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1 Introduction

1.1 This document forms the next stage in the preparation of a Core Strategy Development Plan Document for the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral. It is published for public consultation.

1.2 This is the last chance to comment on the emerging Core Strategy before a draft plan is prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State.

What is a Core Strategy?

1.3 The Core Strategy is a long term planning document that will set the framework for future development and investment in Wirral over the next 15 to 20 years. It is not intended to be a site-specific Development Plan Document.

1.4 Once adopted, the Core Strategy will form part of the Local Development Framework for the Borough and will be used as the basis for determining individual planning applications and for other decisions taken under the Planning Acts.

How is it Prepared?

1.5 A Core Strategy must be prepared in accordance with national procedures.

1.6 The Council began preparing the Core Strategy in July 2005 when initial consultation was undertaken to identify the Borough's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and local needs. The findings were then prioritised by a series of public workshops held in November 2006. Additional consultation with under-represented groups took place during summer 2007.

1.7 Formal consultation on Issues, Vision and Objectives took place in February 2009 and on Spatial Options in January 2010.

1.8 Reports of consultation are available, which have been used to inform the content and conclusions now set out within this document.

What is this Document About?

1.9 This document sets out the Council's Preferred Options for a long-term spatial strategy for the Borough. It represents the first formal statement of what the Council expects to include within a Core Strategy Development Plan Document for Wirral.

1.10 This document is accompanied by a separate Assessment Report which gives a fuller explanation of the reasons that these options have been preferred⁽¹⁾.

1 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

Core Strategy for Wirral - Preferred Options Report

1.11 The Preferred Options contained within this document have also been subject to a sustainability appraisal⁽²⁾, an assessment of their likely impact on European Sites⁽³⁾ and an Equality Impact Statement⁽⁴⁾, which are available for public inspection.

1.12 The implications of the Preferred Options for the replacement of the policies and proposals in the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 are also set out in an accompanying document⁽⁵⁾.

How Can You Comment?

1.13 You can comment on any aspect of this document or on the content of any of the accompanying documents. A series of consultation questions have been included in this document to guide you to areas where we would especially like to hear your views. Your comments must, however, be made in writing, by letter, e-mail or fax **and arrive at the address below no later than 17.00 hours on Friday 7 January 2011.**

1.14 It costs the Council less if your comments can be made through the Council's on-line consultation system. This will also help us to keep you up-to-date on future progress. It is easy to register and you will be given your own user name and password at <http://wirral-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

1.15 Please note that the Council will not be able to keep any of the comments you make private and your name or organisation as well as your comments may need to be recorded in a published report of consultation.

1.16 Copies of this document have also been placed in public libraries and One-Stop-Shops and can be made available in alternative formats, on request from the address below.

What Will Happen Next?

1.17 The comments you send in will be used to test the Council's assessment of the Preferred Options and will be used to inform the preparation of a draft Core Strategy. The Council expects to publish a draft Core Strategy in March 2011 before the Core Strategy is formally submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination in June 2011.

For further information please contact:

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2 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

3 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

4 Core Strategy Preferred Options Equality Impact Statement(2010)

5 Core Strategy Preferred Options Implications for Unitary Development Plan Policies and Proposals (2010)

2 Plan Period

2.1 The initial time period for the Core Strategy extended to 2031⁽⁶⁾. Government Office North West indicated that a reduced plan period would better reflect the national policy that a Core Strategy should look forward at least 15 years from the expected date of adoption.

2.2 The Local Development Scheme approved by the Secretary of State in November 2009 indicated a target for adoption of June 2011. It is now expected that the date of adoption will be no earlier than February 2012.

Milestone	Date
Consultation on Preferred Options	November 2010
Publication of Draft Plan	March 2011
Submission	June 2011
Public Examination Hearing	September 2011
Inspectors Report	December 2011
Adoption	February 2012

2.3 The Council's preferred option for the plan period is, therefore, as follows:

Preferred Option 1 - Plan Period

Fifteen years from the estimated date of adoption of February 2012 - a plan period of April 2012 to March 2027.

2.4 Any further alteration to the timetable will need to be taken into account as the preparation of the Core Strategy progresses.

2.5 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that there will be no implications arising from Preferred Option 1⁽⁷⁾.

2.6 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows that Preferred Option 1 is considered to have no potential for effects on European Sites⁽⁸⁾.

Consultation Question 1

Do you agree with Preferred Option 1 - Plan Period?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

6 Core Strategy Spatial Options Report (January 2010)

7 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

8 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

3 Spatial Portrait

3.1 Previous stages of consultation have sought to identify the issues that local people believe should be dealt with as part of a Core Strategy for Wirral⁽⁹⁾. Further research has added to the list of issues that may need to be addressed⁽¹⁰⁾.

3.2 The Spatial Portrait included in the Spatial Options Report in January 2010 has been amended in light of the comments received and is now provided in a separate accompanying report⁽¹¹⁾.

Policy Context

3.3 The policy context for the Core Strategy is set by national policy and established local strategies. Much of this policy context has already been set out in the Council's previous consultation documents⁽¹²⁾ and is not repeated again in this Preferred Options Report. The policy context of greatest relevance to each of the issues considered is now provided in an separate accompanying report⁽¹³⁾.

Changes Since the Spatial Options Report

3.4 The Core Strategy is being prepared in a period of rapid change. The main changes since the publication of the Spatial Options Report include:

Changes to national policy:

- Regional Spatial Strategies were revoked in July 2010 to remove "top-down" targets to allow greater local choice
- The Secretary of State has confirmed that decisions on housing supply will rest with local councils without the framework of regional numbers and plans
- National policy for housing has been amended to remove the national minimum density for new housing development and to remove back gardens from the definition of previously developed land⁽¹⁴⁾
- National planning policy is expected to be subject to further changes in the short to medium term, to be replaced by a new National Policy Framework

9 the results of the latest stage of consultation are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

10 the main evidence base documents are listed in section 26 of this document

11 Core Strategy Preferred Options Revised Spatial Portrait (2010)

12 Core Strategy Issues, Vision and Objectives Report (February 2009) and Core Strategy Spatial Options Report (January 2010)

13 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

14 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (CLG, PPS3, June 2010)

Changes in the national economy:

- There is significant uncertainty over when the economic situation will begin to improve and to what level it will return⁽¹⁵⁾
- The number of new homes completed in Wirral has dropped well below the previous target of 500 net new dwellings each year⁽¹⁶⁾
- The need for affordable housing has increased significantly⁽¹⁷⁾ but the ability for private developments to support it has reduced⁽¹⁸⁾
- The amount of new employment floorspace completed in Wirral has fallen well below previous average levels
- The latest sub-regional level job forecasts show a slight loss of jobs to 2015 followed by an increase of 3.6% or 3,920 jobs by 2030⁽¹⁹⁾
- Public funding is expected to be subject to significant reductions, with implications for regeneration projects, affordable housing and publicly funded infrastructure

Changes in national statistics:

- The national mid-year population estimates have been revised to show a smaller population in Wirral of 308,500 people in 2009⁽²⁰⁾
- The latest national projections show the Wirral population continuing to decline by 2% or 4,800 people by 2033

-
- 15 the Regional Economic Forecasting Panel expects recession impacts to continue to 2015 when longer term growth rates are expected to resume. Other commentators suggest that it could take longer to return to previous conditions
- 16 the previous Government approved reductions in short term targets to 265 in 2009/10 and 160 in 2010/11 under the Wirral Local Area Agreement
- 17 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Fordhams Research, 2010)
- 18 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Affordable Housing Viability Study (Fordhams Research, 2010)
- 19 Liverpool City Region Economic Forecasts Recession and Recovery (TMP, December 2009)
- 20 ONS Mid Year Estimates 2002 to 2008 (Revised May 2009). The Statistical Bulletin for Population Estimates (June 2010) placed Wirral in the top five local authorities in England and Wales for the greatest percentage decrease in population between mid-2001 and mid-2009

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- While the population of working age is expected to decline by 15% or 26,500 people, the number of older people is expected to increase by over a third or 24,600 people⁽²¹⁾
- The latest travel to work data shows a lower proportion of Wirral residents travelling to work in Cheshire West and Chester; and an increasing proportion of residents travelling to work further afield in North Wales and Manchester⁽²²⁾
- Latest estimates prepared to inform the Merseyside Local Transport Plan show the number of trips and distances travelled continuing to rise by 6.1% and 8.5% by 2024⁽²³⁾

Progress on major developments:

- The construction of the waterfront development at New Brighton has now begun⁽²⁴⁾
- Work has begun on the strengthening and refurbishment of the Bidston Moss Viaduct⁽²⁵⁾
- The Council has resolved to approve the first two planning applications for Wirral Waters at Northbank East⁽²⁶⁾. A further planning application for East Float was resolved for approval subject to referral to the Secretary of State in August 2010⁽²⁷⁾
- Significant progress has continued to be made within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, which has accommodated an increasing proportion of the Borough's new housing development since April 2004⁽²⁸⁾

21 ONS 2008-based population projections (July 2010)

22 ONS Commute-APS (2008)

23 Building a New Mobility Culture - Challenges and Opportunities for Future Transport Provision in Merseyside (Merseyside Transport Partnership, 2010)

24 including a supermarket, cinema, hotel and a refurbished marine lake with modern sailing facilities

25 the viaduct forms part of a strategic freight route providing access to the Twelve Quays Ferry Terminal and Liverpool City Centre

26 which could provide up to 1,600 new homes

27 which could provide a further 13,500 homes; and over half a million square metres of offices, research and development, culture, education and leisure floorspace

28 1,137 older dwellings were demolished and 924 new dwellings were completed within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area between April 2003 and April 2010

- The construction of a new Asda superstore in Birkenhead Town Centre is expected to be complete by the end of 2011
- The designation of a new Strategic Regional Site at Birkenhead Docklands was confirmed by the North West Development Agency in August 2010

Key Assets

3.5 A number of replies to previous consultation wanted the Core Strategy to be more explicit about the Borough's strengths and assets⁽²⁹⁾. The results of consultation have shown that the Borough's key assets include:

- A high quality of life and environment for many residents, with some of the most attractive residential areas in Merseyside
- A rich and varied heritage of classical townscapes, docklands, model villages, resorts, merchant estates and commuter settlements, including nationally important buildings, Conservation Areas and archaeology
- Extensive areas of national and international importance for biodiversity and nature conservation
- A generally high quality and accessible countryside with significant historic and landscape value, including pretty rural villages, extensive country parks and high grade agricultural land
- An extensive accessible developed and undeveloped coastline providing long promenades, beaches, islands and views, attracting large numbers of visitors for quiet enjoyment, leisure, recreation and watersports
- Proximity and access by road, rail and ferry to jobs and services in Liverpool, Chester and North Wales, including the Merseyrail network, the Birkenhead and Wallasey road tunnels and the M53 Motorway
- Nationally significant port and dock facilities at Birkenhead, Tranmere and Eastham
- Successful regionally significant employment locations at Bromborough and Twelve Quays, Birkenhead
- High educational attainment among the majority of the population and a high concentration of highly skilled, well-educated people
- Centres of medical excellence at Arrowe Park and Clatterbridge
- One of the lowest crime rates in the country

29 re-iterated by a CABE Places Matter LDF Design Review Panel (April 2010)

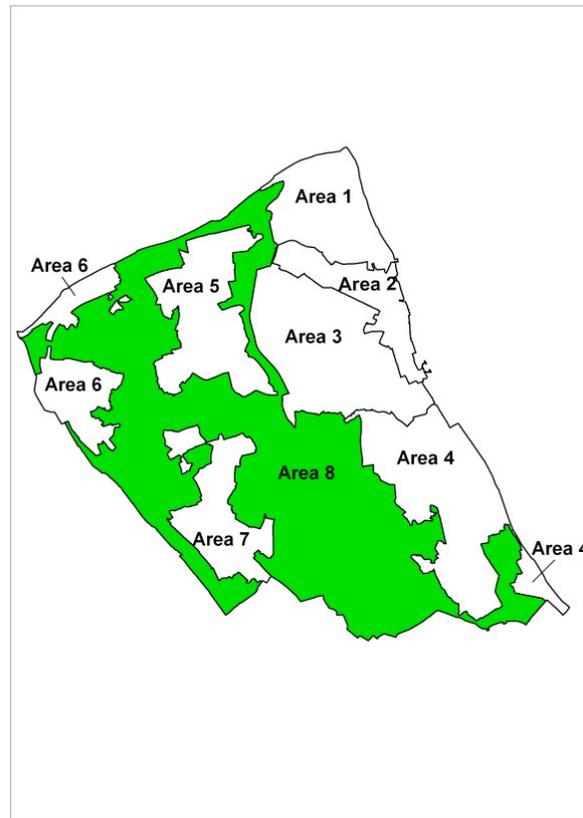
Drivers for Change

3.6 In contrast, the main drivers for change include:

- A low density of jobs and businesses, coupled with low wages, poor graduate retention and high levels of out-commuting
- A declining and ageing population, which is failing to attract and retain younger age groups
- Wide gaps between the best and worst social, economic and environmental conditions, with high concentrations of worklessness and income and employment related deprivation in eastern and central Wirral
- A combination of housing market failure, poor housing conditions, declining centres and high levels of vacant land and buildings in parts of the older urban area;
- A high demand for affordable and specialist housing
- Local shortfalls in the range, quality and quantity of green infrastructure
- The need to respond to climate change, reduce emissions and increase resilience, including flooding, local production, food, water and energy security and sustainable waste management
- The need to promote sustainable travel choices, especially for journeys to work and reduce the impact of localised traffic congestion
- The opportunity to maximise the contribution of existing centres and the large scale development opportunities in and around Birkenhead and the Birkenhead Dock Estate

4 Settlement Areas

4.1 Previous stages of consultation have also been used to show how the Core Strategy could impact on local areas. The Spatial Options Report defined eight broad Settlement Areas based on the main groups of settlements within the Borough:



Picture 4.1

4.2 Public consultation appeared to welcome the Settlement Areas as a way of making the Core Strategy more relevant to local people; the Settlement Area Profiles provided as part of the Spatial Portrait; and the sections setting out the likely implications of the emerging Policy Options for each of the Settlement Areas, although one respondent thought that this had led to the analysis being too repetitive.

4.3 Amended Settlement Area Profiles are now provided in a separate accompanying report⁽³⁰⁾.

4.4 The main criticisms were that the Settlement Areas should be named rather than numbered, to reduce the need for constant cross referencing, and that it was not always clear how the Settlement Areas related to the spatial priorities set out in the former Regional Spatial Strategy, which had divided the Borough into the RSS Inner Area, RSS Outer Area and RSS Rural Area.

30 Core Strategy Preferred Options Revised Spatial Portrait (2010)

4.5 A number of respondents were also concerned that the boundaries would not, as currently drawn, support the expansion of the existing urban areas to accommodate development proposals within the Green Belt; and that including the Borough's rural areas within a single Settlement Area did not allow distinctions to be made between some of the smaller rural settlements⁽³¹⁾.

4.6 The Council proposes to continue to use the Settlement Area approach to better explain the implications of the Core Strategy for local areas and to allow the local distinctiveness of each of these Settlement Areas to be more clearly expressed. Individual policies for each Settlement Area are expected to take the form of a series of statements about local priorities and assets:

Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

The main spatial implications of the Core Strategy will be presented through a series of Settlement Area Policies⁽³²⁾.

Settlement Area Policies will set out:

- the number, scale, type and broad location of new housing development⁽³³⁾
- the amount, scale, type and broad location of new employment development⁽³⁴⁾
- priorities for local infrastructure⁽³⁵⁾
- priorities for existing centres⁽³⁶⁾
- priorities for maintaining local distinctiveness⁽³⁷⁾
- priorities for green infrastructure and public access⁽³⁸⁾
- priorities for public safety⁽³⁹⁾
- priorities for tourism

31 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

32 Settlement Area Policies will be supported by a series of Settlement Area Profiles setting out the principal characteristics and local distinctiveness of each Settlement Area which will be regularly updated as part of the Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report

33 in line with Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets and Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing

34 in line with Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment

35 including transport, utilities and community services including sports, education and medical services

36 in line with Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network

37 in line with Preferred Spatial Objective 5 - Environmental Quality

38 in line with Preferred Option 18 - Green Infrastructure

39 including coast protection, flooding and other hazards

Settlement Area Policies for Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core will set out the main priorities for the New City Neighbourhood at Birkenhead and Wirral Waters⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Settlement Area Policies for Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham will set out the main priorities for the industrial locations in Bromborough⁽⁴¹⁾.

Settlement Area Policies for Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area will set out the main priorities for the Green Belt and the rural economy.

Settlement Areas will be both named and numbered on the following basis:

Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	Settlement Area 7 - Heswall
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area

4.7 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 2 is considered sustainable. It will have a positive effect on social inclusion, urban regeneration and economic development, and will set priorities for maintaining local distinctiveness, including landscape quality and local heritage. There are some uncertainties at this stage, which will be reconsidered when the policies are prepared for the draft Core Strategy⁽⁴²⁾.

4.8 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows that Preferred Option 2 is capable of a significant adverse effect on European Sites, as all the Settlement Areas have pathways to European Sites and will, therefore require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽⁴³⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

4.9 The only realistic alternative approach would be to follow the three larger geographical units for the RSS Inner Area, RSS Outer Area and RSS Rural Area identified in the former Regional Spatial Strategy. This approach was discounted when the Spatial Options Report was being prepared, on advice from Government Office North West, on the basis that it would fail to capture the local distinctiveness of Wirral's historic settlement patterns. The usefulness of this alternative approach has now been further undermined by the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

40 in line with Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations

41 in line with Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations

42 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

43 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

4.10 The Settlement Area approach has since been used as an example of best practice by the national Planning Advisory Service.

Consultation Question 2

Do you agree with Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

5 Preferred Spatial Vision

5.1 The Council's Spatial Vision for the Borough has already been subject to public consultation on two occasions⁽⁴⁴⁾. The Spatial Options Report included the background on how the Vision had been developed based on the Sustainable Community Strategy adopted by the Council in May 2009⁽⁴⁵⁾.

5.2 Public consultation showed a broad level of support for the Spatial Vision contained within the Spatial Options Report, as a fair indication of what the Council wanted to achieve but a number of people thought that the Vision was probably too long and needed a simple one line summary to make it more easily understood. Government Office North West felt that there was too much overlap with the Spatial Objectives and that the Vision and Objectives were pitched at too similar a level.

5.3 Some people thought that the Vision was over-ambitious; that the Council was pinning most of its hopes on Wirral Waters, with no "Plan B"; that the Vision should make greater reference to the limitations of a peninsula and the Borough's traditional role as dormitory to Liverpool; and that all the Borough's needs could not be met by large scale housing provision in east Wirral. Some people wanted the Vision to allow for urban extensions.

5.4 A number of people felt that the Vision was too vague with regard to Settlement Area 8; that it should refer to agriculture, local production, food security and the Green Belt; and that it provided little guidance on the need to secure benefits over a wider area, outside regeneration priority areas. Others wanted a greater link with other sub-regional initiatives⁽⁴⁶⁾. Cultural facilities, sport and recreation and care for the elderly were also identified as missing items. Other responses sought a greater focus on the environment alongside social and economic concerns; greater clarity on the

44 Core Strategy Issues Vision and Objectives Report (February 2009) and Core Strategy Spatial Options Report (January 2010)

45 Wirral 2025 More Equal More Prosperous (Wirral Partnership 2009)

46 such as the Atlantic Gateway, Strategic Regional Sites, Liverpool SuperPort, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, the Port of Liverpool, Manchester Ship Canal and Liverpool Waters

need to increase the population and reduce out-commuting; better integration with sustainable transport objectives; and wanted climate change and energy security to have a higher priority⁽⁴⁷⁾.

5.5 While further changes have been made to take these comments into account, the Council has tried to only concentrate on genuinely strategic issues, to keep the Vision as short as possible and allow any additional detail to be included elsewhere within the Preferred Options Report. The Council's Preferred Spatial Vision is now as set out below:

Preferred Option 3 - Spatial Vision

By April 2027, Wirral will continue to offer a high quality of life, as an attractive place to live an active, productive, safe and healthy lifestyle based on a series of distinct but well-integrated settlements, which will together make a stronger contribution to the prosperity and regeneration of the wider sub-region.

The focus of new development and investment will be on urban regeneration; tackling social, health, economic and environmental disparity; re-using previously developed land; and on strengthening and enhancing the distinctive assets of the Borough, including the quality and value of the natural environment; supported by a tight Green Belt.

The housing market and housing conditions within the older urban areas in east Wirral will be competing on a more equal footing with outlying residential areas. Large areas of older stock will have been improved and replaced in Birkenhead, Seacombe and Tranmere. A new city neighbourhood will be being established at East Float to create an exemplary, sustainable, mixed-use waterside community, where new homes and a wide range of employment, education, leisure, community and cultural uses will create a new impetus for wider regeneration at the heart of the older urban area, reversing trends in the loss of population, particularly among younger age groups.

The density of jobs and businesses and rates of economic activity will be moving toward regional average levels and vacant land will be being brought back into productive economic use. Sustainable economic regeneration will be being driven by the major economic hubs of Birkenhead, Bromborough and the Ports, with strong transport links to Liverpool, Chester and North Wales, supported by a thriving network of town, district and local service centres and attractive, safe and healthy residential areas within each main Settlement Area.

47 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

Wirral's potential as a visitor and tourist destination will be focused on the quality of the Borough's natural environment; built heritage; country parks; and visitor and coastal facilities at Birkenhead, New Brighton, Leasowe, Hoylake, West Kirby, Thurstaston and along the Mersey coast.

Wirral's rural areas will be providing for an efficient and productive agricultural economy making full and effective use of the Borough's best and most versatile agricultural land, promoting local production and food security.

Development and investment will support and encourage a more sustainable pattern of travel that will reduce emissions; reduce the level of traffic along major routes; improve air quality; increase the use of public transport; and make greater use of alternative forms of transport such as walking and cycling.

There will be a greater emphasis, across all sectors, on securing sustainable approaches to design and construction; energy; water; flood risk, waste management; carbon impact; local employment and production; and mitigation, adaptation and resilience to climate change.

5.6 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 3 is considered sustainable. It will improve job densities, support housing market renewal, enhance tourism potential and maintain a network of centres. It will also secure sustainable approaches to energy, water and waste management, and will enhance local distinctiveness⁽⁴⁸⁾.

5.7 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows Preferred Option 3 is capable of a significant adverse effect on European Sites and will require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

5.8 No alternative Spatial Vision is proposed.

Consultation Question 3

Do you agree with Preferred Option 3 - Spatial Vision?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

48 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

49 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

6 Preferred Spatial Objectives

6.1 The Council consulted on eleven Spatial Objectives for the Core Strategy in the Spatial Options Report in January 2010⁽⁵⁰⁾.

6.2 Public consultation indicated a wide level of support for the Spatial Objectives presented in the Spatial Options Report. The main issues related to the references to specific Settlement Areas within some of the Objectives, which the majority of respondents believed should apply across the Borough as a whole; a desire to turn the objectives into more detailed policy statements; and a desire to refer to specific projects and initiatives.

6.3 Other comments indicated that growth and development should be directed across a wider area of the Borough; the need to allow district and local centres to continue to serve the needs of local communities; that economic revitalisation should not be pursued at the expense of the wider character of the Borough; opportunities for the development of the rail network; a greater emphasis on the impact of travel choices; and the need to expand the approach to climate change.

6.4 A CABE Places Matter Design Review Panel, which met towards the end of April 2010, provided additional advice which included the need to further reduce the focus of the Spatial Objectives to allow the Council's spatial priorities to be more simply and clearly expressed⁽⁵¹⁾.

6.5 The Council has, therefore, made the following changes to the Spatial Objectives, to express the priority to be given to issues related to economic revitalisation; housing growth and housing market renewal; transport accessibility; neighbourhood services; environmental quality; flood risk; and the creation of a new city neighbourhood in east Wirral:

Preferred Spatial Objective 1 - Economic Revitalisation

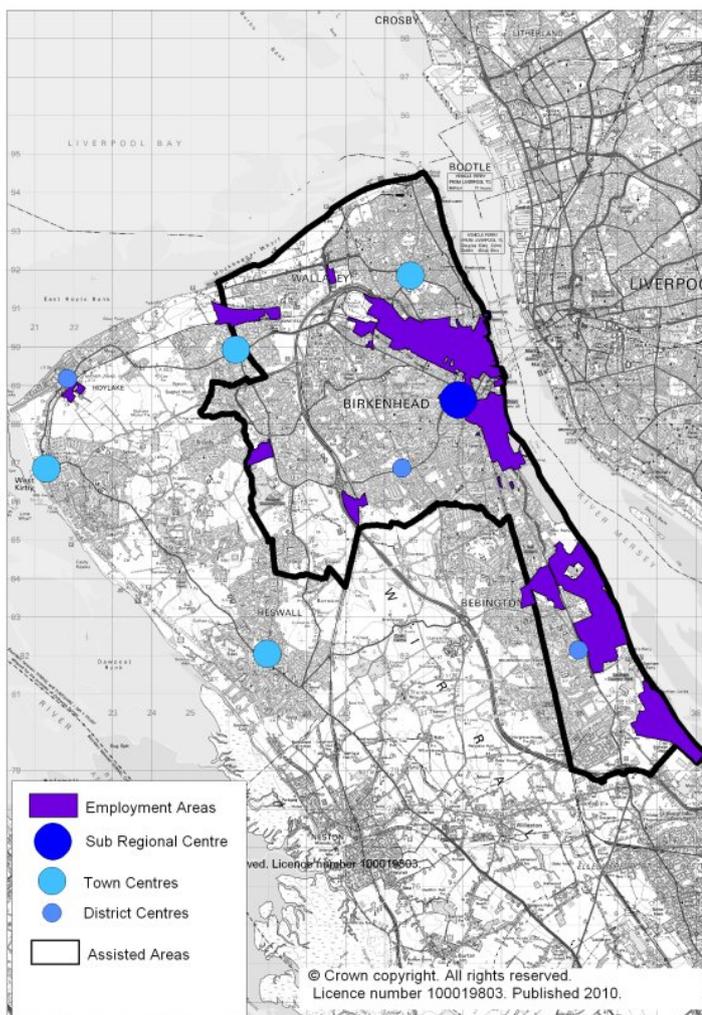
To focus new employment development and investment within the existing employment areas in the Assisted Areas and existing centres shown on Picture 6.1

6.6 The intention of Preferred Spatial Objective 1 is to secure a higher density of jobs and businesses in areas that will be most accessible to the majority of the Borough's population, especially to areas where social, economic and environmental

50 twenty-nine potential objectives were also consulted on as part of the Core Strategy Issues, Vision and Objectives Report (February 2009)

51 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

needs are greatest; to support an increase in economic activity; tackle worklessness; and reduce the need to travel outside the Borough to work in other areas, as part of a wider vision for regeneration at the heart of the Liverpool City Region.



Picture 6.1

6.7 The Assisted Areas were last designated by the Government in 2006 to identify areas which would qualify for special financial assistance on the basis of their need for employment and economic revitalisation.

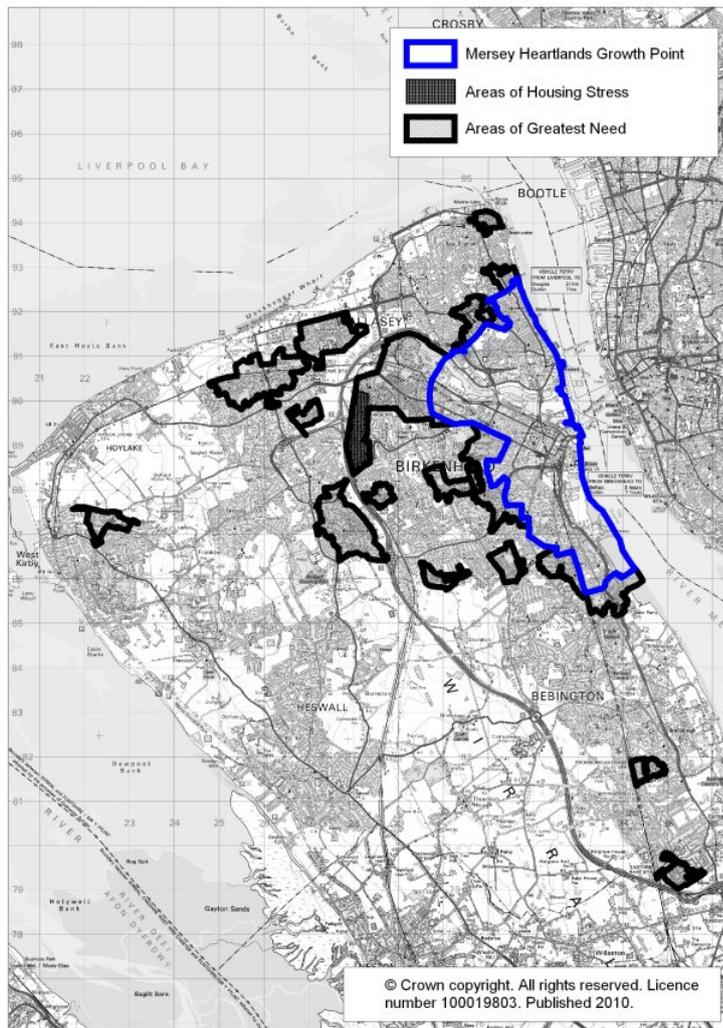
6.8 The existing employment areas shown on Picture 6.1 include the areas listed under Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment.

6.9 The existing centres shown on Picture 6.1 include the higher level centres listed under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network.

Preferred Spatial Objective 2 - Housing Growth and Market Renewal

To focus housing development and investment within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area; the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point; and other vulnerable housing market areas shown on Picture 6.2

6.10 The intention of Preferred Spatial Objective 2 is to regenerate the older urban areas; improve housing conditions; and support the revitalisation of the housing market, by tackling the long-term loss of population from areas where social, economic and environmental needs are greatest, as part of a wider vision for regeneration at the heart of the Liverpool City Region.



Picture 6.2

6.11 The Newheartlands Pathfinder Area was designated by the Government in April 2003 as part of a 20-year programme for the renewal of the housing market, in areas where conditions were worst, in parts of Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral.

6.12 The Mersey Heartlands Growth Point was designated by the Government in December 2008 to achieve a higher rate of housing delivery in Liverpool and Wirral between April 2008 and March 2017.

6.13 The additional vulnerable housing market area shown on Picture 6.2 includes the Beechwood Estate in Bidston⁽⁵²⁾.

Preferred Spatial Objective 3 - Transport Accessibility

To direct new development to locations with easy access to the existing centres and high frequency public transport corridors shown on Picture 6.3.

6.14 The intention of Preferred Spatial Objective 3 is to ensure that new development is located within easy walking distance of local centres and of regular and frequent public transport to support the vitality of local centres; reduce the need to travel; and provide a realistic choice of means of transport to jobs and services.

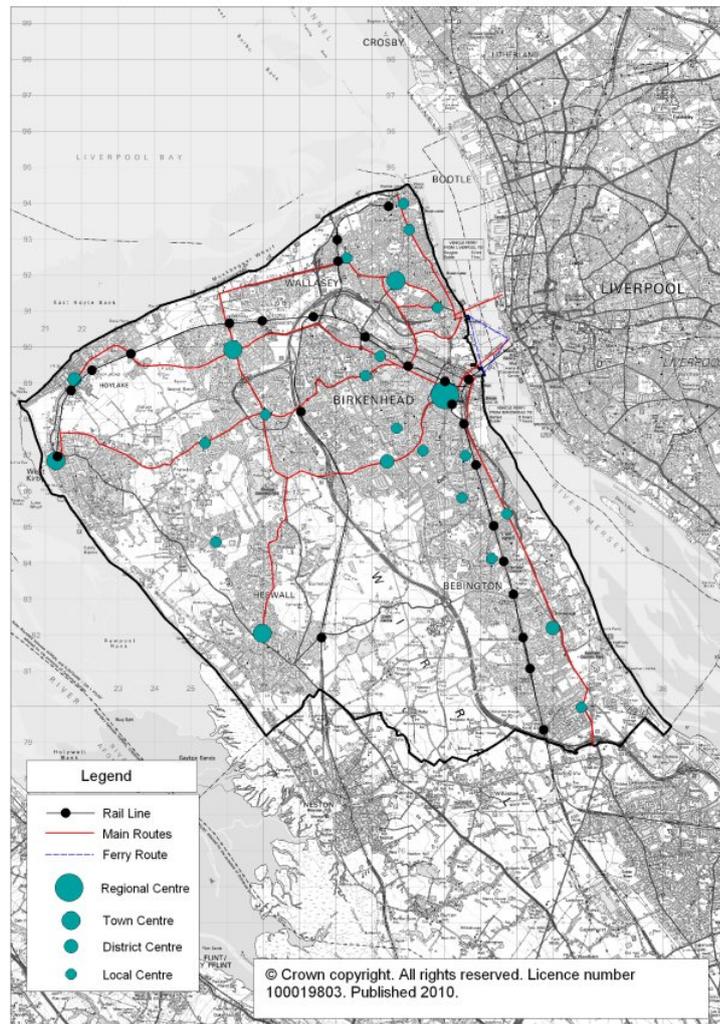
6.15 The existing centres shown on Picture 6.3 include all the centres listed under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network.

6.16 The high frequency public transport corridors shown on Picture 6.3 include:

- Merseyrail lines from Liverpool and Birkenhead to New Brighton, West Kirby and Chester
- the Borderlands railway line from Bidston to Wrexham
- Ferry services to Liverpool from Seacombe and Woodside
- Bus service routes from Birkenhead to Liscard, Wallasey and New Brighton
- Bus service routes from Birkenhead to Moreton, Hoylake and West Kirby
- Bus service routes from Birkenhead to Upton, Greasby and West Kirby
- Bus service routes from Birkenhead to Ellesmere Port and Chester (A41)
- Bus service routes from Birkenhead to Heswall

6.17 The A552 Woodchurch Road corridor is also identified in the Merseyside Local Transport Plan as an area where traffic congestion needs to be closely monitored.

52 additional vulnerable housing areas have been identified by monitoring the relative progress of housing market renewal within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area against performance within the rest of the sub-region

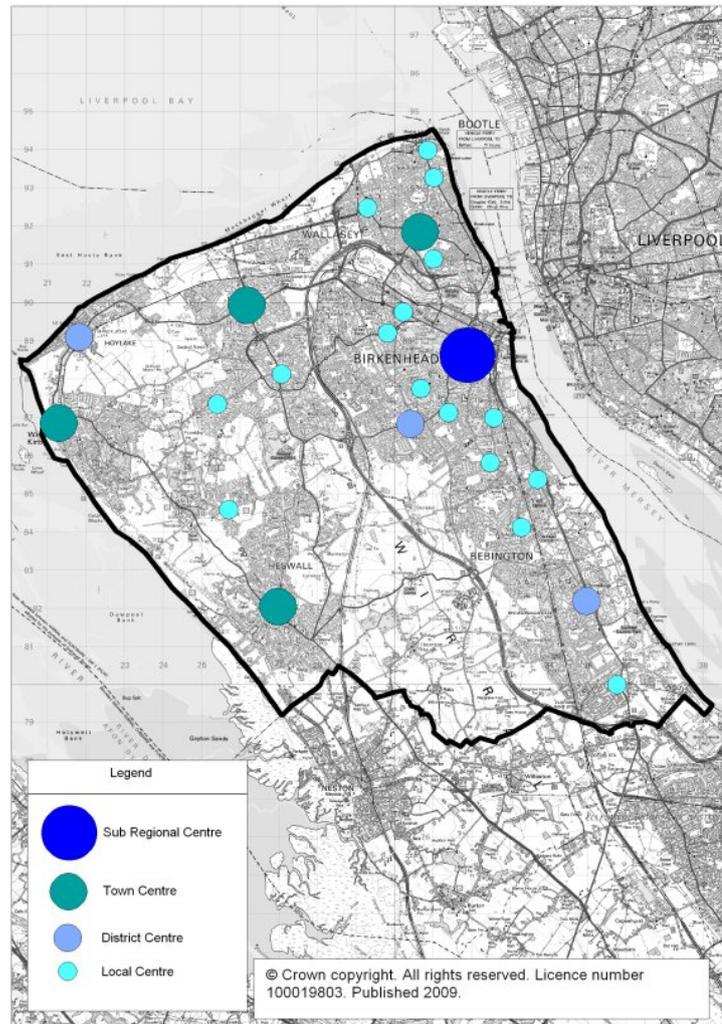


Picture 6.3

Preferred Spatial Objective 4 - Neighbourhood Services

To focus the provision of shops, services, health and community facilities on the existing centres which meet the everyday needs of local communities shown on Picture 6.4

6.18 The intention of Preferred Spatial Objective 4 is to strengthen and retain a thriving network of district and local centres, with a diverse range of shops and services; capable of meeting the everyday needs of local communities; in locations that are easily accessible by a choice of means of transport, including walking and cycling.



Picture 6.4

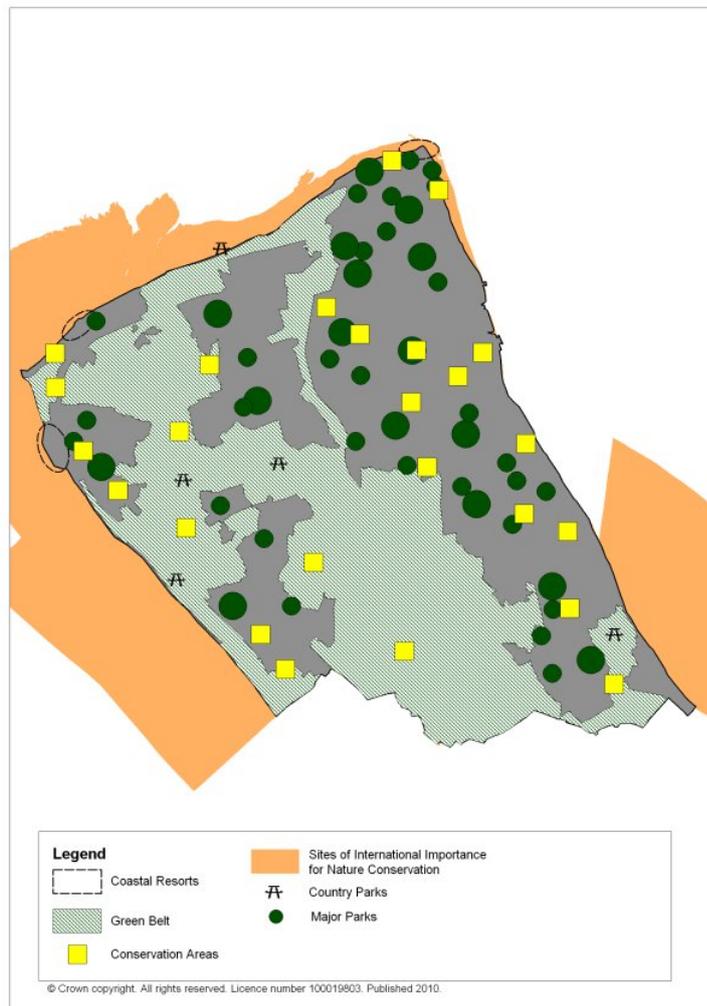
6.19 The existing centres shown on Picture 6.4 include all the centres listed under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network.

Preferred Spatial Objective 5 - Environmental Quality

To ensure that development and investment will enhance and improve the locally distinctive characteristics and assets listed in the Settlement Area Policies⁽⁵³⁾

6.20 The intention of Preferred Spatial Objective 5 is to retain and strengthen the quality of the Borough's most distinctive assets, assets which add positively to quality of life and make Wirral an attractive place to live, work and visit.

53 provided under Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies



Picture 6.5

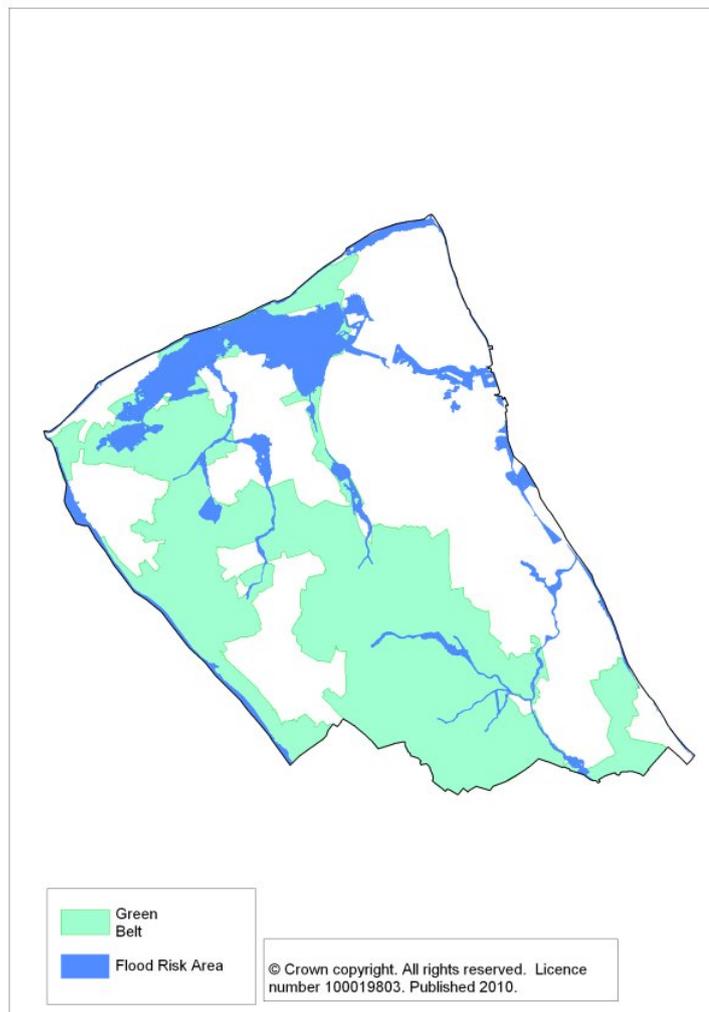
6.21 The characteristics and assets to be listed in the Settlement Area Policies under Preferred Option 2, will include:

- the character and setting of villages and settlements
- the character and quality of the landscape, coast and countryside
- the character of coastal resorts and facilities
- facilities for formal, informal and countryside recreation
- local heritage
- the character of residential areas
- green infrastructure including biodiversity, geodiversity and public rights of way
- distinctive scenery and views
- designations of local, national or international importance

Preferred Spatial Objective 6 - Flood Risk

To direct new development away from areas that may be liable to flooding⁽⁵⁴⁾

6.22 The intention of Preferred Spatial Objective 6 is to prevent development in areas known to be at risk of flooding or which would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.



Picture 6.6

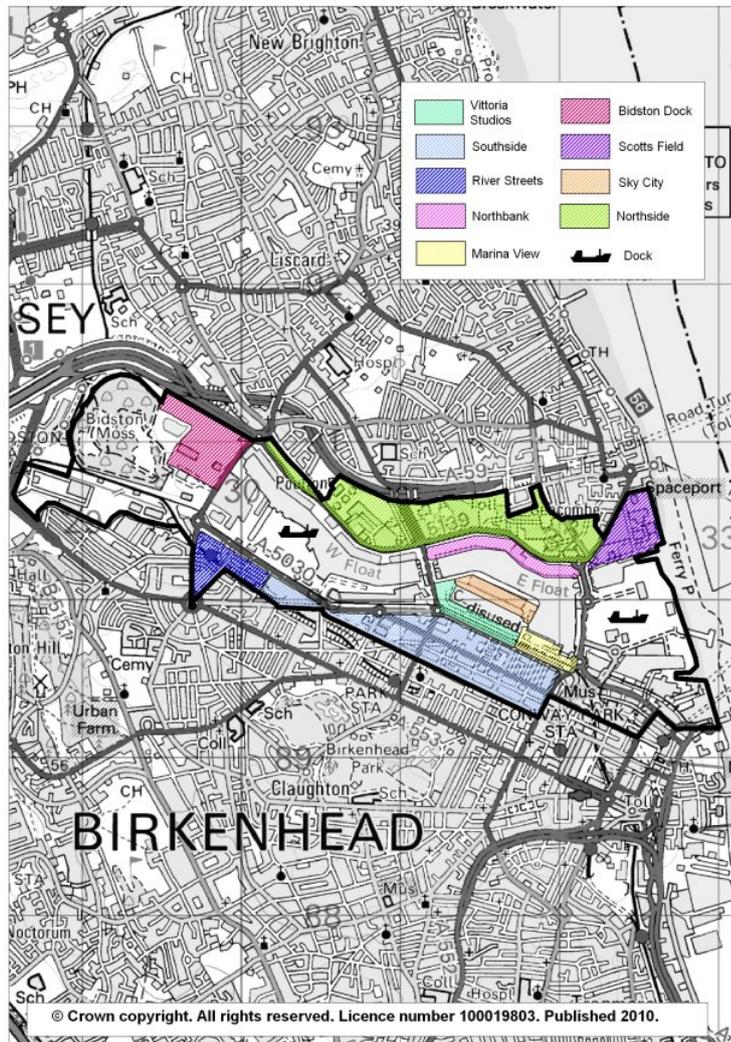
54 areas currently liable to flooding are illustrated on Picture 6.6. The extent of areas at risk of flooding may change over the lifetime of the Core Strategy subject to further advice from the Environment Agency

6.23 The areas shown as liable to flooding on Picture 6.6 have been taken from the Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009 and include areas falling within the Functional Floodplain, Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3.

Preferred Spatial Objective 7 - New City Neighbourhood

To establish a new city neighbourhood at the heart of the older urban areas in Birkenhead in the areas shown on Picture 6.7

6.24 The intention of Preferred Spatial Objective 7 is to express the Council's long-term objective to secure the commercial transformation of the heart of the older urban areas by securing a major, modern, high-density, mixed-use, commercial and residential community on vacant and underused previously developed land in and around Birkenhead and within the Birkenhead Dock Estate, as part of a wider vision for regeneration at the heart of the Liverpool City Region.



Picture 6.7

6.25 The area shown on Picture 6.7 could accommodate, over a period that will extend well beyond the current Core Strategy:

- Up to 460,000 square metres of high density modern office space
- Up to 72,500 square metres of new retail floorspace ⁽⁵⁵⁾
- Up to 15,500 new residential units
- Up to 25,000 new jobs
- Up to 29,000 residents

6.26 The areas shown on Picture 6.7 will act as a focus and catalyst for wider regeneration, in an area where the concentration of vacant land and premises and social, economic and environmental needs are greatest⁽⁵⁶⁾.

6.27 The area was confirmed as a Strategic Regional Site in August 2010.

Impact Assessments

6.28 The revised sustainability appraisal includes a matrix which assesses the compatibility of the Preferred Spatial Objectives with sustainability objectives. Overall, the appraisal suggests that there are no outright conflicts between the Preferred Spatial Objectives but there are a number of uncertainties, depending on how the final Core Strategy is implemented⁽⁵⁷⁾.

6.29 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that Preferred Spatial Objectives 3, 4, 5 and 6 have no potential for significant adverse effects on European Sites. Preferred Spatial Objectives 1, 2 and 7 will, however require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽⁵⁸⁾.

Alternative Options

6.30 No alternative Spatial Objectives are suggested.

Consultation Question 4

Do you agree with the Preferred Spatial Objectives?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see them changed.

Please indicate the Objective(s) you are talking about by referring to their number and title.

55 phased in line with the delivery of office and residential elements

56 the intention to establish a New City Neighbourhood is also expressed in Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations

57 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

58 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

7 Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy

7.1 The Council consulted on three Broad Spatial Options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Broad Spatial Option 1 - Focused Regeneration
- Broad Spatial Option 2 - Balanced Growth
- Broad Spatial Option 3 - Urban Expansion

7.2 The Council initially indicated that Preferred Broad Spatial Option 1 - Focused Regeneration was likely to be the Council's preferred option.

7.3 Consultation showed limited support for Broad Spatial Option 1 because of the focus on a small area of the Borough and the reliance on a small number of delivery partners. The strongest support was expressed for Broad Spatial Option 2 which would allow a wider range of local issues to be addressed alongside the regeneration of the older urban areas. There was, however, little support for Broad Spatial Option 3, primarily because of its implications for the character and natural assets of the Borough⁽⁵⁹⁾.

7.4 There was support for key elements like Strategic Regional Sites to be retained whatever Broad Spatial Option was pursued and an additional Tourism Regeneration Focus was requested for Birkenhead.

7.5 The majority of people did not believe that another Broad Spatial Option needed to be considered. Those who did suggested a mix of the existing Options, mainly linked to the promotion of elements of Broad Spatial Option 3 and a more strongly transport orientated approach to the release of development sites.

7.6 A number of comments were directed towards development proposals emerging within the Birkenhead Dock Estate, at Wirral Waters. A small number, while supportive of regeneration, believed that the scale of the proposals could have too great an impact on the surrounding areas, including areas outside Wirral. Others did not believe it could be delivered in the current economic climate.

7.7 Three planning applications have now been recommended for approval at Wirral Waters subject to Section 106 Agreements and referral to the Secretary of State for which pre-application consultation showed significant support⁽⁶⁰⁾. Local Authorities outside Wirral were also supportive of the application proposals.

59 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

60 the applications provide for up to 15,000 residential dwellings and over 600,000 square metres of commercial, office, leisure and retail floorspace

7.8 The Council has now re-appraised the Broad Spatial Options in the light of the comments received and the findings of the wider evidence base. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽⁶¹⁾.

7.9 The Council's preferred Broad Spatial Option has now been amended to retain the priorities previously expressed under Broad Spatial Option 1 but to allow for some additional development across a wider area of the Borough, within the existing urban areas, in line with Broad Spatial Option 2. The Council does not believe that a policy of urban expansion would be an appropriate response to the issues likely to face Wirral during the plan period.

7.10 The main elements of the Preferred Broad Spatial Option are, therefore, set out below:

Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy

The Core Strategy will focus job, housing and population growth to areas in greatest need of social, economic and environmental regeneration. Elsewhere, the focus will be on targeting local improvements to benefit local residents and to enhance the environmental assets of the Borough⁽⁶²⁾.

Development will be used to promote urban regeneration; housing market renewal; and employment and population growth within the older urban areas of east Wirral⁽⁶³⁾. Housing and employment densities in these areas will be medium to high to make the most efficient use of land, investment, infrastructure and services and to deliver the scale of transformation necessary to support a self-sustaining programme of regeneration. No upper limit will be placed on the number of dwellings provided within these areas, to support a greater pace of regeneration, if the market can support it⁽⁶⁴⁾.

The focus for new jobs will be the Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and Bromborough; and existing employment areas within eastern and central Wirral⁽⁶⁵⁾, where they will be most accessible to the greatest number of residents.

61 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

62 including heritage; landscape; biodiversity; the character of the countryside and coast; and green infrastructure

63 the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point

64 subject to issues related to design and the capacity of transport and other infrastructure networks

65 Birkenhead Town Centre including Hamilton Square; Priory Industrial Estate; the A41 Corridor in Tranmere; Cross Lane Industrial Estate, Wallasey; Pasture Road and Reeds Lane, Moreton; Arrowe Brook Road, Upton; North Cheshire Trading Estate, Prenton; and the factory and research complex at Port Sunlight

No upper limit will be placed on the number of jobs provided within these areas, to support the economic revitalisation of the Borough⁽⁶⁶⁾.

Borough wide services will be directed to the most accessible locations in Birkenhead. Secondary, district level services will continue to be directed to the larger existing centres of Liscard, Moreton, West Kirby and Heswall, which will be well served by public transport.

Land will continue to be set aside at the Ports⁽⁶⁷⁾ to reflect their continued strategic importance for cargo handling and freight movements; the opportunity to maximise the potential for off-road transport; and contribute towards a sub-regional "SuperPort".

A lower proportion of homes and jobs will be directed to areas in and around existing centres⁽⁶⁸⁾ and along transport corridors served by well-integrated, high frequency public transport services, where the development will maintain and improve local centres and neighbourhood services; reduce the need to travel; improve amenity; and provide local housing and employment to meet identified needs. Outside these areas, only small scale, lower density development will be permitted, to meet identified local needs and maintain local character and distinctiveness. A ceiling will be placed on the number of dwellings provided within these areas to ensure that regeneration continues to be supported within the regeneration priority areas.

Green Belt will not be released in the period to March 2027, in the absence of a full review of the Core Strategy and the adoption of a site-specific Development Plan Document⁽⁶⁹⁾. The focus within rural areas will be on re-using existing buildings; strengthening the agricultural economy; increasing local food production and food security; maximising the use of best and most versatile agricultural land; and providing for outdoor sport and recreation; while protecting local distinctiveness and preserving biodiversity, landscape, heritage and other local features of importance⁽⁷⁰⁾.

-
- 66 subject to issues related to the capacity of transport and other infrastructure networks
- 67 Twelve Quays, West Float Docks, Cammell Lairds and the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham
- 68 listed in Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network
- 69 the boundaries to the Green Belt are shown on the Unitary Development Proposals Map. The re-use of existing buildings and development within the existing Major Developed Sites or Infill Villages designated in the Unitary Development Plan will continue to be permitted where the visual and operational impact of the development proposed would not cause any significant additional intrusion. Green Belt boundaries, Major Developed Sites and Infill Villages will only be amended through the adoption of a site-specific Development Plan Document
- 70 identified under Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

Tourism development will be targeted to deliver local improvements to benefit both local residents and visitors; support regeneration in Birkenhead; improvements within the coastal resorts of New Brighton, Hoylake and West Kirby and along the Mersey coastline; and improve access to the coast and countryside.

All new development will be required to demonstrate how it will contribute to addressing identified social, economic or environmental problems; reduce vacant property within the urban area; promote the re-use of previously developed land; improve housing and living conditions; promote environmental improvements; preserve local heritage, identity and distinctiveness; protect and provide a linked network of green infrastructure; reduce emissions; and meet identified local needs.

The local implications will be expressed through a series of Settlement Area Policies⁽⁷¹⁾.

7.11 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 4 is sustainable, given its focus on urban regeneration within the area identified as having the greatest social, economic and environmental need. Growth may place increased demand on infrastructure and measures to respond, mitigate and adapt to these demands will need to be implemented⁽⁷²⁾.

7.12 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that Preferred Option 4 is capable of an adverse effect on European Sites and will require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽⁷³⁾.

Alternative Broad Spatial Option

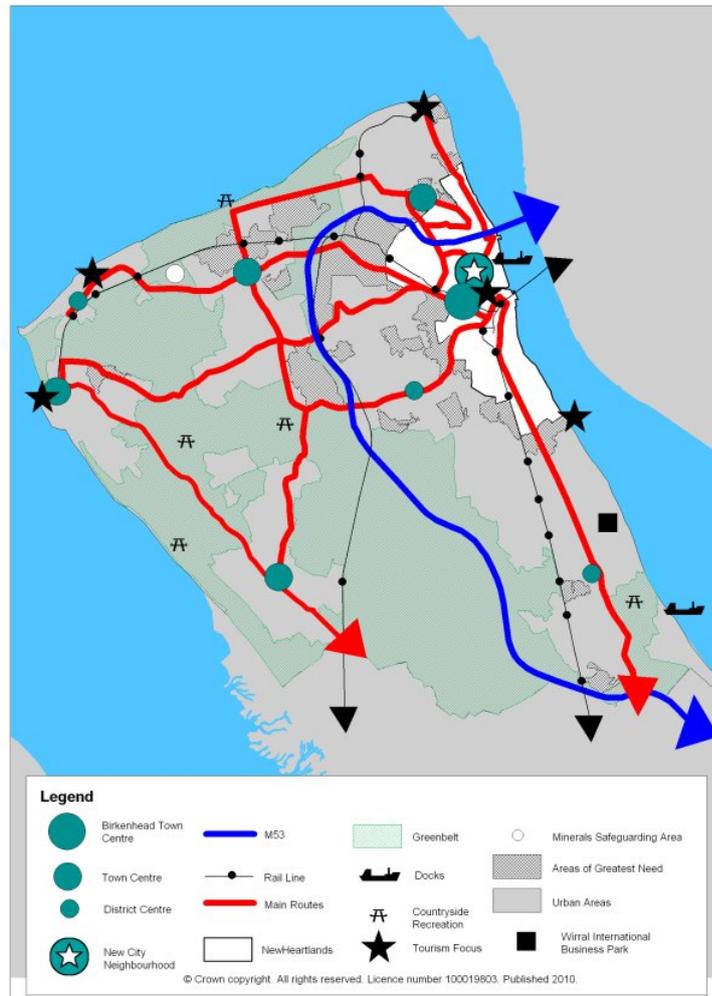
7.13 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 4 not to be accepted. The next best performing option would be to widen the focus of development still further to reflect the full extent of Broad Spatial Option 2. This has, however, not been preferred because it would not adequately reflect the latest spatial priorities for the Borough; does not reflect the level of local support for a more targeted approach to regeneration; and would take less account of the need to reduce the need to travel.

71 in line with Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

72 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

73 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

7.14 The Preferred Broad Spatial Strategy can also be expressed in the form of a simple Key Diagram:



Picture 7.1

Consultation Question 5

Do you agree with Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

8 Scale of New Housing Development

8.1 The revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy means that the Council must now consult on the scale of housing to be provided across the Borough. The wider background to the consideration of this issue is set out in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽⁷⁴⁾. There are four main options⁽⁷⁵⁾:

Policy Option PO1 - Policy Model

8.2 Policy Option PO1 is based on the Submitted Draft Regional Spatial Strategy⁽⁷⁶⁾, which set a total maximum housing requirement for Wirral of 4,500 additional dwellings for the period April 2003 to March 2021, at an annual average of 250 additional dwellings including affordable housing⁽⁷⁷⁾. This is half the figure included in the final version of the former Regional Spatial Strategy⁽⁷⁸⁾.

8.3 The likely impact of Policy Option PO1 on each Settlement Area has been assessed by dividing the total requirement by the local pattern of land available for housing based on the capacity identified within the Council's latest assessment of housing land⁽⁷⁹⁾.

8.4 The figures are presented under two scenarios - with and without the potential capacity available at Wirral Waters. This has been done to show how future development can be accommodated taking due account of market fluctuations in the delivery rate from Wirral Waters and the need to demonstrate how the Borough can meet its housing requirements across a range of delivery scenarios as required by national advice⁽⁸⁰⁾.

Policy Option PO1A - With Wirral Waters

8.5 Policy Option PO1A follows the assessed capacity of the urban areas with the additional capacity at Wirral Waters:

74 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

75 the figures shown for each Settlement Area under each Policy Option are indicative only and do not at this stage constitute final policy numbers

76 North West Regional Assembly (2006)

77 this is the "Option 1" figure for Wirral, which the Coalition Government expects to be used as the baseline for the start of the collaborative planning process and as the provisional housing number in Local Development Frameworks

78 North West of England Plan 2021 (September 2008) revoked in July 2010

79 Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym and Partners, 2010)

80 an additional allowance will be needed for demolitions which are currently estimated at an annual average of 133, based on programmed demolitions and past trends (Local Development Framework for Wirral Annual Monitoring Report, 2009)

Policy Option PO1A - With Wirral Waters	Total Number of Dwellings (net) 2012/13 to 2026/27	Implied Annual Target	Proportion of Total Provision (percent)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	129	8	3%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	2,724	182	73%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	371	25	10%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	378	25	10%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	47	3	1%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	27	2	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	23	2	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	51	3	1%
TOTAL	3,750	250	100%

Policy Option PO1B - Without Wirral Waters

8.6 Policy Option PO1B follows the assessed capacity of the urban areas without the additional capacity at Wirral Waters:

Policy Option PO1B - Without Wirral Waters	Total Number of Dwellings (net) 2012/13 to 2026/27	Implied Annual Target	Proportion of Total Provision (percent)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	257	17	7%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	1,706	114	45%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	739	49	20%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	754	50	20%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	93	6	3%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	54	4	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	46	3	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	101	7	3%
TOTAL	3,750	250	100%

Implications of Policy Option PO1

8.7 Policy Option PO1 would under-perform against the housing needs assessed under Policy Option PO2 but would remain within the capacity of the urban areas assessed under Policy Option PO3. Policy Option PO1 would, however, be below the scope of both the recovery scenarios assessed under Policy Option PO4, even over the longer term.

Policy Option PO2 - Needs Model

8.8 Policy Option PO2 is based on the figures contained within the Council's latest housing needs assessment, which identifies the number of new homes that would be needed to meet local needs over the twenty years to 2029, were housing development solely to be based on an objective assessment of housing need but

not on any policy-led approach⁽⁸¹⁾.

8.9 The likely impact of Policy Option PO2 on each Settlement Area has been assessed by dividing the scale of the need identified in the housing needs assessment by the existing proportion of residential property contained within each Settlement Area. The figures provide for under-performance during 2009/10 to 2011/12 to be made up evenly over the remaining years to 2029⁽⁸²⁾.

Policy Option PO2 - Housing Needs Assessment	Total Number of Dwellings (net additional) 2012/13 to 2026/27	Implied Annual Target	Proportion of Total Provision (percent)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	1314	88	14%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	-49	-3	<1%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	2036	136	21%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	1236	82	13%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	2242	149	23%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	1168	78	12%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	1405	94	15%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	247	16	2%
TOTAL	9599	640	100%

Implications of Policy Option PO2

8.10 Policy Option PO2 would require a level of development in excess of the pre-recession annual target of 500 dwellings, which was only exceeded in Wirral in two out of the last seven years. The Borough's maximum output at the peak of the market in 2007/08 was 564 additional dwellings.

8.11 Policy Option PO2 would also exceed the capacity of the urban areas assessed under Policy Option PO3, unless Wirral Waters came forward under Policy Option PO3A, and would also exceed both the recovery scenarios assessed under Policy Option PO4. Because Policy Option PO2 is based on an assessment of existing households it severely understates the contribution made by future development within the Commercial Core, which currently contains few households.

8.12 Policy Option PO2 would have significant implications in all Settlement Areas outside the existing regeneration priority areas and for restraint in central and west Wirral, which could undermine urban regeneration; housing market renewal; and the re-use of vacant previously developed land at the heart of the older urban areas. This is because, as an objective assessment of current household needs, Policy Option PO2 is effectively a "policy-off" option.

81 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Fordhams Research, 2010)

82 the figures include both ordinary and specialist housing (estimated at a third of local need) and include affordable housing

Policy Option PO3 - Capacity Model

8.13 Policy Option PO3 provides a "reality-check" based on the actual assessed capacity of the existing urban areas to accommodate new housing development⁽⁸³⁾. The figures are, again, presented under two scenarios - with and without the potential capacity available at Wirral Waters⁽⁸⁴⁾.

Policy Option PO3A - With Wirral Waters

8.14 Policy Option PO3A follows the assessed capacity of the urban areas with the additional capacity at Wirral Waters:

Policy Option PO3A - With Wirral Waters	Total Number of Dwellings (gross) 2012/13 to 2026/27	Implied Annual Target	Proportion of Total Provision (percent)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	636	42	3%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	13,455	897	73%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1,831	122	10%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	1,868	125	10%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	230	15	1%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	135	9	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	114	8	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	253	17	1%
TOTAL	18,522	1,235	100%

Policy Option PO3B - Without Wirral Waters

8.15 Policy Option PO3B follows the assessed capacity of the urban areas without the additional capacity at Wirral Waters:

Policy Option PO3B - Without Wirral Waters	Total Number of Dwellings (gross) 2012/13 to 2026/27	Implied Annual Target	Proportion of Total Provision (percent)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	636	42	7%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	4,228	282	45%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1,831	122	20%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	1,868	125	20%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	230	15	3%

83 based on the findings of the Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym and Partners, 2010)

84 the figures reflect the total assessed gross capacity of previously developed sites within the urban areas at April 2008 based on the provision of 40 percent affordable housing and do not take account of demolitions. Actual and projected gross completions between 2008/09 and 2011/12 have been subtracted from the supply. The assessment will be rolled forward to April 2010 for inclusion in the draft Core Strategy

Policy Option PO3B - Without Wirral Waters	Total Number of Dwellings (gross) 2012/13 to 2026/27	Implied Annual Target	Proportion of Total Provision (percent)
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	135	9	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	114	8	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	253	17	3%
TOTAL	9,295	620	100%

Implications of Policy Option PO3

8.16 Policy Option PO3 would be able to accommodate Policy Option PO1, and both of the recovery scenarios assessed under Policy Option PO4 but would not be capable of meeting the overall needs assessed under Policy Option PO2, in the absence of Wirral Waters, unless additional sites could be secured⁽⁸⁵⁾.

Policy Option PO4 - Market Delivery Model

8.17 Policy Option PO4 provides an additional "reality check" based on an assessment of what could realistically be delivered over the plan period taking account of the current market downturn. The figures are presented as an indicative "best guess" of the likely potential performance of the housing market under two potential scenarios⁽⁸⁶⁾:

Policy Option PO4A - Early Recovery

8.18 Policy Option PO4A assumes that the housing market will recover to pre-recession levels by 2016⁽⁸⁷⁾.

Policy Option PO4A - Early Recovery	Total Number of Dwellings (net) 2012/13 to 2026/27	Implied Annual Target	Proportion of Total Provision (percent)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	234	16	3%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	4,954	330	73%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	674	45	10%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	688	46	10%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	85	6	1%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	50	3	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	42	3	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	93	6	1%
TOTAL	6,820	455	100%

85 this could include a contribution from unidentified windfalls; greenfield sites within the urban areas; and/or an increased density of development on selected sites

86 both the scenarios assume a recovery to the pre-recession annual housing target for Wirral of 500 net additional dwellings

87 based on the expectation of the Regional Economic Forecasting Panel that recession impacts will continue to at least 2015

Policy Option PO4B - Prolonged Recovery

8.19 Policy Option PO4B is a more pessimistic scenario which assumes a more gradual recovery to pre-recession levels by 2026⁽⁸⁸⁾.

Policy Option PO4B	Total Number of Dwellings (net) 2012/13 to 2026/27	Implied Annual Target	Proportion of Total Provision (percent)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	314	21	7%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	2,087	139	45%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	904	60	20%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	922	61	20%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	114	8	3%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	66	4	1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	56	4	1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	125	9	3%
TOTAL	4,588	306	100%

Implications of Policy Option PO4

8.20 The pace of any economic recovery will need to be closely monitored under all four of the Policy Options, as it will have a major impact on the ability to deliver the new homes required under any of the models and scenarios considered.

8.21 Policy Option PO4, nevertheless, shows that an early recovery in the housing market could be accommodated within the capacity of the urban areas assessed under Policy Option PO3, even without Wirral Waters but that an early recovery would still be likely to under-perform against the housing needs identified under Policy Option PO2. Policy Option PO1 could be accommodated under both the market delivery models.

Council's Current Assessment

8.22 The Council's current assessment is that Policy Option PO1 is likely to provide the best balance between the prospects of market delivery assessed under Policy Option PO4 and the need to offer flexibility within the capacity of available urban land under Policy Option PO3.

8.23 In line with Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy, the Council would be willing to support development ahead of the figures included under Policy Option PO1 within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, to reflect the additional potential capacity of vacant land within these areas but in the interests of urban regeneration, would not be willing to do so elsewhere. This approach would best support delivery against Preferred Spatial Objective 3 -

88 based on continued recession to 2015 and a gradual recovery over the following ten years

Housing Growth and Market Renewal, which supports the revitalisation of the housing market in the older urban areas and the delivery of a growth in housing and population within the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, including at Wirral Waters.

Consultation Question 6

Is this a fair assessment of the available Policy Options for the scale of new housing development over the plan period? Please give the reasons for your answer.

Do you agree with the Council's conclusion that Policy Option PO1 is most likely to be the preferred option for the future scale of new housing development? If not, please indicate which Policy Option you would prefer and explain the reasons for your preference.

8.24 The Council's Preferred Option for the future scale of new housing in Wirral during the plan period is set out below:

Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets

The Borough wide target for new housing provision in Wirral will be 3,750 net additional dwellings over the fifteen year period from April 2012 to March 2027, including affordable and specialist housing.

The target for April 2012 to 2017 will be 1250 net additional dwellings.
The target for April 2017 to 2022 will be 1250 net additional dwellings.
The target for April 2022 to 2027 will be 1250 net additional dwellings.

The Core Strategy will set a target for each Settlement Area for each five year period to deliver the distribution of housing set out under Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing based on the findings of the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Annual targets within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point will be minimum targets, which it will be acceptable to exceed to prevent urban regeneration being held back were the housing market to recover more quickly. Annual targets within the remaining areas of the Borough will be maximum targets, which should not be exceeded in the interests of promoting urban regeneration in areas where social, economic and environmental needs are greatest.

The mix of housing will be sought in line with the proportions set out in the Council's latest local housing needs assessment⁽⁸⁹⁾. Affordable housing and specialist housing will be sought in line with the proportions set out under Preferred Option 9 - Affordable and Specialist Housing.

Housing development will be phased across the plan period in accordance with Preferred Option 7 - Phasing Housing Development and Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference to ensure that previously developed brownfield land is developed before previously undeveloped greenfield land.

The scale and pace of delivery against Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets will be assessed on a regular basis within the Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report.

8.25 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 5 is considered sustainable. The provision of high quality housing alongside employment opportunities as part of the Growth Point could have a positive impact on economic growth and social inclusion. It could reduce pressure for development in more sensitive areas to the west, protecting local biodiversity habitats and local distinctiveness. However an increase in housing in regeneration priority areas could heighten traffic congestion, increase energy demand and the use of non-renewable energy, and generate more waste. The need for Preferred Option 5 to be operated alongside other control measures has therefore been identified⁽⁹⁰⁾.

8.26 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows that Preferred Option 5 is capable of an adverse effect on European Sites and will require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽⁹¹⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

8.27 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 5 not to be accepted. The next best performing option is Policy Option PO3 which reflects the assessed capacity of the urban areas, with or without the additional capacity at Wirral Waters. This has, however, not been preferred because it would assume that all sites with an assessed capacity would be brought forward; would offer little flexibility; and is unlikely to reflect the ability of the market to deliver, at least in the short to medium term.

89 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Fordham Research, 2010), which for market housing is currently 19 percent one-bedroom; 37 percent two-bedroom; and 44 percent three-bedroom dwellings

90 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

91 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

Consultation Question 7

Do you agree with Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

9 Distribution of New Housing Development

9.1 The Council consulted on four main options and two-sub options for the distribution of housing in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option HD1 - RSS Inner Area⁽⁹²⁾ with restrictions elsewhere;
- Policy Option HD2 - RSS Inner Area and RSS Outer Area⁽⁹³⁾ with restrictions only in the Rural Area⁽⁹⁴⁾;
- Policy Option HD3 - RSS Inner Area, RSS Outer Area and RSS Rural Area; and
- Policy Option HD4 - RSS Inner Area (reduced contribution), with the remainder made up elsewhere.

9.2 Policy Option HD4 also contained two sub-options:

- Policy Option HD2A - RSS Inner Area (reduced contribution) and RSS Outer Area, with restrictions elsewhere; and
- Policy Option HD3A - RSS Inner Area (reduced contribution), RSS Outer Area and RSS Rural Area.

9.3 The geographical division between the Inner Area, the Outer Area and the Rural Area were based on the geographical priorities set out in the former Regional Spatial Strategy⁽⁹⁵⁾. The assessment of the numbers likely to be involved was also based on the pre-recession targets for additional dwellings set out in the former Regional Spatial Strategy and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point Programme of Development.

9.4 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option HD1 was likely to be the Council's preferred option on the basis that this would be supported by the publicly funded programme of renewal within the Newheartlands Pathfinder and the ongoing commitment to increase the level of housing within the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point.

92 defined by the boundary to the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point shown on Picture 6.2

93 the remaining areas to the east of the M53 Motorway outside the Inner Area

94 areas to the west of the M53 Motorway

95 North West of England Plan 2021 (September 2008) revoked in July 2010

9.5 Public consultation showed that approximately half the people who responded preferred Policy Option HD1, on the basis that it was likely to be the most sustainable; would maximise the use of previously developed land; and would take pressure for development away from other areas. Policy Option HD2 was the next most preferred option, on the basis that it would better reflect the objectives of the former Regional Spatial Strategy; and the need to improve social housing outside the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area⁽⁹⁶⁾. Only one response favoured Policy Option HD2A.

9.6 Critics of Policy Option HD1⁽⁹⁷⁾, believed that it would be too restrictive⁽⁹⁸⁾; too reliant on the proposals at Wirral Waters; fail to offer an appropriate range and choice of location; saturate the market; and place an unwarranted restriction on other sustainable locations. Others believed that it was undeliverable, given the numbers being talked about. A number of respondents were concerned about impacts on quality of life; greenspace; and the suitability of dockside developments for families with children.

9.7 Supporters of Policy Option HD3 and Policy Option HD4 believed that allowing development across a wider area, including urban expansion, would be the only way to deliver the homes that were needed; address the decline in completions; re-use vacant land in other areas; support rural regeneration; stimulate the local economy; and ensure sustainable, mixed communities in all areas of the Borough⁽⁹⁹⁾.

9.8 The Council has re-appraised the options in light of the comments received and the emerging evidence base. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽¹⁰⁰⁾.

9.9 The Council's Preferred Option has now been amended to retain the emphasis on regeneration priorities previously expressed under Policy Option HD1 but to allow for some additional development in sustainable locations across a wider area of the Borough. The main elements of the Preferred Option for the distribution of new housing development are, therefore:

Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing

The broad distribution of new housing to deliver the Council's spatial objectives for urban regeneration; housing market renewal; and housing growth will be:

-
- 96 a number of supporters of Policy Option HD1 also felt that Policy Option HD2 would be an appropriate fall back position
 - 97 a number of respondents believed that Policy Option HD2 would have similar implications
 - 98 one respondent suggested that it would be more restrictive than the Council's current Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development
 - 99 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)
 - 100 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

Core Strategy for Wirral - Preferred Options Report

Settlement Area	Percentage Distribution ⁽¹⁰¹⁾	Implied Annual Target (Net Additional) ⁽¹⁰²⁾
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	7%	18
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	45%	112
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	23%	58
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	18%	45
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	1%	3
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	2%	5
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	1%	3
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	3%	6
Total	100%	250

The Core Strategy will set a target for each Settlement Area to deliver the broad distribution of housing set out above based on the findings of the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment⁽¹⁰³⁾.

Land allocations for new housing development will be contained within a site-specific Development Plan Document.

9.10 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 6 is considered sustainable. Preferred Option 6 would have a positive impact in relation to urban regeneration and economic growth, and could enhance the viability of centres through allowing limited development in areas in and around existing centres and along well-served transport corridors. The need for Preferred Option 6 to operate alongside other control measures is, however, identified particularly in relation to biodiversity, traffic intrusion, waste management, carbon reduction and local heritage⁽¹⁰⁴⁾.

9.11 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows that Preferred Option 6 is capable of an adverse effect on European Sites and will, therefore, require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

102 the inclusion of an implied annual target for each Settlement Area is indicative only as the emphasis of Preferred Option 6 is only on the percentage distribution of housing, irrespective of the final annual target selected

101 the percentage figures are based on deliverable and developable sites and a conservative assumption about delivery at Wirral Waters, at half the rate shown in the Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym and Partners, 2010)

103 under Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

104 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

105 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

Alternative Policy Option

9.12 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 6 not to be accepted.

9.13 The re-distribution of new housing between the Settlement Areas will need to be closely related to the strength of the recovery of the housing market.

9.14 In the event of a strengthening market, the Council's preferred alternative would be to move closer towards the distribution shown for policy options for the scale of new housing development which include the additional assessed capacity at Wirral Waters⁽¹⁰⁶⁾:

Alternative Policy Option 6A - Strong Housing Market	Percentage Distribution	Implied Annual Target (Net Additional)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	3%	8
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	73%	182
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	10%	25
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	10%	25
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	1%	3
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	1%	2
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	1%	2
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	1%	3
Total	100%	250

9.15 In the event of a continuation of weak market conditions, the Council's preferred alternative would be to rely on the distribution shown for policy options for the scale of new housing development which exclude the additional assessed capacity at Wirral Waters⁽¹⁰⁷⁾:

Alternative Policy Option 6B - Weak Housing Market	Percentage Distribution	Implied Annual Target (Net Additional)
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	7%	17
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	45%	114
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	20%	49
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	20%	50
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	3%	6
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	1%	4
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	1%	3
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	3%	7
Total	100%	250

106 shown under Policy Option PO1A and Policy Option PO3A in section 8 of this document, which would be more closely in line with Preferred Spatial Objective 2 - Housing Growth and Market Renewal and the delivery of Preferred Spatial Objective 7 - New City Neighbourhood

107 shown under Policy Option PO1B and Policy Option PO3B in section 8 of this document, which are directly related to the assessed capacity of the urban areas without Wirral Waters

9.16 In practice, this is likely to be determined by the ability to maintain an acceptable five year supply of housing land to meet the proportions shown for each Settlement Area, as shown in the Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report.

Consultation Question 8

Do you agree with Preferred Option 6 - Distribution of Housing?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

10 Phasing of New Housing Development

10.1 The Council consulted on two main options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option HP1 - Borough wide phasing; and
- Policy Option HP2 - Settlement Area phasing

10.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option HP2 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option.

10.3 Public consultation did not show a clear preference for either Policy Option. Of those who gave reasons for their views, Policy Option HP2 appeared too complicated; could lead to the loss of valuable greenspace; would be less likely to support development in areas of greatest need; and would be difficult to implement, especially in the rural areas. By contrast, Policy Option HP1 would allow brownfield land to be used across the Borough before using greenfield land in the east, where open space is most lacking; and would not limit development to one particular area⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

10.4 The Council has re-appraised these options in the light of the comments received and the emerging evidence base. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽¹⁰⁹⁾.

10.5 The Council's Preferred Option is now to adopt a Borough-wide approach because of the benefit of promoting the re-use of brownfield land in all areas of the Borough before any greenfield land is released for development. The main elements of the Council's Preferred Policy Option for the phasing of new housing development are, therefore:

¹⁰⁸ further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

¹⁰⁹ Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

Preferred Option 7 - Phasing Housing Development

The Core Strategy will phase housing development across the Borough as a whole in support of Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy and to maximise the reuse of existing buildings and previously developed land.

The phasing of the release of housing land for development will be operated in line with Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference and the need to ensure that any adverse impact on European Sites is avoided.

10.6 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 7 is considered sustainable. It is likely to have a positive impact on restructuring housing markets, supporting social inclusion and protecting local distinctiveness, through prioritising development in regeneration priority areas. Preferred Option 7 would, however, need to be applied in accordance with Preferred Option 8, which states the order of preference for the phasing of housing land⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

10.7 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment indicates that an additional commitment may be needed for measures to secure appropriate water treatment infrastructure and prevent disturbance to wildlife and loss of habitat, which would need to be phased alongside the delivery of new housing development to prevent an adverse impact on European Sites.⁽¹¹¹⁾

Alternative Policy Option

10.8 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 7 not to be accepted. The next best performing option would be Policy Option HP2, which would phase development within each Settlement Area. This has, however, not been preferred because consultation responses indicated that Policy Option HP2 was too complicated and would be unlikely to maximise the reuse of previously developed brownfield land.

Consultation Question 9

Do you agree with Preferred Option 7 - Phasing Housing Development?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

110 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

111 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

11 Order of Preference for Housing Development

11.1 The Council also consulted on an order of preference for the development of different types of land for new housing based on nine different categories of land. The Council expressed no preferred option for the sequence of land that should be developed before other types of land are considered.

11.2 Public consultation showed clear support for using previously developed brownfield land before previously undeveloped greenfield land. Rural brownfield land was also generally preferred over urban greenfield land⁽¹¹²⁾.

11.3 The order of preference can also be used to support the delivery Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy. The Preferred Option for an order of preference to guide the phasing of new housing development is, therefore:

Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference

The Council's preferred order of preference for phasing housing land will be:

1. Urban brownfield land in identified regeneration priority areas⁽¹¹³⁾
2. Urban brownfield land in east Wirral⁽¹¹⁴⁾
3. Urban brownfield land in west Wirral⁽¹¹⁵⁾
4. Rural brownfield land in east Wirral⁽¹¹⁶⁾
5. Rural brownfield land in west Wirral⁽¹¹⁷⁾
6. Urban greenfield land in east Wirral, subject to an assessment of the need for open space and other forms of green infrastructure within the locality⁽¹¹⁸⁾
7. Urban greenfield land in west Wirral, subject to an assessment of the need for open space and other forms of green infrastructure within the locality⁽¹¹⁹⁾

112 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

113 previously developed land within the areas identified under Preferred Spatial Objective 2 - Housing Growth and Market Renewal

114 previously developed land within urban settlements east of the M53 Motorway

115 previously developed land within urban settlements west of the M53 Motorway

116 previously developed land in Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area east of the M53 Motorway

117 previously developed land in Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area west of the M53 Motorway

118 previously undeveloped land within urban settlements east of the M53 Motorway

119 previously undeveloped land within urban settlements west of the M53 Motorway

Land in a lower category will only be released where land of a higher category is shown to be inadequate to meet a five year supply of housing land as shown in the Council's latest Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report when assessed against the overall Borough-wide targets set out under Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets.

The Borough wide target for the re-use of previously developed land will be at least 80 percent.

11.4 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 8 is considered sustainable. It is likely to have a positive effect in relation to urban regeneration and economic growth, and prioritising housing development in the urban east of Wirral could reduce the pressure for development in more sensitive areas. To ensure that sites in the urban area with biodiversity or local heritage value are not placed under greater pressure, Preferred Option 8 will, however, need to be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 15 - Better Design and Preferred Option 16 - Development Management⁽¹²⁰⁾.

11.5 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows Preferred Option 8 is capable of a significant adverse effect on European Sites and will require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽¹²¹⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

11.6 Because of the flexibility already contained within the order of preference the Council has not identified an alternative policy option. The only realistic alternatives would be to re-order the order of preference to support an alternative spatial distribution or to simplify the approach to prioritise the use of previously developed land irrespective of any spatial priority.

Consultation Question 10

Do you agree with Preferred Option 8 - Order of Preference?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

120 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

121 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

12 Affordable and Specialist Housing

12.1 The Council consulted on two main options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option AH1 - Borough wide targets; and
- Policy Option AH2 - Settlement Area targets, where evidence shows specific local needs

12.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option AH1 was likely to be the Council's Preferred Policy Option.

12.3 Public consultation indicated a general support for Policy Option AH1. A number of people believed that Policy Option AH1 was likely to result in a more even distribution of affordable housing and would be easier to implement. Supporters of Policy Option AH2 felt that Policy Option AH2 would take greater account of local needs and allow affordable housing to be targeted to the most sustainable locations⁽¹²²⁾.

12.4 The Council's latest housing needs assessment shows that the need for additional affordable housing has risen sharply since the recent economic downturn. The majority of this need falls in east Wirral. Approximately a third of the new housing will need to be specialist housing. The assessment recommends that the Council should also aim to secure 40% of new housing development as affordable housing⁽¹²³⁾.

12.5 The Council's viability assessment indicates that a 40% target will need to be introduced gradually to take account of current market conditions⁽¹²⁴⁾. The scale of need indicates that providing affordable housing should also be considered on small sites, subject to site-specific viability⁽¹²⁵⁾. Where this is not feasible, an equivalent commuted sum could be paid to contribute to alternative off-site provision.

12.6 The Council has re-appraised the options available in the light of the comments received and the updated evidence and has concluded that Policy Option AH1 is still the Council's preferred option. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽¹²⁶⁾.

12.7 The main elements of the Council's Preferred Policy Option for affordable and specialist housing are, therefore:

122 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

123 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Fordham Research, 2010)

124 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Affordable Housing Viability Study (Fordham Research, 2010)

125 on sites which could provide less than 15 dwellings

126 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

Preferred Option 9 - Affordable and Specialist Housing

A third of the future housing land supply set out under Preferred Option 5 - Local Housing Targets, should be set aside for the development of specialist housing⁽¹²⁷⁾.

The long-term aspiration will be to move towards a Borough wide requirement to provide up to 40 percent affordable housing⁽¹²⁸⁾ as part of new market housing developments, subject to site specific viability.

To begin with, a Borough-wide target of 20 percent affordable housing will be applied alongside a target of 10 percent within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area, to reflect current market conditions. The Core Strategy will, however, include a provision to re-consider these targets on a regular basis to take account of national published data for house prices, building costs and alternative use values⁽¹²⁹⁾.

The provision of affordable housing will need to be considered and secured on any site that will provide five or more dwellings, subject to site specific viability. A commuted sum will be sought where affordable housing is not to be provided on-site.

85 percent of any affordable housing provided should be secured for social renting with the remaining 15 percent secured as intermediate housing⁽¹³⁰⁾. The affordable housing secured should reflect the mix of house types for affordable housing set out in the latest local housing needs assessment⁽¹³¹⁾.

The housing needs assessment and viability assessment will be periodically updated to ensure that the most appropriate type and proportion of affordable and specialist housing is being secured.

For land allocations, specific requirements will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document.

127 any form of purpose-designed housing or communal establishment such as sheltered, supported, extra care or wheelchair standard housing which caters for people who are unable to live independently in ordinary housing

128 housing at a cost which is below that of housing typically available in the open market and available at a sub-market price in perpetuity

129 through the Council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report

130 housing at prices and rents above those of social rent but below market prices or rents

131 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Fordham Research, 2010), which for social rented housing is currently 9 percent one-bedroom; 44 percent two-bedroom; 21 percent three-bedroom; and 27 percent four or more bedroom dwellings

12.8 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 9 is considered sustainable. The high specification to which affordable units are required to be built could have a positive impact on quality of life, energy efficiency, waste management and carbon reduction. The distribution of affordable housing across the Borough will help to create sustainable communities. In accordance with national policy, Preferred Option 9 should be flexible enough to respond to local circumstances relating to viability⁽¹³²⁾.

12.9 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows that Preferred Option 9 is considered to have no potential for effects on European Sites⁽¹³³⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

12.10 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 9 not to be accepted. The next best performing option would be to apply a range of different targets within each Settlement Area under Policy Option AH2. This has, however, not been preferred because Policy Option AH2 was not favoured by the majority of respondents and Policy Option AH1 would be easier to implement.

Consultation Question 11

Do you agree with Preferred Option 9 - Affordable and Specialist Housing?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

13 Gypsies and Travellers

13.1 The Council consulted on two main options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option GT1 - Geographically specific target; or
- Policy Option GT2 - Borough wide criteria

13.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option GT2 was likely to be the Council's preferred option.

13.3 Consultation showed almost unanimous support for Policy Option GT2. Only one respondent appeared to favour Policy Option GT1, while a small number of others expressed no preference⁽¹³⁴⁾.

¹³² Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

¹³³ Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

¹³⁴ further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

13.4 The Coalition Government has now indicated that regionally imposed figures will no longer apply. National grants to assist with the construction of new sites have also recently been withdrawn and national policy is to be revised.

13.5 The Council has re-appraised these options in the light of the comments received and the available evidence base and has concluded that Policy Option GT2 will remain the Council's preferred option. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽¹³⁵⁾.

13.6 The Preferred Option for the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers is, therefore:

Preferred Option 10 - Gypsies and Travellers

The Core Strategy will set out criteria for the determination of planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation⁽¹³⁶⁾. The criteria are likely to include:

- evidence of need and demand, including travelling patterns
- highway access
- access to and impact on local services⁽¹³⁷⁾
- impact on local character and amenity
- other environmental considerations⁽¹³⁸⁾

Further advice on the application of these criteria will, where necessary, be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.

13.7 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 10 is considered sustainable. It could help to identify need and address deficiencies in provision and improve access to appropriate accommodation, services and employment opportunities. Preferred Option 10 would, however, need to be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 15 - Better Design and Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to minimise any potential adverse impacts on biodiversity, waste management, pollution, local heritage or traffic congestion⁽¹³⁹⁾.

135 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

136 to take account of specialist issues arising from the design, location and operation of Gypsy and Traveller sites in addition to Preferred Option 16 - Development Management

137 including medical, care, education and community services

138 including flooding, biodiversity and landscape

139 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

13.8 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows Preferred Option 10 is capable of a significant adverse effect on European Sites and will require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽¹⁴⁰⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

13.9 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 10 not to be accepted. The only alternative would be to set a geographically specific target. This has, however, not been preferred because the evidence base would not support the identification of a geographically specific target.

Consultation Question 12

Do you agree with Preferred Option 10 - Gypsies and Travellers?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

14 Distribution of Employment

14.1 The Council consulted on three main options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option EL1 - Concentrate on identified strategic locations in east Wirral
- Policy Option EL2 - Concentrate on existing industrial areas and town centres across all of Wirral
- Policy Option EL3 - Identify a new long term strategic location outside the existing urban area

14.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option EL1 was likely to be the Council's preferred option.

14.3 Consultation showed broadly equal support for Policy Option EL1 and for Policy Option EL2. The main limitations of Policy Option EL1 related to the need to provide for a more balanced pattern of growth; take account of the potential for additional development within other existing business locations; the need to address a wider range of needs; provide local jobs; reduce the need to travel; and support local centres. Policy Option EL3 received only limited support⁽¹⁴¹⁾.

140 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

141 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

14.4 Recent regional and sub-regional job forecasts assume that the impact of the recession will last to 2015, with only modest job growth to 2030 but do not take account of policy aspirations or local interventions⁽¹⁴²⁾. The Wirral Investment Strategy aims to drive forward the economic regeneration of Wirral, to improve sustainability; increase GVA; reduce worklessness; provide higher value jobs; and reduce the number of people that need to travel outside the Borough for work⁽¹⁴³⁾. The Investment Strategy also includes a general target to reach an employment rate of 76%, equivalent to an additional 27,500 jobs⁽¹⁴⁴⁾.

14.5 Council studies have consistently shown a need to provide additional modern space for small and medium enterprises and start-up businesses; a lack of high quality sites and premises; and a shortage of immediately available employment land. High levels of income and employment related need continue to persist in large areas of the Borough because of a wide range of barriers to employment, including a lack of the skills now required by the jobs market. The justification for seeking a higher level of new commercial development also includes the training and employment opportunities they will present to existing local communities, where worklessness is greatest.

14.6 The Council's latest assessment recorded a total stock of employment land of 204 hectares and a potential long-term shortfall of up to 177 hectares, based on historic take-up rates and the aspirations of the Wirral Investment Strategy⁽¹⁴⁵⁾. The current distribution of available employment sites is shown below:

Settlement Area	%
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	1%
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	41%
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1%
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	43%
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	11%
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	<1%
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	<1%
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	3%
Total	100%

14.7 The Council's latest assessment was undertaken at the height of the market. The take-up of employment land has been lower over recent years; additional sites have become available; and the land supply will need to be re-assessed before the draft Core Strategy is prepared. Significant additional capacity for job creation within the Birkenhead Dock Estate at Wirral Waters; further capacity at Wirral International Business Park; and emerging potential in other key projects in and around Birkenhead

142 Liverpool City Region Economic Forecasts Recession and Recovery (TMP, 2009) and State of the North West Economy A Long Term Forecast (Regional Economic Forecasting Panel, 2010)

143 Employment For All - A Full Employment Strategy for Wirral (2006)

144 based on NOMIS job density (2008)

145 Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study (BE Group, 2009)

Town Centre, may all go some way towards addressing identified shortfalls. A greater focus on Birkenhead is also supported by a new major study, which identifies the provision of modern business accommodation as a key priority⁽¹⁴⁶⁾.

14.8 The Council has re-appraised the options in the light of the comments received, the updated evidence base and the wider aspirations of the Wirral Investment Strategy and has concluded that a mix of Policy Option EL1 and Policy Option EL2 should now be the Council's Preferred Option. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽¹⁴⁷⁾.

14.9 The main elements of the Preferred Policy Option for the distribution of employment are set out below:

Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment

The Core Strategy will seek to secure the equivalent of up to 177 hectares of additional development land for new employment-related development during the plan period to March 2027⁽¹⁴⁸⁾.

The Council will resist the loss of designated employment land and premises to non-employment uses⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ unless a Borough wide employment land review has identified them as no longer viable and surplus to requirements.

The broad distribution of new employment development will be:

- Commercial Core - 50 percent⁽¹⁵⁰⁾
- Bromborough - 40 percent⁽¹⁵¹⁾
- Other estates and centres - 10 percent⁽¹⁵²⁾

To enable new and existing businesses to grow successfully, the supply of suitable, available and fully serviced employment land should not fall below a

146 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, 2010)

147 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

148 defined as land for business uses including offices, research and development, general industry and storage and distribution falling within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the national Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended)

149 including uses which would be more appropriate within a town centre

150 based on the need to provide employment in the most accessible locations and to reflect the scale of the development opportunities within and surrounding Birkenhead Town Centre and the Birkenhead Docklands

151 including Wirral International Business Park and the industrial and research complex at Port Sunlight, reduced from recent past performance to reflect the more limited land supply now available in these locations

152 to reflect the more limited scope for infill development and the re-use and re-development of existing land and premises

ten year supply at past rates of development.

The following priorities for locations, uses and activities will be contained within Settlement Area Policies⁽¹⁵³⁾:

- Land at Twelve Quays, West Float, Cammell Lairds and the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham will be reserved for port-related requirements and activities
- Land at Bromborough will primarily be reserved for large and medium scale industrial and campus-style office developments
- Small and medium scale commercial and industrial activities will be directed to the dockside hinterlands at Poulton, Seacombe and the Cleveland Street Corridor in Birkenhead; Priory Industrial Estate and the A41 Corridor in Tranmere; Tarran Industrial Estate and the employment complexes at Pasture Road and Reeds Lane in Moreton; Carr Lane Industrial Estate in Hoyle; Arroe Brook Road, Upton; North Cheshire Trading Estate in Prenton and Cross Lane Industrial Estate in Wallasey
- Wirral Waters and the areas immediately surrounding Birkenhead Town Centre will be promoted for larger scale commercial, office and service activities⁽¹⁵⁴⁾
- Smaller, more locally based office and service activities will be directed to other existing centres⁽¹⁵⁵⁾

Precise locations and boundaries will be determined by a site-specific Development Plan Document⁽¹⁵⁶⁾.

The Council will, wherever possible and feasible, also negotiate with developers to provide training and job opportunities for the local community, in the demolition and construction phases of new developments as well as their subsequent operation. Relevant agreements will, where appropriate, be secured in line with Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions.

14.10 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 11 is considered sustainable. It is likely to have a positive impact on urban regeneration and economic growth, through directing employment growth to sustainable locations and enhancing employment opportunities. It should, however, be operated in

153 in line with Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

154 which could not be accommodated in more sequentially preferable locations

155 in line with Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy and the hierarchy of centres in Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network

156 the boundaries to most of these areas are already shown as Employment Development Sites and Primarily Industrial Areas on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map and will only be amended through the adoption of a site-specific Development Plan Document

conjunction with Preferred Option 16 - Development Management and Preferred Option 20 - Waste Management to mitigate any adverse impacts in relation to biodiversity, pollution, traffic intrusion and waste management⁽¹⁵⁷⁾.

14.11 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows Preferred Option 11 is capable of a significant adverse effect on European Sites and will require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

Alternative Policy Option

14.12 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 11 not to be accepted. The only realistic alternative is to concentrate on a smaller number of strategic locations in line with Policy Option EL1. This would include the designated Strategic Regional Sites at Birkenhead and Bromborough, which the Council's latest assessment confirmed as the two most attractive business locations in the Borough⁽¹⁵⁹⁾. Policy Option EL1 has not, however, been preferred because it would offer a more limited choice of development opportunity; would be less likely to provide the capacity necessary to deliver the amount of land and number of jobs that will be necessary; and would offer fewer opportunities to support local centres and provide jobs across a wider area of the Borough, with a lower impact on reducing the need to travel.

14.13 The Council has already resolved not to consider pursuing a replacement site in the Green Belt for the quality and capacity previously provided by Wirral International Business Park, which would now also be contrary to the stated intentions of the Coalition Government.

Consultation Question 13

Do you agree with Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

157 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

158 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

159 Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study (BE Group, 2009)

15 Town Centre Hierarchy

15.1 The Council consulted on a Town Centre Hierarchy in the Spatial Options Report, to translate the centres listed in the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ into a hierarchy more consistent with the definitions set out in national planning policy⁽¹⁶¹⁾.

15.2 Public consultation indicated additional centres that should be included within the network; concerns over where individual centres sat within the hierarchy; and the role of existing out-of-centre facilities in meeting local shopping needs and providing local employment⁽¹⁶²⁾.

15.3 The Council has, therefore, sought to provide greater clarity on the role of centres within the wider network; on the implications of the hierarchy for future growth and development; and included two additional local centres within the network⁽¹⁶³⁾.

15.4 The Council's latest retail assessment revealed that many existing centres are showing signs of weakness and that the poorest performers were generally located within the older urban areas⁽¹⁶⁴⁾. The recession has also had a visible impact on some centres, resulting in the increased closure of shops, contributing to further decline by creating negative perceptions and a general sense of neglect.

15.5 National planning policy now states that:

- the town centre network and hierarchy should be defined on the basis of choices about the centres that will accommodate any identified need for growth in town centre uses;
- deficiencies in the network should be addressed by promoting centres to function at a higher level in the hierarchy, giving priority to deprived areas where there is a need for better access to services, facilities and employment;
- consideration should be given to the scope for consolidating and strengthening declining centres, by focusing on a wider range of uses and environmental improvements
- where reversing decline is not possible, consideration should be given to reclassifying the centre at a lower level within the hierarchy⁽¹⁶⁵⁾.

160 identified under UDP Policy SH1, UDP Policy SH2 and UDP Policy SH6

161 then Planning for Town Centres (ODPM, PPS6, 2005)

162 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

163 Eastham (Mill Park Drive/New Chester Road) and Greasby (Arrowe Road/Mill Lane)

164 Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study (Roger Tym & Partners, 2009)

165 Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development (PPS4, CLG, 2009), issued following the Council's latest study and the Core Strategy Spatial Options Report (January 2010)

15.6 Taking these matters into account, the Council's preferred network is now set out under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network. Further details about the definitions used to classify the main role of each centre are provided in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽¹⁶⁶⁾. Further guidance on the role of each centre will be included under Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies.

15.7 The Borough's higher order centres are already shown on the Proposals Map for the Unitary Development Plan. There is, therefore, no pressing need to give them any further geographical expression in the statutory Development Plan. Detailed local boundary changes would need to be consulted on as part of a site-specific Development Plan Document.

Local Centres Implementation Plan

15.8 Private sector investment and the careful use of available public funding will be needed to halt or reverse the decline of some of these centres. The first stage will be an economic appraisal to inform the preparation of a Local Centre Implementation Plan to identify the package of measures and local improvements that will be necessary within each centre.

Out of Centre Retailing

15.9 While the role of existing out-of-centre facilities is recognised⁽¹⁶⁷⁾, additional retail and leisure development will not be appropriate within these facilities other than to modernise and enhance the shopping environment, provided that such proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the existing centres listed under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network. The Council's Preferred Option for the Borough's retail network and hierarchy is, therefore, as follows:

Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network

The Borough's shopping centre network will comprise the following types of centre, to support community regeneration and a sustainable distribution of shops and services:

Sub-Regional Centre - Birkenhead will function as the Borough's main comparison shopping destination and the focus for retail, office, leisure, service, cultural and tourist facilities, and other main town centre uses of Borough wide significance.

Town Centres - are second tier centres which function as important convenience and comparison retail and service centres below the Sub-Regional Centre. The objective will be to improve the environment and support investment to achieve

¹⁶⁶ Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

¹⁶⁷ such as Croft Retail and Leisure Park; Junction 1 Retail Park; Rock Retail Park; and Upton Retail Park

a mix of uses (with retail as the principal use) to ensure the centres will continue to meet the needs of the local communities within the catchments that they serve.

District Centres - will provide the focus for district level shops, services and community facilities at a level above local neighbourhoods. The objective will be to improve the environment and support investment to achieve a mix of uses (with retail as the principal use) to ensure the centres will continue to meet the needs of the local communities within the catchments that they serve and to support diversification and specialisation where this can be shown to contribute to the overall vitality of the centre.

Local Centres - will be the focus for neighbourhood level shops and services to serve everyday needs. The objective will be to improve the environment and maintain the current level of investment and the range of neighbourhood services within these centres.

The Council will use the following network of centres to guide the distribution of town centre uses⁽¹⁶⁸⁾:

Hierarchy of Centres⁽¹⁶⁹⁾	
Sub-Regional Centre	
Birkenhead Town Centre (including Grange Road West, Oxton Road and Argyle Street)	
Town Centres	
Heswall	Liscard
Moreton	West Kirby
District Centres	
Bromborough Village	Hoylake
Woodchurch Road (Prenton)	
Local Centres	
Borough Road (Prenton Park)	Claughton Village
Dacre Hill	Eastham (Mill Park Drive/New Chester Road)
Greasby (Arrowe Road/Mill Lane)	Irby Village
Laird Street	Lower Bebington
New Ferry	Oxton Village
Seacombe (Poulton Road)	New Brighton (Seabank Road)
Tranmere Urban Village	Upton Village
New Brighton (Victoria Road)	Wallasey Village

Initial priorities for each centre⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ including the approach to upper floor and residential uses, will be included in the relevant Settlement Area Policies⁽¹⁷¹⁾.

168 including new retail development and other uses that would benefit from a town centre location accessible to local people
 169 listed under each heading in alphabetical order and not in order of importance
 170 in line with findings of the Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study (Roger Tym and Partners, 2009)
 171 under Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

The boundary to each of these centres will be defined in a site-specific Development Plan Document⁽¹⁷²⁾. In defining the boundaries to these centres, consideration will be given to:

- the need to provide a strong focus within each centre
- the function of the centre
- the location of potential development sites
- the range of shops and services
- transport accessibility
- the findings of a Local Centre Implementation Plan⁽¹⁷³⁾

Site-specific Development Plan Documents will also specify floorspace thresholds for the scale of any edge-of-centre and out-of-centre development that should be subject to an impact assessment under national planning policy⁽¹⁷⁴⁾; the areas to which these thresholds will apply; and any locally important impacts that should be assessed.

15.10 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 12 is considered sustainable. Protecting the Borough's network of centres will help to ensure that residents have continued access to a wide range of employment opportunities and may reduce the need to travel. Local heritage and the provision of facilities for culture, sport and leisure should, however, be taken into consideration when defining the boundaries of centres⁽¹⁷⁵⁾.

15.11 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows Preferred Option 12 is capable of a significant adverse effect on European Sites and will require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽¹⁷⁶⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

15.12 No alternative Policy Option has been suggested. The only real alternative would be to alter the list of centres and/or adjust their position in the hierarchy proposed, which can only be justified in the light of the evidence base and the results

172 the boundaries to these centres, with the exception of Eastham, Greasby and Oxtton Village, are already defined in the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 and will only be amended through the adoption of a site-specific Development Plan Document

173 a Local Centre Implementation Plan will be prepared for each centre, as resources allow, to focus public and private sector resources

174 Planning for Sustainable Economic Development (PPS4, 2009)

175 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

176 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

of public consultation. The Council does not, at this stage, believe that the available evidence base would support a change in the list or function of centres set out in Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network.

Consultation Question 14

Do you agree with Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

16 Distribution of Retailing

16.1 The Council consulted on two main options for the distribution of new comparison retail floorspace in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option CR1 - Focus on Birkenhead Town Centre and Wirral Waters
- Policy Option CR2 - Focus on Wirral Waters

16.2 The Spatial Options Report included a detailed assessment of potential development opportunities in and around Birkenhead and concluded that none of the locations considered were able to support a major growth in comparison floorspace. The Council therefore initially indicated that Policy Option CR2 was likely to be the Council's preferred option.

16.3 Consultation showed concern that Policy Option CR2 appeared to be ignoring the scope for locating new development within existing centres; concern about the potential impact of a large scheme at Wirral Waters; and continued concern about the future of Birkenhead Town Centre. Clarification was also requested on the approach to future convenience retailing. Comments on the Spatial Portrait also indicated a need for enhanced policy coverage for the key centres within each Settlement Area⁽¹⁷⁷⁾.

16.4 The Council's latest retail assessment was formally reported in January 2010⁽¹⁷⁸⁾. The Council's Cabinet indicated its support for Option 5 (Policy Option CR1) and Option 6 (Policy Option CR2) for meeting future retail and leisure needs, in addition to an allowance for growth within existing retail centres across Wirral. The Council has also adopted an integrated regeneration study which puts forward a spatial framework for the regeneration of Birkenhead based on three central themes:

177 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

178 Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study (Roger Tym & Partners, 2009)

- improving the attractiveness and legibility of key routes and enhancing the overall sense of connectivity through Birkenhead
- improving the quality of key areas of public realm, and the connectivity between important public open spaces
- developing a land use structure that can guide development decisions in a way that helps to improve the 'intactness' and coherence of Birkenhead's urban structure⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

16.5 The spatial framework for the regeneration strategy also includes proposals for Movement, Public Realm and Land Use, each supported by written strategies. In relation to Birkenhead Town Centre, the regeneration strategy indicates that the policy approach to the role and function of the wider town centre needs to change, away from being focused only on the retail precinct, to a wider central urban area that offers a range of high quality uses including among other things retail, business, culture, transport, services, recreation and residential uses. Diversification of uses is particularly important alongside the regeneration potential of the waterfront, to introduce higher value development; improve town centre connections; integrate development into the surrounding area; and ensure new uses complement the future role of Birkenhead Town Centre.

16.6 The Council has, therefore, re-appraised the options in the light of the comments received, the available evidence base and the publication of revised national planning policy⁽¹⁸⁰⁾. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽¹⁸¹⁾.

Capacity for Additional Retail Floorspace

16.7 The Council's latest retail assessment assessed the need for additional retail floorspace in the period to 2021 and more indicatively to 2026.

16.8 In relation to convenience retailing, the assessment concludes that low forecasts of growth in future expenditure; low forecast population growth; the need to support existing businesses; and the turnover requirements of existing planning permissions indicated no capacity for additional convenience floorspace in the Borough in the period to 2026⁽¹⁸²⁾.

179 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, 2010)

180 Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development (PPS4, CLG, 2009)

181 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

182 this was not to say that no new convenience floorspace would come forward but that this would have to follow a future up-to-date assessment of need and be justified on the basis of meeting a demonstrated local deficiency, perhaps in response to a change in existing provision, in line with a sequential approach to site selection

16.9 In relation to comparison floorspace, the assessment concluded that the effects of the recession on forecasts of future expenditure growth; low forecast population growth; the need to support existing retail businesses; and the turnover requirements of existing planning permissions; indicated that additional comparison floorspace could not be supported before 2014. Capacity for additional comparison floorspace was, however, likely to be generated in the medium term as expenditure growth increased. The assessed capacity for additional comparison floorspace is set out in Table 16.1 below:

Time Period	Gross Floorspace (sq.m)	Net Floorspace (sq.m)
2014-2016	3,558	2,491
2016-2021	58,664	41,064
2021-2026	59,592	41,715
Total	121,814	85,270

Table 16.1 Capacity for Comparison Retail Floorspace

16.10 In terms of accommodating the future growth in comparison floorspace, the Council's Preferred Option is now a balanced approach which focuses on both Birkenhead Town Centre and the regeneration opportunity at Wirral Waters as the key locations for accommodating future comparison retail growth in line with the hierarchy set out under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network, where opportunities arise and where growth reflects the priorities identified under Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies.

16.11 While Birkenhead Town Centre remains the most sequentially preferable location, the delivery of major retail development is dependent on suitable, available and viable development opportunities coming forward within the Centre. No additional locations within the Town Centre were identified during consultation in addition to those assessed in the Spatial Options Report. The main elements of the Council's Preferred Option for the distribution of new retail floorspace are, therefore, as set out below:

Preferred Option 13 - Retail Growth

Convenience Shopping Floorspace⁽¹⁸³⁾

There is no quantitative need for additional convenience floorspace in the Borough to 2026. Proposals for convenience retail floorspace which are intended to address a demonstrated local qualitative deficiency in provision will first be directed to existing centres in line with the hierarchy identified under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network, having regard to considerations of scale and impact on existing centres. Any retail development at Wirral Waters including convenience floorspace should support the objectives of the Council's integrated

183 largely relates to perishable goods which are purchased on a regular basis

regeneration study for Birkenhead and Wirral Waters⁽¹⁸⁴⁾.

Comparison Shopping Floorspace⁽¹⁸⁵⁾

New comparison floorspace will be provided in line with the phasing set out in Table 16.1 up to a ceiling of 121,814 square metres gross by 2026. New floorspace will first be directed to existing centres in line with the hierarchy identified under Preferred Option 12 - Retail Network and then to Wirral Waters, having regard to considerations of scale and impact on existing centres. Any retail development at Wirral Waters should support the objectives of the Council's integrated regeneration study for Birkenhead and Wirral Waters⁽¹⁸⁶⁾.

16.12 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 13 is considered sustainable. New retail development directed towards Birkenhead and then Wirral Waters would provide jobs, services and facilities, and an enhancement in the vitality and viability of the hierarchy of town centres could have a positive effect on social exclusion and sustainable travel. New retail development may, however, have potential negative implications for the environment through increased pollution, surface run-off and waste generation. Preferred Option 13 would need to be operated alongside other Policy Options to ensure any adverse impacts were minimised⁽¹⁸⁷⁾.

16.13 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows that Preferred Option 13 is considered to have no potential for effects on European Sites⁽¹⁸⁸⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

16.14 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 13 not to be accepted.

16.15 The identified comparison goods need of 121,814 square metres gross is based on long-term need and is partly dependent on the the delivery of residential development at Wirral Waters to generate the demand to support it. The Council's latest retail assessment, included an assessment of comparison floorspace capacity which did not factor in the additional population growth generated by Wirral Waters. The comparison goods floorspace capacity under this scenario is set out in Table 16.2 below. The short term position is the same as "with Wirral Waters" - there is no capacity for additional floorspace before 2014; thereafter, the capacity for additional floorspace is reduced in line with the reduced population forecasts.

184 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, 2010)

185 non-food items including household goods, furniture, electrical goods and clothing

186 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, 2010)

187 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

188 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

Time Period	Gross Floorspace (sq.m)	Net Floorspace (sq.m)
2014-2016	1,269	889
2016-2021	55,425	38,798
2021-2026	55,815	39,071
Total	112,510	78,757

Table 16.2 Alternative Capacity for Comparison Retail Floorspace (Without Population Growth at Wirral Waters)

16.16 This alternative has, however, not been preferred because it would not support the aspiration to establish the New City Neighbourhood expressed under Preferred Option 3 - Spatial Vision and Preferred Spatial Objective 7 - New City Neighbourhood; would not take into account the impact of the potential additional growth in population generated by the Wirral Waters proposals; and would go against the general support for a more targeted approach to regeneration.

Consultation Question 15

Do you agree with Preferred Option 13 - Distribution of Retailing?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

17 Renewable, Decentralised and Low Carbon Energy

17.1 The Council consulted on three main options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option RE1 - set a Borough wide target(s) to be achieved by all types of development
- Policy Option RE2 - set a Borough wide target(s) to be achieved by specific types of development
- Policy Option RE3 - set geographically specific targets for each Settlement Area

17.2 The Council initially indicated that a combination of these Policy Options was likely to be preferred.

17.3 Public consultation demonstrated wide support for a mixed approach but with little agreement over the detail. One respondent felt that insufficient information was available on which to base a choice. The majority of respondents, nevertheless, believed that Policy Option RE1 should remain the underlying assumption and that it was important that all types of development should at least be made to consider

the possibilities. Supporters of Policy Option RE1 believed that any other approach would be too easy to avoid. The need to protect the environment based on an assessment of local impact was, however, also a strong underlying theme⁽¹⁸⁹⁾.

17.4 The national approach has been subject to significant change since the Spatial Options Report was prepared. A recent consultation document has indicated that Borough wide targets for single developments will be unnecessary following proposed changes to the Building Regulations⁽¹⁹⁰⁾. While the Coalition Government intends to increase the amount of energy generated from renewable sources, the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy has removed regional targets.

17.5 An emerging study of the capacity of the Borough to generate renewable energy is likely to identify the proposed New City Neighbourhood identified under Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations as a potential priority zone, with a capacity for some 3.5MW of renewable energy through a district heating scheme⁽¹⁹¹⁾. This appears to confirm that the most significant local sources of renewable energy are more likely to come from extensions to the off-shore wind farms in Liverpool Bay or the project currently being drawn up to exploit tidal power within the Mersey Estuary⁽¹⁹²⁾.

17.6 The Council has, therefore, re-appraised the options in the light of the comments received and the available evidence base and has concluded that the Preferred Option should be amended to encourage the development and use of decentralised energy and to focus on specific opportunities to provide it. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽¹⁹³⁾.

17.7 The main elements of the Preferred Option for renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy are, therefore set out below:

Preferred Option 14 - Decentralised Energy

The Core Strategy will include a general policy to encourage energy efficiency and the use and development of renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy⁽¹⁹⁴⁾.

189 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

190 Draft National Planning Policy for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate (CLG, 2010)

191 Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study (Arup, 2010)

192 Mersey Tidal Power Project Stage 1 Options Report (Scott Wilson, 2010)

193 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

194 which could also be partly implemented under Preferred Option 15 - Better Design and Proposed Option 16 - Development Management

The New City Neighbourhood identified under Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations, will be identified as a priority zone for the possible implementation of a district heating scheme.

Opportunities to use tidal power in the River Mersey will be encouraged subject to appropriate environmental controls including a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment to select the most suitable design and location and assess the impact of construction and operation.

Specific requirements for individual land allocations will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document.

17.8 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 14 is considered sustainable. Increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable and decentralised energy is likely to have a positive impact on economic growth and climate change mitigation. While Preferred Option 14 may have an adverse effect on biodiversity and local heritage, ignoring climate change will, in any case, eventually damage biodiversity and natural habitats. Preferred Option 14 should, however, be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 15 - Better Design and Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to mitigate any potential negative impacts⁽¹⁹⁵⁾.

17.9 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment indicates the need for an additional reference to a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment for any project to generate tidal power from the Mersey⁽¹⁹⁶⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

17.10 In light of the latest national consultation, no alternative has been suggested as targets for individual developments may no longer be necessary following planned changes to the Building Regulations and it would not be appropriate for the Core Strategy to duplicate existing controls.

Consultation Question 16

Do you agree with Preferred Option 14 - Decentralised Energy?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

195 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

196 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

18 Better Design

18.1 The Council consulted on three main options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option DE1 - Integrate requirements for improved design across all the other policies within the Core Strategy
- Policy Option DE2 - Include a separate Borough wide design policy in the Core Strategy
- Policy Option DE3 - Include provision for geographically specific design policies within the Core Strategy

18.2 The Council initially indicated that a mixed approach using elements from every Policy Option was likely to be the Council's Preferred Option.

18.3 Consultation showed wide support for a mixed approach. The main concern was to ensure that new development matched the character and visual amenity of existing areas and secured elements of sustainable design. The general consensus appeared to be for an overarching design policy to be included in the Core Strategy, supported by policies and guidance in lower level Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents⁽¹⁹⁷⁾.

18.4 A Places Matter Design Panel Workshop was held in April 2010 to advise the Council on the best approach for the Core Strategy. The Panel also advised a mixed approach but concluded that the Core Strategy needed to place a greater emphasis on the many unique assets of the area, such as the quality and distinctiveness of the Borough's views, heritage, landscape, countryside and coast⁽¹⁹⁸⁾.

18.5 The Panel believed that the wide variety in the nature of these features would require a variety of policy responses, rather than a single over-riding approach, to provide greater control over the design and quality of new development. Development should only be permitted where it could be shown to strengthen and enhance the character of the assets identified or where development could be used to secure, re-establish or reinforce local character or provide environmental improvements. This would strongly support a Settlement Area based policy approach, which would need to be embedded across the whole of the Core Strategy.

18.6 The Council has re-appraised the options in the light of the comments received. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽¹⁹⁹⁾.

18.7 The Council's Preferred Option is still to develop design policies using a mix of Policy Option DE1, Policy Option DE2 and Policy Option DE3. This approach has

197 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

198 the Panel stressed the need to reflect the findings of the more recently completed landscape and historic character assessments and conservation area appraisals

199 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

now also been further embedded within the Preferred Option 3 - Spatial Vision, the Preferred Spatial Objectives and Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies. The main elements of the Preferred Option for the better control of design are, therefore, set out below:

Preferred Option 15 - Better Design

The Core Strategy will include an overarching design policy that will promote the maintenance and enhancement of local distinctiveness and sustainable construction and design⁽²⁰⁰⁾.

Local requirements will be based on an assessment of the character of the assets identified under Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies⁽²⁰¹⁾.

Detailed requirements will be based on additional guidance contained within separate Supplementary Planning Documents and design guides.

Design requirements for land allocations will be set out in a site-specific Development Plan Document. Major developments may be supported by a site-specific Supplementary Planning Document.

18.8 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 15 is considered sustainable. It could support economic revitalisation, social inclusion and the integration of biodiversity enhancement, water efficiency, carbon reduction and sustainable transport measures into new development. Preferred Option 15 should ensure that development respects its setting, protects and enhances local heritage, as well as preventing any adverse impact on residential amenity⁽²⁰²⁾.

18.9 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows that Preferred Option 15 is considered to have no potential for effects on European Sites⁽²⁰³⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

18.10 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 15 not to be accepted. The next best performing option would be Policy Option DE3. This has, however, not been preferred because a partial, variable approach based on geographically specific areas may not be sufficient to deliver high design standards in the most consistent and effective way.

200 taking account of issues and opportunities identified in the Settlement Area Policies, including appearance, scale, layout, the quality of public and private spaces, landscaping, accessibility, local amenity, crime prevention, energy and water conservation, sustainable waste management and drainage and adaptability to technological, climatic, social and economic change

201 including visual, landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets

202 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

203 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

Consultation Question 17

Do you agree with Preferred Option 15 - Better Design?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

19 Development Management

19.1 The Council consulted on two main options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option DM1 - include no specific policy in the Core Strategy
- Policy Option DM2 - set out a list of general criteria within the Core Strategy

19.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option DM2 was likely to be the Council's preferred option.

19.3 Consultation showed strong support for Policy Option DM2. Only one respondent favoured Policy Option DM1, on the basis that Policy Option DM2 would provide room for confusion, duplication and over-complication. Another did not believe that any policy on development management was appropriate for a Core Strategy. Most appeared to see Policy Option DM2 as an opportunity to provide additional clarity on a wide range of local issues⁽²⁰⁴⁾.

19.4 The Council has re-appraised the options in the light of the comments received. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽²⁰⁵⁾.

19.5 The Council's Preferred Option is still an approach based on Policy Option DM2 on the basis that this would provide improved clarity to Council officers, applicants and the public. The main elements of the Preferred Option for development management are, therefore, set out below:

Preferred Option 16 - Development Management

The Core Strategy will set out a list of the main issues that will need to be addressed when considering the appropriateness of any new development proposal or land allocation. The list of main issues will include:

²⁰⁴ further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

²⁰⁵ Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

- contribution to the delivery of Spatial Vision⁽²⁰⁶⁾
- contribution to the delivery of Spatial Objectives⁽²⁰⁷⁾
- compliance with the Broad Spatial Strategy⁽²⁰⁸⁾
- impact on local distinctiveness⁽²⁰⁹⁾
- impact on protected sites and species⁽²¹⁰⁾
- impact on mitigation, adaption and resilience to climate change⁽²¹¹⁾
- impact on the reuse of buildings and previously developed land⁽²¹²⁾
- impact on transport, access and servicing⁽²¹³⁾
- impact on sustainable travel choices⁽²¹⁴⁾
- impact on public safety⁽²¹⁵⁾
- impact on the capacity of local infrastructure and services⁽²¹⁶⁾
- impact on design and amenity⁽²¹⁷⁾
- impact on wider environmental requirements⁽²¹⁸⁾
- the results of community consultation⁽²¹⁹⁾

The requirements of Preferred Option 16 - Development Management will be applied in accordance with national planning policies, guidance and best practice.

Further advice on the application of these requirements will, where necessary, be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

206 in line with Preferred Option 3 - Spatial Vision

207 in line with Preferred Spatial Objectives 1 to 7

208 in line with Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy

209 including local features and characteristics such as townscape, heritage, archaeology, bio- and geodiversity, landscape, views, green infrastructure and statutory designations

210 including European Sites and their supporting habitats

211 including impact on flood risk, coast protection, river maintenance, sustainable drainage, water and energy conservation and emissions

212 previously developed land is defined in national planning policy in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3, CLG, June 2010)

213 including traffic management, road safety, parking and provision for disabled people

214 including the need to travel and access by public transport, walking and cycling

215 including crime prevention, the separation and protection of sensitive uses, airport safeguarding, unstable land and other hazards

216 including foul and surface water drainage

217 including local character, visual amenity, living conditions, noise and other disturbance

218 including environmental improvements; the quality of air, land and water; protection of water resources; sustainable construction and waste management; and natural processes

219 to satisfy the Wirral Statement of Community Involvement and/or the requirements of national policy

19.6 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 16 is considered sustainable, although there are a number of uncertainties depending on how the final policy is drawn up and implemented. However, operated in conjunction with other Policy Options, Preferred Option 16 has the potential to mitigate a number of potential adverse impacts⁽²²⁰⁾.

19.7 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment indicates that an additional commitment may be needed to prevent an adverse impact on European Sites through measures to prevent disturbance to wildlife and loss of habitat, which could include suitably located green infrastructure, habitat management, enhanced access management, appropriate water treatment infrastructure and the prevention of development that would require a change in coast defence policy that might compromise natural coastal processes including cross-boundary effects⁽²²¹⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

19.8 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option DM2 was not to be accepted. The only alternative would be to have no development management policy in the Core Strategy. This has, however, not been preferred because reliance on national policy alone is unlikely to be sufficient to deliver high quality development in the most consistent and effective way in line with the Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives of the emerging Core Strategy.

Consultation Question 18

Do you agree with Preferred Option 16 - Development Management?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

20 Developer Contributions

20.1 The Council consulted on two main options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option DC1 - an enabling policy to support requirements through legal agreements and obligations
- Policy Option DC2 - an enabling policy to support requirements both through legal agreements and obligations and as part of a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

20.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option DC2 was likely to be the Council's preferred option.

²²⁰ Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

²²¹ Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

20.3 Consultation showed strong support for Policy Option DC2, primarily on the basis of its greater flexibility. The few supporters of Policy Option DC1 favoured site by site negotiation, believing it to be the easiest and cheapest to operate. One respondent expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the Community Infrastructure Levy and the level of detail required, especially at sub-regional level⁽²²²⁾.

20.4 Regulations for the Community Infrastructure Levy came into force on 6 April 2010. The Levy is a new charge that authorities can decide to apply to most types of new development in their area. The proceeds of the Levy can be used to provide new infrastructure to support the development of an area. Separate advice on the operation of Section 106 Agreements, which has been published for consultation, states that a planning obligation may now only be used if it is necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms, is directly related to it and is fair and reasonably related to it in scale⁽²²³⁾. The Coalition Government has indicated that they are likely to favour a more simplified system of tariffs and incentives.

20.5 If the Council were to decide to adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy or another tariff based charging system, a separate charging schedule would need to be prepared based on the infrastructure shown to be necessary in the Core Strategy⁽²²⁴⁾.

20.6 The Council has re-appraised the options in the light of the comments received and the potential intentions of the Coalition Government. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽²²⁵⁾. The Council's Preferred Option is still an approach based on Policy Option DC2. The main elements of the Council's preferred approach are set out below:

Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions

The Core Strategy will require new development to contribute to new or replacement facilities where they are needed to serve the development proposed or to mitigate its impact. The types of provision likely to be required will include:

- transport⁽²²⁶⁾
- water services⁽²²⁷⁾

222 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

223 New Policy Document for Planning Obligations (CLG, 2010)

224 a draft charging schedule would need to be published for public comment and submitted to independent public examination

225 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

226 including lorry routes and facilities for public transport, walking and cycling

227 including flooding, supply, disposal, sustainable drainage and prevention of pollution

- public realm⁽²²⁸⁾
- affordable housing⁽²²⁹⁾
- green infrastructure⁽²³⁰⁾
- local employment and training opportunities⁽²³¹⁾
- education⁽²³²⁾
- health⁽²³³⁾
- community services⁽²³⁴⁾
- sustainability considerations⁽²³⁵⁾
- measures to avoid and mitigate an adverse impact on European Sites

A full list of the key infrastructure necessary to support the delivery of the Core Strategy will be included alongside an indication of the Settlement Area and uses to which they will apply⁽²³⁶⁾. The levels of contribution and the uses and thresholds against which they will be applied will be contained in a separate Supplementary Planning Document.

Any requirements will be applied in accordance with an assessment of the viability of the development proposed.

For land allocations, site-specific requirements will be set out in a Development Plan Document.

The mechanisms used to secure provision, in payment or in kind, could include planning conditions, Section 106 Agreements, agreements under the Highways Acts, the Community Infrastructure Levy or other development-based tariffs⁽²³⁷⁾.

The funding raised and the facilities provided will be published for public scrutiny.

20.7 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 17 is considered sustainable. Securing community benefits as part of any new development will have a positive impact on the local environment, including local heritage and biodiversity, and may assist in addressing local deficiencies or inequality in service

228 including integration with surrounding facilities, public art and street furniture

229 in line with Preferred Option 9 - Affordable and Specialist Housing

230 in line with Preferred Option 18 - Green Infrastructure

231 in line with Preferred Option 11 - Distribution of Employment

232 including primary, secondary, higher and further education

233 including hospitals and GP Services

234 including sports and leisure, community and cultural facilities

235 including sustainable waste management, contributions to off-site renewable energy generation where appropriate schemes are available and use of low carbon technologies

236 a preliminary list of potential projects has been included in the accompanying Core Strategy Preferred Options Draft Delivery Framework (2010)

237 depending on any changes introduced by the Coalition Government

or facility provision. Securing improved and adaptable infrastructure, including sustainable waste and water management, transport improvements and carbon-reduction measures as part of any new development, is likely to have a positive effect on the local economy and environment⁽²³⁸⁾.

20.8 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment indicates that an additional commitment may be needed to prevent an adverse impact on European Sites through measures to prevent disturbance to wildlife and loss of habitat which could include suitably located green infrastructure, habitat management, enhanced access management and appropriate water treatment infrastructure⁽²³⁹⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

20.9 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative Policy Option were Preferred Option DC2 not to be accepted. The next best performing option would be Policy Option DC1 but the limits now placed on the scope of planning obligations by the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations and the current uncertainty over public funding means that Policy Option DC2 may be the only option that will be capable of providing the infrastructure necessary to meet the Borough's ambitions. The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations also mean that the Council would not be able to pool contributions towards items of infrastructure after 2014.

Consultation Question 19

Do you agree with Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

21 Green Infrastructure

21.1 The Council consulted on two main options in the Spatial Options Report:

- Policy Option GI1 - identify Borough wide numerical standards for different types of green infrastructure
- Policy Option GI2 - identify specific priorities within each Settlement Area to reflect local needs and characteristics

238 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

239 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

Core Strategy for Wirral - Preferred Options Report

21.2 The Council initially indicated that Policy Option GI2 was likely to be the Council's preferred option, primarily because this approach would be better able to reflect the distinctiveness of each of the Settlement Areas.

21.3 Consultation showed strong support for Policy Option GI2 but a number of respondents still wanted some sort of standards to be included. Otherwise, respondents wanted a stronger emphasis on protection; on standards of management; and assurances that the multi-functional value of a fuller range of green infrastructure would be included⁽²⁴⁰⁾.

21.4 An assessment of the more formal types of open space has now been completed⁽²⁴¹⁾. Further work is being undertaken to join up data for landscape, river corridors, biodiversity, heritage and other related green infrastructure including the identification of important off-site feeding and roosting areas for qualifying species from European Sites.

21.5 Sub-regional studies are now further advanced but have not yet reported⁽²⁴²⁾. A wider cross-boundary partnership may also be needed to deliver suitably located green infrastructure, habitat management and enhanced access management to address the potential cumulative impact on European Sites.

21.6 The Council has re-appraised the options in the light of the comments received, the findings of the emerging evidence base and relevant sub-regional initiatives. The results of this re-assessment can be viewed in the accompanying Assessment Report⁽²⁴³⁾.

21.7 The Council's preferred Option is now primarily based on Policy Option GI2 to reflect the often unique character of the sites, habitats and features within in each Settlement Area but with elements of Policy Option GI1 where it would still be appropriate to apply a numerical standard.

21.8 The main elements of the Preferred Option for the protection and provision of green infrastructure are, therefore, set out below:

240 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

241 Wirral Open Space Assessment (Strategic Leisure, 2010) is subject to public consultation alongside this Preferred Options Report

242 including a Green Infrastructure Framework prepared by The Environment Partnership for the Mersey Dee Alliance; and a City Region Green Infrastructure Framework for the Liverpool City Region prepared by the Mersey Forest

243 Core Strategy Preferred Options Assessment Report (2010)

Preferred Option 18 - Green Infrastructure

The Core Strategy will set Borough-wide standards for the quantity⁽²⁴⁴⁾, quality⁽²⁴⁵⁾ and accessibility⁽²⁴⁶⁾ of parks and gardens; natural and semi-natural greenspace; outdoor sports facilities including playing fields, bowling greens and tennis courts; amenity greenspace; provision for children and young people; and allotments.

A hierarchy of provision will differentiate between Borough wide⁽²⁴⁷⁾; district⁽²⁴⁸⁾; and local facilities⁽²⁴⁹⁾.

The Borough-wide standards will be used to protect existing features and facilities; identify priorities for improvements; and to support new provision⁽²⁵⁰⁾. Requirements will include the protection and maintenance of natural features; hard and soft landscaping; and facilities for recreation, sport or play. Contributions for new or improved provision arising from the demands of new development will be sought under Preferred Option 17 - Developer Contributions.

The implications for local areas will be included in Settlement Area Policies⁽²⁵¹⁾, which will set out local priorities and characteristics including issues related to natural features; trees and woodland; soils and geology; coastal character and influences; landscape and heritage; habitats and species; corridors and linkages; public rights of way; formal and informal recreation; water courses and drainage.

All development proposals and land allocations will be assessed against their contribution to:

- the standards set out under Preferred Option 18 - Green Infrastructure
- the priorities for the Settlement Area(s) concerned⁽²⁵²⁾
- the delivery of the Council's overall Strategy for Green Infrastructure
- the delivery of any other related initiatives and strategies⁽²⁵³⁾
- the avoidance and mitigation of an adverse impact on European Sites

Site-specific requirements for land allocations; including land allocations for green infrastructure, will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document⁽²⁵⁴⁾.

This approach will, where necessary, be supported by additional background information and mapping provided in Supplementary Planning Documents.

21.9 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 18 is considered sustainable. It could improve the environmental quality of an area, making an area more attractive for investment while helping to create healthy sustainable communities. Preferred Option 18 could also help to reduce flood risk and mitigate the impacts of climate change, have a positive impact on the water cycle, and provide attractive open spaces for recreation and leisure⁽²⁵⁵⁾.

21.10 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment indicates that the delivery of suitably located green infrastructure, habitat management and enhanced access management may be necessary to prevent disturbance to wildlife and loss of habitat and supporting habitat at European Sites⁽²⁵⁶⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

21.11 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative were Preferred Option 18 not to be accepted. The next best performing Policy Option would be Policy Option GI1. This has not, however, been preferred because it would only provide standards for restricted types of green infrastructure; would not be appropriate to apply to other significant types of green infrastructure; and would fail to take full account of local distinctiveness.

244 expressed as a rate of provision for every thousand people

245 expressed as a target quality score based on the range, condition and overall impression of the facilities and physical infrastructure provided

246 expressed as the distance that each facility should be from the residential properties it is intended to serve

247 larger facilities which may be intended to serve a wider than local catchment, including visitors from outside Wirral

248 intended to provide the main facilities within each Settlement Area

249 smaller facilities only intended to serve an immediate local neighbourhood

250 requirements for and within individual spaces including provision for disabled people will be informed by site-specific management plans prepared by the Council's Parks and Countryside Service

251 in line with Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

252 set out under Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

253 including river corridor and catchment area management plans; surface water management plans; flood alleviation; sustainable urban drainage; heritage characterisations; conservation area appraisals and management plans; and other local improvement plans

254 locally designated sites for urban greenspace, sports grounds, school playing fields, local wildlife and earth science sites are already shown on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map adopted in February 2000 and will only be amended through a site-specific Development Plan Document

255 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

256 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

Consultation Question 20

Do you agree with Preferred Option 18 - Green Infrastructure?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

22 Additional Policy Options

22.1 The Spatial Options Report asked whether there were any other policy areas that should be included within the Core Strategy. Respondents indicated that the following areas should also be considered:

- minerals
- waste management
- disability issues
- parking
- anti-social behaviour
- allotments
- archaeology
- vacant properties
- watercourses and water management
- trees and woodland
- indoor leisure
- culture, arts and community facilities
- agriculture, including horticulture, market gardening, local production and food security
- the need for supporting infrastructure
- peak oil
- the provision of healthcare facilities
- care for the elderly

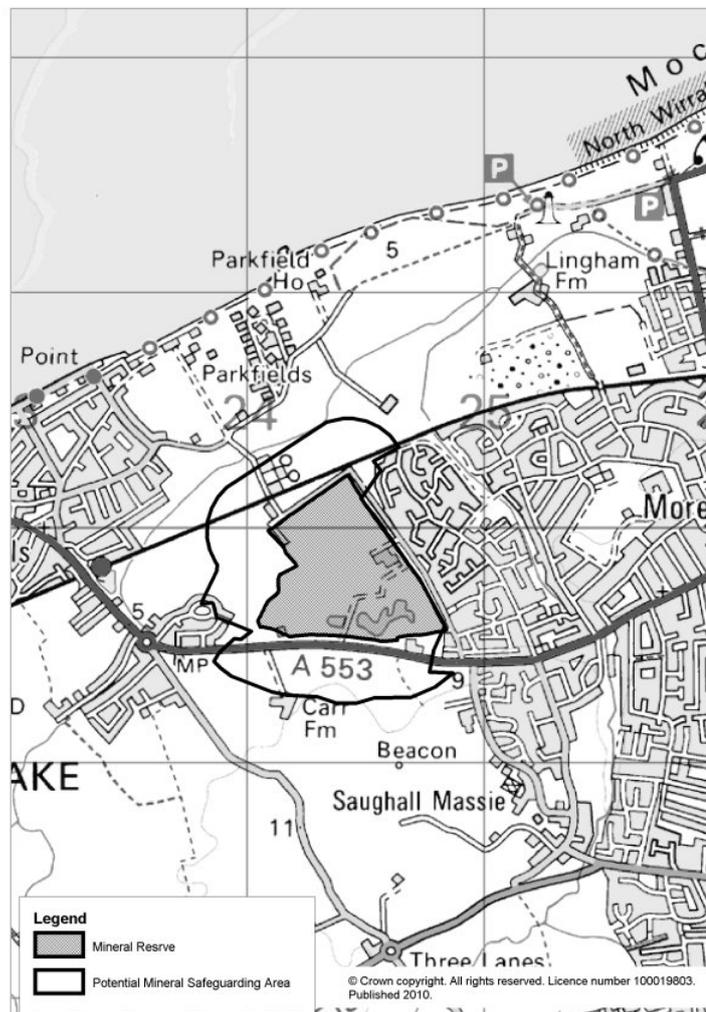
22.2 The Council has concluded that only issues related minerals and waste management need to be taken forward as new specialist policies, as the majority of the other issues could be dealt with as part of revisions to other areas of the Core Strategy.

22.3 The following sections set out how policies for minerals and waste management will be taken forward:

23 Minerals

23.1 Government Office North West has stated that the Core Strategy must include provision for minerals⁽²⁵⁷⁾.

23.2 Minerals can only be worked where they are found. In Wirral, a combination of geological and environmental factors means that mineral working has historically been limited to small quarries for local sandstone and winnable brick clay reserves. Only two sites remain with planning permission to extract clay to 2042, at Carr Lane in Moreton; and at Prenton Dell.



Picture 23.1

257 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (2010)

23.3 The Merseyside Mineral Resource Study 2008 recommended that a mineral safeguarding area should be identified at Moreton, to prevent incompatible development from sterilising the mineral reserve. The area that could be affected is shown on Picture 23.1. The area of search will, however, need to be more closely defined in a site-specific Development Plan Document.

23.4 It is therefore proposed to include a new Preferred Option as follows:

Preferred Option 19 - Minerals

The Core Strategy will indicate the intention to safeguard an area, based on the area of search shown on Picture 23.1, to prevent incompatible development from sterilising the existing mineral reserve at Carr Lane in Moreton⁽²⁵⁸⁾. The area of search will be shown as a symbol on the Core Strategy Key Diagram. A more detailed boundary will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document.

The Core Strategy will also include additional criteria for development management to take account of specialist issues related to the design, construction, operation, restoration and aftercare of mineral sites⁽²⁵⁹⁾.

Further advice on the application of these requirements will, where necessary, be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

23.5 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 19 is considered sustainable. Preventing existing mineral reserves from being sterilised to enable future extraction, could create jobs and improve local economic performance. However, Preferred Option 19 would need to be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to ensure any potential negative impacts relating to biodiversity, residential amenity and local heritage can be mitigated⁽²⁶⁰⁾.

23.6 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows that Preferred Option 19 is considered to have no potential for effects on European Sites, as this issue would be addressed through a subsequent site-specific Development Plan Document⁽²⁶¹⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

23.7 No alternative Policy Option is suggested. The only alternative is not to include a policy in the Core Strategy.

258 the boundary to the mineral reserve is already shown on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map adopted in February 2000

259 in addition to Preferred Option 16 - Development Management

260 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

261 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

Consultation Question 21

Do you agree with Preferred Option 19 - Minerals?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

24 Waste Management

24.1 Government Office North West has stated that the Core Strategy must include provision for waste management⁽²⁶²⁾.

24.2 A Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton is currently in preparation, which will identify and allocate the sites needed to accommodate sub-regional and district scale facilities; waste processors and smaller scale facilities; and include a series of specialist policies for development management, to ensure a consistent approach across the wider sub-region⁽²⁶³⁾.

24.3 It is, therefore, proposed to include a new Preferred Option as follows:

Preferred Option 20 - Waste Management

The Core Strategy will support provision for sustainable waste management solutions to promote the prevention, minimisation, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste and to minimise the need for residual landfill, subject to the requirements of Preferred Option 16 - Development Management.

New waste management facilities will primarily be directed to industrial and commercial locations away from residential properties.

A Joint Waste Development Plan Document will include site-specific proposals for sub-regional, district and smaller scale facilities; and additional criteria for development management to take account of specialist issues related to the location, design, operation, impact, restoration, aftercare and monitoring of waste management facilities⁽²⁶⁴⁾.

Further advice on the application of these requirements will, where necessary, be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

262 further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options

263 documents related to the Merseyside and Halton Waste DPD can be viewed at <http://wasteplanningmerseyside.gov.uk/site.do>

264 in addition to Preferred Option 16 - Development Management

24.4 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 20 is considered sustainable. It could have a positive impact on economic productivity and the prevention, minimisation and recycling of waste. Preferred Option 20 should, however, be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to ensure any potential negative impacts relating to biodiversity, residential amenity and local heritage can be mitigated⁽²⁶⁵⁾.

24.5 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows that the potential for effects on European Sites will be addressed through the separate Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton⁽²⁶⁶⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

24.6 No alternative Policy Option is suggested. The only alternative is not to include a policy in the Core Strategy.

Consultation Question 22

Do you agree with Preferred Option 20 - Waste Management?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

25 Strategic Locations

25.1 The analysis of the available Policy Options has repeatedly highlighted the importance of a number of specific locations for the future delivery of the emerging Core Strategy. These include:

- Birkenhead and Wirral Waters; and
- the industrial areas in Bromborough, particularly Wirral International Business Park.

25.2 National policy states that Core Strategies can set out details of key sites that are considered central to the achievement of the strategy.

25.3 There are two options. A strategic allocation would require a high level of detail and certainty to be provided within the Core Strategy and would need to appear on the Proposals Map which will replace the Unitary Development Plan. A broad location would require only a symbol on the Key Diagram for the Core Strategy. More specific details would then be worked up later in a site-specific Development

265 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

266 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

Plan Document or Area Action Plan⁽²⁶⁷⁾.

Wirral International Business Park

25.4 While the boundary to Wirral International Business Park is not shown on the Proposals Map for the Unitary Development Plan⁽²⁶⁸⁾, the industrial areas in Bromborough⁽²⁶⁹⁾ are already well-defined as Primarily Industrial Areas. Although the pattern of site-specific land allocations for new employment development needs updating⁽²⁷⁰⁾ this would, be better dealt with as part of a site-specific Development Plan Document.

Birkenhead and Wirral Waters

25.5 An exception to this is the Birkenhead Dock Estate, where the pattern of land use could be significantly different from that envisaged in the Unitary Development Plan. The boundary to the Dock Estate (and the policy that went with it) was deleted from the Unitary Development Plan following a Direction by the Secretary of State in September 2007 as the first stage in the promotion of the area for a wider range of uses. The area is now effectively "white land" in the Unitary Development Plan⁽²⁷¹⁾.

25.6 The area lies at the heart of major regeneration proposals including national initiatives such as the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, which form part of a wider vision for regeneration at the heart of the Liverpool City Region. It also lies at the heart of the area where social, economic and environmental needs and the proportion of vacant land and premises is greatest.

25.7 The owners of the Dock Estate have aspirations based on their land interests extending from the now infilled Bidston Dock at Wallasey Bridge Road in the west, through the Dock Estate at East Float and West Float, to Alfred Dock and the Twelve Quays Ferry Terminal on the Mersey waterfront, to Woodside in Birkenhead and Cammell Lairds at Tranmere. The East Float has already been subject to major planning applications and further applications are expected at Bidston Dock and at Woodside. The Core Strategy will be seeking to promote the majority of this area as

267 the difference between a strategic allocation and a broad location is set out in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (PPS12, CLG, June 2008)

268 the current boundary extends from the course of the river Dibbin to the north of Pool Lane in the north to the Green Belt boundary alongside the Leverhulme Sports Ground in the south and includes all of the industrial and commercial areas between the A41 and the Mersey coast, including Croft Retail and Leisure Park but excluding the residential areas at Port Causeway

269 which include the factory and research facilities at Port Sunlight and Quarry Road East to the east of the A41

270 as most of the site specific land allocations contained within the Unitary Development Plan have now been developed

271 "white land" is land with no notation in the Development Plan

a modern high-density, mixed-use, commercial location that will, over the longer term, deliver the physical and economic transformation of the area. Delivery will extend well beyond the plan period for this current Core Strategy.

25.8 These proposals will also have a major impact on the surrounding neighbourhoods, including the industrial and residential areas within the Dock hinterland and Birkenhead Town Centre⁽²⁷²⁾. The main areas affected are shown on Picture 25.1 and include:

Wirral Waters

- Bidston Dock - mixed use retail and leisure development
- West Float - industrial and port-related development
- East Float - mixed uses including residential, retail, office and leisure

Partnership Neighbourhoods

- Scott's Quay - mixed use, industrial, office and ancillary uses
- Twelve Quays - roll-on roll-off ferry terminal
- Woodside - mixed uses including residential, office, leisure and ancillary retail
- Cammell Lairds - industrial and port-related development
- Northside - mixed industrial and office development
- Southside - mixed industrial and office development
- Europa Boulevard - hotel, offices and leisure developments

25.9 The heart of the area was designated as a Strategic Regional Site by the North West Development Agency in August 2010.

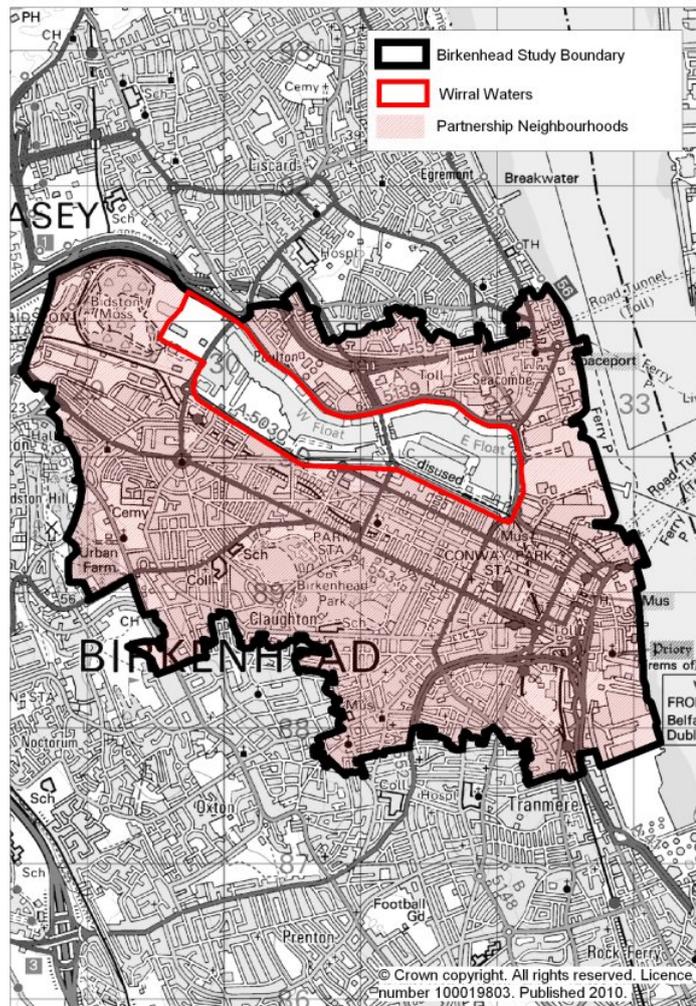
25.10 The Council has recently undertaken a major study into how best to secure the proper integration of these proposals with these surrounding areas⁽²⁷³⁾. The study area includes areas falling within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point.

25.11 The Study has created a new Vision for Birkenhead, underpinned by a number of guiding principles to inform the development of a single, integrated, comprehensive spatial plan to address the key social, economic and environmental issues of the area. The Study sets out eight thematic principles, each supported by a series of objectives to guide future development. The next steps outlined in the Study are to accelerate the implementation of the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area programme within the Birkenhead Priority Neighbourhood; advance the concept of an education cluster; prepare an integrated masterplan for Birkenhead Town Centre; develop an integrated strategy to tackle the underlying socio-economic problems of

272 these areas were initially identified in the Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework, prepared and consulted on by the owners of the Dock Estate in 2006, which described them as Partnership Neighbourhoods outside the core Wirral Waters site

273 Birkenhead Integrated Regeneration Study (GVA Grimley, July 2010)

the Study area; and to develop an East Wirral traffic model and transport strategy for the Town Centre. The integration of these findings is expected to lead to the preparation of a series of Area Action Plans.



Picture 25.1

25.12 The Council therefore proposes to include a new Preferred Option as follows:

Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations

The Core Strategy will identify the area of Birkenhead and Wirral Waters, shown on Picture 25.1, with a symbol on the Core Strategy Key Diagram as a broad location for the development of a New City Neighbourhood⁽²⁷⁴⁾.

The Core Strategy will indicate the intention to prepare a series of Area Action Plans for the remaining areas in the surrounding Partnership Neighbourhoods.

Settlement Area Policies will set out the main priorities for the industrial locations in Bromborough and the Wirral International Business Park⁽²⁷⁵⁾.

Precise locations and boundaries will be included in a site-specific Development Plan Document, specifying timescales for delivery.

25.13 The revised sustainability appraisal shows that Preferred Option 21 is considered sustainable. It is likely to have a positive impact in terms of employment opportunities, accessibility to jobs, improved economic prosperity, standards of wellbeing, and the protection of greenfield sites. Preferred Option 21 should, however, be operated in conjunction with Preferred Option 15 - Better Design and Preferred Option 16 - Development Management to mitigate any potential negative impacts⁽²⁷⁶⁾.

25.14 The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment shows Preferred Option 21 is capable of a significant adverse effect on European Sites and will require appropriate assessment. Avoidance and/or mitigation is, however, likely to be possible through amendments to other Preferred Options⁽²⁷⁷⁾.

Alternative Policy Option

25.15 To ensure flexibility, the Council must also indicate a preferred alternative Policy Option were Preferred Option 21 not to be accepted.

25.16 The next best performing option would be to identify one or more of the areas indicated as a strategic allocation. This has not been preferred because the designation of a strategic allocation would require a level of certainty which cannot currently be provided. As the realisation of these proposals is likely to extend well beyond the fifteen-year period for the Core Strategy and the pace of delivery will be largely dependent on market conditions, it is not considered practical to provide the level of detail required to make a strategic allocation. The approach set out under Preferred Option 4 - Broad Spatial Strategy allows for the pace of development to be increased, if market conditions allow.

274 in line with Preferred Spatial Objective 7 - New City Neighbourhood

275 in line with Preferred Option 2 - Settlement Area Policies

276 Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report (2010)

277 Core Strategy Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment (2010)

Core Strategy for Wirral - Preferred Options Report

Consultation Question 23

Do you agree with Preferred Option 21 - Strategic Locations?

If not, please give the reasons for your answer and explain how you would like to see it changed.

Consultation Question 24

Do you have any other comments on the content of the Preferred Options Report or any of its supporting documents?

Please state the name of the document you are referring to and the paragraph or section number in that document in your answer.

26 Document List

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Building a New Mobility Culture - Challenges and Opportunities for Future Transport Provision in Merseyside	A consultation document setting out the issues that will need to be considered in the next Local Transport Plan for Merseyside.	2010	Merseyside Transport Partnership
Birkenhead (and Wirral Waters) Integrated Regeneration Study	A study to provide a comprehensive regeneration plan for the commercial heartland of Birkenhead	2010	GVA Grimley
Core Strategy - Report of Initial Consultation	A report setting out the findings of initial public consultation on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and local needs within the Borough to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy	2006	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Second Report of Initial Consultation	A report setting out the results of public consultation to prioritise the issues identified in response to consultation on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and local needs within the Borough	2009	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Issues, Vision and Objectives Report	A consultation report setting out the Council's initial proposals for the issues to be addressed in the vision and objectives for the Core Strategy	2009	Wirral Council

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Core Strategy - Report of Consultation on Issues, Vision and Objectives	A report setting out the results of public consultation on the Issues, Vision and Objectives Report	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Spatial Options Report	A consultation report setting out what the Council believes are the main options that will need to be considered before deciding on the most appropriate long term spatial strategy for the Borough	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report	A report setting out the likely implications of each of the spatial options for the Core Strategy for the promotion of local sustainable development	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Habitats Regulations Interim Screening Assessment	A report setting out an initial assessment of the potential impact of the spatial options for the Core Strategy on designated European Sites	2009	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Initial Equality Impact Statement	A report setting out the potential impact of the spatial options for the Core Strategy on different social groups	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Report of Consultation on Spatial Options	A report setting out the results of public consultation on the Core Strategy Spatial Options Report	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Revised Spatial Portrait	A report setting out an updated spatial portrait of the Borough amended in response to public consultation	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Assessment Report	A report setting out an updated assessment of the spatial options for the Core Strategy amended in response to public consultation	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal Report	A report setting out the likely implications of each of the preferred options for the Core Strategy for the promotion of local sustainable development	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Habitats Regulations Assessment	A report setting out an assessment of the potential impact of the preferred options for the Core Strategy on designated European Sites	2010	Wirral Council

Core Strategy for Wirral - Preferred Options Report

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Equality Impact Statement	A report setting out the potential impact of the preferred options for the Core Strategy on different social groups	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Implications for Unitary Development Plan Policies	A report setting out the expected implications of the preferred options for the Core Strategy on the replacement of the policies and proposals contained within the the Wirral Unitary Development Plan	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options - Draft Delivery Framework	A consultation document setting out a summary of the main projects and developments that will contribute towards the delivery of the Core Strategy	2010	Wirral Council
Employment for All: A Full Employment Strategy for Wirral	This strategy identifies the key challenges facing employment within the Borough and suggests the steps required to work towards full employment	2006	Centre for Social Inclusion
Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development	An interim policy to support the regeneration of identified priority areas in the east of the Borough, in line with the objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy	2005	Wirral Council
Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton	A sub-regional Development Plan Document which will replace the policies and proposals for waste management contained within the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral	2010	Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service
Liverpool City Region Economic Forecasts: Recession & Recovery	A report setting out the long term economic prospects for the Liverpool City Region to 2030	2009	The Mersey Partnership
Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study	A report setting out the likely capacity of the area to generate renewable energy	2010	Arup
Liverpool SuperPort	A prospectus setting out proposals to integrate air, port, logistics and transportation across the Liverpool City Region	2008	The Mersey Partnership

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report	A regular report monitoring performance against national and local indicators and progress on the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework	2009	Wirral Council
Mersey Heartlands Growth Point - Programme of Development	A report setting out the plans and ambitions, infrastructure requirements and funding needed to support the programme for the delivery of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point	2008	Liverpool City Council, Wirral Council and Peel Holdings
Mersey Tidal Power Project Stage 1 Options Report	The first stage of a study to select a preferred scheme for generating electricity from the tides within the Mersey Estuary	2010	Scott Wilson
Merseyside Local Transport Plan	A five-year delivery programme for transport investment and service improvement	2006	Merseyside Transport Partnership
Merseyside Mineral Resource Study	A review of mineral resources and reserves within Merseyside	2008	Urban Vision
North West of England Plan 2021 (revoked in July 2010)	The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West which previously formed part of the statutory Development Plan for Wirral	2008	Government Office for the North West
State of the Northwest Economy A Long-term Forecast for the Northwest 2010–2030	Assesses the current economic climate in the North West and provides a forecast taking into account threats and opportunities to the Northwest economy.	2010	Regional Economic Forecasting Panel
Wirral 2025 More Equal More Prosperous A Sustainable Community Strategy	A strategy setting out how local partners will work collectively to improve quality of life within Wirral	2009	Wirral Partnership
Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan	A document setting out local measures to enhance and safeguard the Borough's most important habitats and species	2003	Wirral Biodiversity Partnership
Wirral Biodiversity Audit	An audit of available information on the Borough's biodiversity resources including a review of the criteria for the selection of local wildlife sites	2009	Penny Anderson Associates

Core Strategy for Wirral - Preferred Options Report

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study	An assessment of the supply and demand for employment land and premises setting out recommendations on the future allocation of employment land to maintain economic growth	2009	Business Environments Group
Wirral Investment Strategy	A strategy that outlines local economic opportunities and constraints and key priorities to drive economic growth	2007	Wirral Council
Wirral Landscape Character Assessment	An assessment of the landscape and visual character of the countryside in Wirral	2009	The Environment Partnership
Wirral Local Area Partnership Agreement 2008-2011	A local area agreement between central Government and local partners which sets out a three-year delivery plan for key elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy	2008	Wirral Partnership
Wirral Open Space Assessment	An audit of the quantity, quality and distribution of recreational open space	2010	Strategic Leisure
Wirral Statement of Community Involvement	A statutory document setting out local standards for community involvement in decisions under the Planning Acts	2006	Wirral Council
Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	An assessment of areas at risk of flooding	2009	Faber Maunsell
Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	An assessment of the Borough's housing land supply to 2026	2010	Roger Tym and Partners and A.P. Sheenan
Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update	A revised assessment of local housing needs including the need for affordable and specialist housing, to take account of the impact of the economic downturn	2010	Fordhams Research
Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Affordable Housing Viability Study	An assessment of the viability of targets for affordable housing	2010	Fordhams Research
Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study	An assessment of the function of retail centres across Wirral providing recommendations to inform the Local Development Framework	2009	Roger Tym and Partners

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Wirral Unitary Development Plan	An old-style Development Plan adopted by the Council in February 2000, which will be progressively replaced by the new-style Development Plan Documents contained within the emerging Local Development Framework	2000	Wirral Council
Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework	An initial framework for the future development of the Birkenhead Dock Estate and its surrounding areas	2008	Turley Associates
Woodside Masterplan	A masterplan for the development and regeneration of land and buildings at Woodside in Birkenhead	2006	Building Design Partnership

27 Glossary

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Affordable Housing		Housing at a cost below that typically available in the open market including social rented and shared-ownership housing
Allocation		The identification of a specific piece of land for a specific type of development in a Development Plan Document or Unitary Development Plan
Amenity		A summary term for the quality of life and surroundings
Annual Monitoring Report	AMR	A written report, published by the Council towards the end of each calendar year, setting out progress on the delivery of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies set out in Local Development Documents are being achieved
Area Action Plan	AAP	A Development Plan Document setting out a more detailed programme of action within a specific location
Assisted Area		Area designated by the European Commission to receive additional Government funding to support employment and economic revitalisation
Atlantic Gateway		A framework for collaboration between the Manchester and Liverpool City Regions to promote the economic regeneration of the wider area, including major projects such as Wirral Waters
Biodiversity		A collective term for the full variety of biological life on earth including plants, animals and eco-systems

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Birkenhead Dock Estate		The geographical area under the control of the port operator at Birkenhead previously designated under Policy EM10 of the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral
Broad Strategic Location		A general geographical area identified in the Core Strategy where a particular type of development is likely to take place
Brownfield Land		See 'Previously Developed Land'
Cabinet		A group of Local Councillors appointed by the Council to take executive decisions on behalf of the Council
Charging Schedule		Related to the Community Infrastructure Levy. A schedule setting out the details of the charge(s) to be applied to each category of development as a cost per unit or site area
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment	CABE	A national public body that advises on best practice in architecture and urban design
Communities and Local Government	CLG	The Government Department responsible for planning, building and the environment
Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL	A financial charge on new development which can be levied to pay for local infrastructure to be provided within the area
Comparison Goods		Non-food items including household goods, furniture, electrical goods and clothing
Conservation Area	CA	An identified area designated by the Council to allow the character and appearance of that area to be protected and enhanced
Convenience Goods		Largely relates to perishable goods which are purchased on a regular basis. Some non-food goods are also classed as convenience such as newspapers, tobacco and alcohol
Core Strategy		A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision and general strategy for the future development of the Borough
Decentralised Energy		A usually small scale energy supply from local renewable and/or low-carbon source which is not normally directly related to the national energy generation network
Developer Contributions		The provision of a payment or facility part or wholly funded by a developer to meet a specific planning requirement
Development Management		The function within the Council which processes and determines planning applications

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Development Plan		The statutory Development Plan for the Borough is the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral adopted in February 2000, until the Unitary Development Plan has been replaced by the Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework. Individual planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise
Development Plan Document	DPD	A Local Development Document with status as part of the Development Plan for the Borough
Dock Estate		An area of land owned and operated by a port operator
East Float		The geographical area of the Birkenhead Dock Estate between Duke Street and Tower Road
Environment Agency	EA	A government body that aims to control and prevent a wide variety of harmful impacts on the environment
Equality Impact Statement		A formal assessment indicating whether a local policy document is likely to have a disproportionate impact on different social groups
European Sites		Sites designated for their international importance for nature conservation
Evidence base		Information and data gathered to support the policy approach set out in Local Development Documents
Flood Zone 2		Areas with a low to medium risk of flooding as defined by the Environment Agency
Flood Zone 3		Areas with a high probability of flooding as defined by the Environment Agency
Functional Floodplain		Areas where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood as defined by the Environment Agency
Geodiversity		A collective term for the full variety of earth materials including minerals, rocks and sediments
Government Office North West	GONW	A government body responsible for national policies and initiatives within Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside
Green Belt		Land designated for protection to prevent urban sprawl and to safeguard surrounding countryside from further encroachment
Greenfield		Land that has not been previously developed. Includes land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; developed for minerals extraction or waste

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
		disposal by landfill purposes; and undeveloped land in built-up areas such as parks, recreation grounds, allotments and gardens
Green Infrastructure	GI	Networks of public and private green spaces and habitats
Growth Point		An area identified by the Government in which an accelerated level of housing delivery will be promoted
Gross Value Added	GVA	A measure of the performance of the local economy.
Gypsies and Travellers		People of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including those who have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently
Habitats Regulations Assessment	HRA	An assessment of the impact of emerging policies and proposals on European Sites
Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area	HMRI	An area defined by the Secretary of State as a focus for public action to restructure the local housing market, also known as the Newheartlands Pathfinder, which in Wirral includes parts of Birkenhead, Tranmere, Seacombe, Bidston and Liscard
Infrastructure		Assets, services or facilities required to serve a new development such as new roads or drainage
Key Diagram		A summary plan used to illustrate the broad location for future development and/or protection
Listed Building		A building or structure listed as having architectural or historic importance by Government Agency English Heritage
Liverpool City Region		The Liverpool City Region comprises of Liverpool, Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.
Local Area Agreement	LAA	A formal agreement by the Council and other local service providers to meet a set of specific targets for the delivery of selected local services
Local Development Document	LDD	A document prepared as part of the Local Development Framework for the Borough
Local Development Framework	LDF	The overall name for the collection of adopted Local Development Documents for the Borough
Local Development Scheme	LDS	A statutory document setting out the Council's proposals for the content of the Local Development Framework and the timetable for the preparation of individual Local Development Documents
Local Distinctiveness		The main features of an area which contribute to its unique character and sense of place

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Local Strategic Partnership	LSP	A non-statutory partnership of public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors intended to co-ordinate improvements within a local area
Local Transport Plan	LTP	A joint strategy for investment in the provision and management of transport infrastructure including buses, trains, ferries, freight, roads, footpaths and cycleways
Low Carbon Energy		Power that comes from sources that produce fewer greenhouse gases than traditional means of power generation
Mersey Heartlands Growth Point		An area, with the same boundary as the HMRI Pathfinder, which was designated as a New Growth Point in December 2008 to increase the national delivery of new housing
Mersey Dee Alliance	MDA	A partnership between the local authorities of Cheshire West and Chester, Denbighshire, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Flintshire, Wirral, Wrexham, the Welsh Assembly Government and Merseytravel
Merseyside		The land area covered by the local Councils of Liverpool, Wirral, Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens.
New City Neighbourhood		A newly constructed neighbourhood including a wide range of uses which is intended to lead to the commercial transformation of the older urban area
Newheartlands		One of ten nationally designated Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Areas, which in Merseyside includes parts of Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral, which are designed to tackle low demand and housing market failure in areas of greatest need
NOMIS	NOMIS	A database of official labour market statistics, run on behalf of the Office for National Statistics
Northbank		The geographical area of land running along the northern bank of the East Float within the Birkenhead Dock Estate at Wirral Waters
North West Development Agency	NWDA	A public body set up to promote economic development within the North West Region
Office of National Statistics	ONS	The Government Department responsible for collecting and publishing official statistics about the UK's society and economy
Partnership Neighbourhoods		The existing neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to the proposed development at Wirral Waters within the Birkenhead Dock Estate

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Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Planning Policy Statement	PPS	A statement of national planning policy published by the Government
Previously Developed Land	PDL	Land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The full definition is set out in national advice published by the Secretary of State. Also known as 'brownfield' land
Proposals Map		An annotated map showing the areas of land where the policies and proposals contained within the Unitary Development Plan or contained within in a Development Plan Document will apply
Regional Economic Forecasting Panel		A panel of senior representatives from the business, academic and public sectors advising on the economic prospects of the North West
Regional Spatial Strategy	RSS	A statutory document, issued by the Secretary of State, setting out the vision and priorities for future development within the North West Region, which previously had status as part of the Development Plan for the Borough but which was formally revoked in July 2010
Renewable Energy		Energy that is generated from resources which can be naturally replenished such as wind, sunlight, rain, tides, geothermal heat and waste
RSS Inner Area		A geographical area defined in the former Regional Spatial Strategy, in Wirral referring to the boundary of the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area
RSS Outer Area		A geographical area defined in the former Regional Spatial Strategy, in Wirral referring to the remaining areas to the east of the M53 Motorway outside the Inner Area
RSS Rural Area		A geographical area defined in the former Regional Spatial Strategy, in Wirral referring to the areas to the west of the M53 Motorway
Secretary of State		The person appointed by the Prime Minister to have overall responsibility for the operation of the national planning system, currently the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Settlement Area		A geographical area used by the Council to represent one of the eight main groups of settlements within the Borough
Site-Specific Development Plan Document		A Development Plan Document which identifies and allocates specific areas of land for new development

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Section 106 Agreement		A legal agreement between the Council and a developer to ensure that certain specified works will be undertaken if planning permission is granted for a particular development
Spatial Objective		An objective which can be applied to a specific geographical area
Spatial Vision		A brief statement of the main geographical aspirations for the future development and wellbeing of the Borough
Specialist Housing		Any form of purpose-designed housing or communal establishment such as sheltered, supported, extra care or wheelchair standard housing which caters for people who are unable to live independently in ordinary housing
Statutory		A document or process which has a special legal status, as set out in national law
Strategic Allocation		A site identified in the Core Strategy for a specific type of development that is essential to the deliver the vision and/or spatial strategy for the area
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	SHLAA	A document which examines potential sites for housing across the Borough and assesses them in terms of their suitability, availability and achievability
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	SHMA	A document which examines the key features of Wirral's housing market, including housing need, supply and demand
Strategic Regional Site	SRS	A site designated by the North West Development Agency as a priority location for the promotion of new business development
Supplementary Planning Document	SPD	A Local Development Document which provides additional information to assist in the delivery of an adopted policy within a Development Plan Document (or an adopted policy in the Unitary Development Plan until that policy has been replaced)
Sustainability Appraisal	SA	A written appraisal of the likely social, economic and environmental impact of the proposals contained within a Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document
Sustainable Community Strategy	SCS	A strategy setting out the overall vision for the improvement of the area prepared under the Local Government Act 2000 by the Local Strategic Partnership
The Mersey Partnership	TMP	A sub-regional public/private sector partnership to promote economic development, investment and tourism across the Liverpool City Region

Core Strategy for Wirral - Preferred Options Report

Terminology	Abbrev.	Explanation
Twelve Quays		A former dockland area along the Mersey waterfront between the ferry terminals at Seacombe and Woodside to the east of Birkenhead Road, Tower Road and Canning Street which was previously identified as a Strategic Regional Site
Unitary Development Plan	UDP	An old-style Development Plan, which will be progressively replaced by the new-style Development Plan Documents contained within the emerging Local Development Framework
Water Framework Directive		A European Union Directive which requires that all coastal and inland waters within defined river basin districts must reach at least good status/ potential by 2015
Wirral International Business Park		A designated Strategic Regional Site in Bromborough to the east of the A41 extending across the area between the watercourse at Bromborough Pool and Eastham Country Park
Wirral Waters		A project to create an internationally recognised city waterfront, focused upon the East Float of the Birkenhead and Wallasey dock system, together with a distinctive leisure and retail destination at Bidston Dock, now designated as part of a Strategic Regional Site