

<b>6. HOUSING</b>
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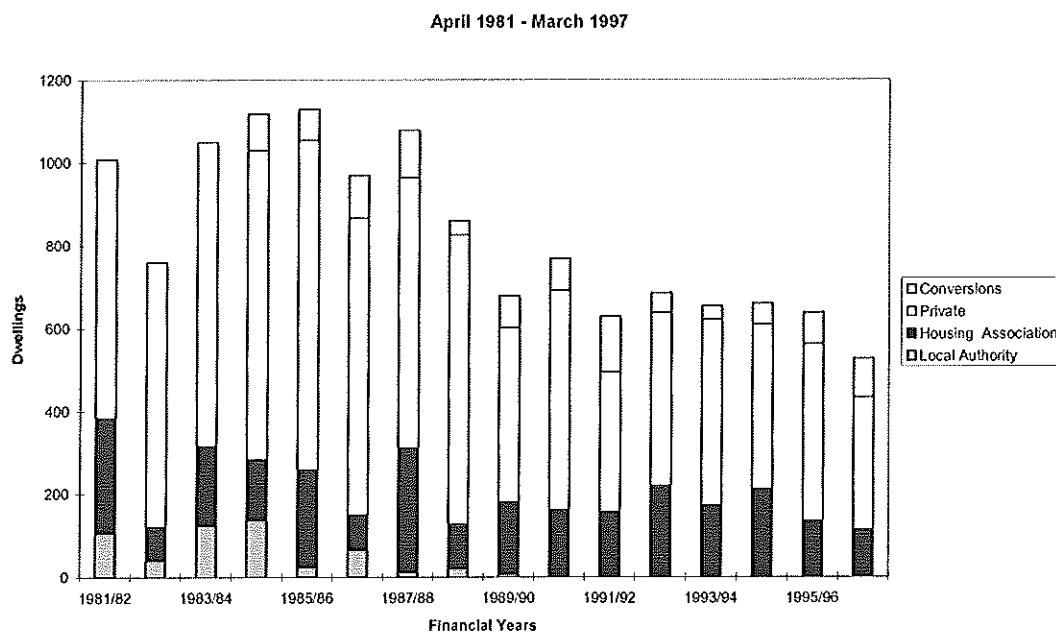
## PART ONE POLICY

<b>POLICY HSG1 - NEW DWELLING REQUIREMENT</b>
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<b>THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL ENSURE THAT 10,500 NEW DWELLINGS CAN BE PROVIDED IN THE PERIOD APRIL 1986 TO MARCH 2001</b>
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## POLICY HSG1 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.1 The provision of new dwellings is one of the most important issues for the Unitary Development Plan. The need for new dwellings arises from the formation of new households, particularly as families have become smaller, and from the need to replace older, substandard dwellings.
- 6.2 Whilst land for new dwellings is required to satisfy most of these needs and to provide for an element of demand from housebuyers, for most Wirral residents, the condition of the existing housing stock is of most importance. The policies of the UDP complement the Council's Housing Strategy which aims to improve the existing stock and to encourage the provision of affordable housing.
- 6.3 The overall requirement for new dwellings to be provided in Wirral over the UDP period of April 1986 to March 2001 reflects the need and demand for new dwellings in Wirral. Most of these new dwellings will come from the construction of new houses, although there will be an important contribution from the conversion of non-residential property and the sub-division of large old houses.
- 6.4 The figure of 10,500 has been derived from an analysis of household growth and migration over the UDP period, together with assumptions about the rate of demolition, both of older private houses and of surplus hard-to-let Council property, and the vacancy rate within the existing stock.
- 6.5 The UDP housing requirement was originally set out in Strategic Planning Guidance for Merseyside as 9,500, which represented 7,750 new dwellings to accommodate housing need and 1,750 new dwellings to satisfy housing demand. This figure of 9,500 has been increased to 10,500 so as to reflect more recent population and household projections, together with an allowance for housing demand.
- 6.6 The housing requirement figure of 10,500 represents an average building rate of 700 per annum over the fifteen year period of the UDP, a figure well below the demand level of the early 1980's. Figure 1, overleaf, sets out building rates from April 1981 to March 1997 and shows the relationship between those rates and that derived from the UDP housing requirement.

**Figure 1 - Wirral New Dwellings****Figure 2 - Sources of New Dwellings April 1986 to March 2001**

<b>(i) New Dwellings 1986-1995</b>	
New build completions April 1986-March 1995	6,173
Net change from conversions April 1986-March 1995	670
<b>(ii) New Build Sites Identified at March 31 1995</b>	
Sites under construction > 0.4 ha (units not started + under construction on sites with pp)	742
Sites not started > 0.4 ha (units not started on sites with planning permission)	249
Sites under construction > 0.4 ha (units not started + under construction on UDP allocated sites)	12
Sites not started > 0.4 ha (units not started on UDP allocated sites)	802
Sites not started > 0.4 ha (units not started on sites with lapsed consents)	160
Sites under construction < 0.4 ha (units not started + under construction on sites with pp)	290
Sites not started < 0.4 ha (units not started on sites with planning permission)	549
<b>(iii) New Build Contribution From Sites Identified After 31 March 1995</b>	
Sites > 0.4 ha (units not started on sites now recommended for UDP allocation)	300
Sites > 0.4 ha (units not started on other sites)	350
Sites < 0.4 ha (units not started on other sites)	200
<b>(iv) Future Net Gain From Conversions</b>	300
<b>TOTAL DWELLING SUPPLY 1986-2001</b>	<b>10,797</b>

### Proposal HS1 - Land Allocated for Residential Development

The following sites are allocated on the Proposals Map for new housing development in the period April 1993 to March 2001:

		Area (ha)	Units (no.)
1.	Old Birkonians, Noctorum	12.90	250
2.	South of Ditton Lane, Leasowe	8.00	190
3.	Claremount, Reeds Lane, Moreton	5.00	150
4.	North of Rose Brae, Birkenhead	2.34	130
5.	Laird Street Bus Depot, Birkenhead	2.57	100
6.	Land to the east of Fender Farm, Moreton	4.06	90
7.	West of Manor Drive, Moreton	2.80	60
8.	South of Leasowe Hospital, Leasowe	1.50	30
9.	W of Tideway, Kings Parade, Wallasey Village	1.43	29
10.	87-99 St Paul's Road, Seacombe	0.40	20
11.	N of Bus Depot, New Chester Rd, Rock Ferry	0.52	20
12.	SE of Social Centre, Highcroft, Bebington	0.40	15
13.	155-175 Borough Road, Seacombe	0.59	10
14.	Styewear/ Buxton Road, Rock Ferry	0.58	10
<b>Totals</b>		<b>43.09</b>	<b>1,104</b>

### PROPOSAL HS1 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.7 Strategic Guidance for Merseyside recognised that there are significant constraints to new housing development in much of Wirral, with its tight Green Belt, extensive areas of good agricultural land and sites of ecological importance. The allocations in Proposal HS1 support urban regeneration and keep the Green Belt intact.
- 6.8 Together with the outstanding commitments outlined in Figure 2, opposite, these allocations also support the wider aims of sustainable development and reduced energy usage in that they concentrate development within the urban area, minimise the use of previously undeveloped land and reduce the need to travel.

### Proposal HS2 - Land at Noctorum Way, Noctorum

The above site, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for housing development subject to:

- (i) the reservation, laying out and landscaping of a new local neighbourhood park at Noctorum Way, as allocated under Proposal GR2/36;
- (ii) the installation of children's play equipment at the site identified under (i) above in accordance with Proposal RE12/6;
- (iii) provision being made in the scheme for improved access to Townfield Primary School in order to improve road safety outside the school;

- (iv) provision for appropriate landscaping throughout the site and along its external boundaries in order to preserve the visual character of the area;
- (v) provision being made for formal access through the site from the existing public access at Holmlands Drive to the Ridgeway High School complex;
- (vi) appropriate highway works being undertaken at the entrance to the site at its junction with Noctorum Way before the development is occupied; and
- (vii) compliance with other relevant policies of the Plan.

The detailed design of the development to be permitted will be the subject of a development brief to be prepared by the Council and the works specified above will be subject to a Section 106 planning obligation with the future developers of the site.

#### PROPOSAL HS2 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.9 The allocation of land at Noctorum Way in Noctorum (Old Birkonians) provides the largest single housing development site within the UDP. Because of its scale and location, the Council believe it is necessary to set out certain requirements for open space, children's play, access and landscaping.
- 6.10 Development of the site may take a number of years and involve a number of developers. The Council therefore proposes that a development brief should be prepared for the site, so as to achieve a comprehensive and co-ordinated development which can provide for a range of housing types.

#### Proposal HS3 - Land to the East of Fender Farm, Moreton

The above site, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for housing development subject to:

- (i) the satisfactory relocation of the riding school and stables in accordance with Proposal AG9;
- (ii) provision of appropriate landscaping throughout the site and along its external boundaries in order to protect the visual amenities of the adjoining Green Belt in accordance with Policy LA7 and in order to reflect the wider need for landscape renewal within the M53 Corridor;
- (iii) the provision of new urban greenspace at the rate of 60 square metres for every new dwelling constructed in accordance with Policy GR6;
- (iv) appropriate highway works being undertaken at the entrance to the site at its junction with Fender Lane before the development is occupied;

- (v) adequate provision being made in terms of the prevention of flooding; and
- (vi) compliance with other relevant policies of the Plan.

The works specified above will be subject to a Section 106 planning obligation with the future developers of the site.

#### PROPOSAL HS3 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.11 Land to the east of Fender Farm in Moreton is allocated for new housing development, subject to the satisfactory re-location of the existing riding school and stables. Proposal HS3 is intended to ensure that new development will have regard to this requirement and to other relevant policies of the Plan.

#### Policy HS4 - Criteria for New Housing Development

Proposals for new housing development on allocated sites and within the Primarily Residential Areas shown on the Proposals Map will be permitted subject to the proposal fulfilling all the following criteria:

- (i) the proposal being of a scale which relates well to surrounding property, in particular with regard to existing densities and form of development;
- (ii) the proposal not resulting in a detrimental change in the character of the area;
- (iii) access and services being capable of satisfactory provision, particularly for off-street car parking areas and garages, and adequate vehicular access;
- (iv) the provision of appropriate landscaping and boundary treatment which relates the proposed development to its surroundings, paying particular attention to the maintenance of existing natural features and vegetation in accordance with Policy GR5;
- (v) the appropriate provision of design features which contribute to a secure environment and reduce the likelihood of crime;
- (vi) incorporating provision for accessible public open space and children's play areas in accordance with Policy GR6; and
- (vii) the provision of adequate individual private or communal garden space to each dwelling.

For all proposals whose main elevations are parallel, or nearly so, an adequate distance should be kept between habitable rooms in separate dwellings. In addition, where the gable end of one property fronts onto the rear elevation of another, then an adequate separation should be achieved.

## POLICY HS4 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.12 The environment around the home has a major impact on residents' quality of life. When new residential development is proposed, both on allocated sites where a new environment is being created and where new housing is proposed within the existing residential areas, it is important that new housing blends in well with that already built and creates a safe external environment.
- 6.13 Detailed design is largely a matter for the developer and his client. However, the UDP can provide guidance on safeguarding the quality of the residential environment, so that proposed development can bring positive benefits. Policy HS4 therefore sets out a series of appropriate environmental safeguards. Additional advice on the design of residential roads and footpaths can be found in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 14.

### Policy HS5 - Density and Design Guidelines

In the following existing residential areas as outlined on the Proposals Map, in addition to the criteria in Policy HS4, proposals for new residential development will be subject to controls over density and layout as follows:

#### 1. Noctorum Ridge, Noctorum

##### Zone 1

Maximum density of 10 dwellings per hectare in low-rise development. New purpose-built blocks of flats and the conversion of existing property into self-contained flats will not be permitted.

##### Zone 2

Density range 25-30 dwellings per hectare in two or three storey houses. New purpose-built three storey blocks of flats will not be permitted, although the conversion of existing property into self-contained flats will be permitted subject to Policy HS13.

##### Zone 3

Density range up to 30-60 dwellings per hectare for new purpose-built three storey blocks of flats. New sheltered housing of a higher density and nursing/ residential care homes will be permitted subject to Policy HS7 and Policy HS8. The conversion of existing property into self-contained flats will be permitted subject to Policy HS13.

#### 2. Mountwood, Prenton

Maximum density of 7.5 dwellings per hectare, with plot frontages comparable to those of plots in close proximity. The conversion of existing property into self-contained flats will not be permitted.

#### 3. Meols Drive, Hoylake

Maximum density of 20 dwellings per hectare, with plot frontages comparable to those of plots in close proximity.

Within Zones 4, 5 and 7 new purpose-built flats will not be permitted.

In Zone 5 any new development should access Eddisbury Road and not Meols Drive.

New sheltered housing of a density higher than 20 dwellings per hectare and nursing/ residential care homes will be permitted in Zones 1, 2, 3 and 6, subject to Policy HS7 and Policy HS8.

#### 4. Stanley Road, Hoylake

##### Zone 1

The conversion of existing dwellings into self-contained flats will be permitted.

##### Zone 2

The conversion of existing dwellings into self-contained flats will be permitted, as will the redevelopment of pairs of dwellings to provide three storey blocks of flats at a maximum density of 35 dwellings per hectare.

##### Zone 3

Redevelopment should be at a maximum density of 35 dwellings per hectare.

##### Zone 4

Redevelopment should be at a maximum density of 25 dwellings per hectare.

##### Zone 5

New purpose-built flat development will not be permitted.

Plot frontages for new purpose-built flat developments to be comparable to those of plots in close proximity. New sheltered housing of a density higher than 35 dwellings per hectare and nursing/ residential care homes will be permitted in Zones 2 and 3 subject to Policy HS7 and Policy HS8.

#### 5. Gayton

##### Zone 1

Any development permitted should be of small scale.

##### Zone 2

Density should be at a maximum of 7.5 dwellings per hectare, with plot frontages and set backs comparable to those of plots in close proximity. Open plan frontages will not be permitted.

##### Zone 3

Development will only be permitted on plots with a frontage and depth comparable to those of plots in close proximity.

#### 6. Gleneagles Park, Caldy

On plots 7-31 and 35-38 only bungalows will be permitted. On all other plots only two storey dwellings will be permitted. Each dwelling should have a minimum of 6.0 metres between it and the side boundary and a set back from the plot frontage of at least 12.0 metres.

#### 7. Caldy

##### Zone 1

Maximum density of 2.5 dwellings per hectare.

**Zone 2**

**Higher densities may be permitted subject to the development preserving or enhancing the Conservation Area.**

**POLICY HS5 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 6.14 Many of the Borough's older established residential areas have a special character derived from their architecture and extensive mature gardens. These areas are attractive to residents and there is always pressure for new dwellings through both infill and redevelopment.
- 6.15 Many of the existing dwellings are large and require adaptation and conversion to accommodate today's smaller households. New development therefore offers a challenge to their existing character which can be addressed by specific controls on the density of new development. The guidelines set out in Policy HS5 are long established and have been successful in controlling new and converted housing, by retaining the best property as far as possible and by preserving the spaces between buildings.

**1. NOCTORUM RIDGE**

- 6.16 The Noctorum Ridge extends for 2.5 kilometres from Bidston Hill in the north to Woodchurch Road in the south and for 2 kilometres from Ford Hill in the west to Slaty Road in the east. It includes a number of different areas of mature housing, ranging from the large detached houses around the Wirral Ladies Golf Course to the densely developed Victorian housing around Oxtown Village.
- 6.17 However, the pressure for development on the Ridge, which is one of Birkenhead's most popular housing areas, has led to a threat to its character. The Council's response has been to divide the area into a number of separate zones of differing character and capacity for varied development. This diverse area provides for a full range of housing needs, from converted flats for small households in the east of the area, to large high-quality family housing in the west.
- 6.18 Zone 1 is comprised of large detached houses with extensive gardens. The abundance of mature trees and shrubs together with the low density of development create an area of considerable environmental quality.
- 6.19 Zone 2 contains many of the older two and three storey houses on the Ridge. A number of these original properties have been refurbished for use as single family dwellings, some have been sub-divided into flats, while others have been converted into residential/ nursing homes. The retention and refurbishment of existing properties is to be encouraged.



- 6.20 Zone 3, although similar in basic character to Zone 2, is considered suitable for new three storey flat developments or conversion to flats because of the large plot sizes, adjoining open spaces and the massing of buildings. Further advice on the Noctorum Ridge Guidelines Area is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2.

## 2. MOUNTWOOD

- 6.21 The Mountwood area, to the west of Mount Road, south of Prenton Lane, is characterised by large Edwardian and post-Edwardian detached houses in well-treed gardens. It is important that this character is preserved and that any new development should reflect the existing density, frontage length, quality of enclosure and landscaping. The area retains its function of providing for high quality medium-sized family accommodation and it is felt that the replacement of existing houses with flats is not appropriate. Further advice on the Mountwood Guidelines Area is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 3.

## 3. MEOLS DRIVE

- 6.22 Meols Drive between Hoylake and West Kirby has a distinctive character based on mature landscaping and consistently large houses with a variety of architectural form and detailing. Whilst many of these houses have remained in single family occupation, some have been converted into flats and there is pressure to redevelop others for blocks of flats or for smaller houses. New dwellings should, as far as possible, reflect the size of existing buildings, having two or three storeys with pitched roofs and generous architectural features. Further advice on the Meols Drive Guidelines Area is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4.

## 4. STANLEY ROAD

- 6.23 The Stanley Road/ Kings Gap area of Hoylake has a distinctive character, deriving from the large houses, variety of architecture and open coastal location. The size and design of the largest houses has in many cases precluded their continued use as single dwellings and there is pressure for redevelopment. New development should be sympathetic to the existing character of the area and as far as possible reflect the size and scale of the existing buildings.
- 6.24 In Zone 1, although the majority of proposals are likely to be for the conversion of dwellings to provide flats, redevelopment of pairs of semi-detached houses should respect the formal and rigid layout of the Kings Gap.
- 6.25 In Zones 2, 3 and 4 the proposed densities will assist in maintaining the prevailing character of the area.

- 6.26 Zone 5 contains some of the best large family houses in west Wirral set in large plots with fine architectural detailing. Further advice on the Stanley Road/ Kings Gap Guidelines Area is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 5.

## 5. GAYTON

- 6.27 Gayton lies to the south-west of Heswall Town Centre, between the Chester High Road and the Dee Estuary. The area of control is a mixture of the historic village and the newer, extensive suburbs.
- 6.28 Zone 1 consists of Gayton Village, formerly a self-contained farming community. The village is centred on Gayton Hall which is surrounded by wooded grounds and approached by the original cobbled lane with high walls on either side.
- 6.29 Zone 2 consists of large family houses set in extensive, well-treed grounds with strong boundaries. New development should reflect this character in its density and siting.
- 6.30 Zone 3 is more mixed, with higher densities and a more varied layout, including building lines much closer to the road frontage. Further advice on the Gayton Guidelines Area is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 6.

## 6. GLENEAGLES PARK

- 6.31 The Gleneagles Park estate lies to the south of Caldy Village and provides one of the largest sites for new, high-quality housing in Wirral. It has been divided into plots which are being sold for development with individual houses or bungalows.
- 6.32 The area around Caldy Village itself is characterised by large family houses set in landscaped gardens with high hedges or solid, dark wooden fences. It is intended that the Gleneagles Park area can eventually mature into a similar form of development.
- 6.33 Whilst most of the remaining plots are suited to two storey houses, some plots including those backing onto the Green Belt to the south and the Wirral Way to the west should be restricted to bungalows only. This should minimise the impact on the surrounding countryside and impart a unity of design to the development. Further advice on the Gleneagles Park Guidelines Area is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 7.

## 7. CALDY

- 6.34 Caldly is a high-quality housing area centred on a small village which has developed eastwards to Caldly cross-roads and north towards West Kirby. Most areas were developed from the beginning of the 20th Century with large family houses in landscaped grounds.
- 6.35 Zone 1 forms the core of the village and is densely developed with frontages close to the road. Much of this area has been recently redeveloped and there are few other opportunities for new housing. A density of 2.5 dwellings per hectare should maintain the character of this area.
- 6.36 Zone 2 outside the core area contains larger plots with their houses set back from the road frontage. Within this area higher densities will only be appropriate subject to the proposals effect on the character of the area. Further advice on the Caldly Guidelines Area is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 8.

### PART ONE POLICY

#### **POLICY HSG2 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL NEGOTIATE WITH DEVELOPERS AND HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS, TO ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF AN ELEMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, ON SITES ALLOCATED FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND ON SITES NOT ALLOCATED BUT WHICH COME FORWARD FOR DEVELOPMENT. THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL SEEK TO ENSURE THAT SUCH NEGOTIATED AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS RESERVED FOR THOSE MOST IN NEED THROUGH THE USE OF LEGAL AGREEMENTS.**

#### POLICY HSG2 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.37 Affordable housing is housing built for sale or for rent at a price below the market rate and which is related to local needs. It is targeted at those whose incomes generally deny them the opportunity to purchase or rent homes at that local market rate.
- 6.38 The importance of affordable housing has been highlighted in recent years by rapid fluctuations in house prices and the mismatch in local income levels, often combined with the risk of home loss from repossession. This difficulty in the private sector is coupled with the reduction in the rented stock, in Wirral from 44,774 households in 1981 to 35,229 in 1991, and the difficulties faced by Housing Associations as they become the principal providers of new low rent housing.
- 6.39 The UDP, as a land-use plan, cannot differentiate between tenures, nor can planning controls be used to limit price or ownership. The UDP can however

set the framework for negotiation with developers on large sites, where it may be desirable to provide a range of dwellings, including some at affordable prices. Many sites, are of course, already suitable for affordable housing, either through the density of development, or through their ownership, or location. Of the sites already identified in the UDP under Proposal HS1, many could be developed for Housing Association rental or low-cost private development.

- 6.40 In order to establish the need for affordable housing, it is essential that the UDP is co-ordinated with the Council's Housing Strategy, which will require a survey of the community's need for affordable housing. This survey will cover local income levels, house prices and rents and will provide an assessment of the annual requirement for such affordable housing.

### **Policy HS6 - Principles for Affordable Housing**

**The Local Planning Authority will seek to negotiate the provision of an element of affordable housing on suitable sites of over 1.0 hectare:**

- (i) **for the purpose of Policy HS6, affordable housing is defined as being that available to those whose incomes are insufficient for them to enter the local housing market;**
- (ii) **the affordable dwellings so developed shall be provided through partnership arrangements between the developer and a Housing Association or other suitable housing trust, or by the construction of low-cost units for sale or part-sale, part-rent;**
- (iii) **depending on the suitability of the site and the local need, dwellings should be provided for one or more of the following groups:**
  - **young single people;**
  - **the elderly;**
  - **young couples and newly forming households;**
  - **those with special needs, including disability, mental illness and mental handicap.**

**The dwellings so provided shall be retained for the benefit of the original client group by a secure agreement.**

### **POLICY HS6 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 6.41 Whilst a full housing needs assessment would provide greater detail on the need for affordable housing, the Council now has in place a unified housing waiting list, compiled jointly with local Housing Associations. At May 1997, the number of applicants on the list was 7,880, 56% comprising single people and couples of all ages and 44% families with children. The Council currently makes circa 2,750 new allocations per year, of which 1,600 (58%) are for single people and childless couples of all ages and 1,150 (42%) for families with children. The Housing Strategy identifies the types of households in most need of affordable housing and through its support of various housing initiatives prioritises the means to partly satisfy these needs.

- 6.42 These initiatives have included the support of Housing Association new-build and refurbishment, such as living over the shop, foyer and shared ownership, which have delivered new dwellings. Existing Local Authority difficult-to-let dwellings have been rehabilitated through Estate Action schemes, with a contribution of new-build dwellings from Housing Associations. Private developers have also entered into partnerships to provide shared ownership dwellings. UDP policies on the conversion of existing buildings into dwellings, including the ground and first floors of some retail premises, intensification of existing dwellings and Houses in Multiple Occupation all support the provision of new dwellings which may satisfy some affordable housing needs in locations which maximise access to services and the recycling of urban land and buildings.
- 6.43 Before planning permission is granted for the development of a site which will include a proportion of affordable housing, the developer should demonstrate the means by which such housing will be provided and how the dwellings so provided will continue to be made available for households in need. This could include arrangements for a partnership agreement with a Housing Association or trust or a shared ownership scheme.

#### **Policy HS7 - Sheltered Housing**

**Proposals for sheltered housing will be permitted subject to the proposal fulfilling all the following criteria:**

- (i) the proposal being of a scale which relates well to surrounding property;**
- (ii) adequate private amenity space being provided at a rate of approximately 10 square metres for every bed space, except where the proximity of open space or other features adjoining the site justifies a reduced provision;**
- (iii) the site being easily accessible on foot to local shops and public transport; and**
- (iv) the proposal otherwise complying with Policy HS4 and Policy HS5.**

#### **POLICY HS7 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 6.44 Residential development designed for the elderly and for those who need specialist care ranges from modest sized houses and bungalows, often grouped together, to large flatted schemes, with or without a warden on-site.
- 6.45 Wirral has always been a popular area for retirement, and policies are necessary to ensure that residential development is well located for essential facilities such as shops and public transport. Equally important is the relationship of the new development to other existing housing. Within

schemes it is especially important for adequate amenity space to be provided for residents who may become increasingly housebound.

- 6.46 A major issue arising from sheltered housing schemes is the amount of car parking required. Car ownership rates vary with the type of scheme, with owner-occupied schemes for the most mobile requiring more parking space than rented accommodation in the inner urban areas. Special consideration needs to be given to the provision of adequate off-street car parking for visitors and to safeguard access for emergency services.

### **Policy HS8 - Nursing Homes/ Residential Care Homes**

**Proposals for the development of new residential care or nursing homes, or the conversion of existing buildings to provide residential care or nursing homes will be permitted, subject to the proposal fulfilling all the following criteria:**

- (i) the proposal being of a scale which relates well to surrounding property;**
- (ii) the proposal not resulting in an over-concentration of residential care or nursing homes in the area;**
- (iii) the proposal not resulting in a private dwelling having a residential care or nursing home on both sides; and**
- (iv) the proposal otherwise complying with Policy HS4 and Policy HS5.**

**All consents shall be given subject to a condition that they should be implemented within a three year period.**

### **POLICY HS8 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 6.47 Following the growth in the number of sheltered housing schemes in Wirral in the 1980's, there has been a large increase in the number of residential care and nursing homes in the Borough, which fall within Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. In part, this reflects the increasing numbers of very elderly people who require closer care than would be possible were they to remain in their own homes.
- 6.48 In addition to care homes for the elderly, with Government policies on care in the community, there will continue to be demand for specialist care homes, for example for people with learning difficulties and for those released from hospitals following treatment for mental illness and drug dependency. It is Government policy for such accommodation to be well integrated in the local community.
- 6.49 This, however, can cause concern where a significant number of such homes are grouped together, or proposals come forward for the conversion of small, modern dwellings.

- 6.50 Whilst the locational requirements for residential care homes - level sites with good access to shops, community facilities and public transport - may be similar to those for sheltered housing, the diversity in the purpose and facilities provided by homes means that some may appropriately be sited in more rural or isolated locations.
- 6.51 To control the concentration of residential care and nursing homes in specific areas of the Borough, Policy HS8 places a time limit of three years on unimplemented permissions. Further guidance on sheltered housing and residential care homes is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 9.

### **Policy HS9 - Mobility Housing**

**In developments of 20 or more new dwellings, the Local Planning Authority will seek to negotiate, where appropriate, the provision of dwellings specifically designed for, or capable of easy adaptation to, wheelchair standard.**

#### **POLICY HS9 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 6.52 In recent years attention has been focused on the need to make housing in general more accessible to less mobile people. As many of these people are elderly or experience mobility problems the growth in specialist sheltered housing or residential and nursing homes has satisfied some of these demands. Estimates by the Wirral Association for Disability (WAD) indicate that 30,000 Wirral residents are disabled to some extent, five times the number officially registered with the Council's Social Services Department. Over 1,200 of the 8,000 people on the 1995 Council House Waiting List have a medical, disabled or sheltered housing priority.
- 6.53 Policy HS9 is consistent with the approach emerging in the Merseyside Code of Practice on Access and Mobility, which is being prepared by all the Merseyside District Councils. However, with the need for many less mobile people to remain integrated in the community and not be placed in institutions, it is important that general policies should be framed to allow access to non-specialist housing. Many design features are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 46 and can also be easily applied to private housing as well as public buildings.
- 6.54 In the past, the Local Authority was able to construct mobility housing for rent, but with recent changes in housing legislation, more emphasis has been placed on Housing Associations and the private sector to provide for all housing needs. Whilst it would be undesirable to build in particular features in all new houses, it is important to design houses that can be easily adapted to take wheelchairs, for example by designing low entrance thresholds, halls

that allow manoeuvring space, and door sets of an adequate width. Single storey accommodation, such as ground floor flats or bungalows, is the most appropriate, but consideration may be given by developers to provide adaptable housing of two storeys, where the houses have downstairs WC's and straight staircases, suitable for stairlifts.

- 6.55 It is important that mobility housing is not concentrated to form potential "ghettos" for the less mobile. Accordingly, such housing should be distributed throughout new development. In practice many of the principles for mobility housing are easily achieved at the design stage, and such features as level access from outside the home will help all family members, and not just the less mobile.

### **Policy HS10 - Backland Development**

**Proposals for the development of between one to three dwellings behind existing dwellings and accessed by a dedicated private drive will not be permitted unless the proposal fulfils all the following criteria:**

- (i) the retention by the existing frontage dwellings of sufficient garden space;**
- (ii) the proposed development including its access, not resulting in a detrimental change in the character of an area, nor in undue noise, disturbance, loss of privacy or sense of enclosure affecting adjoining residents;**
- (iii) the proposed access being of sufficient width to provide a private drive of 3.0 metres width with amenity strips to one or both sides, and adequate passing places. The access must be properly formed and hard-surfaced, with adequate sight lines and visibility splays at its junction with the existing road. It should not have a seriously detrimental effect on the street scene or on highway safety;**
- (iv) the proposed dwellings having adequate private garden space and adequate vehicle turning and parking/ garaging provision;**
- (v) the proposed development not prejudicing the comprehensive development of a larger area of land; and**
- (vi) the proposal otherwise complying with Policy HS4 and Policy HS5.**

### **POLICY HS10 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 6.55 Backland is land which lies behind existing houses which front one or more roads. It may be land comprising large garden areas, neglected land, land in other uses or a mixture of these. The existence of large gardens does not necessarily point to scope for development, as the size and appearance of gardens can be of great importance to the character of a neighbourhood.



However, areas of backland can sometimes be developed, subject to controls over access and the relationship of the proposed dwellings to those existing. Driveways should be of sufficient width to provide a safe access onto the highway, yet not so dominant as to have a detrimental effect on the streetscape. Further guidance on backland development is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 10.

### **Policy HS11 - House Extensions**

**Proposals for house extensions will be permitted subject to all the following criteria being complied with:**

- (i) the scale of the extension being appropriate to the size of the plot, not dominating the existing building and not so extensive as to be unneighbourly, particular regard being had to the effect on light to and the outlook from neighbours' habitable rooms and not so arranged as to result in significant overlooking of neighbouring residential property.**
- (ii) the materials matching or complementing those of the existing building;**
- (iii) design features such as lintels, sills, eaves and roof form and line matching or complementing those of the existing building;**
- (iv) dormer windows if used, being restricted to the rear of the dwelling and not projecting above the ridge, nor occupying the full width of the roof;**
- (v) flat roofs being restricted to the rear or side of the dwelling and only acceptable on single storey extensions;**
- (vi) where the rear extension is single storey on the party boundary and the existing dwelling semi-detached, the proposed extension projects a maximum of 3.0 metres from the main face of the existing houses;**
- (vii) where the rear extension is two storey and the existing house semi-detached, the proposed extension is set back at least 2.5 metres from the party boundary;**
- (viii) to avoid the effect of 'terracing', where two storey side extensions are added to the sides of semi-detached houses of similar style with a consistent building line and ground level, the first floor of a two storey side extension should be set back at least 1.5 metres from the common boundary; or at least 1.0 metre from the front elevation and 1.0 metre from the common boundary; or at least 2.0 metres from the front elevation;**
- (ix) single storey extensions on terraced dwellings allowing an adequate area of amenity space to be retained.**

## POLICY HS11 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.57 House extensions should be designed in such a way as to have no significantly adverse effect on the appearance of the original property, the amenities of neighbouring properties, particularly through overlooking, or an adverse effect on the area in general.
- 6.58 Well-designed house extensions should be constructed of materials which match those of the original dwelling and echo its form, for example, with respect to its roof line. Single storey flat roof extensions are only appropriate where they are unobtrusive, at the side or rear of the dwelling.
- 6.59 In areas of semi-detached housing, the Local Planning Authority is concerned to avoid the terracing effect of two storey side extensions and wishes to see a larger set-back than would otherwise be necessary, where there is a greater separation between dwellings.
- 6.60 Whilst the restrictions on extensions to detached dwellings are often less onerous, in areas of terraced housing it is important to retain some private amenity space at the rear of the dwelling whilst providing often essential facilities such as kitchen and bathroom extensions. Further guidance with regard to house extensions is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 11.

**Policy HS12 - Pre-School Day Care**

**Proposals for the use of existing buildings for pre-school day care facilities will be permitted subject to:**

- (i) ensuring the privacy of neighbouring residents;**
- (ii) any outdoor play areas provided being assessed with regard to potential noise and disturbance and garden/play area boundaries being defined by a 2.0 metre high screen fence or wall;**
- (iii) satisfactory vehicular access with provision being made within the site for the parking of non-resident staff vehicles in addition to parking provision made for the occupiers of the house;**
- (iv) reasonable provision being made for the setting down and picking up of children. Where such arrangements can only take place within the highway, there should be no parking restrictions on the highway fronting the site and it should not be likely to cause a hazard to other road users; and**
- (v) noise insulation being provided where appropriate.**

## POLICY HS12 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.61 Pre-school day care covers a wide range of provision including child minders, play groups, nurseries and creche facilities. All such uses are registered through the Department of Social Services where consideration is given to the type of facilities available within the building and the persons who will be providing the care.
- 6.62 In planning terms, the major implications are for the amenity of adjoining residents, both in terms of the effect of children playing in and outdoors and in terms of the effect of extra traffic as parents drop off and pick up their children.
- 6.63 The ideal type of property to provide for pre-school day care is detached, with adequate garden space to provide separation between dwellings and allow for outdoor play.
- 6.64 Many properties used as creches and day nurseries are on busy roads and it is important to ensure that adequate provision is made for the parking needs of staff and parents when they are dropping off or picking up their children. Further guidance on provision for pre-school day care is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 12.

**Policy HS13 - Self-Contained Flat Conversions**

**Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings into self-contained flats will be permitted subject to:**

- (i) the conversion ensuring the privacy of neighbours and occupants including the layout of car parking areas to prevent overlooking of habitable room windows;**
- (ii) access normally being provided to individual flats within the main structure of the building. If external staircases have to be provided they must not result in significant overlooking of neighbours' windows or private amenity space;**
- (iii) any extensions required complying with Policy HS11;**
- (iv) any new windows required to serve habitable rooms, such as living rooms, kitchens or bedrooms, not overlooking adjoining properties to an unacceptable degree;**
- (v) any interior vertical partitions not cutting across windows and ceiling height reductions not being visible externally;**
- (vi) adequate sound proofing between flats;**
- (vii) any basement flat having windows with two-thirds of their height above the existing outside ground level giving sufficient daylight penetration, a reasonable outlook and not immediately adjacent to parking bays and vehicle accessways;**

- (viii) **main living rooms having a reasonable outlook and not lit solely by roof lights, nor in close proximity to high boundary or gable walls;**
- (ix) **access to rear yards/ gardens being provided from each flat;**
- (x) **adequate visibility at entrance and exit points and turning space for vehicles; and**
- (xi) **the proposal otherwise complying with Policy HS4 and Policy HS5.**

#### **POLICY HS13 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 6.65 The conversion of buildings into flats provides an important source of accommodation for smaller households, often available for rent and in areas close to facilities such as shops. Many older, larger houses are no longer suitable for single family occupation, and subject to the general character of the area, may be best preserved by their conversion to flats.
- 6.66 Many other buildings may also be suitable for conversion, such as coachhouses and agricultural buildings. Where these are in the Green Belt, proposals will be assessed against Green Belt policy, especially in ensuring that the re-use of the building does not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.
- 6.67 In converting buildings to residential use, or in intensifying the use of existing dwellings, it is important that the character of the area is maintained where necessary. Proposals should reflect and respect the general character of the area and existing features such as walls, gate posts, hedges, trees etc., should be retained. The provision of adequate off-street car parking should not involve the total loss of existing front gardens, nor be over-intrusive to neighbouring properties. Further guidance on self-contained flat conversions is contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 13.

#### **Policy HS14 - Houses in Multiple Occupation**

**Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings to multi-occupancy will not be permitted unless the proposal fulfils all the following criteria:**

- (i) **the property being of sufficient size to accommodate the proposal and not of modern domestic scale;**
- (ii) **if the property is not detached then adjoining property is not in single family occupation;**
- (iii) **the proposal not resulting in a private dwelling having an HMO on both sides;**
- (iv) **the proposal not resulting in a change in the character of the surrounding area which would be detrimental;**

- (v) the proposal not resulting in a concentration of HMO's in a particular area such that the character of the area is adversely affected;
- (vi) the proposal ensuring the privacy of neighbours and occupants, including the layout of car parking areas, to prevent overlooking of habitable room windows;
- (vii) staircase access normally being provided within the main structure of the building. If external staircases have to be provided they must not result in significant overlooking of neighbours' windows or private amenity space;
- (viii) any extensions required complying with Policy HS11;
- (ix) any new windows required to serve habitable rooms, such as living rooms, kitchens or bedrooms, not overlooking adjoining properties to an unacceptable degree;
- (x) any interior vertical partitions not cutting across windows and ceiling height reductions not being visible externally;
- (xi) adequate sound proofing being provided;
- (xii) any basement accommodation having windows with two-thirds of their height above the existing outside ground level giving sufficient daylight penetration, a reasonable outlook and not immediately adjacent to parking bays and vehicle accessways;
- (xiii) main living rooms having a reasonable outlook and not lit solely by roof lights, nor in close proximity to high boundary or gable walls;
- (xiv) access to rear yards/,gardens being provided from each flat;
- (xv) adequate visibility at entrance and exit points and turning space for vehicles; and
- (xvi) the proposal otherwise complying with Policy HS4 and Policy HS5.

Existing HMO's and valid planning permissions must not comprise more than 20% or more of the properties forming the street frontage within a street block.

#### POLICY HS14 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION

- 6.68 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are houses which are not occupied by a single family but by a number of unrelated people and small groups in varying combinations. The type of accommodation ranges from bed sitting rooms to bed and breakfast establishments for long stay residents. There are an estimated 2,500 HMOs in Wirral, which if properly managed, can provide a valuable source of low-cost accommodation and fill a necessary gap in the housing market.

- 6.69 Such accommodation can bring about special problems, both in terms of the quality of the accommodation provided, the impact on adjoining properties and the character of the surrounding area. Such impact is due to the number of residents in HMOs and the consequent comings and goings, especially when compared to activity arising from normal family housing.
- 6.70 The properties most commonly used for HMOs are large old houses, frequently in poor physical repair, but with good external space standards. If repaired and brought up to standard, these larger properties can provide accommodation for those requiring small low-cost housing. More modern or smaller terraced properties are normally unsuitable for use as HMOs as they cannot easily be adapted and their use can have a detrimental impact on neighbouring property.
- 6.71 The Council is promoting work through its Housing and Building Control functions to bring existing HMOs up to standard, with adequate internal facilities, such as sanitation and communal rooms, together with the provision of fire escapes which may be external. To the extent that HMOs require extensive inspection and resources being diverted towards their improvement, the Council is concerned not to encourage the further creation of poor standard accommodation.

#### **Policy HS15 - Non-Residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas**

**Within the Primarily Residential Areas as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for small-scale built development and changes of use for non-residential uses will only be permitted where the proposal will not:**

- (i) be of such scale as to be inappropriate to surrounding development;
- (ii) result in a detrimental change in the character of the area; and,
- (iii) cause nuisance to neighbouring uses, particularly in respect of noise and disturbance, on-street parking and deliveries by vehicle.

**Proposals should make adequate provision for off-street car parking standards and servicing requirements.**

#### **POLICY HS15 - REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

- 6.72 Although the Primarily Residential Areas will remain largely unchanged throughout the life of the UDP, they already contain many small shopping parades, small businesses and community facilities such as churches, libraries and community centres. These normally cause little nuisance and are indeed essential to local residents who wish to shop locally or have jobs close to their homes. As well as the convenience to residents of having such

facilities close-by, energy costs are reduced by the shorter journey distances involved.

- 6.73 Policies for business uses are outlined in Policy EM12, which can be found in Section 5 of the UDP; for Community Uses in Policy RE10, which can be found in Section 9 of the UDP; and for small-scale retail uses, such as corner shops and in shopping parades, in Policy SH4, which can be found in Section 16 of the UDP. In all cases the Local Planning Authority will be concerned to limit the environmental intrusion which may be caused by such uses in the Primarily Residential Area, particularly by large numbers of cars and delivery vehicles.

