the initial mapping work had allowed Wigan to consider the locations of different providers and understand the impact the “dislocation” of service providers could have on people who are looking to return to work. The insight generated was that the harder it is for people to access support, the less likely they are to do so and that consequently services don’t just need to be co-located, they also need to be coherent.

This insight informed Wigan’s decision to transfer and integrate a range of teams that support worklessness into a single location in the Life Centre. These include:

- Work Programme staff (Wigan Council is a subcontractor to G4S)
- Family Support Programme staff (a voluntary program for complex family supported by the European Social Fund)
- Wigan’s MBC Housing and Council Tax benefits team
- Skills & Training (including staff transferred from the Skills Shop, which also allowed this building to be vacated).

For further information on these changes, see the “Findings” and “Outcomes” sections.

Identifying opportunities

As part of the Capital and Asset Pathfinder the Wigan Public Sector held an opportunities workshop in July 2011. The aim of the workshop was to identify and appraise the range of opportunities for cross public sector management, development and disposal of assets in order to maximise potential efficiencies and improve service delivery.

Colleagues from the Hampshire Capital Asset Pathfinder facilitated the workshop, which was attended by:

- Wigan Borough Council
- Greater Manchester Police
- Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust
- Ashton and Wigan PCT
- the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS)
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- Wigan And Leigh Housing.

Large scale maps of Wigan showing public sector ownership were made available and participants had access to the live GIS system for the asset maps. In order to prepare for the workshop all partners were asked to provide a ‘Partner Opportunity Statement’ which covered:

- Operational service vision (ie. potential changes to service delivery/organisational structures that other partners would need to be aware of).
- Asset opportunities (ie. list of key buildings and land in scope, categorised with “definites” and “possibles”).
- Capital opportunities (ie. list of key potential capital receipts and funding sources).

After introductions and a context setting session, the core of the event involved the discussion in greater detail of opportunities either identified in the Partner Opportunity Statements or through a review of properties highlighted on the physical maps and the GIS system.

A series of discussions took place around each statement and through these a number of themes and opportunities were highlighted.

These opportunities were captured with the ultimate aim of reviewing and prioritising them once further data was available for each example..

By the end of the workshop the partners had identified twenty one potential opportunities. However, many of these need further investigation to identify whether there was a true cross public sector potential. The shortlist of opportunities is outlined under “Findings”.

Data gathering and segmentation analysis

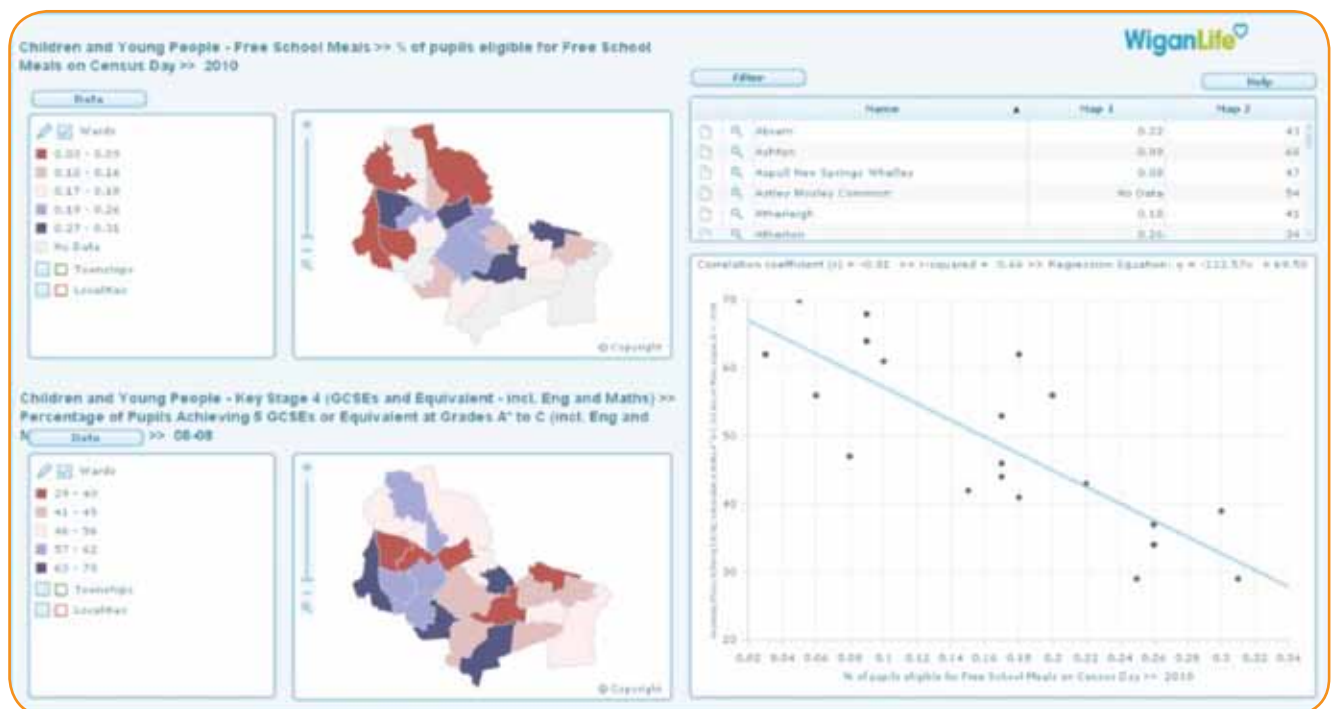
The project also collected together a range of customer insight data to better understand the local workless population. The project built on two established sources of evidence and insight – Wigan’s Local Information System and the ACORN socio-demographic data set.

The Wigan Information System of Dynamic Online Maps - “WISDOM”

This system offers officers easy access to statistics at a variety of spatial levels on a range of themes including deprivation, health and social care, children and young people, and crime and disorder. The system was jointly developed in partnership with Wigan Council, Ashton Leigh and Wigan Primary Care Trust, Wigan and Leigh Housing and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust.

Figure 1 illustrates an example of the data held within WISDOM, and one of the many ways data can be viewed.

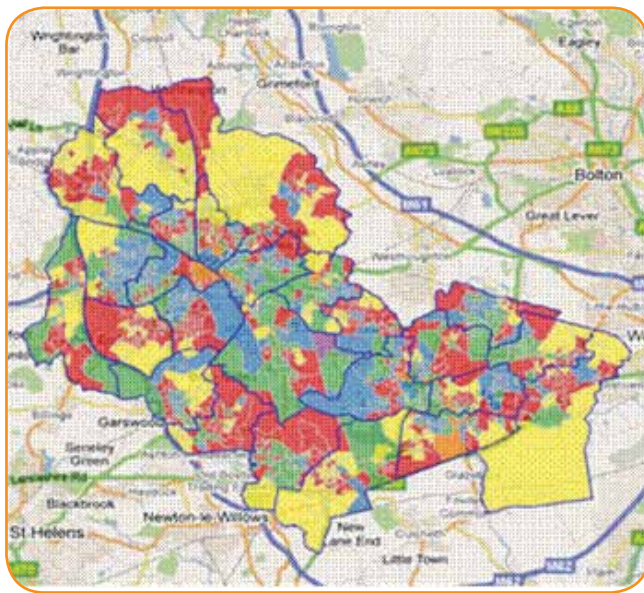
Figure 1. Wigan’s local information system



ACORN Socio-demographic

As part of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), Wigan enjoy access to the CACI ACORN classification data, which categorises information down to postcode level using over 125 demographic statistics and 287 lifestyle variables. For example, the map below profiles Wigan according to six broad groups (the highest level of the hierarchy).

Figure 2. Viewing ACORN



This means Wigan are able to profile local communities and analyse their characteristics at any given geography, according to both CACI and Wigan's service level intelligence.

Wigan's Joint Intelligence Team extended this data by adding data drawn from a range of agencies and sources including:

- Township Health Profiles - Ashton, Leigh and Wigan NHS
- NOMIS, Labour Market Statistics
- School Census
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010
- Crime Data
- NEET Data
- WISDOM.

The team divided Wigan up into five "Twin Townships" to analyse the new data. Historically, the area used to have ten towns. Each of the townships therefore comprises two of the original ten towns. The term "Twin Township" derives demographically based commissioning decisions.

Figure 3. Map of five Wigan 'townships'

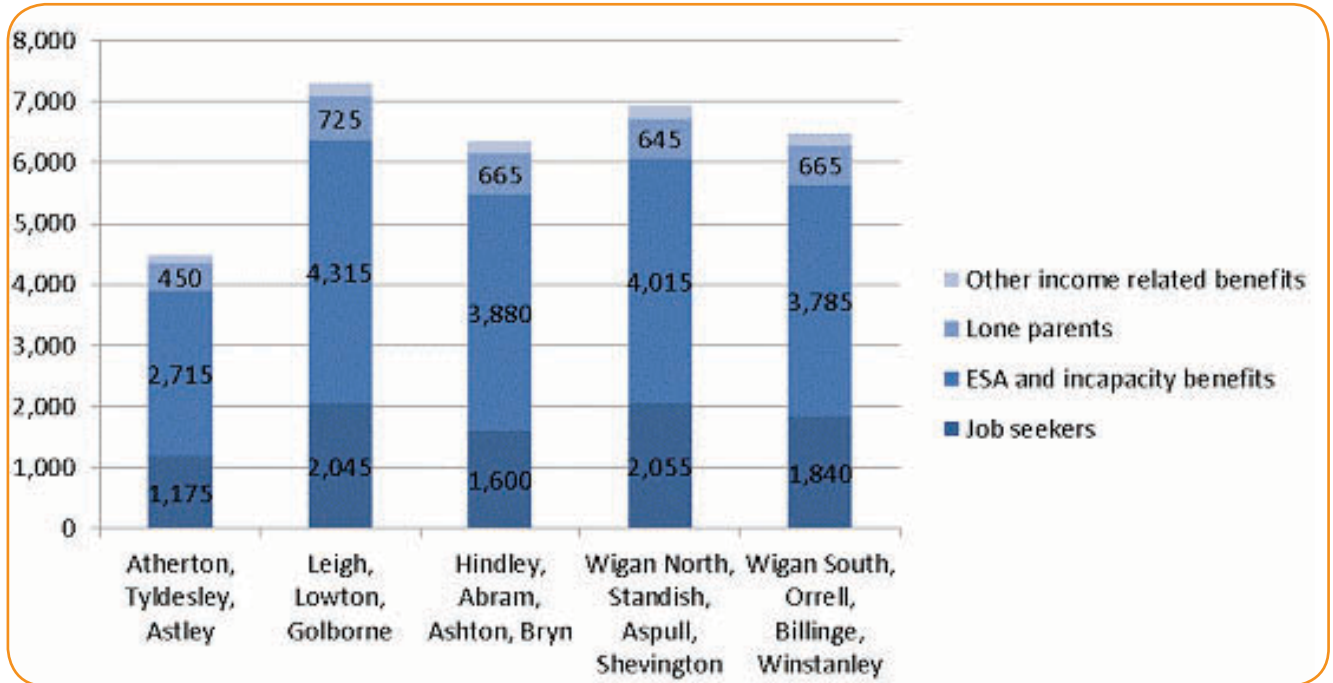


The Joint Intelligence Unit produced a summary of the data relating to the five townships grouped under the following headers:

- population, age and deprivation
- life expectancy and causes of death
- health, rates of mortality, cancer and cardio-vascular disease
- employment, percentage claiming out of work benefits and JSA, and long-term youth unemployment
- housing, by tenure and council tax banding
- children and young people
 - education
 - free school meals eligibility/child poverty
- crime and anti-social behaviour
 - criminal damage
 - disorder offences
- drugs clients.

An example of the nature of the analysis is included below, illustrating the numbers of residents claiming out of work benefits by “township”.

Figure 4. Numbers claiming out of work benefits



This analysis offered insight into the area’s workless residents, where they live and they journey to access public services.

Researching transport and accessibility

While the CAP project was underway, Wigan also participated in a Transport survey focused on understanding the ease of access to public transport as well as travel costs and journey times. The survey sought to understand the role transport plays as a either a barrier or an enabler to employment.

Wigan’s research and intelligence team worked with the community engagement team to deliver this survey. The community engagement team conducted significant outreach work - spending time “in situ” with customers at train stations and bus stops and interviewing residents as they were using the services in question.

As well as surveys conducted at train stations etc, residents were also invited to send comments by e-mail, to register their interest in participating in one of the workshops or to attend drop-in sessions focussed on the prioritisation process.

Furthermore, when respondents did not have sufficient time to complete questionnaires face-to-face, the engagement team encouraged them to complete the survey online by:

- offering residents a QR code which they could scan with their phone which would bring them to the online survey
- offering links to a twitter account and Facebook page where they could either leave comments or access the survey.

This meant that the survey was conducted both face-to-face and online, with 223 respondents completing the long questionnaire and 1257 respondents completing the short questionnaire.

Questions investigated:

- where Wigan residents travelled to for shopping, college, school recreation and leisure
- resident's usual form of transport (ie. bus, car, bike etc)
- factors that might encourage their use of public transport
- specific questions about how Wigan could improve:
 - the local rail service
 - the local bus service
 - local cycling provision
 - local parking provision
 - the levels of congestion across the borough.

For an outline of the findings from the survey, please see the "Findings" section.

We think it's really important in Wigan that we don't overcomplicate engagement. We have lots of opportunities to engage with people. We can go and meet people where they are. We have a youth zone so we go down to the youth zone and speak to young people to get their point of view. We can go into children's centres to speak to parents about their views. So we think it's really important that, when we do engage with our communities, we engage with them where they are in the way they live.

**Nuala O'Rourke, Programme Manager,
People Directorate, Wigan Life Centre**

"We're trying to treat residents as "whole" people rather than as a variety of needs. If you're trying to cultivate resilience and independence, you need to see their lives as a whole and "in the round". This also means you need to locate your front line accessibly - so they are located in places where residents go in the course of their daily lives - rather than in buildings because that's the property the council owns and its where they've always been."

**Lesley O'Halloran, Service Manager
Wigan Council, Citizen Support Services**

Figure 5. Branding on Wigan's transport survey



Understanding demand

The council also undertook analysis of customer demand for front office services across their existing sites.

This included:

- analysing footfall regarding the number of people accessing different buildings over different time periods
- analysing the footfall at Wigan Life Centres to understand the range of advice and guidance sought by residents
- working with Job Centre Plus to understand their footfall figures and hence understand who was coming into the town centre in relation to unemployment
- assessing customer satisfaction rates in all of these locations to establish baseline insight that would enable us to monitor the success of the Life Centres going forward.

Collecting customer stories

Wigan Council has also been collecting qualitative information alongside this quantitative data. This included customer stories of their experience of the one-stop shop, and the outcomes of their visits. An example of a customer success story is included under “Outcomes”.

“We needed to understand who was visiting Wigan Life Centres and why. We then analysed the information to start to understand what service provision is needed.”

**Lesley O’Halloran, Service Manager,
Wigan Council, Citizen Support Services**

Customer success story

A gentleman visited Platt Bridge, which is a Health Centre comprising six GPs where Wigan Borough Council have located a General Helpdesk.

The man had come to see the GP, and have been told by the doctor that he could not have an operation on his knee until he lost weight. As the man was leaving the Health Centre, the Helpdesk Adviser enquired how he was and whether they could help.

As a result of being proactive, starting the conversation and listening to the resident and the challenges he faced, the Adviser registered him for Assisted Bin Collection, applied for a blue badge and put a service request into Adult Social Care to install some adaptations to his house including bars to help get around and avoid falling. They also put into contact with Wigan Borough council’s health and fitness trainers.

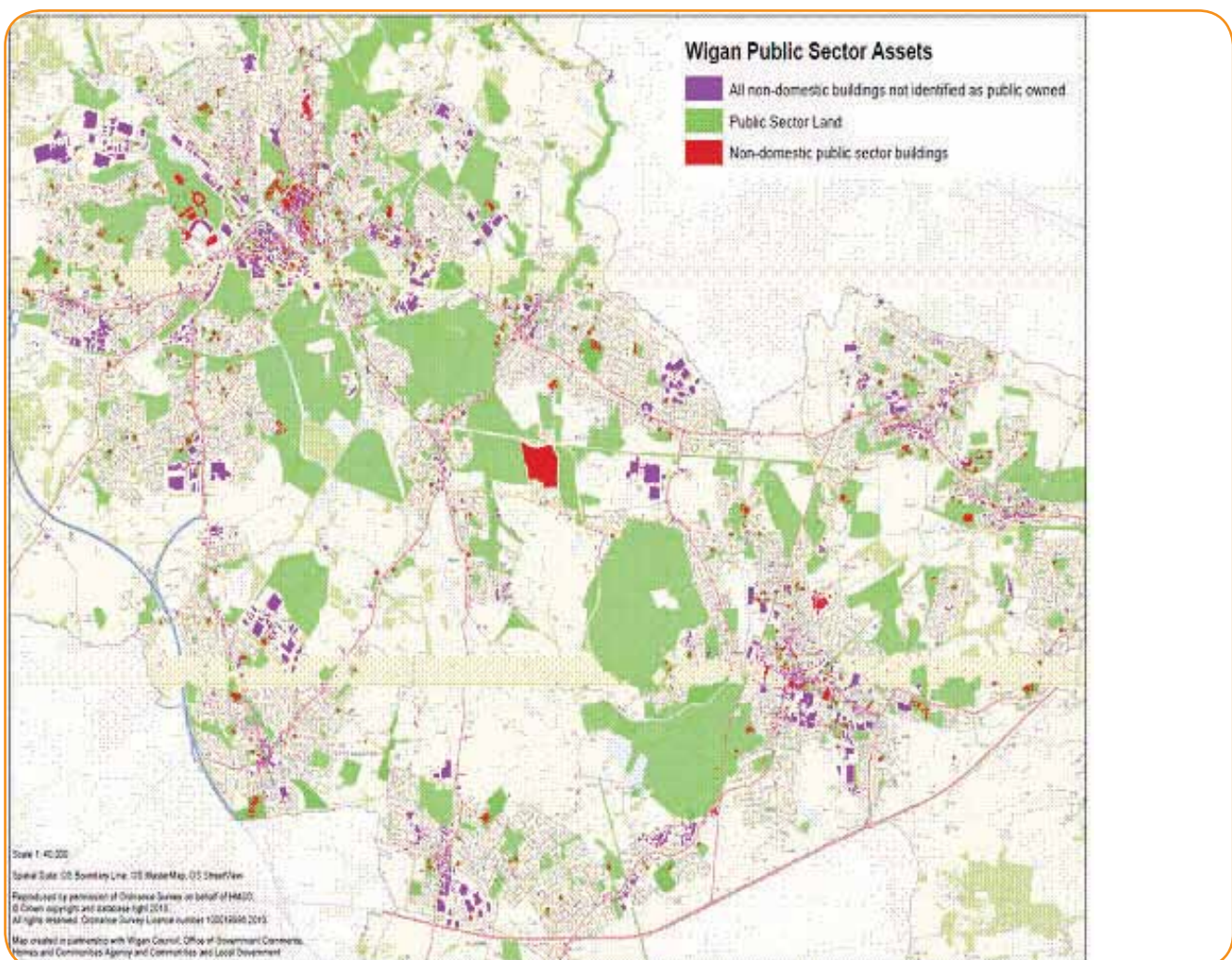
Findings

Mapping assets

This exercise produced a map of public sector assets (below). The mapping exercise revealed that the public sector owned 15 per cent and had an interest in 40 per cent (either as leaseholder or freeholder) of property and land in the Wigan borough area. The majority of the public sector buildings are located in the town centres, and are marked in red in the map below.

The key benefit of the research carried out was the greater understanding the project gave the partner of both the location and condition of their assets and how they could best be used for the benefit of the community. These findings informed the opportunities workshops ran by the pilot (see “Identifying Opportunities” below) and are being used by the Strategic Asset Management Programme that has succeeded the pilot.

Figure 6. Wigan public sector assets



Identifying opportunities

The Opportunities Workshops identified over 21 potential opportunities. Fourteen of these were shortlisted. These were further evaluated in terms of their:

- short or long term potential
- funding requirements and availability
- outcomes for the public sector, and whether they were aligned
- potential to release assets.

Following this, five projects have been progressed, nine have been handed over to the Strategic Asset Management Group, and two further opportunities have emerged from the contacts made at the workshops. These include:

1. Making better use of a “LIFT” building. LIFT (Local Improvement Finance Trust) was a major programme of investment in improving and developing frontline primary and community care facilities. Hence, LIFT buildings were designed with a clinical specification. Meanwhile, Wigan’s main hospital, the Royal Albert Hospital, is located on a cramped site and the PCT was seeking extra space. A possible option was to move the Ophthalmology Department from the Royal Albert Hospital site and into the LIFT building. (The local Mental Health Trust was using the space for office purposes.) The partners agreed to move the Mental Health Trust into the Wigan Investment Centre - an office building council and partners had helped to develop - while the Ophthalmology Department moved into the LIFT building. For further details, see the “Benefits” section.
2. Joining several small parcels of land that surrounded a GP surgery to provide a single site large enough for Housing Development. This opportunity has been subsequently developed by the GP surgery itself acting as a private investor – though no sales have yet been agreed. Following interest from the private sector, the council is no longer involved in facilitating this development (apart from as potential seller of two of the pieces of land).
3. Rebuilding Robin Park fire station behind the site of the old fire station and developing the current site, potentially with other public sector partners (see Blue Light Project below). Capital Approval is currently being pursued from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services
4. Selling the site of the old Ashton Town Hall to the LIFT Company for development for a new building with the agreement that LIFT will provide facilities for the council and other public sector agencies to rent.
5. Reviewing the provision of depots for Wigan’s Blue Light Service as well as the council. This project could involve dropping at least four sites and using just one (potentially on Robin Park – see 4 above). Savings from this are conservatively estimated at £300,000 per year.

6. Re-purposing Mesnes Terrace Car Park. The council-owned 309 space Mesnes Terrace was little-used by the public and as a result faced an uncertain future. In contrast, Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust (WWL) had on-going parking problems at the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, and could see the potential to free-up spaces for patients and visitors by operating a 'park and ride' scheme from Mesnes Terrace for hospital staff. Hence, Wigan Council has sold the car park to WWL. The sale of the site has secured the future of the facility and also protects the Wigan Shop mobility Service base, which operates from the car park. For further information on the benefits to each party, see "Benefits".
7. Co-locating administrative staff from the PCT/CCG at the new Life Centre. The Strategic Asset Management Group has facilitated the recent movement of 200 PCT staff onto the same floor as Wigan Council's People's Directorate. This is intended to facilitate closer working between staff on the Health & Well Being Agenda, and the Children's Agenda. It has also allowed the PCT to release 66a Standish Gate. The annual costs to the PCT for the lease of this building was £200,000. Following co-location this income now flows to another part of the public sector.

Mapping service providers

The project identified that customers needed to visit up to ten different buildings to access advice or support relating to worklessness, and that this could prove expensive and time-consuming.

This "dislocation" was further compounded by the lack of clear signposting between agencies. Over and above the benefits to customers of co-locating services (see also findings from the transport survey below), the research also highlighted the need for

"The customer insight captured has influenced the development of effective partnership working in the Life Centre and also linked to the expectation of our front line officers. We look at the demand for services, and the sorts of questions and requests the customers are making, to assess the value added by introducing a new partner. There has to be a win-win. It's not a question of "co-location", it's a question of taking a holistic approach to customer needs. We insist on joint training between new and existing staff, and promote networking throughout the frontline. It's essential that any new staff from partners understand the ethos of the building and how we all have a part to play in enhancing the customer experience. Otherwise how else will we be joined up for the customer?"

Samantha Tierney, Customer Partnership Manager, Citizen Support Services, Wigan Council

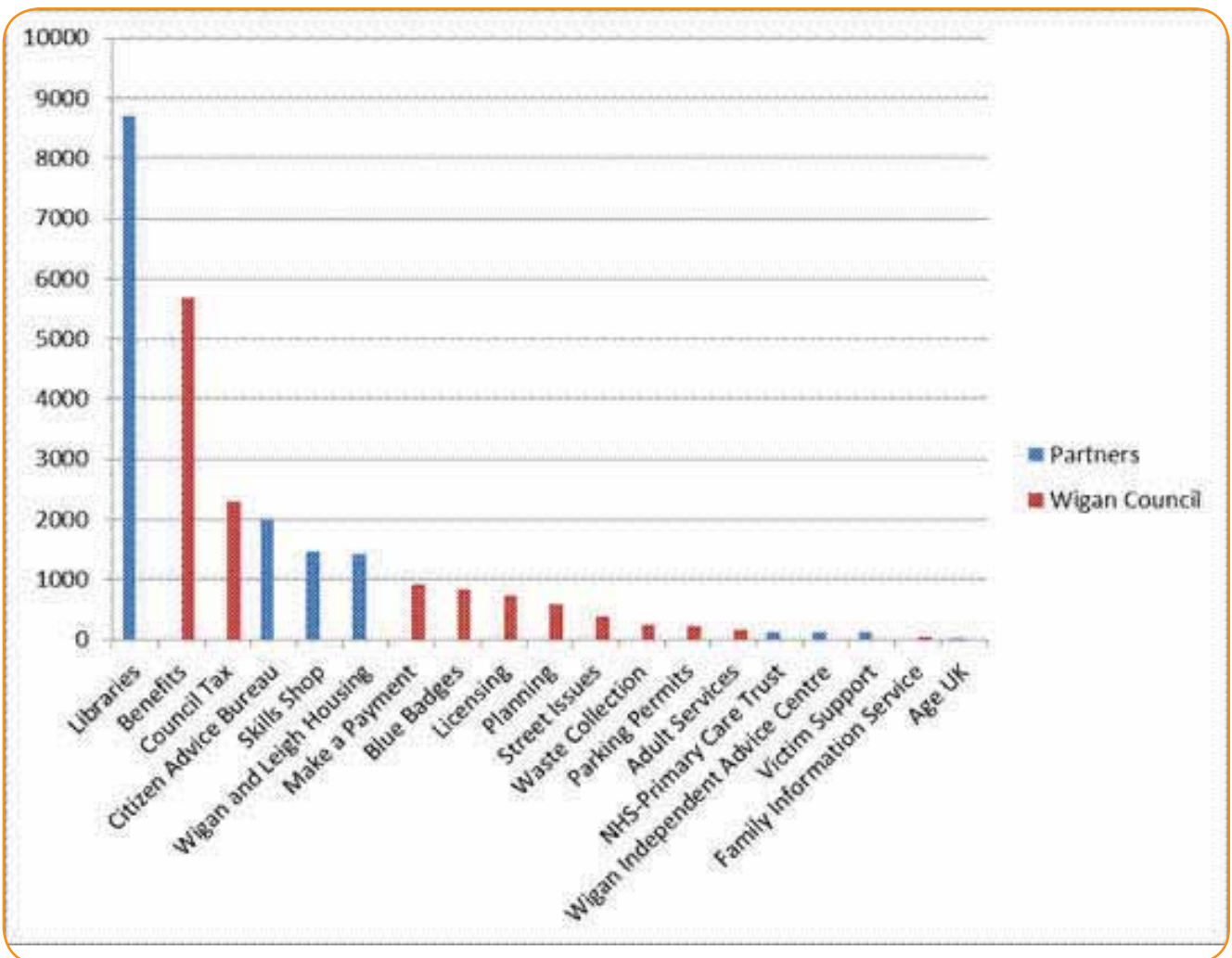
more coherence between services, and the importance of appropriate and timely referrals between providers.

These findings, taken together with the analysis of footfall at Wigan Life Centre presented in the graphic below and the customer stories (see Text Box), has helped to make the case for the continuing integration of services relating to worklessness.

The figures below illustrate footfall at Wigan Life Centre between its opening in January 2012, and May 2012. The research identified that 45 per cent of the advice and guidance and support given to visitors to the 'one-stop shop' related to their benefits and/ or worklessness.

This, taken together with qualitative feedback from customers in the form of customer stories (see below), has influenced the development of the Service Delivery Model focused on worklessness.

Figure 7



Transport survey

One key finding from the review of socio-demographic data and the transport survey was that customers experiencing worklessness preferred to interact with services face-to-face but often have to travel with young families. Hence, the dislocation of service provision in Wigan compounded the challenge of accessing services when taking care of young children. This has been partly addressed by the relocation of the service delivery model and the co-location in cross-training between related services that has taken place (see “outcomes”).

Based on responses to the transport survey, the priorities for residents were to:

- reduce delays associated with traffic congestion and improve reliability of journey times
- maintain and improve the public transport network
- ensure and promote accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially for those without a car
- improve personal safety and security and reduce crime whilst travelling.

Outcomes

Transfer of skills shop staff and integration of services

As a result of the insight generated by these activities, Wigan and a number of their partners have transferred and integrated a range of teams that support worklessness into a single location in the Life Centre. These include:

- work programme staff (Wigan Council is a subcontractor to G4S)
- family support programme staff (a voluntary program for complex family supported by the European Social Fund)
- Wigan's MBC housing and council tax benefits team
- skills and training (including staff transferred from the Skills Shop, which also allowed this building to be vacated)
- Wigan Leisure Culture Trust – who run some of the fit for work courses
- Wigan and Leigh housing.

The range of additional teams and services currently found within the Life Centre North Site:

- Age UK
- Skills Shop
- Libraries (via Wigan Leisure Culture Trust)
- Remploy
- Carers UK
- Citizen Advice Bureau
- NHS Primary Care Trust
- Victim Support
- Wigan Independent Advice Centre.

Council service contacts

- adult services
- benefits
- blue badges
- council tax
- tell us once
- family information service
- licensing
- make a payment
- parking permits
- pest
- planning
- street issues
- waste collection.

Based on the analysis of footfall and the questions and service requests that customers bring, Wigan has cross trained and up-skilled staff so that they can answer queries on a range of services and are empowered to make decisions at the first point of contact.

LIFT remodelling

One of the opportunities identified by the workshop was to improve the clinical utilisation of LIFT centres. The transfer of current staff officers into clinical accommodation and utilising available office space owned by Wigan Council for new staff bases is currently underway. Mental Health Trust staff moved out of a LIFT building in Spring 2012, and Ophthalmology staff are moving in. Ophthalmology is the branch of medicine that deals with the anatomy, physiology and diseases of the eye.

The following are examples of how the co-location and integration of multiple services at the Life Centre has helped customers.

A lady came in regarding her Council Tax Benefit claim, as she had just moved into a new property and was changing over her address. Whilst she was with the CSO, she mentioned that she needed to order a new wheelie bin, as there wasn't one at her new address; she was then seen by Amanda who logged a new bin request on the system.

A gentleman had a query on his Housing Benefit payments, once this was dealt with and evidence copied, he then mentioned that he wanted to speak to Wigan and Leigh Housing regarding some charges. He was directed over to WALH to speak to them about this.

A gentleman brought in evidence for a Housing Benefit over-payment; he then mentioned to the Customer Services Officer that he was having problems paying other bills as well. Advised on Citizen Advice Bureau service being co-located, he decided to speak to them to get advice on dealing with his debts whilst he was here.

Project partners are:

- NHS Ashton Leigh & Wigan PCT
- Foundation for Life (LIFT Co)
- Wrightington Wigan & Leigh NHS Foundation Trust
- Wigan Council.

As a result:

- space that is scarce at the Royal Albert Hospital has been freed-up, relieving congestion and improving the patients experience of the hospital
- the ophthalmology department has moved into a new, high quality clinical building in which they are co-located with other departments including physiotherapy, podiatry and audiology. These departments share a reception in the new building.
- the Mental Health Team have moved into the Wigan Investment Centre, which is better located for a team undertaking work-related travel across the Borough

Customer Stories at the Wigan Life Centre

Lady brought in evidence for her housing benefit claim, she asked for a manual calculation if she got another part time job. She then asked about help with job search, etc. She spoke to staff from the Skill Shop and went to register at the library for internet use.

A couple came in with a housing benefit query, as they were struggling with the shortfall on their private rented property. A discretionary housing payment application form was printed. They then asked for information on registering for council property. They then went over to speak to Wigan & Leigh Housing for information on the application process.

Lady seen regarding a housing benefit enquiry, she then asked how she could get on the housing list for a bungalow. She was signposted to housing for more information.

Transfer of Mesnes car park from council to hospital

The NHS has a number of sites spread across the Borough with a concentration of services in and around Wigan Town Centre and the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary (RAEI) site on Wigan Lane.

The NHS faced a number of travel challenges including parking for both staff and service users. There were competing parking demands at NHS sites throughout the borough, for both staff and patients. This led to congestion at times at the Infirmary site which could increase anxiety for patients attending appointments and for visitors. There were limited opportunities to increase parking provision at the Infirmary site and the NHS already offer a minibus service for staff between Wigan Town Centre and a number of NHS sites.

Following contacts and discussion initiated at the Opportunities Workshops, the NHS approached the council with a proposal to use Mesnes Terrace Multi Storey Car Park as an NHS park and ride car park, served by the existing mini bus service to the NHS sites. The NHS would take over operation, staffing and maintenance of the car park, and make their staff's journey to work quicker and easier by solving their parking problems.

There was little demand from the public to use the car park as other parking offered in the town centre was regarded as more accessible and suitable. Hence, the sale of the car park to the NHS does not compromise parking in Wigan Town Centre. A car parking behavioural study carried out on behalf of the council by an independent consultant in October 2010 found that the Mesnes Terrace Multi Storey car park was not popular with visitors to the Town Centre - during the week is on the whole occupied by council Staff who worked within the Town Centre. Most of these staff have now moved to the Wigan Life Centre.

Benefits

Transfer of staff and integration of services

The setting up of the OSS has resulted in the greater integration of services for workless customers at the Life Centre. This has been supported by cross-training between staff, and as a result over 90 per cent of queries arising from this customer group are now being resolved at the first point of contact within the One Shop.

Locating front and back office staff together at the Life Centre has also helped to achieve speedy outcomes for residents with benefit queries, with more than 80 per cent having their benefit claims resolved immediately or within 24 hours

Face-to-face customer satisfaction across the services at the Life Centre is currently 99 per cent, beating the target Wigan set itself of 90 per cent. This is against a target of 70 per cent.

Based on January – July 2012 data for the Life Centre, there were:

- 22,430 people through the door (for council services)
- 3,989 customers that participated in the exit survey.

Of those surveyed, 1,186 (30 per cent) stated that the Life Centre helped them with their initial query and also helped them with additional services (thus reducing the need for a secondary face-to-face contact).

Hence, proxy calculations would suggest that in the first six months of 2012 Wigan Council and partners have already saved nearly £60,000 in making reducing repeat contacts.

Table 1. Costs to serve

Face to face	Phone call	Website
£8.62	£2.83	£0.15
Socitm - Channel Value Benchmarking (CVB) 2011		

Moreover, the co-location of employment services in the One Stop Shop resulted in the release of a town centre retail unit and savings of £50,000 per year in rent and maintenance costs.

LIFT remodelling

The LIFT remodelling project has helped to make the most efficient use of the current clinical estate through:

- Ensuring maximum clinical use of LIFT buildings, which were designed to deliver clinical services, rather than provide office accommodation.
- Releasing space for redevelopment and delivery of acute services on hospital sites.
- Ensuring the buildings are more fit for purpose.

Providing services closer to patients' homes will have the added benefits including:

- Reducing travel and, therefore, carbon emissions (subject to improved public transport solutions).
- The rationalisation of the health estate which will ensure that old and energy inefficient buildings are no longer in use
- More efficient utilisation of existing buildings to provide better value for money.

Financial benefits

- Capital spend reduced from a proposed £4 million to a forecast £1.2 million.
- Annual revenue costs reduced by circa £90,000.

Transfer of Mesnes car park

The sale of the car park netted the council circa £1million. Clearly this was a Public Sector transfer of money so the overall public sector did not gain any monetary value however, £600,000 of the receipt has been earmarked for repairs to the car park estate across Wigan. This is an additional benefit to the ones already discussed.

Governance

A multiagency steering group was established reporting to the Capital and Asset Pathfinder Steering Group; this in turn reported to the Local Strategic Management Group and the Local Strategic Partnership. The multiagency steering group comprised representatives:

- DWP
- Greater Manchester Fire
- Greater Manchester Police
- Housing ALMO
- Health – PCT
- Wigan Borough Council
- Job Centre Plus.

This work took place during a period of change within the partnership structure in Wigan. Whilst at the beginning of the project the reporting line was to the Local Strategic Management Group of the LSP, by the end a review of the LSP had simplified structures and recommended the establishment of a Wigan Forward Board to oversee economic and environmental development.

In the absence of the formal LSP, the project reported to council's SMT and members via briefing papers seeking approval for the direction of travel. These arrangements ensured that members, partners and voluntary groups had a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the project and were able to offer the project the benefit of their experience and knowledge of the Wigan community.

Deputy Leader of the council, Councillor David Molyneux, as Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration, oversaw projects such as the Mesnes Street car park.

Resourcing

The budget for the work was £65,000 from LGA plus resources committed by partners in the form of staff time. The budget was used to backfill staff to release expertise for the project. £40,000 was used to backfill two staff, two days a week for 52 weeks (this includes on-costs and accommodation).

A further £10,000 was contributed to the Transport Survey, which took place over six weeks and involved 12 members of staff. Programme management cost £10,000 for one day of support per month for a year. This involved managing the programme, producing update reports, sharing information, managing communications and liaising with partners. The remainder of £5,000 was spent on meetings, hospitality and equipment.

All partners involved in the pathfinder contributed internal resources to mapping data and collecting and sharing footfall figures. The time committed to do this was estimated at 10 days support from each partner over the period of the project.

A key aim in Wigan with any Customer Insight programme is to ensure it delivers a legacy of skills, experience and knowledge. Therefore, Wigan's approach is to back fill posts and allow their own staff to undertake the research. This gives staff the opportunity to get involved in new and innovative high profile pieces of work and at the same time ensure that the learning is shared within teams in order to influence similar workstreams going forward.

Challenges and lessons learnt

Opportunities workshop

A number of lessons were clear from the results of the opportunities workshop.

- Partners need to have a better co-ordination of data regarding their assets in order to clearly identify which opportunities are likely to deliver either efficiencies or improvements to service delivery.
- It would be useful to develop a sustainable database of public sector assets in order to help inform future decision making.
- The GIS system needs to be developed with full cross public sector details in order to be a useful tool in supporting capital and asset management work.
- Preparation of the Partner Opportunity statements is paramount to the success of the opportunity workshops.

Mapping service provision for worklessness

The council worked with Job Centre plus to map providers of services relating to worklessness across the Borough. However the project quickly realised that many of the postcodes did not map to the points at which services were access by customers.

Many of the postcodes in fact pertained to the location of administration staff. Furthermore, many residents travelled into the centre of town to access services. The project realised that it was more important to understand who the cohort of people are and how services can be more coherent for them rather than solely understanding the location of services.

Effort versus value

Wigan would advise other projects to ensure that the value of the insight outweighs the cost of procuring it. The project pursued detailed information on the running costs of buildings only once they had specific proposals to evaluate – rather than from the outset of the project. Projects should consider the proportionality of effort regarding the value of the insight, and at what point in the process the information is relevant.

Rollout of the work programme

Changing national policy impacted Wigan's provision of worklessness services. While the mapping of service provision was underway, the DWP rolled out the Work Programme. The Work Programme replaced a system comprising multiple service providers with a single provider – in Wigan's case G4S. This meant that all the services would henceforth be administered by one organisation. In retrospect, the project would have benefited from understanding the long-term implications of the DWP plans earlier, before embarking on the mapping exercise.

However, the greater understanding into the customer experience provided by the mapping exercise and other insight activities outlined here has been incorporated into the reshaping of access and support services – as reflected in the mix of worklessness-related services offered by the Life Centre.

Next steps

Wigan will continue to progress the projects that are underway as a result of the pathfinder activity including the Depot Review, Robin Park Fire Station and Ashton LIFT building.

The Steering group has become a regular part of the partnership infrastructure with quarterly meetings that continue to seek further opportunities around public sector assets in Wigan.

With regards to Customer Insight, Wigan is:

- developing an approach for embedding customer journey mapping within all aspects of service design in Wigan Council
- developing a process for satisfaction surveys that allows us to understand not only how well we are doing but what changes to delivery are needed to improve service levels while at the same time delivering efficiencies in existing processes.





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