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**Verdi** property  
regeneration  
consultants

Report

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Birkenhead Housing Market Study

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Wirral Council

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# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 AspinallVerdi (and partners) have been appointed by Wirral MBC to prepare a Housing Market Study for Birkenhead.
- 1.2 The Wirral Local Plan 2021 to 2037 Submission Draft (Submission Plan) informed by the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework (Framework) has sets out proposals for significant housing growth in the central Birkenhead and Seacombe River Corridor area from 2022 onwards. This 'repopulating' of Birkenhead is part of a comprehensive regeneration strategy which is a once in a generation opportunity to address the decades long decline of Birkenhead by focusing significant new housing growth in the town informed by the Framework.
- 1.3 The study objective is to provide supporting evidence to inform and ultimately demonstrate and justify the delivery of housing delivery proposals in the emerging Submission Plan for the regeneration of Birkenhead.
- 1.4 One major objective of the project is to provide exemplar evidence to show that the scale of change and housing market transformation proposed through Submission Plan and Framework is not unrealistic. We will demonstrate where it has been achieved in deprived areas elsewhere in the UK in a similar time period, where apparently unviable brownfield sites in poor housing market areas have become viable, as part of comprehensive regeneration projects.
- 1.5 The study will help to provide the necessary evidence and justification to outline how the market conditions can be created to enable delivery in accordance with the assumptions in the Local Plan, with reference to national planning policy and planning practice guidance.
- 1.6 The team has drawn upon relevant best practice and case studies from the local and national context as appropriate.

## Relationship with other Local Plan Evidence

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- 1.7 The Council has produced a range of supporting documents to accompany and supplement the Wirral Local Plan 2021-2037 which explain and justify the approach to the delivery of planned growth and infrastructure. These include:
  - **Housing Delivery Strategy** - provides further clarification and explanation on all matters relating to the future strategy for the delivery of housing planned as part of the Local Plan up to 2037, and, where possible, beyond. The document seeks to demonstrate how the key expectations of national planning policy and guidance have been addressed through the production of the Local Plan, with reference to evidence which has been collated to support the production and delivery of the Plan.

- **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** – identifies infrastructure to support growth from planned development. It identifies the costs of necessary infrastructure for development, how these costs will be met and provides information on how infrastructure will be delivered.
  - **Viability Assessment** - provides an evidence base to assist in identifying the viability impacts of planning policies in the Local Plan, helping to ensure that the policies will not render development unviable and undeliverable.
  - **Site Selection Report** – outlines the approach that the Council has taken to assessing and identifying sites and broad locations for allocation within the Local Plan.
  - **Birkenhead 2040 Framework** – provides a framework for the transformational regeneration of Birkenhead.
  - **Birkenhead Housing Market Study** – (this document) provides supporting evidence to inform and ultimately demonstrate and justify the delivery of proposals in the Local Plan for the regeneration of Birkenhead
- 1.8 These documents should be read in conjunction with one another and may be updated over time as new evidence and information becomes available.

## Study Team

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- 1.9 The team is led by AspinallVerdi. We have also incorporated external expertise from Alan Bevan of City Residential, and Colin Haylock, a visiting professor at University College London and Commissioner of the Old Oak Common Development Corporation in London.
- 1.10 AspinallVerdi is a specialist practice of Chartered Surveyors and Town Planners providing integrated property development and regeneration consultancy services. The firm advises a wide range of regional and national clients across both the public and private sectors. The practice was established in 2009 and has grown with five offices based in Leeds, London Liverpool, Newcastle and Birmingham.
- 1.11 We are an independent practice which prides itself on providing robust evidenced based advice. We offer pragmatic consultancy and deliverable solutions to the most difficult of challenges, based upon our extensive involvement in property development. Our clients include Homes England, Heritage Lottery, Local Authorities and a wide range of private sector developers and operators.
- 1.12 The study has been led by Andy Delaney, Director of the Liverpool Office. Andy lives in Birkenhead and understands the way the town works. He has current professional experience locally and has worked on masterplans for Birkenhead Town Centre, Liscard, New Ferry, New Brighton and Clatterbridge. Andy also worked with BDP and Arcadis on the Birkenhead High Density Housing Exemplar Study. He has also worked with colleagues on the Local Plan Viability study.

- 1.13 Prior to opening the Liverpool office of AspinallVerdi in 2019, Andy worked for over 20 years with several national and global real estate practices. This has given him strong experience in strategic regeneration; both policy and delivery.
- 1.14 He was the key author of two policy documents for the National Brownfield Strategy – The Barriers to Regeneration of Brownfield Land and The Economic Impact of Recycling Brownfield Land. He was also one of the authors of Beyond Retail, the official response of HMG’s ‘Distressed Towns Taskforce’ to the Portas Review of 2014 (Birkenhead was a case study town).
- 1.15 Alan Bevan is the leading residential agent in central Liverpool and has seen the market develop from nothing. He has provided a timeline of how the market developed from a very low base in Liverpool City Centre. He is also the agent for Urban Splash on their scheme at Wirral Waters and has provided the team with up-to-date advice on interest in Phase 1 of this pioneering development. He is also a resident of the Wirral and a keen advocate of the potential for a town centre market in Birkenhead.
- 1.16 Colin Haylock is a regeneration expert of national standing and has worked on landmark projects such as Grainger Town in Newcastle. He was the only non-London appointment to Boris Johnson’s Old Oak Common task force when the current PM was Mayor of London. He provides expertise on exemplar housing development in UK and overseas. He is visiting professor at the Bartlett Institute at University College, London.

## Method

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- 1.17 In order to ensure a robust assessment, we have adopted a comprehensive study methodology which covers the values that are being achieved in the current market, values in nearby suburbs that are ahead in regeneration terms, to gauge the views of a cross section of developers and Registered Providers in developing, the type of sites they need and the political/ financial support necessary from the public sector; and a review of nationwide examples of housing market renewal.
- 1.18 A summary of the study methodology adopted for gathering the evidence that will enable us to achieve the study objective is set out below:
- Review of Market evidence of new build housing in Birkenhead;
  - Review of Market evidence across wider geographic area to include other areas of the borough where new houses are being built - such as New Ferry/ Bromborough, Greasby, Moreton;
  - Analysis of complementary regeneration and placemaking projects being delivered and planned in Wirral;
  - Consultation with a range of developers including plc housebuilders, regional construction firms and SME's;

- Consultation with Registered Providers active locally;
- Consultation with Homes England and Combined Authority; and
- Review of exemplars, nationally and internationally to demonstrate that development can take place and negative perceptions can be turned around.

## Report Structure

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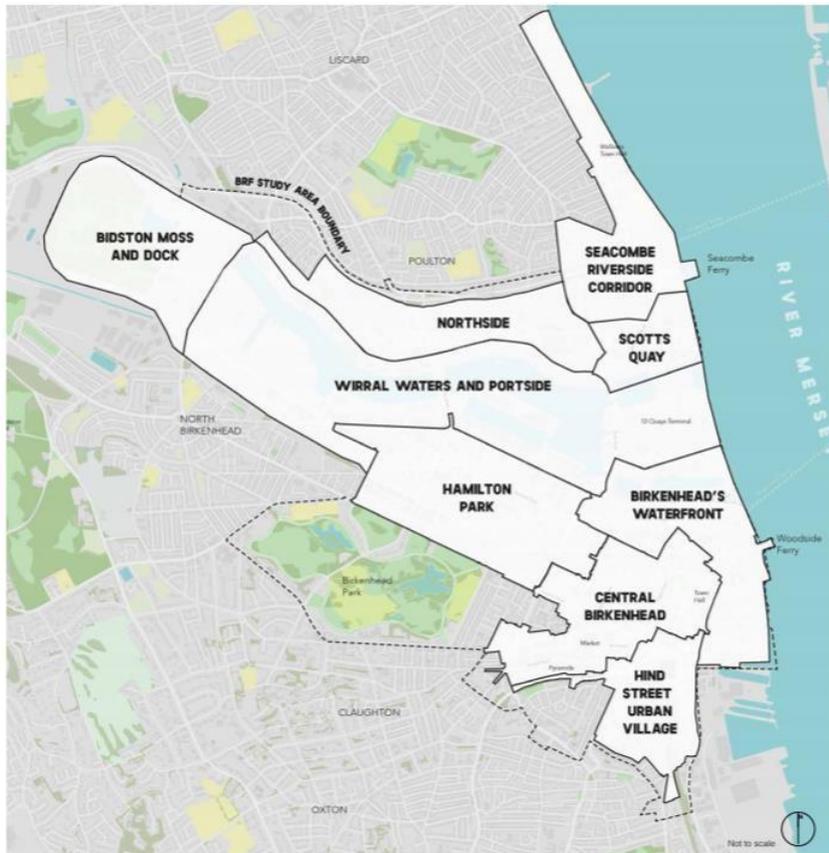
1.19 The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Section 2:** Sets out a review of the relevant National Planning Policy;
- Section 3:** Sets out the proposals of the Submission Plan and Framework for Birkenhead and examines the Council's Comprehensive Regeneration Strategy and identifies the key challenges and opportunities for regeneration.
- Section 4:** Provides a Market Area Profile of the current property market in Birkenhead;
- Section 5:** Provides a description of the type of large scale placemaking and redefining of Birkenhead that is being led by the council and its public and private partners;
- Section 6:** Examines how developers perceive Birkenhead;
- Section 7:** High Quality Design and Tenure Mix builds on some of the points raised in the consultation and also demonstrates the importance on design in regeneration;
- Section 8:** Provides an exemplar review of places that have seen widescale transformation through regeneration including examples of Pioneer Housing schemes that have proved to be catalysts for change;
- Section 9:** Examines the impact that large scale infrastructure investment can have on changing market perceptions through infrastructure investment;
- Section 10:** Provides an analysis of Market Absorption and the Projected Trajectory;
- Section 11:** Considers the impact of Green Belt release on the regeneration of Birkenhead; and
- Section 12:** Sets out our conclusions.

## Geographic Scope

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1.20 This will cover the area known as Birkenhead and is shown on the map below. It focuses on inner Birkenhead, including the docklands, as well as areas in Wallasey which lie just outside it.



Source: An Introduction to Birkenhead 2040, 2021

Figure 1 – Map of Study Area

## 2 National Planning Policy Context

### Introduction

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- 2.1 The proposals of the Submission Plan and the Birkenhead 2040 Framework for the comprehensive regeneration of Birkenhead have had regard and are fully consistent with Government Policy which promotes regeneration of poorer performing areas, the reuse of brownfield land, the efficient use of land through development at higher densities, locating development in the most sustainable locations having regard to infrastructure provision, the creation of beautiful places and the protection of greenspace and the Green Belt.
- 2.2 Relevant Government Policy and Planning Guidance is set out below. Where appropriate particularly relevant policy or guidance for the Submission Plan and Framework proposals for Birkenhead is highlighted in bold text.

### Levelling Up the United Kingdom- White Paper February 2022- HMG

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- 2.3 The Levelling up the United Kingdom (UK)<sup>1</sup> white paper was published on 2 February 2022 and sets out how the UK Government will spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It covers the scale and causes of geographic disparities across the country, as well as a programme of change grounded in twelve missions, improved central and local decision making through better information, incentives and institutions, and rigorous and independent monitoring and evaluation.
- 2.4 Its programme of change has four pillars with aims to:
- help ensure everyone, wherever they live, has the opportunity to succeed and thrive
  - ensure that businesses can invest, create jobs and drive productivity, particularly in areas that have previously struggled
  - empower local leaders and communities
  - enable people to take pride in the places they live and have a good quality of life.
- 2.5 It is a critical stepping stone on the UK Government's ambition to radically alter spatial disparities, ensuring that geography is no longer destiny and that all people and places in the UK are equipped to share in the country's substantial economic, social and cultural wealth.
- 2.6 The White Paper sets out extensive proposals but include:
- The UK Government plans to empower local leaders and communities to reimagine their urban green space and improve access for communities who lack it. This includes enhancing and maintaining protection of the Green Belt;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

- Reform of the planning system including how it enables some developers to benefit disproportionately and unfairly from the land they develop;
- Developing models for a new infrastructure levy that will enable local authorities to capture value from development more efficiently, securing the affordable housing and infrastructure communities need.
- A new UK Shared Prosperity Fund -The fund is a central pillar of the levelling up agenda and a significant component of support for places across the UK, providing funding of £2.6 billion by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition.
- An increased emphasis on the protection of Green Belt.

## The National Planning Policy Framework

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2.7 The NPPF provides guidance on the preparation of Local Plans and the following sections are relevant to the Council's Urban Intensification Spatial Strategy set out in the Submission Plan.

### Section 3 - Plan Making-

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#### 2.8 Examining Plans

Para 35 provides the context within which Local Plans are examined and states:

*Local plans and spatial development strategies are examined to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether they are sound. Plans are 'sound' if they are:*

- a) Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;*
- b) Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;*
- c) Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and*
- d) Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.*

### Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

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2.9 This section deals with delivering a sufficient supply of homes. Paragraph 60 states:

- *To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.*
- 2.10 On identifying land for homes, Paragraph 68 states.
- *Strategic policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability.*
- 2.11 Planning policies should identify a supply of:
- a) specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period; and
  - b) specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan.
- 2.12 The Glossary to the NPPF provides the following definitions:
- **Deliverable:** To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:
    - a) *sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).*
    - b) *where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years*
  - **Developable:** To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.
- 2.13 Paragraph 73 states.
- *The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the*

*necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes). [in the Birkenhead Context this can be applied to the scale of regeneration proposed]*

- 2.14 Working with the support of their communities, and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way. In doing so, they should:
- a) *consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;*
  - b) *ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access;*
  - c) *set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created and how this can be maintained (such as by following Garden City principles); and ensure that appropriate tools such as masterplans and design guides or codes are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community;*
  - d) *make a realistic assessment of likely rates of delivery, given the lead-in times for large scale sites, and identify opportunities for supporting rapid implementation (such as through joint ventures or locally-led development corporations); and*
  - e) *consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining new developments of significant size.*

## Section 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres

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- 2.15 Paragraph 86 states. Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should:
- a) *define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters;*
  - b) *define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre;*
  - c) *retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones;*
  - d) *allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed, looking at least ten years ahead. Meeting anticipated needs for retail,*

*leisure, office and other main town centre uses over this period should not be compromised by limited site availability, so town centre boundaries should be kept under review where necessary;*

- e) *where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available for main town centre uses, allocate appropriate edge of centre sites that are well connected to the town centre. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, policies should explain how identified needs can be met in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre; and*
- f) *recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.*

## Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities

- 2.16 Paragraph 94 states: Planning policies and decisions should consider the social, economic and environmental benefits of estate regeneration. Local planning authorities should use their planning powers to help deliver estate regeneration to a high standard.

## Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport

- 2.17 Paragraph 104 states. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:

- a) *the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- b) *opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) *opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- d) *the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- e) *patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.*

- 2.18 Paragraph 105 states: The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between

urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

## Section 11 - Making effective use of Land

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- 2.19 Paragraph 119 states. Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. **Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.**
- 2.20 Paragraph 120 states: Planning policies and decisions should:
- a) *encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;*
  - b) *recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;*
  - c) *give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;*
  - d) *promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and*
  - e) *support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.*
- 2.21 Paragraph 121 states: Local planning authorities, and other plan-making bodies, should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them. This should include identifying opportunities to facilitate land assembly, supported where necessary by compulsory purchase powers, where this can help to bring more land forward for meeting development needs and/or secure better development outcomes.

2.22 Paragraph 124 states: Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) *the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
- b) local market conditions and viability;**
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;**
- d) *the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*
- e) *the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.*

2.23 Paragraph 125 states. Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:

- a) *plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination, and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate;*
- b) *the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range; and*
- c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).**

## Section 12 deals - Achieving well designed places

2.24 Paragraph 128 states. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles

set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety.

## Section 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land

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- 2.25 Paragraph 137 states: The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 2.26 Paragraph 138 states. Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
  - b) *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
  - c) *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
  - d) *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
  - e) *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*
- 2.27 Paragraph 140 states: Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.
- 2.28 Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This will be assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy:
- a) *makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and under-utilised land;*
  - b) *optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
  - c) *has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground*

### 3 Wirral Local Plan 2031 to 2037 Submission Draft-

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- 3.1 The Wirral Local Plan 2021 to 2037 Submission Draft (Submission Plan) *Delivering Housing Growth through the Comprehensive Regeneration of Birkenhead- Challenges and Opportunities* is based on the Council's preferred spatial option of urban intensification whereby it will meet all of its development needs within existing urban areas, largely on Brownfield sites.
- 3.2 The key focus of the Submission Plan is the regeneration of the 'LeftBank' of the Mersey stretching from new Brighton to Eastham. In particular, based on the proposals of the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework (Framework) the Submission Plan sets out nationally significant regeneration proposals to address several decades of decline in the town, to address housing market failure and to create a unique attractive family orientated and sustainable place. As is set out in Section 2, this strategy is entirely in accordance with national policy relating to regeneration, the efficient use of land, and the protection of Green Belt.
- 3.3 The Submission Plan Housing trajectory sets out proposals that will see approximately 800 homes delivered within the Framework area (Regeneration Areas 1 to 7 in the Submission Draft) over the period to 2037. The Council recognise that this housing delivery target is challenging but is achievable if it is supported by a comprehensive regeneration strategy.

#### Challenges

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- 3.4 In developing the Local Plan Urban Intensification Strategy, the Council recognises that the housing market in Birkenhead is currently weak and that the level of redevelopment proposed by Peel Land at Wirral Waters and by other developers at Hind Street and across central Birkenhead is ambitious. Residential sales values are currently low and there are significant viability issues to address. However, the Council believes that the comprehensive regeneration of Birkenhead over the next 15 to 20 years is now realistic and is required if the significant issues of deprivation are to be tackled in the town.
- 3.5 The council does underestimate the scale and depth of the task it faces; but after years of an acceptance of a failing market and diminishing returns; the council is now looking to challenge the spiral of decline by meeting the challenge head on with the comprehensive 'LeftBank' regeneration programme with a key focus on Birkenhead. This recognises the multifaceted nature of these problems and aims to improve the quality of neighbourhood and housing markets, whilst integrating interventions within a sub-regional framework that links housing, planning and economic development.
- 3.6 A key issue in assessing the viability and deliverability of housing in Birkenhead is that there is currently no more than a nascent housing market. After years of stagnation and decline, there are few comparable examples of private sector housing in Birkenhead.

- 3.7 Birkenhead has experienced chronic population and household loss over seven decades. It was and still is characterised by a crude surplus of housing, which is particularly evident in the lower value terraced sector. The poor-quality housing offer remains a major obstacle to the successful regeneration of the town.
- 3.8 This entrenched deprivation has contributed to and been worsened by the collapse of the housing market. As investment in areas has fallen, those who have been able to afford it have moved out. With a declining population, the quality and availability of local services and amenities has reduced along with environmental quality.
- 3.9 The town centre has been under-invested in in recent years. It was highlighted as a “Distressed Town” in 2014 and it has declined again since. An old adage is that no-one goes past a good town to go to another. If Birkenhead was improved, it would improve further, as it enjoys a good catchment and demographics – the challenge is persuading people from Heswall, West Kirby and Higher Bebington to regularly use the town and its facilities. An improved town centre makes the whole town a more attractive place to live.
- 3.10 Until a recent surge of activity, with the Keepmoat ‘Dockside’ Beaumont Road housing scheme and the Urban Splash Phase 1 (Wirral Waters North Bank (RES-RA 6.3)) on sites in inner Birkenhead, there has been little meaningful development in the town for a considerable period and this is down to a perception of market failure. In fact, it could be described in even starker terms. Inner Birkenhead has been invisible to the market.
- 3.11 The town would appear to be ideal for new housing for young families and other groups who wanted accessibility into the centre, but needed a bit more than an apartment. Yet there is no evidence that large scale development could take place and there is scepticism from the risk averse development world, who are much keener on finding sites in affluent suburbs for standard house types.
- 3.12 With some honourable exceptions, amongst residential land agents and major housebuilding companies, Birkenhead has not existed as an area with a housing market. It has been perceived as an area that has been considered “too hard”. Values have been low and subsequently agents’ commissions are low – a lot lower than on attractive suburban sites in west Wirral and Cheshire. It has been perceived as a “big council estate” and did not even register as a potential area for large scale development.
- 3.13 Birkenhead is not performing as it should do. However, based on the evidence of the renaissance of other similar areas as described in Section 8, there is strong evidence that by following the Council’s comprehensive strategy; new, mixed-tenure and mixed type development can take place on a large scale. The town can become an attractive and popular location to live, work and socialise. In previous years, regeneration policy has not been targeted correctly by the council.

Under the recent change of leadership at political and officer level, large scale targeted intervention is redefining the town.

## Opportunities

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- 3.14 Birkenhead has so much potential and should be focus of the 325,000 people living in the borough and the wider peninsula; yet it has been caught in a cycle of decline over several decades. Birkenhead needs to reinvent itself as the service centre of Wirral. Its town centre has been hollowed out in recent years, the retail offer has hollowed out and it is caught in a never-ending spiral of decline. There is little cultural life and the night time economy has also declined.
- 3.15 We are mindful of the history and tradition of the town and are conscious not to promote gentrification, but the town centre needs to consolidate and adapt. It needs to appeal to a cross section of its catchment and not just appeal to the lower socio-economic groups.
- 3.16 The new leadership at the council (politically and at officer level) has embraced the challenge and this political will, combined with the production of a new Local Plan is a tremendous opportunity for change. There is also a willingness from the people of the wider Wirral to regenerate Birkenhead. There is dismay amongst the local community over what has happened to the town centre and “North End” of the town in recent years and people don’t want to see cherished green spaces in Higher Bebington, Storeton and Irby developed into ‘anytown’ housing estates.
- 3.17 Sandy Livingstone, Development Director of Onward, is of the view that Birkenhead is a “fantastic opportunity” and its time is about to come. In his words “it should work, but for some reason it has been left to struggle.” *its location opposite Liverpool, the opportunities presented by the attractiveness and relative affluence of the wider peninsula means that it should work. “It needs a long-term view on value creation and it will need critical mass to create the shift in the market to create a new residential and business eco system.”*
- 3.18 There is an often quoted expression that housing is only viable on Wirral in the more affluent west of the borough. This is not true. People value the accessibility of Birkenhead. It is quicker to get from Oxton or Prenton to Liverpool City Centre than it is from south Liverpool!
- 3.19 There have been several transactions of £1Million+ in the CH43 postcode during 2021. It is 1.3 miles from Bidston Road to Birkenhead Park station. Oxton Village is one of very few places in the north west conurbation that has a Michelin starred restaurant. There are several high achieving schools in the Oxton/ Claughton area. These are all factors that demonstrate that people with money want to live in the town and not everybody with higher paid jobs lives in the west of the borough (and Cheshire).

3.20 Cheshire and South Liverpool are comparably more expensive. At a more local level, Greasby, Hoylake and Heswall have become too expensive. These suburbs are now overpriced and there is only a finite supply of attractive sites left. As such, developers and investors (and buyers) are now looking beyond these suburbs. An improved housing offer, supporting a regenerated town centre, with its newly diverse retail offer, employment opportunities, strong infrastructure, excellent communications, good schools and attractive public realm can offer an alternative to these suburbs.

### A Comprehensive Regeneration Strategy for Birkenhead

3.21 As is explained in the Local Plan Housing Delivery Strategy the Council understands that in order to address the deep-rooted decline and current housing market failure it would be necessary to put in place a regeneration programme of national significance in its scale and ambition. For this to be deliverable the Council have developed an overarching regeneration strategy for Birkenhead with the following five pillars:

**i A Comprehensive Vision and Spatial Strategy;**

3.22 The Council have prepared and endorsed the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework which sets out a comprehensive spatial strategy for Birkenhead.

<b>The Birkenhead 2040 Vision is:</b>
<p>Birkenhead has grown into a thriving urban community on the left bank of the River Mersey.</p> <p>Chosen as home by families and entrepreneurs alike, drawn by the unique, historic waterfront environment and iconic design. A place of creativity, innovation and fun, a place to put down roots.</p> <p>The connectivity of city-living, in harmony with nature.</p> <p>A place with room to breathe and space to grow.</p> <p><b>We are Re-imagining Re-discovering Re-connecting Birkenhead</b></p>

The full Draft Birkenhead 2040 document can be viewed here [Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework | www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk).

As part of the preparation of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and to inform the Local Plan the Council also commissioned more detailed 'Neighbourhood Frameworks' to provide the spatial context for change, to inform the potential for brownfield housing and mixed use development, to identify essential infrastructure and to identify areas requiring further detailed masterplans.

The Draft Framework is expected to become the strategy for a new bespoke delivery vehicle as discussed below.

**ii A Comprehensive Place Making Strategy;**

The Council fully understands the importance of design quality of new building and places to the success of their regeneration strategy and changing housing markets and has appointed the leading Anglo Dutch Design Practice, Maccreeanor Lavington, to prepare a comprehensive Design Guide and Public Realm Guide for Birkenhead. In accordance with national guidance this will set out the Council's approach to design quality and building a unique Birkenhead.

**iii A Comprehensive Place Making Infrastructure Strategy;**

As is explained in the Housing Delivery Strategy, the Council have developed a comprehensive Infrastructure Delivery Strategy for Birkenhead which aligns with the Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The bulk of projects will be delivered through 'pump priming' public funding through a range of sources including: Town Deal, Levelling Up Fund, Strategic Investment Fund and Town Deal.

## Key Projects

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3.23 Below we summarise the key projects being brought forward.

**Dock Branch Park**

3.24 The construction of a world class linear park through the centre of Birkenhead utilising a disused railway cutting which will be raised in places and incorporate National Museums Liverpool's new 'Transport Shed'. The park will not only provide a strategic open space resource for new residents but will itself be the focus of a new mixed use neighbourhood along its route. It is expected that construction of the new park will begin in early 2023 with completion in stages between 2024 and 2025.

**Removal of the Borough Road Fly overs and replacement local high network**

3.25 The unsightly oversized piece of highway structure which currently divides the town centre from its hinterland to the south is due to be demolished in 2023. Its removal will transform pedestrian and cycling links between the Town Centre, the Proposed new St Werburgh's Quarter (MPA\_RA5.2) and the proposed Hind Street Urban Garden Village (RES-RA5.1). The replacement local highways network to accommodate traffic movements arising from the removal of the flyovers will also provide access to facilitate the early delivery of housing on the early phases on this strategic site.

### **Woodside Waterfront**

- 3.26 The Council received £19M levelling up funding in 2021 which will enable the realignment of the woodside gyratory which will open up pedestrian and cycling access to Wirral's Waterfront at Woodside. This world class location is currently underutilised and the funding will enable a range of other enabling infrastructure to be provided including a replacement landing pontoon for the famous Mersey Ferry, and new strategic public realm linking Woodside through Hamilton Square to Argyle Street and the new Dock Branch Park.

### **Birkenhead Mass Transit System**

- 3.27 Whilst Birkenhead is served by five Merseyrail stations, 'last mile' connectivity to some proposed new neighbourhoods including Wirral Waters is recognised to be an issue. In addition to developing a comprehensive active travel network the Council is working closely with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to develop proposals for a new Mass Transit system which will connect Wirral Water to Merseyrail stations and to the Birkenhead Town Centre. The system will also serve the Secombe River Corridor to New Brighton.
- 3.28 The Council are currently developing an Outline business case for the provision of a new bus based mass transit system as an interim measure before a longer term system is put into place. Although not a prerequisite for the delivery of regeneration and housing the delivery of a new mass transit system would provide a significant land value uplift and assist with the attractiveness of the area and longer-term viability.
- 3.29 See Housing Delivery Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan for further information.

### **Birkenhead Heat network**

- 3.30 With the support of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the LCR CA the Council have appointed consultants to develop a Detailed Project Plan (DPD) for a proposed Heat Network covering much of Central Birkenhead. The DPD is expected to be completed in late 2022 when an application for commercialisation funding will be made to BEIS. The Submission Plan Policy W8.5 makes provision for development to make provision to connect to the system where in close proximity to the network.
- 3.31 If implemented a comprehensive heat network would add to the attractiveness and distinctiveness of the area offering a more stable energy cost supply, and addressing fuel poverty.

#### **iv An appropriate delivery vehicle**

- 3.32 The Council recognise that it does not have the internal capacity to deliver the proposals of Birkenhead 2040 which are of a nationally significant scale. The Council were successful in obtaining funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to develop a

business case for the establishment of an Urban Development Corporation. This business case is currently under preparation by Deloitte and is expected to be submitted to DLUHC in late 2022.

- 3.33 As is explained in the Housing Delivery Strategy the Council are currently working closely with Homes England and the Liverpool City Combined Authority through the 'LeftBank' Board to explore funding strategies to deliver the Birkenhead 2040 Framework.

**v Branding and marketing**

- 3.34 The Council also recognise that image and branding of the opportunities offered by Birkenhead 2040 will be an important part of the success of its regeneration strategy. The Council is currently developing an interim branding and marketing strategy based on the concepts of 'Birkenhead its Time', and 'LeftBank Living'. This strategy will be confirmed and fully implemented by the new delivery vehicle.
- 3.35 As is explained in Section 8 of this report these actions reflect similar actions adopted in other areas where comprehensive regeneration programmes have transformed housing markets in a relatively short period of time.

## Building at higher density and delivering family homes

- 3.36 A key element of the Council's preferred urban intensification strategy and reflecting national planning policy guidance is the need to increase density to make more efficient use of land. Policy WS3.2 of the Submission Plan deals with Housing Density and sets out minimum housing densities of between 60 and 70 dwellings per hectare in central Birkenhead (the latter in those areas in a waterfront density Zone (RES-DZ1).
- 3.37 Reflecting the vision and objectives of the Framework and the requirements of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2022 the Council's intention is to create a more sustainable balance of communities than has been achieved in other major city centre regeneration programmes such as Liverpool and Manchester with an emphasis on making Birkenhead a place for families.
- 3.38 In this context, Policy WS3.4 Housing Mix sets out a requirement for new residential development to deliver a minimum of 30% of family homes (3 bedroom plus) within Regeneration Areas.
- 3.39 Recognising the challenges that this requirement and objective raises in current market conditions the Council has commissioned the Birkenhead High Density Family Housing Study which is discussed in Section 10.

## Current progress

- 3.40 It is important to stress that work on delivering the proposals of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and Regeneration proposals of the Submission Plan is already being progressed as described below:

## Wirral Waters, Northbank

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### Urban Splash Phase 1

- 3.41 Peel Land and Property, a developer of national significance, is now working in partnership with the Council on this market-making scheme. The duo are well advanced in delivering the comprehensive package of place making and infrastructure projects for this strategically important regeneration project.
- 3.42 The first phase of the Urban Splash residential development (RES-RA6.3/6.4/ 6.8) is approaching completion with sales already completed with significantly higher values than previously achieved in the area.



**Figure 3.1: Urban Splash North bank Wirral Waters (January 2022)**  
(copyright Peel L&P)

### Legacy

- 3.43 This is a council supported Build to Rent project by Peel L&P. It comprises of five hundred 1- and 2-bedroom apartments. It commenced on site in February 2022. Together with the Urban Splash development, this scheme will transform the Birkenhead housing market. The involvement of the local authority enhances viability and therefore enables a high-quality design approach.



**Figure 3.2: Legacy North bank Wirral Waters (Architects Illustration)**  
(copyright Peel L&P)

#### **Wirral Met Construction College**

- 3.44 This is the first key landmark on Peel Group’s Wirral Waters development located on Tower Road, was completed in 2015 and provides construction courses for young people to provide them with modern construction skills. Peel L&P work closely with the college to offer practical experience on projects in sustainable construction.

#### **The Hythe**

- 3.45 Peel L&P completed the 30,000 sq ft Grade A office development on Tower Road was completed in late 2021.

#### **Eureka Children’s Science Museum**

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- 3.46 The Eureka Children’s Science Museum at Seacombe Ferry is expected to open in late 2022.

#### **Wirral Growth Company Birkenhead Commercial District Office Development**

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- 3.47 The Wirral Growth Company have commenced construction of the first phase 150,000 sq.ft Grade A office development in Birkenhead town centre which when completed in 2023 will become the new offices for the Council and provide additional modern floorspace for other private businesses and public sector organisations.

#### **Birkenhead Market**

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- 3.48 The Wirral Growth Company will deliver a new Market for Birkenhead on the site of the former House of Fraser Site in 2023/ 24.

## Birkenhead Town Centre Housing Development

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- 3.49 The Council working with the Wirral Growth Company are expected to seek delivery partners by mid-2022 for the development of new residential development in Birkenhead comprising:
- RES-RA4.1 WGC Town Centre Plot E – 172 dwellings
  - Site of former House of Fraser – c82 units (within the St Werburgh's masterplan area (MPA-RA5.2))
- 3.50 In addition to the above the Council are working with Homes England and the LCR CA on the development of a detailed delivery strategy/ business case for funding for key strategic residential projects at Vittoria Studios (RES-RA6.2), Hamilton Park Masterplan area (MPA-RA7.1), Hind Street Urban Garden Village (RES-RA5.1) and Dock Branch Park Phase 1 (within MPA\_RA4.2).
- 3.51 The Council is also working on the delivery of major public realm and active travel projects funded through Town Deal, Future High Streets Fund, Levelling Up Funds and various LCR CA funding including the Dock Branch Park.

## 4 Market Area Profile

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4.1 This section provides an overview of the residential market in Birkenhead. Full details are set out in Appendix 1.

### Introduction

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4.2 The structure of this section is as follows:

- **National and Regional Overview** – provides an assessment of the current residential market in a national and regional context.
- **Existing Evidence** – provides a review of existing market evidence which will inform our assumptions.
- **New Build Achieved Values** – provides an assessment of new build achieved values across the district over the last two years based on industry recognised published data from Land Registry and Energy Performance Certificate Register (EPC).
- **Second Hand Achieved Values** – provides an assessment of second hand achieved values across the district over the last three months, again based on industry recognised published data.
- **New Build Asking Prices** – provides an assessment of asking prices for new build properties across the district. The market assessment is based on industry recognised published data from Rightmove and developer's websites such as; Taylor Wimpey and Bellway Homes.
- **Residential Value Assumptions** – Based on assessment of achieved and asking value data, we set out our value assumptions (£/ psm and absolute values) which could be expected across the district taking into consideration the settlement hierarchy.

### Local Overview

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4.3 Birkenhead has experienced chronic population and household loss over seven decades. It was and still is characterised by a crude surplus of housing, which is particularly evident in the lower value terraced sector. The poor-quality housing offer remains a major obstacle to the successful regeneration of the town.

4.4 This entrenched deprivation has contributed to and been worsened by the collapse of the housing market. As investment in areas has fallen, those who have been able to afford it have moved out. With a declining population, the quality and availability of local services and amenities has reduced along with environmental quality.

- 4.5 This clearly shows the link between housing markets and concentrated labour market disadvantage. While house prices remain relatively low and vacancies comparatively high, there have been positive movements in both variables.
- 4.6 However, the legacy of decline is long standing and there is clear evidence that many residents in the deprived communities in areas like Rock Ferry and Seacombe have been unable to take advantage of the opportunities presented.

## Grounds for Optimism

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- 4.7 Despite these acknowledged problems of deprivation and dereliction, there is considerable grounds for optimism for the future. The borough, notably the urban areas on the east, is no outsider to the national surge in demand which has been seen across the last year and local agents have reported strong confidence in the market from buyers. This trend has seen both the volume of enquiries and completions significantly increase, with the number of sales agreed hitting record levels for three months in a row across 2020 and 2021.
- 4.8 Given the strengths of the area, offering suburban living close to the coast, with excellent commuter links to major northern cities, it is clear that Wirral offers qualities many are now looking for. These characteristics have seen two towns within the area rank in the top ten British property hotspots March 2021, with Wallasey recording the highest increase in house prices over the past year (15.6%) and Birkenhead not far behind (12.4%).<sup>2</sup>
- 4.9 Recent developments of new build housing have been well received by buyers. Keepmoat's scheme at the Docklands continues to sell well and the company is keen to extend its footprint. Bellway's Kings Hill scheme in New Ferry achieved strong sales values of £245/sq,ft and Urban Splash's scheme at East Float has seen strong interest from buyers.

## Vision context: Birkenhead 2040

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- 4.10 As well as the national strength of the residential market over the covid period, buyers and investors have gained confidence that the long overdue regeneration of Birkenhead is finally going to happen. As is described in Section 3 over the last eighteen months Wirral Council has developed a framework for the transformational regeneration of Birkenhead, the Birkenhead 2040 Framework. This is a 20-year plan which sets out the most significant proposals for the town since the 1947 Town Plan.
- 4.11 There have been notable recent funding successes with significant new pump priming public funding, with an award of £24.8 million from the Future High Streets Fund and a £24M Town Deal and £19M from the Levelling Up Fund from the government. There is a general awareness that

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2021/may/01/wallasey-merseyside-british-property-hotspots-rightmove>

the infrastructure is being improved and this is giving increasing confidence to the development industry for the future.

4.12 At the heart of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and the Submission Draft Plan is the creation of family-friendly neighbourhoods with beautiful, green public spaces and parks including the strategically important new Dock Branch Park and associated 'Transport Shed'. The proposals of the Framework and the Submission Draft Plan will re-connect the revitalised town centre with the amazing opportunities along the Mersey waterfront, and will make the most of the town's iconic heritage and buildings. The changes already underway at Wirral Waters (described in section 3), Wirral Growth Company's new office quarter and market in the town centre, the opening of Eureka! Mersey in 2022, the completion of the Hythe Office Development and the commencement of construction of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of office development in Birkenhead town centre are tangible evidence that major change is underway.

4.13 Birkenhead 2040 divides Birkenhead into several distinct neighbourhoods:

- **Central Birkenhead** – Covering the high street (Grange Road, the Pyramids and the Pavements shopping areas, Birkenhead Market, Europa Boulevard and Hamilton Square) and the first phase of the proposed Dock Branch Park
- **Birkenhead's Waterfront** – Potentially the most underutilised asset across the Framework, Birkenhead's waterfront area – an industrial legacy with an iconic future, stretching from Cammell Laird in the south right through to Egerton Docks and Tower Road
- **Hind Street Urban Village** – The development area on and surrounding the former Gas Works to the south-east of Central Birkenhead – the southern gateway of Birkenhead Central Station and the location of the southern stretch of the proposed Dock Branch Park
- **Wirral Waters** – The strategically significant Wirral Waters regeneration scheme and early phase dockside development areas, for which masterplanning and Outline Planning Permission is in place and is in the process of being delivered
- **Hamilton Park** – The community within Central Birkenhead's fringe, the area between Birkenhead Park and Wirral Waters and the most prominent legacy of the Laird Grid in Birkenhead
- **Northside and Scotts Quay** – The legacy of the docks and its industrial hinterland – the land between them and the M53 and A59 corridor, considered collectively through the Framework process but with area specific recommendations reflecting the distinct geography and opportunities across this neighbourhood to be taken forward separately
- **Seacombe Riverside Corridor** – Wallasey's southern waterfront and Ferry gateway closely connected to Birkenhead's northern waterfront – connecting Birkenhead to Wallasey and New Brighton and Birkenhead's communities with their waterfront

- **Bidston Moss and Dock** – The remains of the dock located at the head of Wallasey Pool, accommodating both strategic open space and reclaimed land available for development purposes
- 4.14 These neighbourhoods are the focus of the planned regeneration activity and therefore are the focus of this study.

## Residential Value Assumptions and Conclusions

- 4.15 The full analysis of recent transactions, new developments and asking prices can be read in Appendix 1. Based on the above, our assumptions for residential values in Birkenhead are as follows:

**Table 4.1 – New Build Sales Values**

Dwelling type	Lower Range £ psm	Higher Range £ psm	Area assumption (sqm)	Lower Range Absolute Value	Higher Range Absolute Value
1 Bed Flat	£2,000	£2,550	50	£100,000	£127,500
2 Bed Flat	£2,000	£2,550	61	£128,100	£155,650
1 Bed House	£2,100	£2,700	58	£121,800	£156,600
2 Bed House	£2,100	£2,700	70	£147,000	£189,000
3 Bed House	£2,200	£2,800	84	£184,800	£235,200
4 Bed House	£2,200	£2,800	97	£213,400	£271,600
5 Bed House	£2,200	£2,800	110	£242,000	£308,000

Source: AspinallVerdi 2021

## Rental Value Assumptions

- 4.16 We found asking price evidence for rental values in Birkenhead, in addition to the existing evidence base for this. It is expected that good quality newbuild will command higher rents than second hand.
- 4.17 Based on this, and the evidence in the round, the newbuild flat rental assumptions are below:

**Table 4.2 - Newbuild Rental Value Assumptions**

Dwelling type	Rent pcm
1 Bed Flat	£610

2 Bed Flat	£0
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Source: AspinallVerdi 2021

## Summary and Conclusions

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4.18 The results of this market analysis demonstrate that:

- There has been little new market housing development in Birkenhead in recent times. This is rapidly changing with the completion of the first 30 dwelling phase of the iconic Urban Splash Homes and the commencement of the 500 dwelling Legacy project at Northbank, Wirral Waters;
- Until recent positive movement, values achieved have been low and have not been attractive to all developers of private market housing;
- Wirral is no outsider to the surge in demand, which has been seen across 2021 and local agents have reported strong confidence in the market from buyers;
- The new local plan, and the Birkenhead 2040 regeneration strategy, the funding awards and the start on site of pioneer schemes are giving confidence that change is coming;
- This trend has seen both the volume of enquiries and completions significantly increase, with the number of sales agreed hitting record levels for three months in a row across 2020 and 2021;
- Given the strengths of the area, offering of semi-rural living with excellent commuter links to major northern cities, it is clear that Wirral offers qualities many are now looking for - Birkenhead is not excluded from this;
- These characteristics have seen two towns within the area rank in the top ten British property hotspots March 2021, with Wallasey recording the highest increase in house prices over the past year (15.6%) and Birkenhead not far behind (12.4%);
- Keepmoat has seen strong levels of demand for its scheme known as The Docklands and it is actively pursuing more land opportunities in Birkenhead and Wallasey;
- Urban Splash's scheme on Wirral Waters is attracting strong levels of interest and several houses have been reserved at values in excess of £250/sq.ft.
- Recent brownfield development by Bellway at King's Hill in New Ferry has seen strong sales interest and sales values of £245/sq.ft;
- There has been no recent development of any private rental property of any scale; although 2022 will see the start of a large Build to Rent scheme at Northside at Wirral Waters;
- We are aware of developers planning Build to Rent apartment schemes in Birkenhead town centre. Their business plan has projected rentals of £16.25/ sq.ft.

## 5 Creating a New Birkenhead

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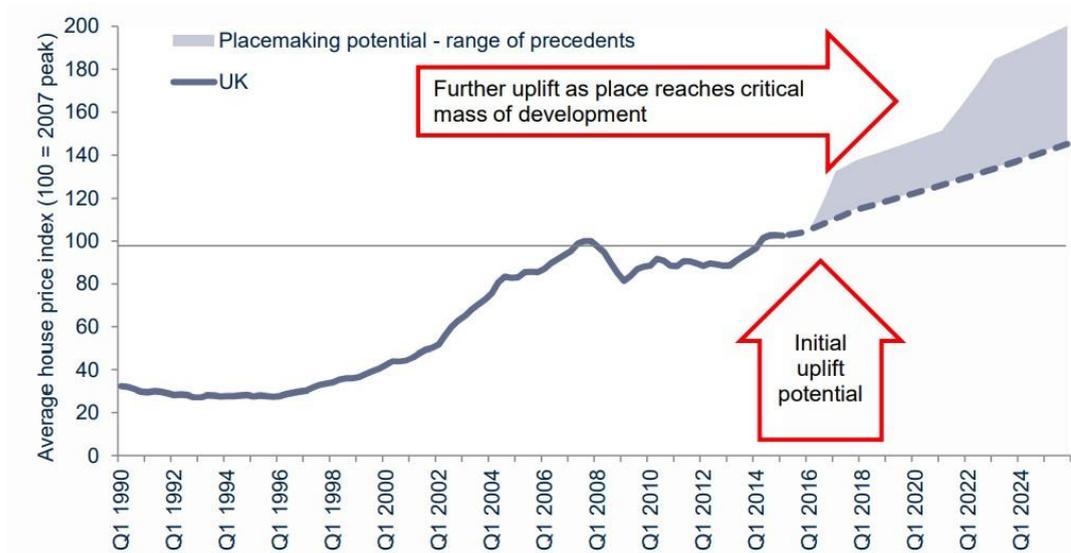
- 5.1 Attracting people to live in “new” neighbourhoods in previously semi-abandoned parts of Birkenhead is not a simple case of “build it and they will come”. A compelling, attractive and secure environment, with open space, good accessibility, shopping and other amenities is essential. The overall strategy to improve the public realm, food and entertainment offerings, connectivity and general “buzz” of the town centre is as important to increasing the residential population as ensuring there are appropriate sites for development.

### What is placemaking?

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- 5.2 A key aspect of any major regeneration project is a placemaking strategy. It is the creation of a destination that starts before hard physical development has taken place. It is often in a location that has long been neglected, but is the focus of a regeneration initiative. In the early days, these are often “meanwhile” uses on a temporary basis. Broadly, this means creating an area with strong community identity, where locals will wish to socialise and live and which will attract both domestic and international visitors. In time, it is the development of schools and community facilities, transport improvements and commercial space.
- 5.3 As has been discussed in Section 3 of this report the Council has developed a comprehensive regeneration strategy based on the Birkenhead 2040 Framework with place making as a key pillar. The Placemaking is town wide and transformational. The proposals include new office employment, new schools, a mass transit system, new green space, a museum and a redesigned town centre, with fit for purpose retail and leisure space. The large scale placemaking will drive demand and increase prices as it would cater to needs of the demographics that the “new” Birkenhead aims to attract. The redevelopment will also create a ‘green neighbourhood’ with a world class linear park (Dock Branch Park) and a connected waterfront. We would anticipate a potential uplift of land values and improved viability as demand increases to live in the neighbourhood and a sense of community is created at the site.
- 5.4 In Section 8 of this report, we provide some examples of locations where a housing market has been created in areas that experts said were not viable. Placemaking has been intrinsic to the process of value creation in these areas. In Salford, an artist’s collective started the process, moving in to an abandoned office building; at the Baltic Triangle in Liverpool, it was also creative and digital industries creating a ‘buzz’ which led to more activity, in Sheffield it was similar. On a grander scale, it has been seen in Shoreditch, London, the Meatpacking District in New York and the Distillery District in Toronto.
- 5.5 There have been numerous examples in the UK and within Europe where placemaking has been successfully implemented to realise longer term value growth.

**Figure 4.1 – The long term impact on value of Placemaking**



Source - Savills

5.6 The graph shown above is reproduced from placemaking research by Savills. It compares the potential uplift in value for development schemes as a result of placemaking. Triggers for uplift are generally associated with an increase in footfall to an area and include the following:

- Potential opening of a new school;
- Opening of a new transport link such as a new train station;
- Completion and occupation of commercial space;
- Completion of retail offering such as shops in local centre or shopping centre;
- Completion of leisure offering such as cafes in local centre, cinema or sports centre;
- Completion of public open space such as a town square or local parks.

5.7 There are a number of factors which are integral to placemaking efforts. These are; improved cultural offerings – whether that be museums, entertainment venues or other; increased connectivity – encouraging local residents to move around the town more naturally and providing convenient access for visitors and; community improvements; this includes increased retail and leisure offerings as well as streetscaping, to encourage residents and locals to use the area more frequently.

5.8 This section details the efforts being made to create a sense of place in Birkenhead, including those projects which are planned and already underway.

## Birkenhead 2040 Framework

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- 5.9 The Birkenhead 2040 Framework is a 20-year plan for the transformative regeneration of Birkenhead and forms the first of 5 key pillars of the regeneration approach for Birkenhead as described in Section 2. The framework sets out ambitious and aspirational proposals for the regeneration of Birkenhead as a 'sustainable urban garden community' based on strong sustainability and low carbon principles.
- 5.10 The project aims to deliver over 21,000 homes and 6,000 new jobs with new residential, employment, leisure and cultural offerings. Combined with a new Mass Transit System, improved green spaces and integrated streetscaping, the framework holds ambitions to transform Birkenhead into a place where people of all incomes, ages and backgrounds would want to live.
- 5.11 Such a result would represent a significant transformation, from what is currently regarded as a disjointed and undesirable ex-industrial town, to an integrated destination with high-quality residential, employment and leisure offerings which can be readily access on foot, bicycle, road or via public transport.

### Framework objectives

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- 5.12 Nine key objectives have been identified which underpin delivery of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework vision. All of these, in particular the Iconic, Cultural and Connected Birkenhead objectives will be key in placemaking and creating a specific identity for the area.
- 5.13 The 9 objectives are:
- **Waterfront Garden City:** we will deliver a substantial and diverse array of additional homes, via new sustainable mixed-use family neighbourhoods and the renewal of existing residential areas. A high-quality network of green and blue infrastructure will ensure 'garden city' principles are at the forefront of Birkenhead's urban change.
  - **Industrious Birkenhead:** we will grow and diversify our economic base. Our much celebrated manufacturing and maritime sector will thrive, and we will grow our emerging clean growth industries. Birkenhead's service sector and town centre uses will prosper through innovation, as more and more of our residents utilise Birkenhead for their everyday needs.
  - **Inclusive Birkenhead:** we will ensure all our communities share more fully in the wealth we generate and in the economic assets we house. This means broader access to opportunity, higher rates of economic participation, higher rates of enterprise, higher skills, good work and more local ownership and control.
  - **Iconic Birkenhead:** we will fully celebrate and leverage the unique heritage offer of Birkenhead. Our assets will be treasured locally and recognised nationally. We will be

known as a place of firsts, shaped by pioneers, and will use this to shape our brand and identity.

- **Cultural Birkenhead:** we will develop further the Cultural infrastructure of Birkenhead and ensure that the town becomes a key part of the City Region's cultural identity. This drive will focus on the production, showcasing and the consumption of cultural content – a full and comprehensive approach to culture.
- **Connected Birkenhead:** we will improve yet further the connectivity of Birkenhead with the rest of the city-region and beyond. Internal connections within our town will also be greatly enhanced through new walking and cycling infrastructure. And digital access for all our communities will become world class.
- **Sustainable Birkenhead:** we will be known as Sustainability Central. This means Birkenhead will perform at the highest levels, and be a national leader, on lean and clean energy, on clean travel, and on carbon capture and offsetting. We will create a climate-ready built environment and enhance our green and blue infrastructure to protect us from even more extreme weather patterns.
- **Healthy Birkenhead:** we will help shape a healthy living and active culture across all of Birkenhead's communities. We start from a relatively low base and a comprehensive programme of education, inspiration and accessible support infrastructure is required.
- **Resilient Birkenhead:** we will be in greater control of our own destiny, and by necessity more flexible. Our enhanced resilience will be delivered through the robust long-term stewardship of Birkenhead, innovative approaches to place management and new delivery models based on shared values and ambition.

## Deliverability

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- 5.14 Birkenhead 2040 captures development potential shaped by a sequence of proactive, strategic actions taken by Wirral Council to deliver large-scale regeneration.
- 5.15 This started with collaboration with Peel at Wirral Waters and developed to test delivery options for Council-owned land, culminating in a public/private sector joint venture with Muse: the Wirral Growth Company.
- 5.16 Birkenhead 2040 builds on this and has itself been developed alongside critical delivery actions, including:
- Engaging with Government and submitting an EoI to establish a Development Corporation (c£750k of revenue funding secured);
  - Dialogue with Homes England to inform a £100m+ funding strategy for wider 'LeftBank' area;
  - Strategic land acquisition by Wirral Council to enable major project / infrastructure delivery;

- Submission of a successful £25m funding bid to Government via Future High Streets Fund;
- Securing £8m Transforming Cities funding to enable the removal of flyovers in the town centre;
- Securing £25m Town Deal funding;
- Securing £22M Levelling Up Funding for Woodside Gyratory realignment to open up the waterfront, new visitor attraction and comprehensive public realm.

### **Design Guide**

- 5.17 The Council is procuring a Design Guide to work in tandem with Birkenhead 2040 and the emerging Local Plan to secure coordinated place-making. The guide will inform and quality-assess individual developments coming forward within the area. A particular focus is a comprehensive public realm strategy and guidance on individual elements of delivery.

### **Dock Branch Park**

- 5.18 As one of the key catalyst projects in Birkenhead 2040, the Council is driving momentum behind the delivery of Dock Branch Park; a proposed mile-long park within a former railway cutting through the heart of the town centre. This also includes the new National Museums Liverpool large vehicle collection in a bespoke building at one end of the park.
- 5.19 Reusing this space as a park will transform active travel choices and access to open space, reveal hidden assets and environments, create new links between neighbourhoods, and unlock development opportunities. The Council placed this project at the heart of its successful Town Fund submission, and committed to commissioning a detailed masterplan and planning application to commence late Summer 2021.
- 5.20 The delivery of Dock Branch Park, to a best in class standard, will have a very positive impact on the perception of the town and it is likely that it will add value to the surrounding area. On a walk around Birkenhead town centre in summer 2021, David Williams, the Regional Director of Bellway Homes stated that this could be a “game changer.”

## **National Urban Design Awards**

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- 5.21 There has already been a commendation for the placemaking approach that is being adopted by Wirral Council. Birkenhead 2040 has been shortlisted for the 2021 National Urban Design Awards. It has been commended for showing an exemplary placemaking approach.
- 5.22 The judges confirm “*A clear narrative around quality of place and the value of good design threads through all stages of the process and levels of detail, including; dialogue with partners on the wider Left Bank initiative, articulating the framework for the town, definition of catalyst projects, neighbourhood strategies and funding applications.*”

- 5.23 *The work places urban design at the heart of large-scale regeneration. It has been fundamental to the analysis of challenges faced by the town and its communities, showing a clear understanding of how issues in the physical structure of the environment link to social and economic regeneration.*
- 5.24 *A design-led approach has been key to:*
- *Exploring the role and character of a large and complex urban area;*
  - *Demonstrating the potential for low carbon, brownfield growth;*
  - *Establishing opportunities for active travel and modal shift;*
  - *Highlighting the potential for street-based urbanism that rediscovers and reinforces the quality of the town's historic built form;*
  - *Capturing the intrinsic value of the Birkenhead's waterfront setting."*

## Summary & Conclusion

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- 5.25 Birkenhead has been in decline for several decades. The town centre is not fit for purpose and there is widespread deprivation and dereliction. The answer is not simply to build and they will come. There needs to be a comprehensive and sophisticated regeneration and strategy in place to provide a framework to deliver transformational change.
- 5.26 It has been demonstrated in numerous examples the potential uplift in value for development schemes as a result of placemaking. Triggers for uplift are generally associated with an increase in footfall to an area and include the provision of schools and community space, plus leisure opportunities, sets out ambitious and aspirational proposals for the regeneration of Birkenhead as a 'sustainable urban garden community' based on strong sustainability and low carbon principles. The objective is to drive demand and increase prices, as it would cater to the needs of the demographics that the "new" Birkenhead aims to attract.
- 5.27 The deliverability of the proposals has been embedded into the framework and there is engagement with government over delivery through a potential Development Corporation; dialogue with Homes England over strategic investment, the success of funding applications for Future High Streets Fund, Town Deal and the Transforming Cities Fund. The council is also acquiring sites to facilitate future development.
- 5.28 A Design Guide is being procured to provide a consistent framework for delivery of public realm and guidance on elements of delivery. Dock Branch Park is one of the key projects.
- 5.29 The quality of the placemaking approach has had an early endorsement by its shortlisting for the Urban Design Awards 2021.

## 6 How Do Developers Perceive Birkenhead?

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- 6.1 One objective of this study is to seek to identify market demand for projects in a deprived, but improving, economic environment, working alongside a council that is committed to intervention in the market to drive regeneration.
- 6.2 In order to provide this evidence, we undertook an extensive consultation exercise with a wide range of developers to establish their perception of the Wirral and Birkenhead and to ask if they would be interested in developing in the town. This section is a summary of these findings.
- 6.3 The principal objective of the SMT exercise is to provide comfort that the BRF proposals are not the visionary dreams of architects and urban designers, but instead provide a pragmatic balance of a vision that is grounded in commercial reality and gives a 'warts and all' perspective on the prospects of realising viable and successful developments which can be the harbinger of a reimagined, repopulated and redeveloped Birkenhead.
- 6.4 We have engaged directly with Registered Providers and the private sector development community, to canvas their opinions and views on sites of this nature. This report provides an analysis of the response that highlights some of the issues that might be faced in bringing the development sites to market, in order to guide the Council's decisions on timing and to inform the choice of methodology for doing so.

### Method

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- 6.5 In order to gather a coherent response from the interviewees a template 'feedback form' was agreed. Whilst the interviews themselves were conducted in an informal way; this allowed the discussions to be recorded in a way that answered the key areas of enquiry which were:
- Do they know the Wirral and do they have a track record in the borough?;
  - What is their appetite for exemplar development and do they have the capability and resources to deliver projects?;
  - What is the most effective way for them to deliver sites to the market?;
  - Are there any other issues they think should be considered?
- 6.6 The list of organisations to be contacted was agreed with the Council. This included several Registered Providers operating locally, developers known to be active in Wirral, major developers who are currently in the city region, but not in Wirral and plc housebuilders. We made sure that we consulted with developers used to dealing with the Build to Rent, Retirement and Care sectors.
- 6.7 Generally, we had an encouraging level of response and of the developers approached most were prepared to engage in the SMT exercise. Developers did not shy away from admitting to the difficulties of developing in Birkenhead and the lack of development taking place over the

last decade, but there was a feeling that there is untapped potential in the town and that if presented properly then there will be a market for housing in the town.

6.8 The list of RP's was provided by the council and these are listed below;

- Magenta;
- Torus;
- Onward; and
- Wirral Methodist HA

6.9 The private housebuilders and developers are as follows:

- Urban Splash;
- Engie (Equans);
- Bellway;
- Keepmoat;
- BCEG;
- Countryside Properties;
- Step Places;
- Ion Property Developments Ltd;
- Capital & Centric;
- Starship;
- THI Group/ Skye Homes;
- MCI Developments; and
- Igloo.

## Delivering High Density Family Homes in Birkenhead

6.10 As is explained in Section 3, a key requirement of the Submission Plan and the Framework is to make Birkenhead a more family orientated place with a requirement set out in Policy WS3.4 Housing mix to deliver a minimum of 30% of 3 bedroom plus dwellings in Regeneration Areas. Key challenges are the need to deliver quality homes and neighbourhoods at higher densities than currently the norm in Birkenhead, and viability.

6.11 To consider whether the requirement for achieving a minimum 30% mix of 3 bedroom plus 'family homes' was achievable in Birkenhead the Council commissioned the Birkenhead High Density Family Homes Study 2022. The study makes clear that quality high density family homes such as those proposed for Birkenhead in the Submission Plan and the Framework are already being delivered elsewhere across England and in similarly challenging housing markets. The study

also shows that the minimum 30% 3 bedroom plus requirement is achievable and that viability is not unduly impacted as compared to other housing typologies.

- 6.12 The study also revealed a strong developer appetite for delivering non-standard housing family homes in Birkenhead.

## Summary Of Findings

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- 6.13 We have prepared a full report on the consultation exercise. This is provided as Appendix 4 of this report and includes all of the consultation responses. In summary, the key findings of this exercise are:

- Leading private sector developers specialising in regeneration believe that Birkenhead is a good opportunity and are interested in working with Wirral Council to deliver their vision;
- Several Registered Providers are also interested;
- Birkenhead is viewed with interest. There is a perception that the area has great potential, but there has been under investment over many years. This has led to a decrease in economic confidence, as there has been limited development activity;
- The council needs to take the lead in the delivery of the Regeneration Framework;
- Wirral Council is correct to use its sites to enable development to happen. It should not expect a capital receipt at an early stage. The council should then enter into a partnership with a commercial developer;
- Viability is challenging in Birkenhead. There are negative perceptions of the town and the town centre is not fit for purpose. Potential delivery partners are encouraged by the change in direction at the council, but this must be followed up in the months and years to come;
- High levels of intervention funding will be required in the early years of regeneration. This should be used to assemble sites, decontaminate them and provide infrastructure and public realm;
- Housing exemplars from elsewhere demonstrate that if done properly, these can generate premiums above the current market; they can also boost confidence in a location;
- Mixed tenure will help to establish viability and is also beneficial in placemaking as delivery timescales are shorter;
- All developers who have expressed even a tentative interest in the schemes stress the importance of placemaking and the public realm.
- Major national housebuilders are willing to be involved. They are sceptical of such innovations as high-density housing, zero carbon and high-quality design, but they feel that whilst the exemplars are probably not for them, they have a definite role in the long-term delivery of regeneration;

- All would need to be convinced of business case before they got involved. The overall feeling is that would need some form of partnership/ Joint Venture to share risks. Developers would need to understand different business models available and what would appeal to different developers; and
  - High Quality Design and a Design Guide are important, but are not overriding.
- 6.14 The residential opportunities will be attractive to local and regional Registered Providers and development companies. They suggested that a range of units and tenures needed to be developed to ensure delivery across economic cycles. Build to Rent properties will help build confidence and interest in the area ahead of any sales.
- 6.15 There are numerous developers who believe that they can build a large number of houses in Birkenhead and that the town can be redeveloped and repopulated. Nobody underestimates the challenge, but there is an underlying feeling that Birkenhead is greatly under-performing and if there is a judicious use of public sector funding to pump-prime early intervention, then there would be a market for a spectrum of housing in the town. This additional population would help to support a renewed town centre and there would be a reciprocal benefit as an interesting and lively centre will attract new residents. There is a wide cross section of the development community who would have the confidence to invest and develop housing in Birkenhead.

## 7 High Quality Design and Tenure Mix

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- 7.1 It is interesting to note that there was consistency in the consultation responses that there will be a wide range of housing with a diversity in tenure being developed in Birkenhead during the next plan period. Such diversity of product helps overcome viability issues and also broadens the appeal of the site. In the early days of residential development in Birkenhead there will be a limited market as many potential buyers will need to be convinced of the attractiveness of the market.
- 7.2 Such is the scale and ambition of the Submission Draft Plan and the Birkenhead 2040 Framework; it is clear to us (and the developers we consulted) that there is not going to be one housing solution for Birkenhead's regeneration. As major development sites within the inner town come forward with opportunities for residential use, it is important that a measured approach to housing is established across the major development sites to promote inclusion, sustainability, cohesion and balance.
- 7.3 The objective is to produce high quality, sustainable developments with a mix of tenures that reflect the economic, social and environmental patterns of Birkenhead. The mix of tenures can include private for sale, PRS, social and affordable, including co-ownership, in addition to the small pockets of student housing that come forward. On larger schemes with capacity for significant amounts of residential units, integrated, mixed and blind tenure options should be considered. A consultee suggested a potential tenure mix of 33:33:33 between market rent, affordable rent and market sales.

### Quality adds value

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- 7.4 The quality of residential developments has long-term impacts, both on the communities they house and on the surrounding neighbourhoods. The location and how well they knit into the fabric of existing neighbourhoods and the city-scape are factors which will have long term positive and negative implications for the future of the town.
- 7.5 High quality design standards are paramount to the success and sustainability of housing development with issues such as space standards, orientation, storage, treatment of communal areas, access to open space etc. requiring careful consideration.
- 7.6 Key to all of this is viability of the projects, ensuring that high quality schemes come forward in the right location to meet demand. The Design Guide is helping to provide a framework for this. There is potential to look at different sources of funding and financing to assess how they may be combined to achieve a viable and mixed solution.

## Tenure Mix

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- 7.7 The Birkenhead 2040 Framework recognises that a residential population is an important element for a successful and vibrant town centre. Birkenhead's town and edge of centre residential markets are currently under-developed.
- 7.8 The Council and its public and private sector partners believe that the current planning and funding situation presents a unique opportunity to create social, affordable and private housing schemes and mixed income communities to increase the residential population and build shared, balanced and sustainable communities.
- 7.9 The Council agrees, as part of the Local Plan process and Birkenhead Regeneration Framework, to develop with its key strategic partners at Homes England, the CA and RPs, to grow the population through an expansion of the housing offer. This plan will include the development of social, affordable and private housing and seek to encourage more families living close to the town centre. The plan will also look at the quality of the places and buildings, the need for private and communal open spaces/parks and access to schools essential for family living."
- 7.10 The Town Centre itself can provide an opportunity to support mixed tenure developments, which will help ensure a shared space can be achieved.

## Registered Providers

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- 7.11 It is likely that the involvement of registered social providers will be necessary to make the first significant development in the core development area. Several of those active in Birkenhead and Wirral were consulted as part of this study. Whilst they still need to prepare a robust business case and secure board approval before proceeding.
- 7.12 The advantage of an RP is that they will take a long-term strategic view of all development opportunities. They are not bound by the vagaries of the development cycle. They analyse their cash flow over a forty-year period, which means that they can deliver schemes that a private developer may find unviable. Wirral is a key growth area for several large RPs that can deliver at scale. These organisations have a range of products within their portfolios and can therefore 'flex' the approach to tenure to suit the site itself, it is therefore not limited to particular areas or markets but will take a long-term view of what is right for an area and community.

## Build to Rent – an opportunity

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- 7.13 This is a tenure of property that is of increasing importance in the UK market. At the present time, there is no Build to Rent market. Legacy – Wirral Waters One is a joint project between Wirral Council, Peel Land and Property and PIC (as the scheme funder) and represents a step change to the residential offer in the East Wirral Housing Market.

- 7.14 The project is catalytic in that it forms part of a new, sustainable 'neighbourhood' for Wirral offering new typologies of housing, unlocking further residential and commercial development in Wirral Waters, and creating a brand-new community within the Dockland Area.
- 7.15 The development consists of 500 one- and two-bedroom apartment units in a medium rise residential led scheme on a cleared brownfield site on Northbank West, Wirral, adjacent to the waterside. The residential units will be operated on the basis of a private rent model.
- 7.16 The Council will acquire a 50-year leasehold interest but with an initial 10-year lease back to a Peel entity who will manage the completed development for this initial period. The scheme has progressed through design, approval, and procurement and a 34-month construction period is anticipated with an anticipated start on site January 2022.
- 7.17 The residential scheme has full planning consent, design is currently at RIBA Stage 3 and will be at RIBA Stage 4 in the coming weeks.
- 7.18 We are also aware that there is current interest from private developers in bringing forward Private Rented Sector (PRS) apartments, specifically the creation of build-to-rent PRS blocks. They believe there is a clear opportunity in the town and they are particularly keen on the St Werburgh's/ Birkenhead Central area of the town centre.
- 7.19 Their target group typically comprises key workers, often young urban professionals, who are looking for a comfortable and affordable place to stay for a secure length of tenure where the right life-style setting is important. Added amenities such as a concierge are part of the PRS life-style formula and this is where PRS distinguishes itself from the Build for Sale sector.
- 7.20 Types of life-style facilities can include workspaces, communal roof terraces and gyms. Additional income can be generated from these facilities, although the prime objective is the contribution they make to place-making and community building.
- 7.21 In certain markets, a multi-tenure scheme can be led by a PRS block rather than private individual units where it can "de-risk" a development, with front-loading income for the scheme to potentially allow a broad range of tenures to be offered. While the nature of PRS requires a stand-alone block from an investment and management perspective, good design can enable the block to be integrated into a mixed tenure scheme and remain tenure blind. PRS investors usually require a quantum of units to make a development viable. This is normally in the range of 100+ units depending on the area and size of overall scheme, the demand in the area and project viability.

### Proposals for Private Housing for Sale

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- 7.22 Recent developments such as The Docklands by Keepmoat in the 'north end' of the town, the Urban Splash scheme on East Float and the Bellway development at Kings Hill in New Ferry

have all sold very encouragingly. This strong demand, at a period when Birkenhead has been struggling, suggests there is a good level of interest developing in housing for private sale.

- 7.23 This might be expected to continue as other sites come forward for development. This may include town houses being developed by the Wirral Growth Company on Conway Park, or there may be an extension of the Keepmoat scheme. Housing for sale is another important residential element in a successful and vibrant town centre and home ownership is an integral element within new housing areas which can create balanced and sustainable communities.

## Ongoing Delivery of Regeneration

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- 7.24 There needs to be an emphasis on continuing delivery of regeneration. The strategy has been written and the Local Plan will be adopted but it cannot stop there. The council, or other delivery body, needs to continue to identify key residential sites and prepare market and development briefs, in discussion with landowners. These development briefs should include guidance on tenure mix. If necessary, the council should prepare financial models to underpin and support funding package applications.
- 7.25 The Council will continue to develop a balanced approach to high density housing in the town, including consideration of planning policy and other mechanisms to ensure this type of development is located in suitable locations and the many associated benefits can be maximised.
- 7.26 Key deficiencies in the town centre living environment need to be remedied, through the improvement of food shopping, day-care, open space and sense of security. The Local Plan proposes to contract the primary retail area and facilitate mixed-use development around St Werburgh's when the new market will be constructed using FHSF and will be a new focal point for this neighbourhood.

## Summary and Conclusion

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- 7.27 Diversity of tenure helps overcome viability issues and broadens the appeal for an area during the crucial period of confidence building;
- 7.28 There is no one housing solution for Birkenhead. The scale of ambition and the need for a sustainable future means that a diverse range of products and tenures will be necessary;
- 7.29 High quality design standards are paramount to the success and sustainability of housing development. Such schemes need to come forward in the right location to meet demand. There is potential to look at varying tenures, different sources of funding and financing to assess how they may be combined to achieve a viable and mixed solution;
- 7.30 Registered Providers have a key role to play in the regeneration of Birkenhead. The way they are funded, their ability to provide a range of tenures, to look at projects over a period of forty years,

to provide care and retirement housing, their emphasis on quality design and their partnerships with Wirral Council and Homes England; all confirm their importance;

- 7.31 There needs to be continuing delivery of regeneration across inner Birkenhead and where necessary, the council should prepare development briefs to ensure design quality and diversity of tenure.

## 8 Examples from Elsewhere

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- 8.1 This report has confirmed that Wirral Council acknowledges that the regeneration of Birkenhead will be a challenge. It is an area that has been left to decline in recent years and there has been little new development taking place. There has been very little new housebuilding taking place and sales values have been low.
- 8.2 It has also demonstrated that there is strong political support to change this. The new Local Plan will be built around the comprehensive Regeneration of Birkenhead based on the proposals set out in the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework. The market review has shown that Birkenhead and Wallasey are national property hotspots and that sales interest in developments by Urban Splash, Bellway and Keepmoat has encouraged them to look for more opportunities.
- 8.3 We have summarised placemaking, connectivity and regeneration projects that are creating a better quality of life in Birkenhead and Wirral. We have also demonstrated that there is keen interest from the development industry in building houses in urban Wirral. This comes from a cross section of the housebuilding industry – from local SMEs, through regeneration specialists and major plcs, rather than large housebuilders and land promoters wanting to develop homogenous stock.
- 8.4 The aim of this section of the report is show that whilst challenging, similar projects in struggling areas have been done before and strong housing markets have developed in areas that have been written off by risk averse agents and developers. It is good that Urban Splash is a partner in the regeneration of Birkenhead. In their own words “*It Will Never Work*” is something they have heard many times, and has always been a call to action rather than a discouragement.<sup>3</sup>

### Quality of Place

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- 8.5 Sean Egan, Managing Director of Vistry Partnerships North East, the lead delivery body of the Gateshead Housing Exemplar has observed to us that in their successful scheme “*The demand is in line with the wider market, and values are too – it’s the quality that persuades people to move to areas that they wouldn’t have ordinarily considered.*”
- 8.6 The BRF2040 aims to deliver over 21,000 homes and 6,000 new jobs with new residential, employment, leisure and cultural offerings. The quality of place will be underpinned by the Design Guide produced with the Local Plan. Combined with a new Mass Transit System, improved green spaces and integrated streetscaping, the framework holds ambitions to transform Birkenhead into a place where people of all incomes, ages and backgrounds would want to live.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.urbansplash.co.uk/it-will-never-work-by-urban-splash>

## Town Centre Renaissance

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- 8.7 Across the UK and Ireland, city (and town) centre living is a fast-growing evolving concept. This is a term that previously may have had negative connotations with thoughts of high-rises, traffic and poor public realm. It is now associated with stylish flats and houses, a diverse and affluent populace, as well as a strong sense of community.
- 8.8 Population density is deemed increasingly important in a sustainable town centre. It creates efficiencies with public services and generates demand for local goods and services.
- 8.9 In recent years there has been a trend of people returning to larger urban centres in an “urban renaissance”. The populations of town centres are growing and they show no signs of stopping as people realise the advantages of living close to the centre of activity.

## Town Level Change

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- 8.10 Despite the transformation of the housing market in central Liverpool, the concept of town centre living has never really crossed the Mersey. There are many reasons why this may be. Taking note of national and regional trends, Wirral Council and its partners are looking to make up for lost time by providing policy, political and financial support to pump prime early development.
- 8.11 The material below opens up a number of these areas of partial parallels and specific areas / developments which serve to illustrate how reflections on these may help justify and support aspects of the Birkenhead 2040 Strategy.

## Liverpool

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- 8.12 Liverpool – directly across the Mersey from Birkenhead, is a great example of how this change can happen in the market. The city centre has experienced dramatic physical change since the late 1990's, with the overhaul of the Liverpool One, Ropewalks and the Waterfront. City Residential has prepared a timeline of this regeneration and this is provided as Appendix 5 of this document.
- 8.13 This large-scale regeneration activity has resulted in increased popularity of Liverpool as a visitor destination and a city to work and live. Further new developments have included the renovation and change of uses of a number of buildings within the commercial district, as well as the new towers to be built along the waterfront particularly for the PRS model.
- 8.14 Young adults are by far the largest population group within the city centre made up of either students, young professionals or working people who enjoy a city centre lifestyle.
- 8.15 The revival of City Centre living has been focused on developments of flats, both new build developments and conversions of disused industrial / office buildings. The influx of private rented

flats and apartments cater for young professionals or privately owned by older residents that wish to benefit from downsizing and city centre living with close proximity to available amenities.

- 8.16 This renaissance has been recognised by institutional investors and the city has seen particularly strong investment in the Build to Rent sector. More than 500 units have now been delivered at the 240-unit scheme The Keel and 324 units at Baltic Village (Cargo Building) with a further 1,000 units being built at The Lexington (304 units), The Hive (276 units) and The Strand (383 units).
- 8.17 The existing stock capital values are indicated to be currently £241 per sq ft which is an improvement on previous years. With a large amount of new stock being brought to the market in desirable locations we envisage that capital values will continue to increase in line with the 3% annual increase from 2018 over the next 5 years.
- 8.18 There are currently two major PRS developments being built along the Liverpool city centre waterfront with The Lexington and Plaza 1821 projected to have a capital value upon completion in excess of £300 per sq ft. Similar values are projected for the Circus site.
- 8.19 The market in Liverpool captures the significant uplift in values which results once high-quality new build residential accommodation is developed within a city centre. As Birkenhead town centre is effectively the 'other half' of Liverpool City Centre, the main service centre for another 350,000 people and the gateway to the wider lifestyle offer of the peninsula, there is no reason to suggest that similar development cannot take place on the left bank of the Mersey.

## Manchester

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- 8.20 Manchester has benefited from significant investment within the city centre and the MediaCityUK regeneration project at nearby Salford Quays, which now houses the BBC and ITV, the UK's leading broadcasters. It experienced strong GDP growth of 4% in 2018 while employment rose by an average of 3% per annum between 2013 and 2017.
- 8.21 Economic success and a rise in the student population is driving investment into the build-to-rent sector in Manchester. A total of c. 5,600 purpose built private rental units are now under construction making Manchester by far the largest multifamily rental market outside London.
- 8.22 While the sheer weight of residential development is impressive the growing importance of the city centre in meeting Greater Manchester's overall housing need cannot be understated. The new Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – the region's first ever blueprint for long term development – stipulates that brownfield sites in the city centre should provide for 50,000 new apartments over the next 20 years, a quarter of all projected housing need across the metropolitan county. Given that around 25% of the current 30,000-unit city centre pipeline is yet to get planning permission, supply is on course to meet demand for the first decade of the 20 year GMSF plan.

- 8.23 The rapid growth of the city centre population has seen the emergence of distinct submarkets including a prime market around St John's Deansgate, which saw sales regularly exceed £500 psf in 2017.
- 8.24 Manchester also has one of the largest student populations in Europe, with over 90,000 students at Greater Manchester's five universities, and over 380,000 students at the 22 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Manchester Universities also have a high retention rate of students, with over 50% of students staying in the city after graduating.
- 8.25 Manchester's success in reinventing its city centre as a place to live and work is almost certainly a result of the single-minded focus and leadership provided by Manchester City Council which set as an objective the delivery of new development (offices and housing) within the city centre as a key economic driver. This was done by taking a strong interest in any development sites and proposals and by encouraging developers, funders and investors to deliver good quality development whilst making the process as easy as possible by being very clear on what the City's planning and other requirements were for the site. The former Chief Executive of Manchester City Council was known for taking a personal interest in strategic development opportunities and ensuring the resources of the Council were focussed on assisting delivery of the particular scheme.
- 8.26 Of particular relevance to Birkenhead is the creation of a town (city) centre market in Salford. Despite its adjacency to the regional centre, the regeneration of Salford and the creation of a central housing market was many years after Manchester. Sustained regeneration through place making has been a key part of this success. Later in this chapter, we profile the exemplar housing schemes known as Vimto Gardens and Timekeepers Square.

## Newcastle

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- 8.27 Newcastle is a location that has been lagging behind some of the other core cities. There is now a pro-development city council that has looked to change this situation. Working with devolved regional government and private sector partners, there is a new wave of mixed-use regeneration schemes which is revitalising the urban core, providing housing and enabling the city to expand outwards.
- 8.28 The council has embarked on a forward-thinking and targeted approach to a mix of uses, including residential, in the city centre. The objective is that this will have a positive impact on people choosing to live, work and play there. A number of sites are actively providing, or planning to deliver, homes but there is significantly less Build to Rent (BTR) activity than in comparable regional cities.
- 8.29 The limited level of BTR may in part be due to the relative affordability of housing in the suburbs of Tyneside. However, BTR provision is still an important part of the mix, and there is a growing

pool of 'lifestyle renters' focused on flexible accommodation close to jobs and high-quality amenities.

- 8.30 The city's first purpose-built rental scheme, The Forge, opened in 2019. It comprises 280 flats and a full suite of amenities. The development will cater exclusively to the private rented sector, with tenants benefiting from ultrafast fibre-optic broadband, a fully equipped gym with exercise classes, workspaces and cycle storage. There are two other schemes coming forward in the city centre, which together will deliver a further 300 rental units.
- 8.31 However, provision of rented accommodation remains key to satisfying housing need and there is a growing pool of 'lifestyle renters' who are attracted by flexible accommodation, located close to employment centres and high-quality amenities.
- 8.32 Town centre living has also spread to Newcastle's near neighbour Gateshead on the south bank of the Tyne. Although the river here is a lot narrower than the Mersey, there are obvious parallels here, with several tall buildings looking over towards the bigger city.
- 8.33 A forward-thinking and targeted approach to delivering a mix of uses in the city centre has had a positive impact on people wanting to live, work and play there and ultimately strengthens the demand for the existing commercial space located there.

### Sunderland Riverside

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- 8.34 Branded as "The most ambitious city centre regeneration project in the UK" it aims to create a sustainable new urban quarter for Sunderland – a place to live, a place to work, a place to play.
- 8.35 The strategy has been developed through a JV partnership; initially between the City Council and Carillion managed by Igloo. With the demise of Carillion it is now being carried through by a wholly City Council owned SPV which is managed by Igloo.
- 8.36 On the south bank of the river the strategy takes in the north west part of the city centre and grows from this to the riverside. On the north bank it infills between the river and Sunderland FC's Stadium of Light by redevelopment of a low-density industrial area.
- 8.37 Alongside proposals for riverside parkland and new high- and low-level pedestrian and cycle bridges across the River Wear major new offices, a development site for a life sciences/healthcare facility, supporting social infrastructure and 812 new homes to buy and rent in four riverside neighbourhoods. The mix ranges from 1 bed apartments through 3 bed terraced town houses to 3 and 4 bed courtyard houses. Roughly half of the homes are proposed as 3 or 4 bed units. All of the house types are specific to the place and form a new generation of Sunderland house types. This was described by Igloo as very clearly working through providing a bespoke product to a bespoke context rather than shoehorning standard product into a challenging site and context.

- 8.38 The development majors on a very local response developed through intense local consultation. It is aimed at appealing to Sunderland people, bringing them back into the core of the city. The ambition goes beyond this and neatly matches the vision for Birkenhead. Through its exceptional quality and sustainability and its celebration of a dramatic local environment, Sunderland seeks to exploit its sub-regional and regional setting to attract much wider interest. A housing Expo is planned for 2023 to showcase what living here can be like and to reinforce the local market and promote and cement interest within a wider geographic market.

### Leeds Climate Innovation District

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- 8.39 The city's Climate Innovation District following a masterplan by White Arkitekter turns a brownfield site straddling the Aire close to the city centre into a resilient, green, mixed-use neighbourhood of 516 low energy homes with workplaces and integrated amenities for everyday life. By increasing the energy and resource efficiency of urban developments, infrastructure and transportation systems, it offers a powerful response to climate change.
- 8.40 The concept was to build a community based on Scandinavian urban densities with an exceptional standard of environmental performance. Working closely with housing developer CITU, the masterplan converts an industrial environment into a walkable, healthy, family friendly environment. Housing is fully integrated with services, accessible healthcare and schools, offices and manufacturing plant. The entire district is punctuated by a diverse range of urban social spaces that are open to everyone.

### Malmo – Bo01 and The Western Harbour

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- 8.41 Western Harbour is on the shoreline of the Öresund Sound and sits on what used to be the Kockums shipyard.
- 8.42 Malmo is Sweden's third largest City with a population approaching 350,000. It is an industrial city with a past strong shipbuilding industry. Hit by the economic decline of the industrial sectors in the 1960s and 1970s the city struggled with ecological and socio-economic difficulties in subsequent decades.
- 8.43 A key part of its recovery strategy was the recovery of its vacant Western Harbour waterfront through highly sustainable development. The City Council initiated this through work from 1995 focused on a university and more diversified housing with long term thinking framed around ecovillages, demonstration projects, and "third generation" mainstream. It successfully competed for an international Housing Expo and delivered this through Bo01 in 2001.
- 8.44 The now internationally famous Bo01 expo area occupies just 9ha of the overall 160ha of the whole Western Harbour area, but formed a vital early part of the delivery of the masterplan for the whole site size and provides approximately 1,247 homes, housing about 2,500 people.

Development is five storeys or less and was delivered through lots of small projects using over thirty different architects. Movement priority is given to pedestrians and cyclists and two bus routes provide access to the City Centre in less than 10 minutes.

- 8.45 The first phase of the “Third generation” mainstream follow on housing provided 600 more homes through 13 different developers and was completed in 2008.
- 8.46 Ambitions for further phases focus on sustaining the highly sustainable profile of development attracting more visitors through facilities such as a concert hall and that the area should be “less posh.” It is notable in recent press coverage that this has now become a highly fashionable place to live and many newer residents have large and expensive cars that they wish to keep closer to home! A real sign of the development having become a victim of its own success.

### “Pioneer” housing development.

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- 8.47 The exploration of exemplars focused specifically on housing developments has been divided between two prime types of housing interventions in challenging housing market areas. The “Pioneer” market, essentially innovative and small-scale exploiting/ responding to the aspirations of a relatively small part of the homebuying market which is willing to take risks and buy unusual property in safe market areas or, potentially to get this property more affordable by buying in an otherwise more challenging market area, or even be first entrants into an area which has not traditionally included housing in its mix.
- 8.48 Pioneer housing developments are at the vanguard of the regeneration of an area. Developers like Urban Splash, Igloo and Capital and Centric specialise in this type of development. US is already developing in Birkenhead and the other developer are interested (see Chapter 5). These Pioneerdevelopments work on the basis of an ethos *Buy the Brand / Like the product / Buy the ethos / Small likeminded community*. The developers, who proceed either independently or in partnership with Local Authorities or JV partners, establish a foothold of residentialdevelopment and establish the concept in that location, before larger, more traditional development happens.
- 8.49 These developments tend to revolve around being large enough to create communities of likeminded residents. They may remain as free-standing isolated developments but frequently change perceptions of the area and its wider environment, which encourage more mainstream developers to follow with less challenging design material or even mainstream product.
- 8.50 Some recent illustrations of “Pioneer” development in challenging / unconventional market areas have been described earlier. Below are some additional examples. Most of these feature strong aspects of community building through shared open spaces and facilities such as allotments and also high levels of environmental and ecological performance.

## Exemplar Developments

8.51 We have looked at exemplar development schemes across the UK and within Europe that have benefited from successful placemaking. The developments all have achieved a premium over the local market or in comparison with local standard new build development. We include the Pioneer scheme that is currently on site in Birkenhead.

### Wirral Waters, Birkenhead

	Location	East Float, Birkenhead, 1 mile east of Birkenhead town centre
	Lead Developer	Urban Splash/ Peel Land & Property JV
	Timescale	2021 onwards. First houses delivered on site October 2021
	Description	<p>Forming part of the £4.5 billion Wirral Waters masterplan these new townhouses at East Float from Urban Splash &amp; Peel L &amp; P offer homebuyers a chance to experience modern, dockside living on the Wirral.</p> <p>The development is the first residential scheme to come out of the Wirral Waters master plan, a pioneering new waterside community that will be an early catalyst that will transform the left bank of the Mersey into one of the North West's best places to live.</p> <p>It takes the neglected industrial site of Wirral Docks and turns it into a forward-looking urban village built around people and community. Buyers will be able to acquire a wide range of flexible, modular homes from the award-winning House by Urban Splash range.</p>
Outcome	<p>There is not an outcome to this project yet. It has been referenced in this report that there has been an extremely encouraging response to the agency campaign and reserved values achieved thus far are in the region of £250/sq.ft which is potentially transformational from a viability perspective.</p> <p>The combined impact of this, the Belong Dementia Village and the Build to Rent scheme at Northbank will give confidence in the success of the Wirral Waters project and give renewed confidence in a part of town that has been neglected and unloved for several decades.</p>	

## Baltic Triangle, Liverpool

	Location	Jamaica Street area, Liverpool – half a mile south of Liverpool One shopping centre
	Lead Developer	None – collaboration between several landowners and developers. Community Interest Company, Baltic Creative has been instrumental in its success
	Timescale	2012 - ongoing
	Description	<p>In 2010 Baltic Triangle was a run-down semi-abandoned industrial area, with very little accommodation and very few people choosing to live there.</p> <p>The regeneration of the area was a 'bottom-up' effort by local businesses who could see the inherent strength of the location.</p> <p>Since 2012, more than £200M has been invested in the area. It is now among the most sought after places to start a creative business, work, live and socialise in Liverpool.</p> <p>Hundreds of new apartments have been built here in recent years, with much more accommodation planned. Recent developments include the pioneering Build to Rent scheme known as Cargo Building; offering 320 one, two and three bedroomed apartments.</p> <p>Baltic Triangle is also a hub for creative and digital businesses attracted to the area to exploit the pool of young talent. For example, well-known games developer Elevator Studios is a creative hub providing workspace for artists, musicians and other companies.</p>
	Outcome	<p>This is an area that has been transformed by regeneration. It was abandoned and semi-derelict with chronic property market failure. Baltic Triangle is now Liverpool's liveliest and best place for culture, social life and, a growing creative and digital hub. It enjoys a national reputation. The Times has even called it "<i>one of the coolest places to live in Britain.</i>"</p> <p>Values have risen exponentially and have continued to rise, even as the quantity of accommodation has sharply risen.</p> <p>Although it was a grass roots regeneration story, planning policy has now caught up with an SPD prepared, which includes an extension southward to include the popular Cains Brewery Village</p>

## Chapel Steet, Salford

	Location	Chapel Street Salford – 1 mile west of Manchester City Centre
	Lead Developer	English Cities Fund (a JV between Muse Developments, English Cities Fund and Homes England)
	Timescale	Phase 1 - completed 2015 Phase 2 – completed 2017
	Description	<p>The English Cities Fund, a joint venture between Muse Developments, Legal &amp; General and Homes England are developing Salford Central which will include 220,000 sq m of commercial space for office, retail and leisure development, 849 new homes and 390 hotel rooms.</p> <p>As part of the development ECF and Salford Council spent £10m on Chapel Street. This investment in public realm and placemaking was the first investment into the Salford Central masterplan area. The investment saw high quality materials used to repave the pavements and road network that had a transformational impact on the area.</p>
	Outcome	<p>Vimto Gardens was the first residential phase of the masterplan with 83 apartments and 14 townhouses. In 2014, the scheme achieved £185 per sq ft across all sales. Timekeepers Square was the second phase which comprised a mixture of 36 townhouses and achieved £305 per sq ft across all sales in 2017.</p> <p>This represents a price growth of 65% which is 20% higher than price growth in Salford between the same period. Future phases of development are anticipated to see further growth.</p>

## Victoria North, Manchester

	Location	Manchester City Centre (fringe).
	Lead Developer	Far East Consortium with Manchester City Council
	Timescale	2020 - 2040
	Description	<p>Victoria Riverside marks the first phase of Victoria North (previously Manchester's Northern Gateway), the biggest renewal project Manchester has ever seen.</p> <p>Jointly developed and funded by FEC and Manchester City Council, Victoria North is set to create 15,000 new homes across 155 hectares and seven neighbourhoods over the next 20 years, helping with the shortfall in housing in Manchester.</p> <p>The redevelopment project will create better-connected public spaces, new and improved transport links, and more homes, parks and retail spaces for the city's growing population.</p>
	Outcome	<p>Plans have been submitted this week by Manchester City Council and Far East Consortium (FEC) to build 30 brand new homes for social rent as part of wider regeneration plans in the Collyhurst area.</p> <p>The new homes are in addition to 244 homes (including 100 for social rent) currently being considered for approval by the Local Planning Authority as part of the joint venture's neighbouring Collyhurst Village development – plans for which include a new 1.3 hectare park.</p> <p>The masterplan for Collyhurst Village also includes almost 2,000 sq ft of neighbourhood-focused commercial and retail space as the joint venture partnership looks to improve community assets and provide new inclusive public realm spaces for Collyhurst residents. More than 450 trees are expected to be planted as part of a network of green links to the surrounding village.</p> <p>A separate planning application for Collyhurst Village was submitted in February. Enabling works for the scheme, supported by the government's £400million Brownfield Housing Fund and delivered by Manchester contractor LK Group, have begun on site.</p>

## Preston City Centre

	Location	Preston City Centre
	Lead Developer	None. The town centre regeneration strategy is planned by Preston City Council
	Timescale	2017 - 2032
	Description	<p>The developments fit into Preston Council's City Living Strategy, which was launched in 2017 and aims to see more than 1,700 residential units in the city centre, in order to increase footfall and rejuvenate the area. City Living Preston provides the overarching framework for housing growth in the city centre and surrounding inner suburbs. It is a pro-active response to previous market challenges around the delivery of housing within inner Preston.</p> <p>PCC has a vision to grow Preston into a modern and vibrant city, and attractive, affordable accommodation for residents is vital for this aim.</p> <p>With Preston City Council investing in and improving on infrastructure, and working on masterplans such as Stonegate, the property market, especially in the citycentre, has seen a shift from more retail based, to a mix of retail, leisure and living, with the latter paving way for more independent retailers and keeping up the demand in the city, where other towns and cities are struggling.</p> <p>The City Living Strategy involves the 'de-risking' of 50 brownfield sites to attract private investment, and will lead to the building of over 3,000 homes, many of which will be affordable.</p>
	Outcome	<p>A winner of the 2020 Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Awards for Planning Excellence.</p> <p>Since the start of 2019, numerous new schemes have appeared across the city centre, with 5 new schemes completed and a further 5 due to complete this year. This does not take into account smaller schemes of less than 15 units of which a dozen are at planning stage, again all in the city centre within 1 mile radius of Winckley Square. Agents have reported that values have risen by more than 30% in inner Preston since the launch of this strategy.</p>

## Icknield Port Loop, Birmingham

	Location	Edgbaston Reservoir, Birmingham. Two miles west of Birmingham City Centre
	Lead Developer	Joint Venture Partnership Urban Splash, Places for People, Canals and River Trust, Places for People
	Timescale	Many false starts, but US was appointed in 2018.
	Description	<p>Delivery accelerated by £4m investment to clean up and unlock brownfield land at Icknield Port Loop in Edgbaston which will allow for a further 138 homes using Advanced Manufacturing in Construction (AMC).</p> <p>The funding enabled developers Urban Splash and Places for People to build a further 138 homes using MMC.</p> <p>At least 20% of these homes will be affordable.</p> <p>The WMCA is committed to a brownfield-first approach to housing, which sees derelict industrial sites cleaned up innovative and forward-thinking construction methods are helping us create a sustainable new community at Port Loop.</p> <p>US has employed ShedKM and Glenn Howells to create a diverse housing offering, with typologies which have been designed with internal layouts that provide flexible space for residents. Using sustainable modular construction technology.</p>
	Outcome	<p>When completed, Icknield Port Loop will include more than 1,000 homes over 43 acres and new spaces for walking and cycling along the Old Line canal.</p> <p>Winner of Best regeneration initiative at Housebuilder Awards and Placemaking Project of the Year at Midlands Business Insider Residential Awards 2020.</p> <p>The Port Loop masterplan has already delivered South Loop Park; central Birmingham's first new public green spaces in over a decade, Ladywood Leisure Centre; a new state of the art gym and swimming pool, YARD, the city's first Art House for residents and local community, plus over 100 new homes.</p> <p>The development has been awarded winners of Best regeneration initiative at Housebuilder Awards and Placemaking Project of the Year at Midlands Business Insider Residential Awards 2020.</p>

## Little Kelham, Sheffield

	Location	Located approximately 0.7 miles to the north of Sheffield city centre
	Lead Developer	Citu
	Timescale	2014 -
	Description	<p>Little Kelham is a development of 102 sustainable apartments and townhouses. All units are heated by carbon natural renewable energy and the development is designed around creating a neighbourhood with communal landscaped gardens.</p> <p>There has been extensive regeneration in the local area over recent years with a craft breweries, vintage markets and an independent food hall all taking up residence in the local area.</p>
	Outcome	<p>The 4 bedroom townhouses at the development are available for sale from £370,000 (£222 psf) and 3 bedroom townhouses from £355,000 - £360,000 (£234 - £295 psf).</p> <p>The 2 bedroom apartments start from £205,000 - £350,000 (£280 - £310 psf) and the 1 bedroom apartments are available at £155,000 (£320 psf).</p> <p>According to Zoopla, average property values in the local area are £216 per sq ft for apartments, £160 per sq ft for terraced housing and £135 per sq ft for semi-detached housing.</p> <p>The asking prices at Little Kelham show a premium of 30-48% over average values for apartments and 54-84% for the townhouse units.</p> <p>Whilst not of scale compared to the subject site, Little Kelham illustrates the significant uplift that can be achieved through place making and through the use of sustainable development within a scheme.</p>

## North Shields – Smiths Dock

- 8.52 Development of a complex riverside site with great views of the Tyne but not particularly well located in terms of access to public transport or strong town centre facilities. It is, however selling well with all the three storey town houses and most of the apartments (in red zinc wrapped buildings reflecting the nearby Fish Quay smokehouses) already sold. The development also features a number of 3 bedroom “Fab Houses” designed by George Clarke and TDO architecture.
- 8.53 Further phases are planned to include two storey row houses and more of the smokehouse apartment blocks.

## Newcastle – Malings and Steenbergs Yard – Plus Mclver Ouseburn Quays

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- 8.54 These developments are the first elements of delivery within a development agreement between Newcastle City Council and Igloo with some Homes England involvement which covers a number of sites around the area where the Ouseburn joins the River Tyne approximately 1 mile from the city centre. The Ouseburn is a small tributary of the Tyne – a former industrial valley now home to a mix of industry and cultural and leisure spaces.
- 8.55 Malings Phase 1 - (a further Phase 2 has followed the success of Phase 1) - Supreme winner in the 2016 Housing Design Awards.
- 8.56 A 76 homes development on a tight and sloping 0.6Ha site close to the mouth of the Ouseburn. (138 dwellings/Ha density). 25 2-4 Bedroom houses and 51 1-3 bedroom apartments - many following the local pattern of the Tyneside flat with one unit over another but each with a front door at ground level.
- 8.57 Successful development followed numerous previous failed attempts to develop in this location bending standard apartment formats to try to fit the difficult site – all needing and failing to attract grant aid to secure viability. The built approach needed no grant aid and sold very well with initial buyers making significant profit on resales. This despite a disadvantageous NE6 postcode.
- 8.58 The uplift in values has helped to create a market not just for Phase 2 of a further 28 units but also, across the Ouseburn - the Steenberg's Yard development of twenty-eight 2 and 3 bedroom duplex apartments built above riverside workspace. This latter development was on an even more challenging site and viability was aided by re-investment of surpluses generated on Mailings. It has also established the market which is supporting the adjacent wholly build to rent Ouseburn Quays development of 51 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments by Mclver, a local developer, on a site which lies outside of the scope of the Igloo/City Council development agreement.

## Leeds – Flaunt - Otter Island

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- 8.59 Less “Pioneer” on the design side but “Pioneer” in location. A 113 homes canalside development about a mile west of the City Centre. All townhouses have their own front door and parking and are mainly two bedroom but some 3 and 4 bedroom homes mostly sold to young professionals moving from rented city centre flats. Valuing ownership, parking and accessibility to City Centre and mortgage repayment rates which are similar to rental rates for city centre flats.

## “Settler” housing development

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- 8.60 Whilst the relatively small market for “Pioneer” housing might be important in changing perceptions of place and opening up wider market response it is more mainstream homebuilders

who are likely to need to provide the bulk of the housing response to the follow-on “Settler” market.

- 8.61 In what might still be viewed as relatively challenging markets delivery will often be through special purpose vehicles (SPVs) and/or joint venture (JV) partnerships with public sector organisations.

### Inner West Newcastle – The Rise

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- 8.62 A hugely challenging redevelopment of a 60-acre City Council owned brownfield (former post war- council housing) site being developed with 1,800 new homes over a 17 year period. Originally through JV agreement between Keepmoat, Yuill, Barratt and the City Council – now a simple 50/50 JV between Keepmoat and the City Council. The City Council has put in the land at an agreed valuation and there are agreed minimum return on investment arrangements in respect of build and sales costs and profit-sharing arrangements.
- 8.63 This is a difficult site in both the topography and social stigma associated with the past “problem” social housing perception of this part of the city. However, to set against this, complete clearance produced a large south facing site with great views 3 miles from the City Centre and with good access to the major road network in the A1.
- 8.64 The JV was preceded by an HCA funded reclamation contract to prepare the site to deliver an NHBC Housing Land Quality Endorsement Certificate. There is a complex agreement whereby the Government claws back some of this early investment once certain profit thresholds are passed.
- 8.65 The first phase is now complete. This comprises of 378 mainly detached/ semi-detached homes (59 affordable). It is interesting to note that 48% have been sold to professional/ office workers, in a part of the city where few professional people have lived in the recent past. 93% of purchasers have used mortgages to fund purchase. 74% are first time buyers so the development will clearly have benefitted from the “Help to buy” scheme. 37% of buyers gave “Design and Quality” as the main reason for purchase. The house-types are standard house-types, though stretched by about 15% to meet the City Council’s required space standards.
- 8.66 The first phase was projected to make a loss but would lift values for later phases. This improvement in values is being delivered both with initial values of £135/sq.ft now exceeding £200/sq.ft. This is significantly outstripping regional rates of increase in value demonstrating that the development has clearly overcome previous market sensitivity about the area.
- 8.67 The scale and the comprehensive nature of the development are considered to have been central to its success. The build out rate is now at 100 units per annum.

## East Leeds (including Seacroft Hospital)

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- 8.68 Part of the City Council's Brownfield Development programme to help regenerate and broaden the housing offer in East Leeds in the neighbourhoods of Seacroft, Halton Moor and Osmanthorpe and delivering almost 1,000 new homes, with a further 700 homes on land to the rear of Seacroft Hospital. The partnership here involves Strata homes as well as Keepmoat and work will include greenspace, highways improvements and local amenities. Initial phases include 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes.
- 8.69 The partnership is aimed at bringing benefits to existing residents as well as attracting new people to the area through a greater range of high quality and affordable housing options.

## Early development through Registered Providers

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- 8.70 We would expect that much early housing development connected with the regeneration of Birkenhead will be delivered by Registered Providers. There are many of these active locally and we have consulted several of these as part of this study. They were all interested and saw their ability to deliver a variety of tenures over a long period of time as key factors.
- 8.71 On many occasions, it has been the involvement of a registered social provider that has enabled the first phase in a complex development area. The illustration below is the first significant development in the core development area within the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation area.
- 8.72 The second of London's Mayoral Development Corporations, the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation, is charged with the delivery of the London Plans expectation that the area will, over a 30 year period, deliver a minimum of 24,000 new homes and 55,000 new jobs. Much of this expectation is based upon intensive redevelopment of an area dominated by railway lands and industry in a location which will become highly accessible regionally and nationally with the opening of a new station at the junction between Crossrail and HS2 in the heart of the potential development area.
- 8.73 Whilst the designation of the Development Corporation and the natural pressures of the London market might have been seen to encourage early development, the improved accessibility through the new station is still some years off. Early development interest has focused on currently reasonably accessible sites on the edges of the main development area with a number of private sector developments securing early planning consents.
- 8.74 It is notable that progress towards commitment to development and a start on site on these has been slow and the first major development to progress and now well advanced towards completion has come forward from the RP sector through Notting Hill Genesis Housing Association.

8.75 This development provides 605 homes (predominantly 1 bed 2 person and 2 bed 4 person units) in three blocks ranging from 6 – 26 storeys. It includes on-site healthcare and nursery facilities. Grant aid from the London Mayor was needed to lift the affordable housing component from 33% to 40%. It is understood that the scheme has moved from mixed sale and rental to a wholly Build to Rent basis since the grant of the initial consent in 2016. The 60% uncontrolled accommodation is being held by the Housing Association and used as market rented stock. Their patient money allows them to do this, rather than seek immediate return on their investment. They then have the flexibility in the future to either continue to hold the stock as part of their wider portfolio of market rental stock, or to dispose of on a leasehold basis, unit by unit, or collectively to an investor.

## Summary and Conclusion

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- 8.76 The above exemplar developments demonstrate that the creation of a thriving housing market in post-industrial towns and cities is not an impossibility and there are numerous examples of where this has successfully happened. It is also noticeable that regeneration is continuing in an around all of these locations as the market strengthens and expands; as people see the advantages of living close to centre of town.
- 8.77 It is clear from the short profiles that Wirral Council has taken note of how these developments have happened. They have happened because there has been political support, there has been a local plan in place with detailed masterplans focusing on areas of change and there has been joined up thinking and working between public and private sector organisations. Intervention funding has been available to help pump prime development in the most difficult early stages. A high quality of building design, with an additional emphasis on public realm and open space has also been crucial in attracting pioneers into an area. There is also the very important matter of affordability. People can get more house for their money than they would get in more established areas. They also demonstrate the importance and benefits of placemaking, each being comparable to the Birkenhead (to a degree).
- 8.78 Whilst Chapel Street in Salford has the locational advantage of being adjacent to the regional centre of Manchester, there are clear and obvious parallels with Birkenhead. For many decades, the land that is now occupied by office blocks, 5\*star hotels and Build to Rent schemes was stigmatised as a 'no go zone' for development with many acres of brownfield land and derelict buildings. The situation only started to change when Salford URC was formed, a transformational masterplan was prepared and English Cities Fund/ Muse Developments was appointed as a development partner.

- 8.79 Of course, Salford has gone on to benefit from the rapid development of Spinningfields and the relocation of the BBC and ITV to Media City, but it was these early steps that laid the foundations for this transformation to happen.
- 8.80 Chapel Street in Salford achieved a price growth of 65%, which was 20% higher than normal market growth in the local area from 2014 to 2017. The developer focussed on building a place where people wanted to live, which helped to increase demand and drive further price growth. Through successful Placemaking the same could be achieved at the subject site from the earlier phases to the latter.
- 8.81 Little Kelham in Sheffield, whilst not of scale, provides evidence of the benefits of placemaking through the uplift in values generated over the local market. The same is evidenced in central Liverpool on a large scale. We would anticipate an uplift in values compared to the existing market in Birkenhead and potentially in excess of comparable new build developments based on the high specification of the units suggested at the site.
- 8.82 We would suggest that over the course of Birkenhead 2040, it would be fair to assume growth over and above that of the normal market. With its convenient location across the Mersey from the famous Liverpool waterfront, a reinvigorated and redesigned town centre, plans for green infrastructure, improvements to public transport and the ability to deliver high quality Placemaking mean that it would be possible to achieve between 2 and 3% per annum on top of normal market growth.

## 9 Changing market perceptions through infrastructure investment

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- 9.1 The Birkenhead 2040 Framework make significant play on the value of Merseyrail and the six stations on the system within the Strategy area. It also majors on environmental quality and green infrastructure. It also includes cultural and educational infrastructure proposals. This section of the report highlights some examples of where there has been infrastructure investment as part of a wider regeneration strategy.
- 9.2 It is noticeable that similar infrastructure investments have had considerable influence on regeneration activity, with increased demand leading to new development taking place in the review of similar Regeneration Areas set out in Section 8. This has led to the development of new and diverse communities in locations that have previously seen a weak housing market.

### Public transport

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- 9.3 Section 3 and the Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan explains that in order to improve 'last mile' connections for new and existing neighbourhoods to the existing Mersey Rail system that the Council are developing proposals for a new Mass Transit System for Birkenhead.
- 9.4 Improved public transport connectivity – quality, frequency of service etc. can significantly change perceptions of place and associated values. This impacts on both the value of current stock and the attractiveness and viability of development opportunities.
- 9.5 Researchers from the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds<sup>4</sup> looked at how transport links make locations more attractive, in addition to ease of access to employment, school, local facilities and green spaces. The report is the first of its kind and was funded by Transport for the North, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.
- 9.6 Being able to walk to work has the most significant impact on property prices. On average, there's a 3.61% premium for each additional 10,000 jobs within reach by foot, while there's a 0.19% premium per 10,000 jobs accessible by car. This data shows the value of mixed urban developments across the north.
- 9.7 Rail access can add 14% to property prices. For every additional 10,000 jobs that are readily accessible by rail, there's an average property premium of 0.16%, showing the impact investment in rail transport can have on the property market.

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<sup>4</sup> University of Leeds (2019), Institute for Transport Studies, *Land Value and Transport*

9.8 This demonstrates that one of the reasons for the success of the Keepmoat scheme at the Docklands is its accessibility to Birkenhead North station and also demonstrates the great potential of Hind Street with its access to Green Lane and Birkenhead Central stations.

9.9 Other examples are below:

**Victoria Line and Walthamstow plus Highams Park and Chingford**

9.10 The building of the Victoria line to Walthamstow in 1968 significantly changed the accessibility of Walthamstow to Central London and perceptions of the place as a residential option. It also changed perceptions and values in the areas beyond Walthamstow served by the rail line out to Chingford through interchange at Walthamstow Central. A whole area of London which previously had a poor or weak housing market in a London context has become attractive.

**Jubilee Line extension and Bermondsey, Canning Town East and West Ham**

9.11 A similar story attaches to the impact of the Jubilee Line extension from Green Park to Stratford in 1999 - to some extent affecting perceptions of and values in Southwark but even more dramatically in Bermondsey and in the corridor from Canning Town through the Stratford.

**The London Overground circle and Hammersmith, Hackney Wick and Fish Island**

9.12 The story is further illustrated by the increasing range of connections / service frequencies etc with improvements to the London Overground system with clear impact on the market attractiveness of areas such as Hammersmith and Hackney Wick and, combined with Olympics related perception changing, on the formerly very gritty Fish Island area. Key elements in this have been improvements in train rolling stock, lighting and other improvements to stations and station surrounds and to the frequency and reliability of services.

9.13 With increased ridership has come increased train lengths. Even with these changes there are still parts of the Fish Island area which are seen as very challenging by the mainstream London market - some are being exploited by more risk-taking developers who will play to the potential "Pioneer" market. There has also been displacement of many of the arts-based organisations that have for many years exploited the previous low rent environment of the area.

**Metrolink and Manchester suburbs**

9.14 Outside of London we should be able to track similar changes in perception and markets with the building of the Metrolink system from 1992 – with its subsequent sequence of extensions up to the 2020 extension to the Trafford Centre. Within general benefits there are likely to be stronger proportionate benefits in previously weaker market areas.

9.15 The above report also provided evidence that past investment in transport within the north has boosted the property market. The Manchester Metrolink extensions that have been constructed since 1995 were looked at as a case study.

- 9.16 These extensions increased prices of properties located near new stations by an average of 6.3%. Homes near the South Manchester Line saw an average increase of 10.5%, while the Airport Line had an exceptional 20.9% increase.

#### **Belfast Rapid Transit system**

- 9.17 Known in Belfast as The Glider: this is a new £90m diesel-electric hybrid bus rapid transit (BRT) system launched at the end of 2018. Part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and run by local transport company Translink, the BRT connects the east and west of the city with the city centre via 15.2 miles of bus lanes and mixed traffic lanes.
- 9.18 Since its introduction, the term Glider Hubs has developed as a focus for property development. Located along the city corridors, with good accessibility and well served by high quality transport connections, higher density residential development can typically be supported in close proximity to such centres.
- 9.19 They fulfil an important complementary retail role in providing consumers with convenience and choice in locations outside of the City Centre.
- 9.20 There is no specific research which details added value, but the fact that Glider Hubs is an acknowledged term and anecdotal evidence from estate agents supports the view that the Glider has had a positive impact on development.
- 9.21 This is the same system that is planned for Birkenhead.

#### **Amsterdam – Boreno Sporenburg and the Ijburg**

- 9.22 These islands lie to the east of central Amsterdam and are former shipping and industrial and warehousing areas. Their clearance reclamation and regeneration is underlain by complex funding arrangements. Within this it would appear that public transport infrastructure has played a major part in their success. In particular, both are served not only by bus routes, but also by extensions to the tramway system.
- 9.23 There are some apartments in these two areas, however, the vast majority of the development is two and three storey family housing. The tramway system offers fast and frequent connection into the city centre where parking is extremely limited. The pattern and density allows many to have waterfrontages and car parking to facilitate journeys to non-central locations.
- 9.24 On-line material suggests that Ijburg is now the 3rd most expensive postal district in The Netherlands.

## **Green infrastructure**

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- 9.25 Green Infrastructure is an intrinsic part of the placemaking and regeneration activity that will be delivered as part of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework with Dock Branch Park being one

of the signature projects of the Town Deal. Design Works are underway and funding has been agreed for delivery by 2024/ 2025. Wirral Waters will also see considerable green infrastructure developed as part of its proposals. Birkenhead Park is celebrated as model for Urban Parks and there is an ongoing application for World Heritage status.

9.26 Below are some celebrated examples:

**Barcelona - Rambla del Raval**

9.27 The removal of an entire block in a densely developed relative low value area of the City Centre to create a new urban park. This has transformed not just the immediate surroundings to the park but the whole of the surrounding neighbourhood.

**East London – Queen Elizabeth Park**

9.28 A centrepiece of the Olympic development and legacy strategy was the creation of the largest park developed in London on over 100 years. Beyond the branding impact of association with the Olympics, the park has made a lasting impact of perceptions of East London and encouraged development in the immediate (Chobham Manor) and wider area.

## Reflections

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9.29 The proposed Dock Branch Park has many similarities in its context and aspirations to the strategy delivered in the Rambla del Raval - without the need for similar dramatic large-scale property-removing urban surgery. The consultation with developers and RPs confirmed that this can have a transformational impact on quality of life and the attractiveness of the location as a place to live.

9.30 In Birkenhead Park, Birkenhead already has an element of green infrastructure of great scale and has a maturity which it will take generations for new parks to establish. Wider awareness and appreciation of the park and exploitation of this will make a major contribution to perception changing - as will the proposals to work beyond individual elements of green infrastructure into a Green Infrastructure network which come through in some of the work on Neighbourhoods.

## Summary & Conclusion

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9.31 Investment in mass transportation and green infrastructure are key elements of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework 2040. These improvements will make the town a better place to live, work and visit.

9.32 Improved public transport connectivity – quality, frequency of service etc. can significantly change perceptions of place and associated values.

- 9.33 Academic research has highlighted the positive impact on values from being able to walk to work and also from proximity to a rail station. The development of Metrolink in Manchester has led to development close to tram stops with some areas showing large increases in value.
- 9.34 The Mass Transit system in Belfast has led to 'Glider Hubs' being the focus of development for high density housing and retail.
- 9.35 Green Infrastructure can generate many indirect social and economic benefits. They improve quality of life and can add value to nearby property.

## 10 Housing Absorption Rate and Trajectory

- 10.1 The report has demonstrated that recent developments in Birkenhead have yielded encouraging values and that there are many developers and housebuilders who are very interested in opportunities that may come forward in the town. We have also demonstrated examples of other comparable towns that have successfully created and sustained a housing market when cynical voices said that “it will never work.” There is, however, another question to be answered, over whether the market can absorb the numbers of houses planned for urban Wirral during the next plan period.

### Can the market absorb the planned number of houses?

- 10.2 The term absorption rate refers to a metric used in the real estate market to evaluate the rate at which available homes are sold in a specific market during a given time period. As there has been so little development and wider regeneration activity going on in the Birkenhead market area in recent decades, we cannot produce meaningful directly comparable evidence of market absorption rates of similar developments in the borough, that will compare to the paradigm shift that has occurred in council policy over the past two years. There has been a complete change from development inertia to an ambitious transformational regeneration strategy, supported by a new local plan that focuses on the creation of a new town from within an old town.

### Placemaking

- 10.3 Instead of focusing on individual development sites, the council has adopted a policy of wider placemaking. We have talked about this earlier in the report. When delivering such a policy, “Priority needs to be the development of real places where people want to live, work, visit and spend time”. Because it brings many different influences together, placemaking can have an important impact on long-term sustainability and on the quality of the communities created. In turn, this leads to stronger demand with subsequent value increases. Successful placemaking can pull together key community, social and economic issues essential to successful regeneration and is at the heart of building sustainable and viable communities. The ultimate aim is to make Birkenhead attractive to housebuilders, developers and investors and ultimately to the people and businesses who will make the town their home.
- 10.4 There are encouraging signs that the new strategy is taking effect. We take considerable confidence from the strong sales rates reported by Keepmoat for the Docklands and by Bellway for their King’s Hill scheme and we also take note of the strong interest in Urban Splash’s Wirral Waters scheme. Additional evidence on the strength of demand in urban Wirral is the previously quoted Rightmove research from Summer 2021 which recorded that in the previous twelve months, Wallasey recorded a bigger rise in asking prices than any town or city in Britain,

Birkenhead was in fourth place in this list. Local estate agents have reported that there is high demand and less supply for family homes with gardens.

## Ellesmere Port – from stagnation to “boom town”

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- 10.5 More confidence should also come from the recent experience of Ellesmere Port. This is a town located at the southern end of the Wirral peninsula. Although in Cheshire West, it has a close affinity with Wirral borough. It is a secondary town in comparison to Birkenhead and is blighted by eyesores such as a motorway passing through the town, Stanlow Oil Refinery and large-scale chemical works.
- 10.6 The town had a population of 61,090 in the 2011 census. It saw little development over a considerable period of time. In 2010, only fifty new residential units were being delivered each year. It was the most deprived area of Cheshire and there was a political priority to tackle the multiple deprivation that was evident here.
- 10.7 Cheshire West and Chester established an Ellesmere Port Development Board (EPDB) to drive the regeneration. This was an unfunded Urban Regeneration Company type delivery vehicle and was charged with restoring, 'Pride in the Port'. It was a partnership between the public and private sectors. The EPDB agreed a Plan with the Council, building on the area's assets and community spirit. By 2020, the average rate of delivery for the area covered by the EPDB was up to 500 new homes a year with a pipeline of several thousand. According to Chris Farrow, chair of the board, *“Ellesmere Port is a convenient location, with good homes at a competitive price. There is more to come.”*
- 10.8 The EPDB focused primarily on delivery against the objectives of the Ellesmere Port Vision and Strategic Regeneration Framework and the Economic Growth Strategy. The main thrust of the programme has been to attract and encourage investment to create local employment and make local people proud of Ellesmere Port as a place to live, work and visit.
- 10.9 The low base of 50 units a year was turned on its head; between 2010 and 2020 there were 2,355 new houses, flats and apartments were completed in the area covered by the Ellesmere Port Development Board, with another 1,200 in the process of delivery. This is on track for the Local Plan target of 4,800 by 2030.
- 10.10 These houses are being delivered by a wide range of housebuilders and RPs. These include Barratts, Redrow, Countryside, MacBryde Homes, Bellway, Persimmon, Magenta, Northstone, Sanctuary, Linden Homes and Anwyl. Many of these sites were delivered at similar times and were in competition.
- 10.11 The thoughts of Councillor Matt Bryan, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning & Climate Emergency have resonance with the plans for Birkenhead and also provides confidence in the

projected rate of delivery. It also points out the importance of the provision of a broad cross section of housing types and tenures.

- 10.12 *"The speed at which the new houses are being bought and rented shows the developers were right and they now have a challenge to keep up with the demand. Another important factor is the mix we have between affordable and market rate properties and the range from one room to large family houses being built."*
- 10.13 Birkenhead provides accessible location at the heart of the Liverpool City Region. It can provide good homes at a competitive price. Ellesmere Port has good accessibility to jobs, but Birkenhead is the service centre of the Wirral. Planned regeneration activity will provide a new office quarter, high quality public realm, plans for a fit for purpose town centre, excellent transport links, improved infrastructure. It is also the focus of a larger conurbation of 325,000 people and at the fulcrum of a sub-regional public-transport system (that is set to be enhanced further).

## Housing Trajectory

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- 10.14 We have reviewed the council's housing trajectory for the Local Plan Submission Draft and we agree that the projections put forward are realistic and deliverable subject to fluctuations in the market. Housing is a key part of the physical, economic, and social fabric and is fundamental to the success of the Birkenhead 2040. The pace at which housing is delivered is also critical to the wider development of the plan's wider ambitions.
- 10.15 In the first five years of the plan, the housing trajectory projects that approximately 5,100 homes will be delivered to the market in Wirral. The commitments are already coming through the system and as they include sites that have been progressing a number of years. These include the Former D1 Oils Site, Dock Road South, Bromborough (RES-SA4.7), Land South of Riverwood Road (RES-SA4.2) and the adjoining Wirral Growth Company Land South of Old Hall Road, Bromborough (RES-SA4.3), which together will deliver some 285 dwellings by 2025/26 and some 1675 in total by 2033/24.
- 10.16 Within the Birkenhead 2040 Framework area (identified as Regeneration Areas 1 to 7 in the Submission Plan) the Local Plan projects the completion of approximately 1128 dwellings within years 0 to 5 of the plan period (see Table 10.1). This will include two major developments at Wirral Waters Northbank: East 1 and West 2 (Urban Splash) (RES-RA 6.3/ 6.4) which is an innovative high quality modular town house and apartment development which will deliver 200 dwellings during this period and the Legacy Build to Rent apartment project (RES-RA 6.6) which again is of high design quality waterside development and will deliver 500 dwellings during this period. The initial phase of Urban splash project is nearing completion and the Legacy project is due to commence on site by March 2022.

**Table 10.1: Wirral local Plan 2021 to 2037- Projected Years 0 to 5 Housing Delivery within Birkenhead 2040 Area (Regeneration Areas 1 to 7)**

Allocations	Site Reference	Total Site Capacity	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total Dwelling Completions 2021/2026	Comment
Land East of Birkenhead Road, Seacombe (North)	RES-RA2.1	200				40	50	90	Expected to be delivered by Peel L&P with RPs. Proposed innovative Modular low Carbon Development.
WGC Town Centre Plots I and J, North of Conway Park Station, Birkenhead	RES-RA 4.3	185			50	50	50	150	Site expected to be market by Mid 2022. Site has benefit of Outline planning permission.
Land at Hind Street, Tranmere	RES-RA5.1	1400				50	100	150	Delivery represents initial delivery of a an exemplar urban garden city village Concept.
Wirral Waters - Northbank East 1 (Urban Splash)	RES-RA 6.3	120		30	30	30	30	120	First phase approaching completion @March 2022.
Wirral Waters - Northbank West 2 (Urban Splash)	RES-RA 6.4	230			24	30	30	84	

Allocations	Site Reference	Total Site Capacity	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total Dwelling Completions 2021/2026	Comment
Wirral Waters - Northbank West 1 (Legacy)	RES-RA 6.6	500				160	340	500	Construction commenced February 2022
Wirral Waters - Northbank East 2 (Belong Extra Care Village)	RES-RA 6.7	34			34			34	Due to commence on site by Autumn 2022
Total								1128	

- 10.17 The land owners of Hind Street are advanced in their plans and are confident that they will sell plots to end users. We are aware of current developer interest in Build to Rent residential development in the St Werburgh's area. It is likely that this will have crystallised into a scheme within these initial five years, as will the Wirral Growth Company sites at Conway Park and Europa Boulevard.
- 10.18 Over the medium to long term, we would expect that the placemaking activity will have had a positive impact and the town will be seen as a place of opportunity. The pioneer housing schemes at Wirral Northbank will have been built and occupied. Increased demand will lead to higher values and this will mean that there should be more private sector housing development taking place. Where viability challenges exist in the future we expect that the Council and delivery agencies will continue to work with Homes England and sub-regional partners to unlock development.
- 10.19 Registered Providers will still be vital and there will be continued demand and development across the full spectrum of housing tenures and types. A large stock of good quality, appropriate housing will help to achieve the borough's full potential through better employment opportunities, healthier lives and a more prosperous and equal society.
- 10.20 The trajectory in the years 2026/27 – 2030/31 (see Table 10.2) forecasts that approximately 3,442 out of 5,503 dwellings (52%) could be completed in the Regeneration Areas 1-7. There are some big numbers forecast for delivery in Hind Street (RES\_RA5.1), Wirral Waters-Vittoria Studios (RES-RA6.2), Hamilton Park (MPA\_RA7.1) and Birkenhead central (as part of Dock Branch Park -MPA-RA4.3). After undertaking detailed soft market testing as part of this study, we are confident that these numbers are not unrealistic.
- 10.21 Three of these schemes have experienced and committed developers in place. They have been working up plans over several years and we are aware that they are already talking to institutional funders about large scale high density housing, Registered Providers and plc housebuilders. All are interested in taking plots for building. The projected figures for the mid-plan period are a credible forecast for the expected position on housing numbers coming forward.

**Table 10.2: Wirral local Plan 2021 to 2037- Projected Years 6 to 10 Housing Delivery within Birkenhead 2040 Area (Regeneration Areas 1 to 7)**

Allocations	Site Reference	Total Site Capacity	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	Total Dwelling Completions 2026/2031	Comments
Other developable areas within Seacombe River Corridor Regeneration Area RA1		340	20	30	40	50	50	190	The Council are currently preparing a joint masterplan (MPA-RA1.1) for this important riverside which is due for completion by late 2022. The estate renewal masterplan will identify sites for early housing delivery including vacant and infill. The masterplan is likely to set out transformational proposals for a new low carbon riverside community with world class views of the River Mersey and the Liverpool Waterfront.
SHLAA 5000 - Land East of Birkenhead Road, Seacombe (North)	RES-RA2.1	200	50	60				110	Balance of innovative modular development by Peel L&P and Registered Providers.
Land East of Birkenhead Road, Seacombe (South)	RES-RA2.2	250		40	50	50	50	190	Second phase of a Modular Home scheme by Peel L&P and Registered Providers.

Allocations	Site Reference	Total Site Capacity	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	Total Dwelling Completions 2026/2031	Comments
SHLAA Rose Brae, Church Street, Woodside	RES-RA3.4	180	30	30	30	30	30	150	Project to be delivered by site owner Prima.
Other Developable areas within Waterfront regeneration area RA3		1600			50	50	50	150	Expected to be delivered following the completion of the Woodside Masterplan (MPA.RA3.1) and to include redevelopment of the Land Registry Site and delivery in Mixed use areas.
WGC Town Centre Plot E, Hemingford Street, Birkenhead	RES-RA 4.1	172				43	86	109	To be developed by WGC
WGC Town Centre Plot G, South of Conway Park Station, Birkenhead	RES-RA 4.2	92	23	23		46		92	To be developed by WGC

Allocations	Site Reference	Total Site Capacity	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	Total Dwelling Completions 2026/2031	Comments
WGC Town Centre Plots I and J, North of Conway Park Station, Birkenhead	RES-RA 4.3	185	35					35	Balance of scheme.
Other developable areas within Central Birkenhead regeneration area		1725		100	100	100	100	400	Expected to be delivered as part of Dock Branch Park Phase 1 Project and will comprise 'urban village' style development adjoining the northern part of the park. Council currently undertaking enabling and site assembly work in association with the Park and delivery of the 'Transport Shed'. Part of Dock Branch Park Masterplan (MPA34.3). Delivery of housing within mixed use areas may also contribute. (MUA: RA1)
Land at Hind Street, Tranmere	RES-RA5.1	1400	125	125	125	125	125	625	Delivery represents later delivery of an exemplar urban garden city village concept.

Allocations	Site Reference	Total Site Capacity	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	Total Dwelling Completions 2026/2031	Comments
Wirral Waters - Vittoria Studios	RES-RA 6.2	3400			200	250	250	700	Initial Phases of the large waterside Vittoria Studios apartment Development by Peel L&P. The Council is currently working with Homes England and the Combined Authority to develop a detailed delivery strategy and business case for public funding to accelerate delivery.
Northbank West 2 (Urban Splash)	RES-RA 6.4	230	30	40	40	36		146	Later phases of urban splash modular development comprising town houses and apartments.
SHLAA 2080 Wirral Waters - Northbank East 3 (Tower Road)	RES-RA 6.5	150				50	50	100	Final residential project to be developed by Peel L&P on Northbank Wirral Waters. It is anticipated to be an apartment tower with views across Wirral Waters, the River Mersey Liverpool Waterfront and the Liverpool Waterfront.

Allocations	Site Reference	Total Site Capacity	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	Total Dwelling Completions 2026/2031	Comments
Other developable areas within Hamilton Park regeneration area RA7		1500	50	75	100	100	100	425	This will comprise a new higher density family homes neighbourhood to be developed to the immediate south of Vittoria Studios. Masterplan area (MPA-RA7.1). The Council is currently working with Homes England and the Combined Authority to develop a detailed delivery strategy and business case for this project. Development will require land assembly and business relocation. Development to be predominantly 3 bedroom plus family homes.
Total								3442	

- 10.22 As for the period 2031/32 to 2036/ 37, this is considerably into the future and it is acknowledged that there will be many changes in the world and its economy. Despite the inherent uncertainty of timescale, we feel that the forecast trajectory is based on the realistic prospect of housing development coming forward in these locations.
- 10.23 Approximately 20% of the housing supply in this period will be in Wirral Waters. There has been strong momentum since 2021 on the provision of housing at developments within Northbank, a key neighbourhood within the East Float, including the Legacy project (build to rent), Urban Splash/Peel L&P joint venture, Belong Care Village. Scott's Quay is advanced in its planning preparations and the plans for Vittoria Studios are also in process. By 2031, these early pioneer schemes will have been completed, with Scotts Quay and Vittoria Studios will be on site. The east float of the docklands will be maturing as a residential market.
- 10.24 The other big numbers are in Hind Street, Hamilton Park and Central Birkenhead. Again, despite the uncertainty of what the world will look like in 2031, it is likely that sustainability and the need for carbon neutrality will be even more of a priority at this stage – for councils and occupiers alike. As such, we would expect that for the redevelopment of former industrial land close to town centres there will be viability challenges, but the Council and partners are already in advanced discussions with external funding agencies and it is anticipated that this will ensure timely delivery.
- 10.25 As stated previously, these sites are all owned by competent, local developers who have realistic expectations on the values likely to be achieved on three of these sites. There is every reason to believe that by the time 2031 comes around that these sites will be remediated and serviced and are becoming established as a rejuvenated residential neighbourhood in Birkenhead. The sites are large enough for several developers, selling from onsite outlets. Build to Rent schemes will be delivering 20 units a month, RPs will consistently be delivering new dwellings and MMC will be providing cost effective houses. As such, we are comfortable with the trajectory put forward.
- 10.26 The planning system will need to continue to cater for the variety of needs and demands, offering different tenures and flexible transitions between tenures, helping to enhance economic growth and social mobility, as well as strengthening local communities.

## Summary

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- 10.27 The provision of housing in the eastern urban area is and will remain a priority for Wirral Council over the 15 year duration of the plan and beyond. There will need to be continued working with all housing providers to seek creative, innovative approaches to help the council meet local plan requirements for market and affordable homes, which will include support for local developments by Registered Providers and others as part of planned local regeneration programmes.

- 10.28 Registered Providers will have a vital role in providing people with an affordable home and a platform for getting on in life and so a considerable proportion will be for social rent. There will also need to be intermediate products such as shared equity and homes for intermediate rent.
- 10.29 The Council and partners are already in advanced discussions with external funding agencies and it is anticipated that this will ensure timely delivery. Through the provision of on-site enabling physical infrastructure and other work genuinely required to commence house-building projects and thereby accelerate house-building in the former industrial areas that have been blighted for decades.
- 10.30 The lessons from neighbours like Ellesmere Port and Liverpool is that with political and planning policy support, new build housing can be absorbed into a hitherto stagnant market. We believe the trajectory summarised is realistic and that the market fundamentals are such that delivery momentum can be developed and sustained to such an extent that developers will be challenged to keep up with demand.

## 11 The Green Belt and Birkenhead 2040

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- 11.1 Birkenhead is a post-industrial town that was hit hard by the closure of dockyards and big manufacturing sites and is in need of regeneration. The industrial base of the town has been significantly hollowed out over time along with out-migration. Considerable areas of derelict and underutilised land exist and the population is one of the most deprived in England.
- 11.2 For years, Birkenhead has been an area filed in the “too hard” category by housebuilders and land agents. Values are low and subsequently agents’ commissions are low – a lot lower than on greenfield sites in West Wirral or Cheshire West.
- 11.3 However, Birkenhead has the potential to be the second town of the Liverpool City Region. It is the service centre of a population of 325,000 people. The wider borough is semi-rural with attractive coastal villages. The schools (of which several are in the town itself) are the best performing in LCR. There is considerable affluence in western parts of the borough and in some settlements in the urban area.
- 11.4 The Council is now taking a leading role in driving and facilitating the comprehensive regeneration and transformation of Birkenhead through the ‘Leftbank’ Birkenhead 2040 programme. This recognises the multifaceted nature of the problems that currently exist and aims to improve the quality of neighbourhood and housing markets, whilst integrating interventions within a sub-regional framework that links housing, planning and economic development.
- 11.5 The Wirral Local Plan 2021 to 2037 Submission Draft (Submission Plan) entrenches the proposals of the Draft Birkenhead 2040 Framework in planning policy. As is set out in Section 2, this strategy is entirely in accordance with national policy relating to regeneration, the efficient use of land, and the protection of Green Belt.
- 11.6 This ‘brownfield first’ policy encourages the vital regeneration of the urban area whilst preserving the Green Belt. It protects the countryside and the setting of many of the Wirral’s historic settlements. It also protects the attractive and valued landscapes that are important to people’s environment, heritage, wellbeing and as an agricultural resource.
- 11.7 The plan recognises a need to build more well-designed, well-located and affordable homes. Derelict and underutilised sites within the urban area provide substantial opportunities to ensure that future growth to meet the needs of the Borough will be located in sustainable locations with good access to public transport, services and employment opportunities. Planned growth and regeneration will provide for sustainable development which will facilitate the economic, social and environmental enhancement of Birkenhead.

## Greenbelt release undermines the Framework

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- 11.8 The Council has concluded that the future needs of the Borough can be met through the growth and regeneration of Birkenhead and other urban areas. As a result, exceptional circumstances for the release of Green Belt land (as required by paragraph 140 of the NPPF) do not exist.
- 11.9 Development of greenfield sites in the Green Belt may be an attractive and arguably easier option for developers. However, the release of Green Belt land would in itself act to undermine the Councils strategy to regenerate Birkenhead and other urban areas of the Borough. Green Belt designation serves five purposes, including to assist in urban regeneration (paragraph 138 of the NPPF).

## Social Value of Brownfield development

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- 11.10 There is an awareness of the need for thousands of new homes and there is also knowledge that there are large tracts of derelict and underutilised land adjacent to transport hubs and next to a town centre.
- 11.11 Work undertaken by the Council and appointed consultants as part of the preparation of the Local Plan clearly indicates that there is a more than adequate supply of brownfield land available to meet the needs of the Borough. The benefits of building on derelict and underutilised land are clear. Not only are these prime locations within Birkenhead, which means they have good transport links in place, but regenerating sites will bring fresh life and vitality to the town while simultaneously protecting the countryside from unnecessary sprawl or encroachment by development.

## Summary

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- 11.12 Managed effectively as sustainable development, brownfield sites are immensely preferable to greenfield development. The transformation of a brownfield site is an important part of sustainable urban renewal and can have a positive impact on surrounding property values. Brownfield development is an ideal means to revitalise an area.
- 11.13 Redeveloping on brownfield sites breathes new life and vitality into neighbourhoods, and encourages the transformation of towns and cities. The Local Plan will encourage the repopulation of Birkenhead enabling more people to live close to the town centre and re-establishing it as a vibrant centre for living, culture, entertainment, leisure, shopping, business and civic activity.
- 11.14 There is still much to do and significant, sustained funding is the single most important factor influencing the restructuring of the housing market. The Council has taken decisions with delivery

partners which will take time to implement, supported by the 'Levelling Up' agenda. The approach would be undermined by green belt release.

- 11.15 The Council is seeking to maximise the transformational opportunities provided for by the Birkenhead 2040 Framework. The Wirral Local Plan 2021 to 2037 Submission Draft seeks to embed the regeneration plans into statutory planning policy, providing the certainty required by investors, delivery partners and funding agencies to make the transformation a reality.

## 12 Conclusion

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- 12.1 Increasing the residential population of Birkenhead is a key objective of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework 2040 and is an integral part of the Local Plan. It is important that a measured approach to housing is established across the town to promote inclusion, sustainability, cohesion and balance.
- 12.2 The objective is to produce high quality, sustainable developments with a mix of tenures that reflect the economic, social and environmental patterns of the city. There needs to be a good proportion of family homes. The mix of tenures could include private for sale, PRS, social and affordable, including co-ownership. On larger schemes with capacity for significant amounts of residential units, integrated, mixed and blind tenure options should be considered.
- 12.3 The quality of residential developments has long-term impacts, both on the communities they house, and on the surrounding neighbourhoods. The location and how well they knit into the fabric of existing neighbourhoods and the city-scape are factors which will have long term positive and negative implications for the town. Having the necessary physical and social infrastructure alongside the facilities to support development will be important in creating a sustainable and vibrant community. This will include the integration with existing provision combined with access to employment, amenities and effective public transport linkages. It is equally important to consider potential implications for the successful night-time economy and how this important element of the town's economy and vitality can be revitalised.
- 12.4 High quality design standards are paramount to the success and sustainability of housing development with issues such as space standards, orientation, storage, treatment of communal areas, access to open space etc. requiring careful consideration.
- 12.5 The council has adopted a "design-led placemaking" strategy, which is underpinning all of the regeneration strategy. This is on the premise that value can be generated from the delivery of good structures and making places that people want to inhabit. The rationale for this approach is backed up in the section on exemplars and takes note of the feedback from Vistry Partnerships in Gateshead. Thus, demand helps to drive value.
- 12.6 Key to all of this is viability of the projects, ensuring that high quality schemes come forward in the right location to meet demand. There is potential to look at different sources of funding and financing to assess how they may be combined to achieve a viable and mixed solution.

## Solutions

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- 12.7 Change needed on this scale will not happen organically. Waiting for normal economic growth to return is unacceptable and will result in the town moving further into decline. Patchwork evolution evades responsibility and fails to offer critical mass to allow for viable and successful

rejuvenation. It requires strong local leadership to determine and drive forward what is required. The new Local Plan and Birkenhead 2040 will provide the strategic framework to guide this regeneration.

- 12.8 Birkenhead needs to be repopulated. We need more people living close to the town centre. These people can drive the renaissance and enhance vitality and viability, supporting a smaller retail core, supplemented by the introduction of a wider range of uses such as food and leisure, accessible and affordable transport, as well as a greater number of office and civic functions.
- 12.9 The town needs to be a vibrant centre for living, culture, entertainment, leisure, shopping, business and civic activity. These centres will need to constantly evolve to remain economically vibrant. Local people need to be proud of their town once again.
- 12.10 High on the list of priorities is the need to extend the contribution of the private sector as the programme matures. Progress to date indicates genuine willingness on the part of developers to commit to the long-term nature of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework. Evidence of this is provided in the consultation section of this report.
- 12.11 There is still much to do and significant, sustained funding is the single most important factor influencing the restructuring of the housing market. The council has taken decisions in partnership with like-minded organisations which will take a further decade to implement. These decisions were taken in good faith with government's stated commitment to invest in towns and 'level up' the country.
- 12.12 The results are starting to be seen on the ground through new developments and residents moving into better quality homes more suited to their needs. This is the start of a long-term programme of housing market restructuring in Birkenhead. The early progress that has been made points the way to taking the programme forward and continuing to learn from first-hand experience to tackle effectively.

## The Future is Birkenhead

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- 12.13 After many years of decline and disappointment, the regeneration of Birkenhead is gaining a strong momentum. Planning Policy and political support is behind the transformation of Birkenhead with a transformational local plan being developed and a sophisticated and deliverable regeneration strategy in place. There is strong support from public sector funding partners. There are several notable residential schemes happening and more importantly, selling and values that can support viable development. Registered Providers have funding from Homes England and have identified the area as a priority. A variety of private developers and national housebuilders have all expressed confidence in Birkenhead as a location, particularly if regeneration plans continue to progress.

- 12.14 Transformational and sustainable regeneration of post-industrial towns has happened elsewhere and has been a success. Lessons have been learnt and best practice has been noted. An improved town centre can support new housing and the population that arrives can provide fresh footfall and a new customer base for town centre businesses. New public realm, cultural attractions and world class green infrastructure add to the quality of place and Birkenhead will become a destination that is attractive to new residents and visitors.
- 12.15 This report demonstrates that Wirral Council has realised that Birkenhead needed saving and has responded with a local plan focused on sustainable brownfield regeneration and in Birkenhead 2040, it captures development potential shaped by a sequence of proactive, strategic actions taken by Wirral Council to deliver large-scale regeneration.
- 12.16 There has been a strong demand for houses in urban Wirral in the last 18 months. This has been reflected in strong sales and significant value growth. We have shown that there are many imaginative and creative developers willing to work with the council and deliver the vision of a reimagined and repopulated Birkenhead that is a functioning service centre for the Wirral and one of the major economic engines of the Liverpool City Region.

## Appendix 1 – Birkenhead Residential Market Report

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# 1 Introduction

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1.1 This paper provides a high-level overview of the residential market in Birkenhead.

## Study Objective

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1.1 The objective of the study is to provide strategic development and economic advice on the market demand for increasing the housing supply in Birkenhead, including the opportunity to diversify the housing offer and increase the provision of affordable housing, and provide high quality housing with a new vernacular.

1.2 The study will provide in-depth analysis and insight into the housing market in Birkenhead. Its findings will feed directly into the Birkenhead market study being produced.

1.3 The output of the study will be part of the evidence base for increasing the supply of housing in Birkenhead, based on future demand scenarios and in a way that delivers a quality and attractive place to live.

1.4 To reach the objective, the study will cover the following key elements

- Literature review of the Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and the Whole Plan Viability Assessment;
- Review of the Birkenhead property market – focusing on residential, but also considering commercial mixed-use;
- Residential value assumptions for Birkenhead.

1.5 The structure of the paper is as follows:

- **National and Regional Overview** – provides an assessment of the current residential market in a national and regional context.
- **Existing Evidence** – provides a review of existing market evidence which will inform our assumptions.
- **New Build Achieved Values** – provides an assessment of new build achieved values across the District over the last two years based on industry recognised published data from Land Registry and Energy Performance Certificate Register (EPC).
- **Second Hand Achieved Values** – provides an assessment of second hand achieved values across the District over the last three months, again based on industry recognised published data.
- **New Build Asking Prices** – provides an assessment of asking prices for new build properties across the District. The market assessment is based on industry recognised

published data from Rightmove and developer's websites such as; Taylor Wimpey and Bellway Homes.

- **Residential Value Assumptions** – Based on assessment of achieved and asking value data, we set out our value assumptions (£ psm and absolute values) which could be expected across the District, taking into consideration the settlement hierarchy.

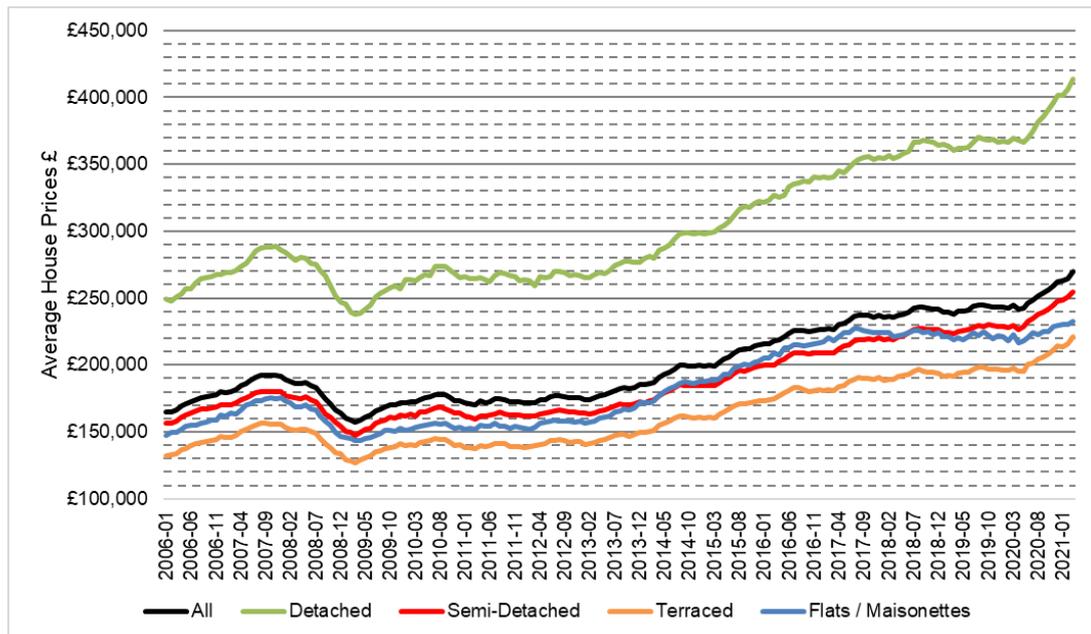
## 2 National and Regional Overview

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- 2.1 The RICS publishes a regular UK residential property market survey providing an overall opinion of the direction that the residential market is taking, along with commentary from surveyors from individual regions throughout the UK. The latest publication of this is April 2021 providing the following summary:
- Demand growth increasingly outstripping supply
  - House price inflation accelerates further across the UK
  - Lack of supply also evident across the lettings market
- 2.2 The April 2021 RICS UK Residential Market Survey results point to buyer demand remaining firm across the market, while the flow of properties being listed for sale has lost momentum as of late. As a result, respondents to the survey frequently highlight this mismatch between supply and demand to be a critical factor in driving up house prices, with growth reportedly accelerating further across all parts of the UK. The full effects of Brexit and Covid are yet to be seen on the UK housing market however, with the phasing-out of the UK Government endorsed Stamp Duty holiday on residential property planned for Q3/Q4 of 2021 it is highly likely that we may see a surge in new buyer enquiries and completed sales towards the end of the year.
- 2.3 The RICS report that alongside this wider growth, newly agreed sales rose over the month evidenced by a net balance of +35% of respondents noting an increase (down from +48% in March). Near term sales expectations remain positive at the national level with a net balance of +23%, with regard to the 12-month view contributors anticipate a cooling in sales growth with the headline net balance standing at just +12%.
- 2.4 A widely cited theme in the comments by survey participants is that the number of fresh listings arriving on the market is insufficient to match current levels of demand. The net balance of new instructions fell to -4% in the latest results, down from +21% in March.
- 2.5 The RICS state that the survey's headline measure of house price growth rose again over the month, with a net balance of +75% of respondents noting an increase in prices during April, this is up from +62% in March and has now become successively more elevated in each of the last three reports. Looking further ahead, respondents foresee upwards pressure on prices remaining firm at the twelve-month time horizon, with the latest net balance standing at +68%.

- 2.6 **Figure 2.1** shows that England and Wales experienced strong house price growth leading up to the 2007/08 financial crisis. Following the financial crash average prices fell by around 19%. In the following few years there was uncertainty in the economy leading to a slow and unpredictable recovery in house prices. Since 2009 average prices have been steadily increasing, at first driven by strong house price growth in London which then filtered out across the regions.
- 2.7 Average prices in England and Wales are now well in excess of the 2007/08 peak (£190,032) at £269,626 equating to a 41.88% increase in values.

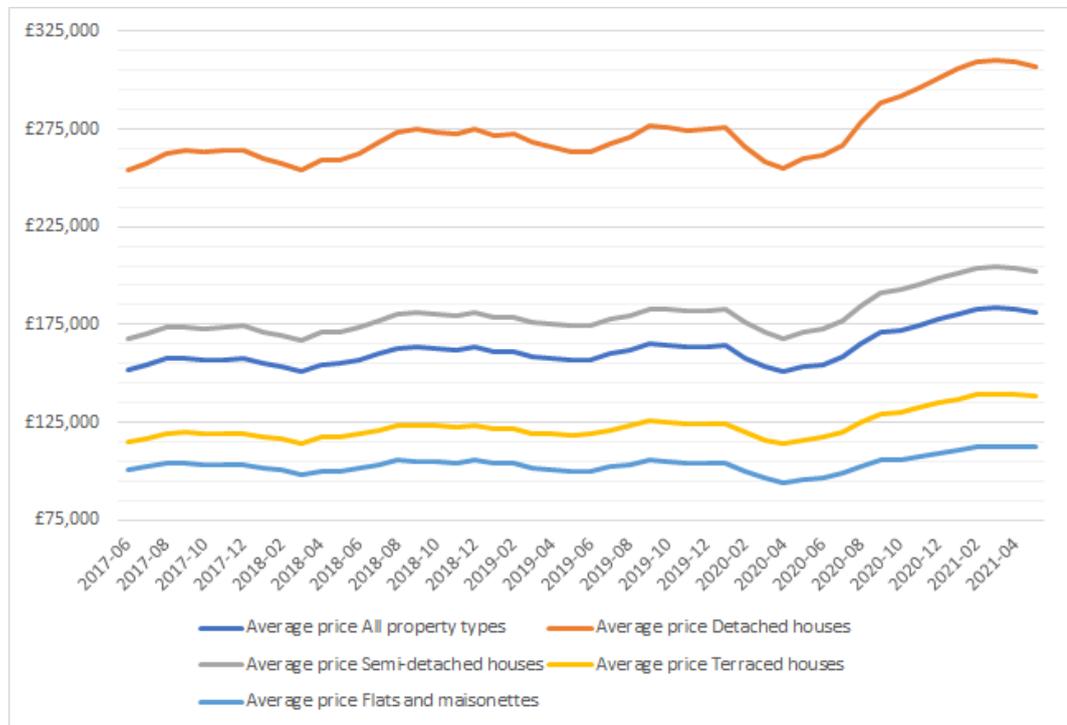
**Figure 2.1 - Average House Prices in England and Wales**



Source: Land Registry (May, 2021)

- 2.8 Below is a graph of Wirral house price trends:

**Figure 2.2 - Wirral House Price Trends**



Source: Land Registry 2021

- 2.9 Pre-covid, house prices were reasonably stable, with gentle peaks and troughs. Covid in March 2019 brought a fall in prices, followed by a steady rise to higher than the pre-covid trend would have indicated. This mid-covid growth seems to have reached a ceiling now, and show early stages of decline.

## Local Overview

- 2.10 Birkenhead has experienced chronic population and household loss over seven decades. It was and still is characterised by a crude surplus of housing, which is particularly evident in the lower value terraced sector. The poor quality housing offer remains a major obstacle to the successful regeneration of the town.
- 2.11 This entrenched deprivation has contributed to and been worsened by the collapse of the housing market. As investment in areas has fallen, those who have been able to afford it have moved out. With a declining population, the quality and availability of local services and amenities has reduced along with environmental quality.

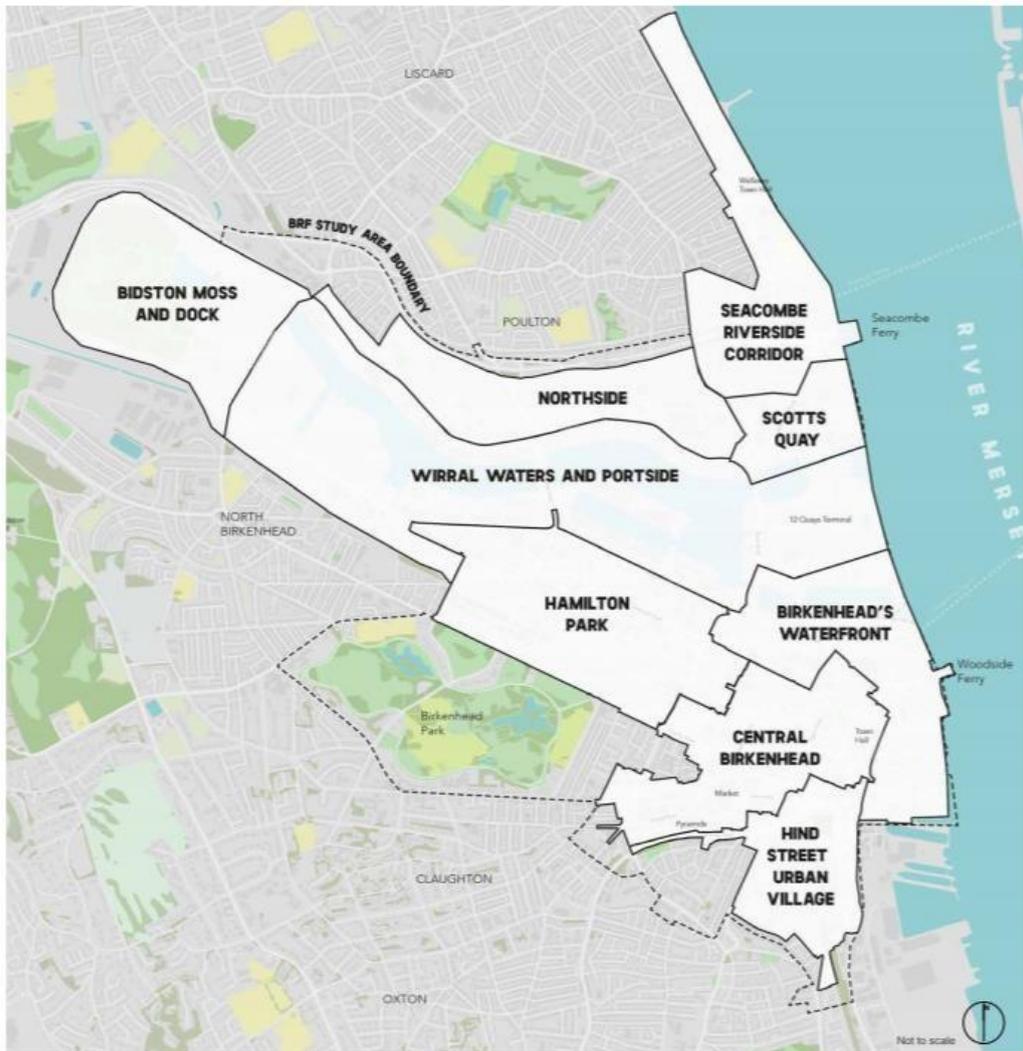
- 2.12 This clearly shows the link between housing markets and concentrated labour market disadvantage. While house prices remain relatively low and vacancies comparatively high, there have been positive movements in both variables.
- 2.13 However, the legacy of decline is long standing and there is clear evidence that many residents in New Heartlands' communities have been unable to take advantage of the opportunities presented.

### Vision context: Birkenhead 2040

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- 2.14 Over the last year Wirral Council has developed a framework for the transformational regeneration of Birkenhead, the Birkenhead 2040 Framework. This is a 20-year plan which sets out the most significant proposals for land use change in the town since the 1947 Town Plan.
- 2.15 At the heart of the proposals is the creation of family-friendly neighbourhoods with beautiful, green public spaces and parks. The plan will re-connect the revitalised town centre with the amazing opportunities along the Mersey waterfront, and will make the most of the town's iconic heritage and buildings. The changes already underway at Wirral Waters, Wirral Growth Company's new office quarter and market in the town centre, and the opening of Eureka! Mersey in 2022, are tangible evidence that major change is underway.
- 2.16 Birkenhead 2040 divides Birkenhead into several distinct neighbourhoods:

Figure 2.3 - Wirral 2040 Neighbourhood Map



Source: An Introduction to Birkenhead 2040, 2021

- **Central Birkenhead** – Covering the high street (Grange Road, the Pyramids and the Pavements shopping areas, Birkenhead Market, Europa Boulevard and Hamilton Square) and the first phase of the proposed Dock Branch Park
- **Birkenhead's Waterfront** – Potentially the most underutilised asset across the Framework, Birkenhead's waterfront area – an industrial legacy with an iconic future, stretching from Cammell Laird in the south right through to Egerton Docks and Tower Road
- **Hind Street Urban Village** – The development area on and surrounding the former Gas Works to the south-east of Central Birkenhead – the southern gateway of Birkenhead Central Station and the location of the southern stretch of the proposed Dock Branch Park

- **Wirral Waters And Portside** – Birkenhead’s vibrant port and associated land, the strategically significant Wirral Waters scheme and early phase dockside development areas, for which masterplanning and Outline Planning Permission is in place and in the process of being delivered
- **Hamilton Park** – The community within Central Birkenhead’s fringe, the area between Birkenhead Park and Wirral Waters and the most prominent legacy of the Laird Grid in Birkenhead
- **Northside and Scotts Quay** – The legacy of the docks and its industrial hinterland – the land between them and the M53 and A59 corridor, considered collectively through the Framework process but with area specific recommendations reflecting the distinct geography and opportunities across this neighbourhood to be taken forward separately
- **Seacombe Riverside Corridor** – Wallasey’s southern waterfront and Ferry gateway closely connected to Birkenhead’s northern waterfront – connecting Birkenhead to Wallasey and New Brighton and Birkenhead’s communities with their waterfront
- **Bidston Moss and Dock** – The remains of the dock located at the head of Wallasey Pool, accommodating both strategic open space and reclaimed land available for development purposes

2.17 These neighbourhoods will be referred to throughout this report.

### 3 Existing Evidence

3.1 We set out below the existing evidence base:

#### H1 - Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2020

3.2 Wallasey and suburban Birkenhead have the lowest rental values in Wirral.

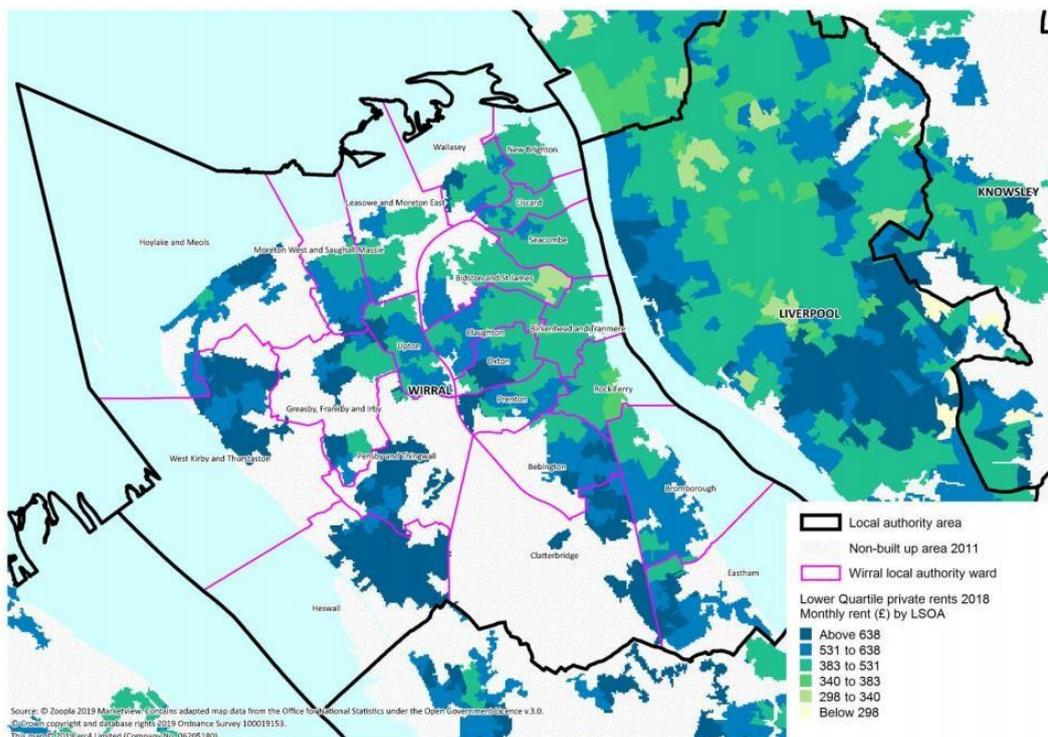
**Table 3.1 - Lower Quartile and Median Rents by sub-area, 2018**

Sub-area	Lower quartile (£ each month)	Median (£ each month)
SA1 Wallasey	451	498
SA2 Commercial Core/SA3 Suburban Birkenhead	451	494
SA4 Bromborough & Eastham	550	624
SA5 Mid-Wirral	524	594
SA6 Hoylake and West Kirby	598	693
SA7 Heswall	676	750
SA8 Rural Areas	650	785
<b>Wirral Borough</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>550</b>

Source: SHMA by ARC 4, 2018

3.3 The peripheral areas have stronger rents and yields.

**Figure 3.1 - Wirral Rental Value Bands**



Source: SHMA by ARC 4, 2018

- 3.4 Birkenhead is generally in rent band £383 - £531 pcm, with some lower values in Bidston and St James, and some higher values in Seacombe.

## 4 New Build Achieved Values

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- 4.1 One scheme in 2018/2019 was found in Birkenhead's housing market with a particularly large number of transactions; This is Minshull Way, by Wise Living Homes. 43 properties were sold here between 10/08/2018 and 09/08/2019. This is outside of the Wirral 2040 area of analysis, lying immediately south east of Hind Street Urban Village.
- 4.2 They are all terraced and semi-detached properties, ranging in psm value from £112,995 to £144,995 psm for terraced, and from £109,995 to £154,995 psm for semi-detached.
- 4.3 The floor areas for all dwellings range from 69 to 89 sqm, and the unit values range from £109,995 to £132,248.
- 4.4 The psm values across the scheme ranged from £1,528 to £1,803 psm:

**Table 4.1 - Minshull Way Transactions**

Development	House Name/ No.	Street	Town	Postcode	Property Type	Date of Sale	Floor Area (sqm)	Sale Price (£)	Achieved £ psm	Source	Floor area source
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	520	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	07/12/2018	76	£131,995.00	£1,737.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	514	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	27/11/2018	87	£139,995.00	£1,609.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	512	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	15/11/2018	87	£139,995.00	£1,609.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	518	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	09/11/2018	87	£139,995.00	£1,609.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	516	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	26/10/2018	87	£139,995.00	£1,609.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	526	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	05/10/2018	72	£111,995.00	£1,555.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	534	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	28/09/2018	69	£111,995.00	£1,623.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	536	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	28/09/2018	69	£111,995.00	£1,623.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	530	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	31/08/2018	69	£111,995.00	£1,623.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	532	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	31/08/2018	69	£111,995.00	£1,623.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	528	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Semi Detached	30/08/2018	72	£109,995.00	£1,528.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	19	COXHEATH	Birkenhead	CH42 2ER	Semi Detached	28/02/2019	77	£132,500.00	£1,721.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	1	COXHEATH	Birkenhead	CH42 2ER	Semi Detached	21/12/2018	87	£139,495.00	£1,603.00	Land Registry	EPC

Development	House Name/ No.	Street	Town	Postcode	Property Type	Date of Sale	Floor Area (sqm)	Sale Price (£)	Achieved £ psm	Source	Floor area source
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	9	COXHEATH	Birkenhead	CH42 2ER	Semi Detached	10/08/2018	85	£134,995.00	£1,588.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	2	CANTERBURY ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2EQ	Semi Detached	28/06/2019	84	£144,995.00	£1,726.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	4	CANTERBURY ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2EQ	Semi Detached	27/06/2019	69	£118,995.00	£1,725.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	6	CANTERBURY ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2EQ	Semi Detached	27/06/2019	89	£154,995.00	£1,742.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	8	CANTERBURY ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2EQ	Semi Detached	14/12/2018	89	£137,995.00	£1,551.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	16	TONBRIDGE CLOSE	Birkenhead	CH42 2EE	Semi Detached	30/04/2019	87	£149,995.00	£1,724.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	14	TONBRIDGE CLOSE	Birkenhead	CH42 2EE	Semi Detached	26/04/2019	87	£147,995.00	£1,701.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	4	TONBRIDGE CLOSE	Birkenhead	CH42 2EE	Semi Detached	29/03/2019	77	£134,995.00	£1,753.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	6	TONBRIDGE CLOSE	Birkenhead	CH42 2EE	Semi Detached	29/03/2019	89	£145,995.00	£1,640.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	6	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2EB	Semi Detached	31/05/2019	77	£135,995.00	£1,766.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	2	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2EB	Semi Detached	19/12/2018	76	£131,995.00	£1,737.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	8	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2EB	Semi Detached	17/12/2018	72	£112,995.00	£1,569.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	4	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2EB	Semi Detached	07/12/2018	76	£131,995.00	£1,737.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	11	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2BW	Semi Detached	08/03/2019	87	£139,495.00	£1,603.00	Land Registry	EPC

Development	House Name/ No.	Street	Town	Postcode	Property Type	Date of Sale	Floor Area (sqm)	Sale Price (£)	Achieved £ psm	Source	Floor area source
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	1	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2BW	Semi Detached	14/12/2018	72	£112,995.00	£1,569.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	9	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2BW	Semi Detached	14/12/2018	69	£113,995.00	£1,652.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	9A	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2BW	Semi Detached	14/12/2018	69	£113,995.00	£1,652.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	522	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Terraced	30/11/2018	76	£129,995.00	£1,710.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	524	NEW CHESTER ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2ES	Terraced	26/10/2018	84	£134,995.00	£1,607.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	7	COXHEATH	Birkenhead	CH42 2ER	Terraced	30/11/2018	76	£129,995.00	£1,710.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	5	COXHEATH	Birkenhead	CH42 2ER	Terraced	12/10/2018	77	£127,995.00	£1,662.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	1	CANTERBURY ROAD	Birkenhead	CH42 2EQ	Terraced	12/04/2019	76	£136,995.00	£1,803.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	10	TONBRIDGE CLOSE	Birkenhead	CH42 2EE	Terraced	09/08/2019	76	£134,995.00	£1,776.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	8	TONBRIDGE CLOSE	Birkenhead	CH42 2EE	Terraced	12/04/2019	83	£144,995.00	£1,747.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	12	TONBRIDGE CLOSE	Birkenhead	CH42 2EE	Terraced	29/03/2019	76	£133,995.00	£1,763.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	2	TONBRIDGE CLOSE	Birkenhead	CH42 2EE	Terraced	19/12/2018	89	£139,995.00	£1,573.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	10	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2EB	Terraced	19/12/2018	69	£113,995.00	£1,652.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	12	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2EB	Terraced	14/12/2018	69	£112,995.00	£1,638.00	Land Registry	EPC

Development	House Name/ No.	Street	Town	Postcode	Property Type	Date of Sale	Floor Area (sqm)	Sale Price (£)	Achieved £ psm	Source	Floor area source
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	5	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2BW	Terraced	08/03/2019	77	£130,495.00	£1,695.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	3	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2BW	Terraced	22/02/2019	76	£131,495.00	£1,730.00	Land Registry	EPC
Minshull Way - Wise Living Homes	7	FAVERSHAM WAY	Birkenhead	CH42 2BW	Terraced	14/12/2018	76	£131,495.00	£1,730.00	Land Registry	EPC

Source: Land Registry and EPC

4.5 Based on the sizes, these are mostly 2 and 3 bedroom properties. Psm values broadly fall between £1,600 and £1,800 psm.

## 5 Second hand Achieved Values

### Wirral-Wide Postcodes

5.1 We have reviewed the data (all house types including flats) for each postcode on a price per square metre (£ psm) basis, this allows the high and low values across the area to be identified.

**Table 5.1 - Wirral Second Hand Values**

Postcode	Minimum £psm	Average £psm	Median £ psm	Maximum £psm
CH41 0	£1,299	£1,609	£1,500	£2,052
CH41 2	£816	£1,070	£966	£1,533
CH41 3	£1,122	£1,468	£1,392	£1,891
CH41 4	£1,067	£1,067	£1,067	£1,067
CH41 5	£1,464	£1,464	£1,464	£1,464
CH41 7	£658	£1,048	£1,155	£1,222
CH41 8	£978	£1,534	£1,657	£1,790
CH41 9	£1,472	£1,899	£1,899	£2,326
CH42 0	£1,265	£1,538	£1,589	£1,761
CH42 1	£793	£851	£851	£908
CH42 2	£1,071	£1,245	£1,233	£1,441
CH42 4	£1,023	£1,456	£1,327	£2,500
CH42 5	£934	£1,091	£1,073	£1,264
CH42 6	£1,154	£1,894	£1,932	£2,867
CH42 7	£880	£1,090	£1,067	£1,378
CH42 8	£1,282	£2,123	£2,196	£2,822
CH42 9	£1,188	£1,737	£1,494	£2,774

CH43 0	£1,292	£1,979	£1,947	£2,727
CH43 1	£1,341	£1,901	£1,583	£3,240
CH43 2	£1,294	£2,020	£2,143	£2,801
CH43 3	£1,536	£1,932	£1,989	£2,241
CH43 4	£1,175	£1,235	£1,235	£1,295
CH43 5	£1,388	£2,865	£2,177	£11,184
CH43 6	£1,759	£2,443	£2,488	£2,921
CH43 7	£1,188	£2,000	£1,993	£2,865
CH43 8	£1,128	£1,721	£1,869	£2,391
CH43 9	£1,348	£2,013	£2,041	£2,467
CH44 0	£1,000	£1,224	£1,165	£1,508
CH44 1	£1,080	£1,215	£1,166	£1,447
CH44 2	£1,389	£1,460	£1,448	£1,556
CH44 3	£1,546	£1,707	£1,687	£1,907
CH44 4	£806	£1,140	£1,063	£1,721
CH44 5	£909	£1,051	£1,111	£1,133
CH44 6	£699	£1,021	£875	£1,490
CH44 7	£1,334	£1,334	£1,334	£1,334
CH44 8	£904	£1,397	£1,280	£2,017
CH44 9	£727	£895	£928	£1,011
CH45 0	£1,293	£2,124	£1,566	£4,261
CH45 1	£1,071	£1,608	£1,512	£2,373
CH45 2	£1,319	£1,706	£1,710	£2,083

CH45 3	£1,434	£2,049	£2,074	£2,596
CH45 4	£1,090	£1,812	£1,650	£3,788
CH45 5	£1,201	£1,705	£1,644	£2,257
CH45 6	£1,618	£1,941	£1,857	£2,348
CH45 7	£988	£1,544	£1,429	£2,667
CH45 8	£1,269	£2,098	£1,968	£3,672
CH45 9	£1,223	£1,598	£1,529	£2,397
CH46 0	£1,927	£2,677	£2,383	£4,412
CH46 1	£1,053	£1,124	£1,124	£1,196
CH46 2	£1,268	£1,492	£1,593	£1,614
CH46 3	£2,450	£2,504	£2,504	£2,558
CH46 6	£862	£2,277	£2,333	£3,295
CH46 7	£1,820	£2,144	£1,959	£2,652
CH46 8	£1,532	£1,560	£1,560	£1,586
CH46 9	£2,361	£2,865	£2,865	£3,368
CH47 0	£1,667	£1,667	£1,667	£1,667
CH47 1	£3,377	£3,888	£3,684	£4,808
CH47 2	£2,053	£2,438	£2,436	£2,754
CH47 3	£2,315	£3,296	£3,303	£4,849
CH47 4	£1,754	£1,878	£1,898	£1,982
CH47 5	£2,344	£2,765	£2,344	£2,344
CH47 6	£3,108	£3,133	£3,133	£3,158
CH47 7	£2,098	£2,663	£2,753	£2,939

CH47 8	£3,662	£3,662	£3,662	£3,662
CH47 9	£1,346	£1,346	£1,346	£1,346
CH48 0	£1,972	£2,686	£2,528	£3,684
CH48 1	£2,226	£3,343	£3,384	£4,570
CH48 2	£2,356	£2,832	£2,778	£3,418
CH48 3	£2,727	£3,290	£3,419	£3,600
CH48 4	£2,492	£2,651	£2,651	£2,810
CH48 5	£2,285	£3,155	£2,958	£4,221
CH48 6	£2,714	£2,894	£2,842	£3,125
CH48 7	£3,397	£3,496	£3,496	£3,594
CH48 8	£2,048	£3,091	£3,196	£3,553
CH48 9	£2,564	£3,061	£2,942	£3,797
CH49 0	£1,500	£1,949	£1,715	£2,846
CH49 1	£2,123	£2,622	£2,568	£3,077
CH49 2	£1,591	£2,446	£2,532	£3,084
CH49 3	£2,163	£3,204	£3,333	£3,936
CH49 4	£1,835	£2,490	£2,374	£3,478
CH49 5	£1,364	£1,757	£1,702	£2,161
CH49 6	£1,307	£2,037	£2,129	£2,500
CH49 7	£1,162	£1,299	£1,250	£1,485
CH49 8	£1,315	£1,435	£1,477	£1,513
CH49 9	£1,386	£1,412	£1,412	£1,438
CH60 0	£2,656	£3,282	£3,326	£3,819

<b>CH60 1</b>	£2,667	£2,797	£2,844	£2,881
<b>CH60 2</b>	£2,464	£3,703	£3,615	£5,317
<b>CH60 3</b>	£3,165	£3,354	£3,399	£3,497
<b>CH60 4</b>	£1,852	£3,288	£3,619	£4,878
<b>CH60 5</b>	£2,211	£2,832	£2,911	£3,373
<b>CH60 6</b>	£3,019	£3,424	£3,200	£4,054
<b>CH60 7</b>	£1,857	£2,537	£2,714	£3,235
<b>CH60 8</b>	£2,789	£3,075	£3,194	£3,240
<b>CH60 9</b>	£2,778	£3,155	£3,170	£3,503
<b>CH61 0</b>	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
<b>CH61 1</b>	£2,075	£2,754	£2,641	£3,796
<b>CH61 3</b>	£1,869	£2,336	£2,336	£2,804
<b>CH61 4</b>	£2,212	£2,844	£2,692	£4,167
<b>CH61 5</b>	£1,856	£2,392	£2,443	£2,829
<b>CH61 6</b>	£2,264	£2,674	£2,475	£2,264
<b>CH61 7</b>	£2,234	£2,821	£2,821	£3,408
<b>CH61 8</b>	£1,553	£2,266	£2,303	£2,757
<b>CH61 9</b>	£2,000	£2,734	£2,800	£3,382
<b>CH62 0</b>	£2,198	£2,428	£2,500	£2,640
<b>CH62 1</b>	£1,200	£1,436	£1,439	£1,571
<b>CH62 2</b>	£1,379	£2,313	£2,291	£3,138
<b>CH62 3</b>	£1,579	£1,886	£1,789	£2,527
<b>CH62 4</b>	£1,143	£2,158	£2,399	£2,692

CH62 5	£1,277	£1,280	£1,280	£1,284
CH62 6	£2,061	£2,531	£2,452	£3,102
CH62 7	£1,231	£1,910	£1,884	£2,379
CH62 8	£1,101	£2,039	£2,306	£2,499
CH62 9	£1,224	£1,699	£1,538	£2,318
CH63 0	£1,636	£2,632	£2,648	£3,933
CH63 2	£1,582	£2,528	£2,411	£3,545
CH63 3	£1,071	£2,236	£2,301	£2,955
CH63 5	£1,703	£2,420	£2,502	£2,872
CH63 6	£2,995	£2,995	£2,995	£2,995
CH63 7	£1,580	£2,075	£1,956	£2,701
CH63 8	£874	£1,909	£1,988	£2,690
CH63 9	£2,171	£2,714	£2,717	£2,717

Source: Land Registry and EPC data 2021

- 5.2 The postcode with the highest average £psm is CH47 1 at £3,888 and the postcode with the lowest average £psm is CH42 1 at £851.
- 5.3 The postcode with the lowest value of £psm is CH44 6 at £699 and the postcode with the highest value £psm is CH43 5 at £11,184.

## Birkenhead

- 5.4 The most relevant postcodes for this study are the ones which fall under Birkenhead (CH41 0, CH41 2, CH41 3, CH41 4, CH41 5, CH41 7, CH41 8, CH41 9, CH42 0, CH42 1, CH42 2, CH42 3, CH42 4, CH42 5, CH42 6, CH42 7, CH42 8, CH42 9).

**Table 5.2 - Birkenhead Second Hand Values**

Postcode	Minimum £psm	Average £psm	Median £ psm	Maximum £psm
CH41 0	£1,299	£1,609	£1,500	£2,052
CH41 2	£816	£1,070	£966	£1,533

<b>CH41 3</b>	£1,122	£1,468	£1,392	£1,891
<b>CH41 4</b>	£1,067	£1,067	£1,067	£1,067
<b>CH41 5</b>	£1,464	£1,464	£1,464	£1,464
<b>CH41 7</b>	£658	£1,048	£1,155	£1,222
<b>CH41 8</b>	£978	£1,534	£1,657	£1,790
<b>CH41 9</b>	£1,472	£1,899	£1,899	£2,326
<b>CH42 0</b>	£1,265	£1,538	£1,589	£1,761
<b>CH42 1</b>	£793	£851	£851	£908
<b>CH42 2</b>	£1,071	£1,245	£1,233	£1,441
<b>CH42 4</b>	£1,023	£1,456	£1,327	£2,500
<b>CH42 5</b>	£934	£1,091	£1,073	£1,264
<b>CH42 6</b>	£1,154	£1,894	£1,932	£2,867
<b>CH42 7</b>	£880	£1,090	£1,067	£1,378
<b>CH42 8</b>	£1,282	£2,123	£2,196	£2,822
<b>CH42 9</b>	£1,188	£1,737	£1,494	£2,774

Source: Land Registry and EPC data 2021

- 5.5 The highest minimum £psm for the Birkenhead postcodes is £1,464 at CH41 5, which is at the border between Central Birkenhead and Birkenhead's Waterfront. The lowest minimum £psm is £816 which is at CH41 2, which is the most inland, westerly lobe of Central Birkenhead.
- 5.6 The highest average £psm for the Birkenhead postcodes is £2,123 which is at CH42 8, south of the Birkenhead 2040 study area and inland. The lowest average £psm is £851, which is at CH42 1, which is south of the study area and at the coast.
- 5.7 The highest median £psm for the Birkenhead postcodes is £2,196 which is at CH42 8, which is south of the study area and inland. The lowest average £psm is £815 which is at CH42 1, which is south of the study area and at the coast.
- 5.8 The highest maximum £psm for the Birkenhead postcodes is £2,867 which is at CH42 6, which lies south of the study area. The lowest maximum £psm is £908 which is at CH42 1, which lies south of the study area at the coast.

## Further Birkenhead Value study and Mapping

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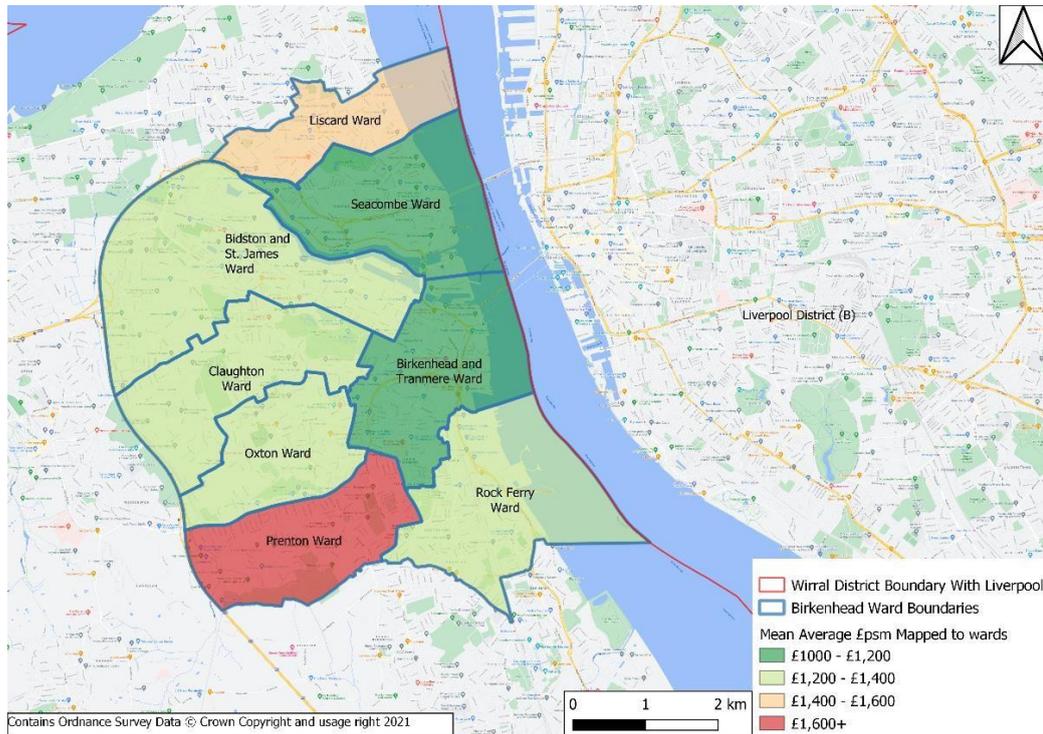
- 5.9 We supplemented the initial study above with a second hand value database focussing specifically on properties in Birkenhead and its immediate surroundings, according to the land registry. Approximately 610 data points between January 2020 and August 2021 were cross-referenced with EPC data to find the square metre values. Having done this, we geocoded the data to get eastings and northings so we could feed it into a GIS package in the form of a CSV file.
- 5.10 We analysed the data by absolute value (price paid), and by value per square meter.
- 5.11 We then mapped the data to the wards containing and immediately surrounding Birkenhead. This way, a representation of property price variance, on average, within different parts of Birkenhead (by ward), could be achieved.
- 5.12 Please note, some of the wards included are not considered to be Birkenhead, but are included for context and completeness. For instance, Seacombe is technically Wallasey, yet part of it is included in the Birkenhead 2040 vision due to its functional role as an extension of Birkenhead. Liscard forms a northern collar around seacombe, so is included for context.
- 5.13 In addition, we produced dot maps, to show a finer-grain of detail in the particular value pockets.

## Choropleth Ward Values

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- 5.14 Devaluing to the ward level shows at a high level where the higher and lower value zones of the Birkenhead area are.

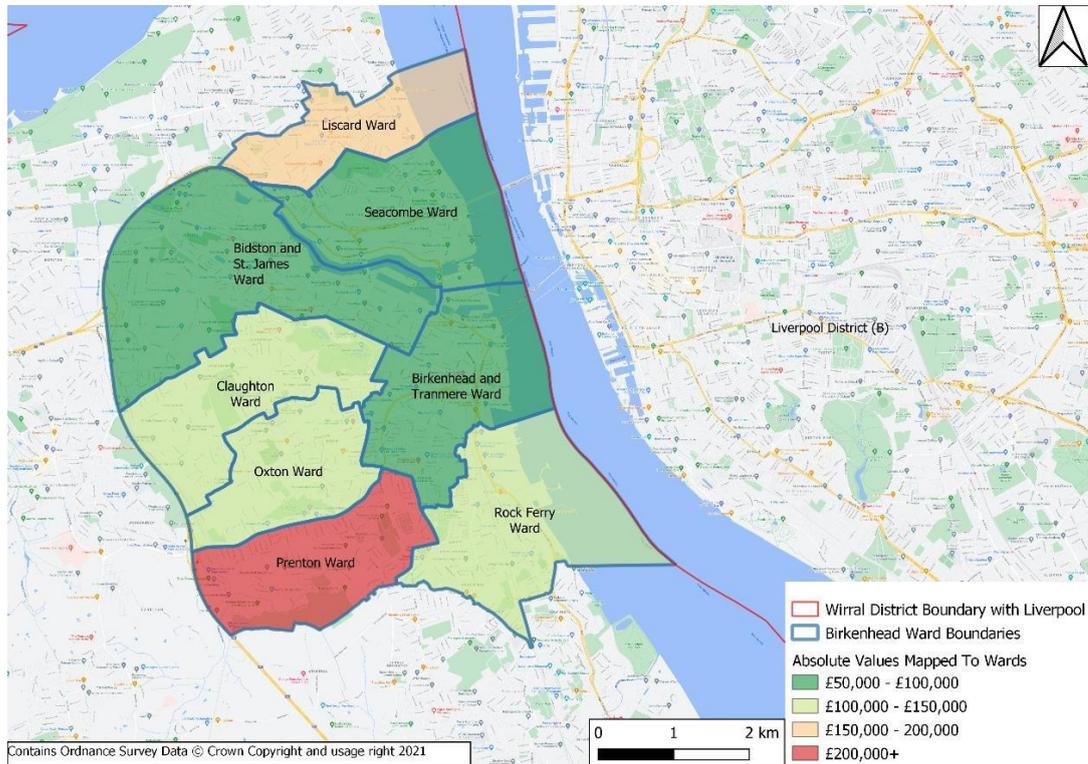
**Figure 5.1 - PSM Values Mapped To Wards**



Source: AspinallVerdi September 2021

- 5.15 The highest value ward in and around Birkenhead is Prenton, with PSM values on average exceeding £1,600 psm.
- 5.16 The second highest values are in Liscard, immediately north of Seacombe.
- 5.17 The next highest wards are Oxton, Cloughton, Rock Ferry, Bidston & St James, wards, with values in and immediately outside Birkenhead being on average between £1,200 - £1,400.
- 5.18 The lowest value wards are Birkenhead & Tranmere, where Birkenhead 'proper' is; and Seacombe. The values here on average fall between £1,000 and £1,200.
- 5.19 To see through another lens, we present the values by ward as absolute values in the map below.

**Figure 5.2 - Absolute Values Mapped to Wards**



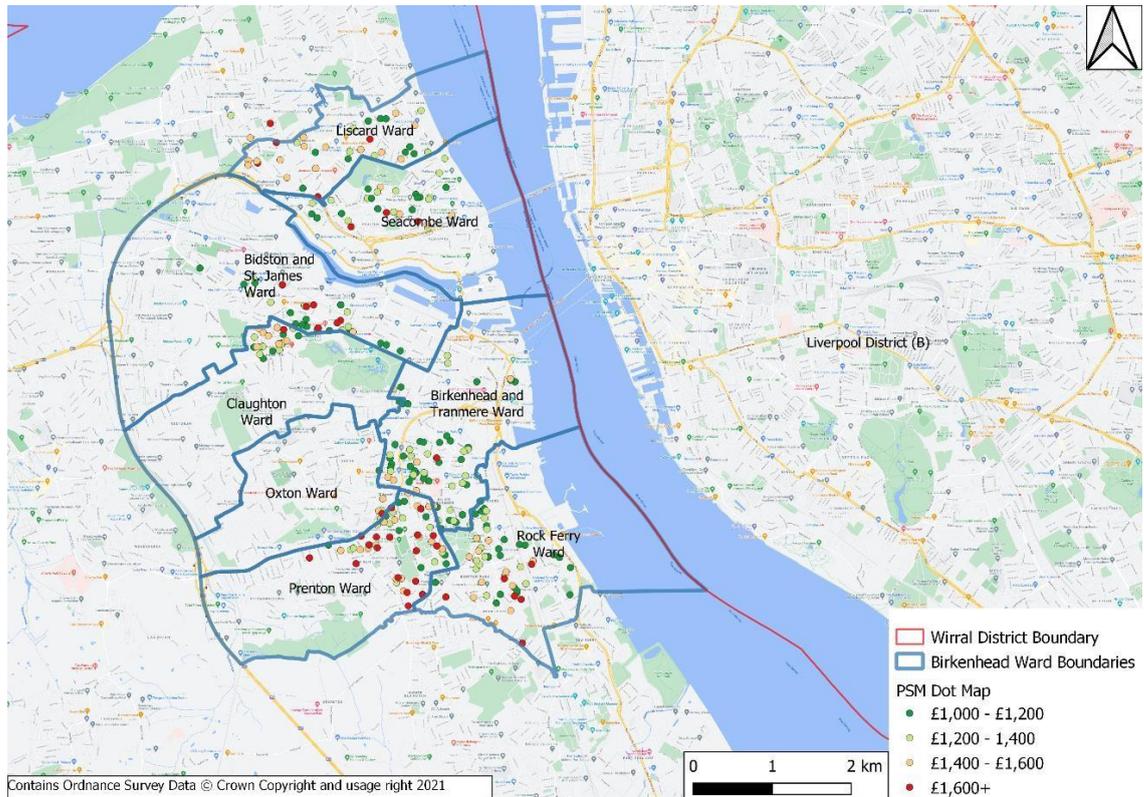
Source: AspinallVerdi September 2021

5.20 The value hierarchy is the same as the PSM values, with the notable exception of Bidston & St James, which joins the lowest value banding in absolute terms. This ward, along with Seacombe and Birkenhead & Tranmere, have average property transactions between £50,000 and £100,000 in and around Birkenhead.

### Dot Map Values

5.21 Since this study focusses specifically on Birkenhead, rather than wards per se, we have also produced point or 'dot' maps, showing specifically where higher and lower values cluster in and around Birkenhead. Each dot represents one transaction, however due to scale of presentation, some dots may be obscured by others:

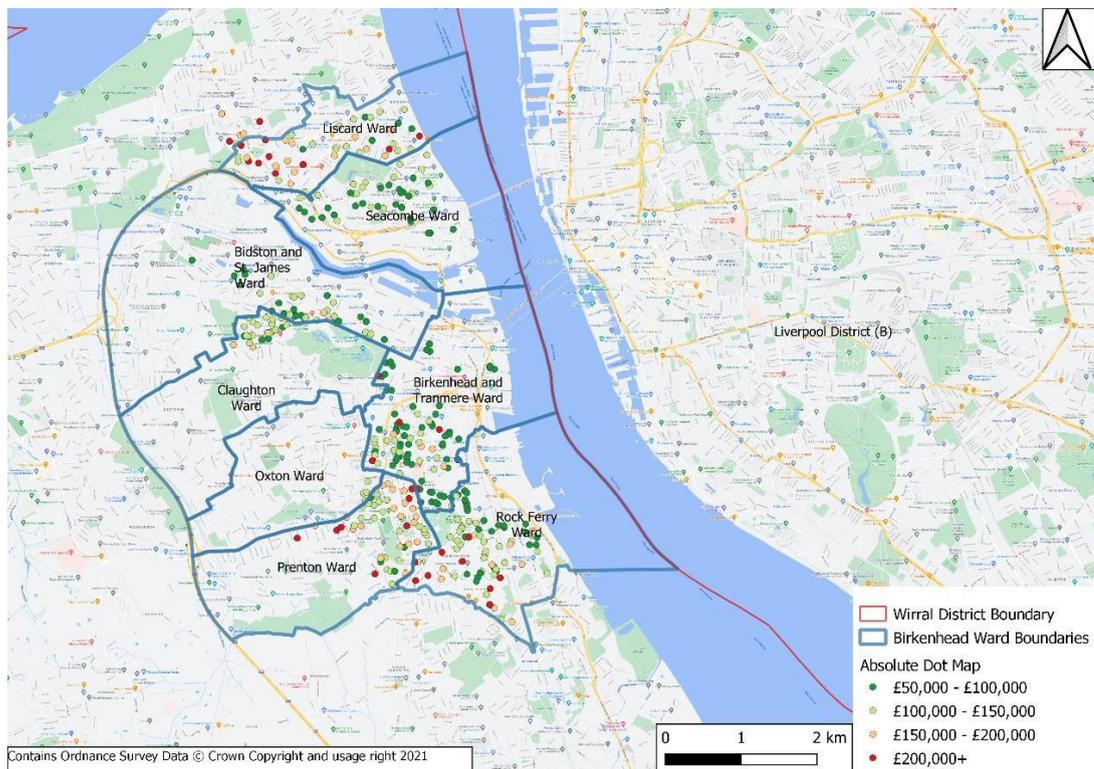
Figure 5.3 - £psm Dot Map



Source: AspinallVerdi September 2021

- 5.22 There is a high psm value transaction cluster in the laird street area of North Birkenhead, in the Bidston and St James Ward, an otherwise reasonable low value ward by £psm in terms of Birkenhead values.
- 5.23 Seacombe, the lowest value band by ward, has a cluster of high value transactions around the Poulton area.
- 5.24 Prenton, a high value ward, has some lower value transactions coalescing around the northern and eastern boundary.

Figure 5.4 - Absolute Values Dot Map



Source: AspinallVerdi September 2021

- 5.25 Absolute values paint a different picture, with Seacombe firmly in the lower 2 value bands territory across the board. The Cloughton and the Bidston & St James wards are also consistently low value, with the exception, of some £150,000 - £200,000 transactions mixed in.
- 5.26 Taking the dot maps together, the Birkenhead and Tranmere ward has the highest value activity near the higher Tranmere area, and at the boundary with Oxton.

## 6 New Build Asking Prices

### Wirral Waters, Birkenhead

- 6.1 Wirral Waters is a neighbourhood led project. It will be phased with early projects clustering in the Four Bridges, Northbank and MEA Park neighbourhood areas. Wirral Waters includes preparing over 75 acres of land and demolishing 20 acres of derelict buildings.
- 6.2 Four bridges is a mixed use neighbourhood including educational, retail, leisure and commercial office developments. This includes Maritime Knowledge Hub which is office and education based. It also includes Hythe and Kingsgate which are both office based and Egerton Village which is office and retail. Wirral Met College is included within the Four bridges which is education based and Tower Road Streetscape Project which is infrastructure.

- 6.3 Northbank is a mixed tenure residential-led quarter. This development provides access to the water's edge and is close to other neighbourhoods. Northbank includes Legacy Project, East Float, Wirral Belong Village and East Float Apartments which are all residential.
- 6.4 East Float is made up of townhouses and rowhouses. There are 3-5 bedroom townhouses and there are 7 in total on the market at present. The asking prices range from £345,000 - £375,000 with an average price of £2,527 psm.
- 6.5 There are 4 rowhouses on the marker at present for this development between 2-4 bedrooms. The asking prices range from £210,000 - £300,000 with an average of £2,630 psm.
- 6.6 MEA Park is a waterside manufacturing, logistics and distribution campus with motorway access, rail and quayside wharfage. MEA Park is government supported and is a job led industrial hub where companies can undertake commercial activity, administration and manufacturing.
- 6.7 Marina View is a mixed use residential and commercial quarter that provides access to Vittoria Pool and is also associated with marina landslide activities.
- 6.8 Vittoria Studios is mixed used with creative industries as their focus. Flexible living/workspaces, enclosed studios, galleries and exhibition spaces provide a transition into Hamilton Park to the south.
- 6.9 Sky City will become an international waterfront destination bringing culture, commercial, leisure and residential quarter capable of attracting new residents and employers. The visual of East Float combined with the tall building cluster and SkyCity Park centred along Vittoria Wharf, will establish a recognisable cityscape and profile from the River Mersey.

### The Alvanley Place, Birkenhead

- 6.10 The Alvanley Place is located on South Prenton Road with the postcode CH43 4XA. It is also located 13 minutes away from Liverpool City Centre and just over an hour away to Manchester via M602, M62. The Alavnley Place is a development with 44 apartments and there are 7 on the market at the moment, all 1-bedroom. The asking prices range from £85,000 - £95,000 but there are no floor areas available for this development.

### Heritage Park , Birkenhead

- 6.11 Heritage Park is located at 54 – 56 Park Road South, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH43 4UY. It is located 10 minutes away from Liverpool City Centre. The development is made up of 1-3 bedroom houses and 1-2 bedroom apartments. The asking prices range from £125,000 - £170,000. The houses have an average price of £2,097 psm and the apartments have an average price of £2,186 psm.

## Statham Gardens

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- 6.12 Statham Gardens is in the Bidston area of Birkenhead, close to transportation links that connect to Liverpool and the North West. Liverpool city centre and the M53 are less than 15 minutes away by car. The historic Birkenhead Park just a short distance away. There are currently 4, 4-bedroom detached houses on the market with asking prices of £325,000 - £345,000 with an average price of £2,610 psm.

## Gibson Park

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- 6.13 Gibson Park is a development in close proximity of Liverpool and Wirral Waters and is located in New Brighton, a town forming part of Wallasey, and 3.4 miles north of Birkenhead town centre. The development is made up of 1, 2, 3 & 4 bedroom apartments and range in price from £115,000 - £320,000. The average price for the development is £2,844 psm.

## The Docklands

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- 6.14 The Docklands is located in Birkenhead with great transportation links. The development consists of 2, 3 and 4-bedroom homes. The asking prices range from £119,995 - £176,995. The average price across the development is £1,788 psm.

## King's Hill

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- 6.15 King's Hill is a development by Bellway Homes located in Bromborough on the edge of Port Sunlight village, the historic village in southern Birkenhead that Lord Leverhulme built for his workers and their families and lies adjacent to the A41 New Chester Road and Dibbinsdale Brook.
- 6.16 The development has 98 new builds that are 3-4 bedroom homes. The achieved prices range from £241,995 - £294,995 with an average price of £2,585 psm.

## Quarry Mount

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- 6.17 Quarry Mount is a development located in New Brighton, Wallasey that consists of 9 3-storey townhouses. The development is located 0.5 miles from Vale Park and New Brighton Beach.
- 6.18 The development has achieved prices ranging from £215,000-£225,000 with an average price of £1,978 psm.

## Glenavon Park, Prenton

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- 6.19 Glenavon Park is a new-build development located in the Birkenhead suburb of Prenton which has a total of 32 dwellings arranged as 4-bedroom detached houses. 6 of the units in the development are marketed at shared ownership.
- 6.20 The development has achieved prices ranging from £354,950 - £404,950 with an average price of £2,545 psm.

### Blossom View, Bebington

- 6.21 Blossom View is a small 3-unit development located in Bebington situated within a predominantly residential area. The properties are 4-bedroom detached houses with a price range of £365,000 - £410,000 and an average price of £2,176 psm.

**Table 8.1 - Average asking price for new-build Developments (£psm)**

	Development	Average £psm
	Palladian Gardens	£2949
	Heritage Park (flats)	£2,186
	Heritage Park (houses)	£2,097
	Statham Gardens	£2,610



Gibson Park £2,844



East Float (townhouses) £2,527

East Float (rowhouses) £2,630



The Docklands £1,788



King's Hill, Bromborough £2,585 (Achieved)



Quarry Mount £1,978 (Achieved)



Glenavon Park £2,545 (Achieved)



Blossom View,  
Bebington £2,176 (Achieved)

Source: Aspinall Verdi research & EPC Register 2021

- 6.22 The development with the highest average £psm is Palladian Gardens located in Hooton, Wirral. The development with the lowest average £psm is The Docklands located in Birkenhead, which is also the most relevant new build development to this study.

## 7 Residential Value Assumptions and Conclusions

- 7.1 Based on the above, our assumptions for residential values in Birkenhead are as follows:

### Sale Value Assumptions

- 7.2 Based on all of the above evidence, we set out our value assumptions below:

**Table 7.1 - AV Table 3 Default Blank Style**

Dwelling type	Lower Range £ psm	Higher Range £ psm	Area assumption (sqm)	Lower Range Absolute Value	Higher Range Absolute Value
1 Bed Flat	£2,000	£2,550	50	£100,000	£127,500
2 Bed Flat	£2,000	£2,550	61	£128,100	£155,650
1 Bed House	£2,100	£2,700	58	£121,800	£156,600
2 Bed House	£2,100	£2,700	70	£147,000	£189,000
3 Bed House	£2,200	£2,800	84	£184,800	£235,200
4 Bed House	£2,200	£2,800	97	£213,400	£271,600
5 Bed House	£2,200	£2,800	110	£242,000	£308,000

Source: AspinallVerdi 2021

## Rental Value Assumptions

7.3 We found asking price evidence for rental values in Birkenhead, in addition to the existing evidence base for this:

**Table 7.2 - Flat Rental Asking Prices**

Property	Bedrooms	Asking Rent pcm	Comment
East Float Quay, Dock Road, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41	2	£700	Three floor, two bedroom,two bathroom apartment at the popular East Float Quay development,Dock Road, Birkenhead.
Willmer Road, Birkenhead, Wirral, Merseyside, CH42	2	£650	Two-bedroom duplex apartment situated in the popular and desirable area of Birkenhead.
27 Hamilton Square	2	£695	Newly renovated, overlooking Hamilton Square.
Old Chester Road, Birkenhead, Wirral, Merseyside, CH42	1	£520	All Inclusive bills, Fibre broadband included, newly refurbished, en-suite double room.
Canning Street, BIRKENHEAD	1	£550	First Floor apartment near Mersey Ferry terminal.
Mersey View, Birkenhead, Wirral, Merseyside, CH41	1	£525	Fully Furnished, high spec interior.

Source: Rightmove 2021

7.4 After reviewing the available evidence on Rightmove and the existing evidence base for rental flats, we set out below our rental assumptions for flats in Birkenhead.

**Table 7.3 – Second Hand Rental Value Assumptions**

Dwelling type	Rent pcm
1 Bed Flat	£550
2 Bed Flat	£680

Source: AspinallVerdi 2021

7.5 Based on this, and the evidence in the round, the newbuild flat rental assumptions are below:

**Table 7.4 - Newbuild Rental Value Assumptions**

<b>Dwelling type</b>	<b>Rent pcm</b>
1 Bed Flat	£610
2 Bed Flat	£770

Source: AspinallVerdi 2021

## Appendix 2 – Analysis on New Build Schemes

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**EAST FLOAT, WIRRAL WATERS - Sales and Comparables JANUARY 2022**

East Float Wirral Waters - Urban Splash/Peel RESERVATIONS							Comments
PLOT	TYPE	BEDS	BATHS	Sq Ft	PRICE	£/sq ft	
30	End Town House	3	2	1500	£384,000	£256	Exchanging w/c 17th Jan 2022
21	Mid Town House	4	3	1500	£362,000	£241	
16	End Town House	3	3	1500	£388,500	£259	
20	Mid Town House	4	3	1500	£362,000	£241	
27	Mid Town House	3	2	1500	£357,000	£238	
28	Mid Town House	3	2	1500	£356,750	£238	
13	Mid Row House	2	1	857	£210,000	£245	
<b>AVERAGES</b>					<b>£345,750</b>	<b>£246</b>	
Arrowe Brook Park, Arrowe Park, CH49 1SX - Bellway Homes							
Chandler	Semi Detached	3	2	937	£273,995	£292	
Mason	Detached	3	2	1043	£303,995	£291	
Cutler	Detached	4	2	1312	£381,995	£291	
<b>AVERAGES</b>					<b>£319,995</b>	<b>£292</b>	
Jellicoe Gardens, Moreton CH46 8SE Moreton - Bellway Homes							
Lymner	Detached	3	2	987	£259,995	£263	
Milliner	Detached	4	2	1271	£327,995	£258	
Bowyer	Detached	4	2	1338	£342,995	£256	
<b>AVERAGES</b>					<b>£310,328</b>	<b>£259</b>	
Jellicoe Gardens, Moreton, CH46 8SE - Ashberry Homes							
Betony	Semi Detached	3	1	750	£199,995	£267	
Angelica	Detached	4	2	1356	£338,995	£250	
<b>AVERAGES</b>					<b>£269,495</b>	<b>£258</b>	
The Docklands, Beaufort Road, CH41 7AG - Keepmoat Homes							
Leven	Semi Detached	2	1	639	£144,995	£227	
Danbury	Semi Detached	3	2	818	£171,995	£210	
Bamburgh	Semi Detached	3	2	1005	£189,995	£189	
Knightsbridge	Semi Detached	3	2	818	£169,995	£208	
<b>AVERAGES</b>					<b>£169,245</b>	<b>£209</b>	
Gibson Park, Wallasey, CH46 8SE -							
202	Apartment	2	1	643	£160,000	£249	
	Apartment	2	1	676	£172,500	£255	
LG 03	Apartment	2	1	695	£175,000	£252	
Phase 2	Apartment	2	1	657	£184,950	£282	
<b>AVERAGES</b>					<b>£173,113</b>	<b>£259</b>	

**Warranty Provider:** Checkmate

**Product Overview:** The houses sit on a concrete foundation and are built with a fully insulated timber frame system. The roof is an insulated timber frame finished with single ply membrane (estimated U Value 0.1)

**Type of Construction:** The Houses are by Urban Splash Modular in our Factory and will be manufactured in accordance with Building Regulations (BOPAS certified) and Checkmate Warranties. The construction type is off-site timber frame

**Cladding :** Power coated aluminium

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## Appendix 3 – Urban Splash, East Float

## WIRRAL WATERS UPDATE



### PLOTS/HOUSEDYPES/PRICING

Type	Sq Ft	Aspect	Beds	Asking Price	£/sq ft
Mid-Town House	1500	Dock	3	£350,000	£233
End Town House	1500	Dock	3	£365,000	£243
Row House – 2 Storey	850	Gardens	2	£210,000	£247
Row House – 2.5 Storey	1119	Roof Terrace/Gardens	3	£295,000	£263
Row House – 3 Storey	1248	Gardens	3	£285,000	£228
Row House – 3 Storey	1248	Gardens	4	£300,000	£240
<b>AVERAGES</b>				<b>£300,000</b>	<b>£242</b>

### RESERVATIONS

Plot	Type	Sq Ft	Aspect	Beds	Asking Price	£/sq ft
16	End Town House	1500	Dock	3	£375,000	£250
20	Mid-Town House	1500	Dock	4	£362,000	£241
21	Mid-Town House	1500	Dock	4	£362,000	£241
28	Mid-Town House	1500	Dock	3	£356,750	£238
30	End Town House	1500	Dock	3	£384,000	£256
<b>AVERAGES</b>					<b>£367,950</b>	<b>£245</b>

### DEMOGRAPHICS (Buyers and Interest)

- Good mix of interest from local, regional, and national buyers.
- Interest from local buyers is focused more on home movers than first time buyers/renters.
- Really good interest from buyers looking to move “up north” (some returning to the Wirral) from the south.
- Interest from all ages from young FTB’s through to an elderly couple (in their 70’s buying).

### COMMENTS

- Show pavilion is open but unrestricted access is not available until mid/end of September.
- First houses expected to arrive mid-September.
- Interest has been strong across most price ranges.
- Interest has probably been stronger for Town House (the more expensive) which has surprised us as we expected more interest at the lower price points. May be due to all the Town Houses overlooking the dock and the Row Houses overlooking the internal gardens.
- Some reluctance from buyers to commit until they can see the actual product on site.

## Appendix 4 – Developer Consultation Report

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Birkenhead Housing Market Study – Developer  
Consultations



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Wirral MBC  
Final Report

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Date December 2021

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Private and Confidential



# Contents

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## Executive Summary

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### Report

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### Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consultation Proforma

## Executive Summary

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- ES 1 Birkenhead is the most important economic and social centre in Wirral, but it has suffered from a lack of investment in recent years. This has been due to a combination of events. The council has a clear ambition and strategy to start a new era of town centre development and a repopulation of the town.
- ES 2 The Birkenhead Regeneration Framework sets out ambitious and aspirational proposals for the regeneration of Birkenhead as an 'urban garden 'city' based on strong sustainability and low carbon principles. The vision and aspirations for the regeneration of Birkenhead envisage it being transformed as a place where people of all incomes, ages and backgrounds would want to live as a choice.
- ES 3 It is important that Birkenhead's new housing offer is not dominated by smaller 1 and 2 bedroom apartments but must meet the requirements of families through the provision of 3 bedroom and larger dwellings (houses and apartments). Development sites and neighbourhoods should provide for a mix of housing ranging from single occupants to multi-generational in extended families' provision.
- ES 4 The principal objective of the SMT exercise is to provide comfort that these proposals are not the visionary dreams of architects and urban designers, but instead provide a pragmatic balance of a vision that is grounded in commercial reality and gives a 'warts and all perspective on the prospects of realising viable and successful developments which can be the harbinger of a reimagined, repopulated and redeveloped Birkenhead.
- ES 5 We have been keen to engage with developers who know the Wirral and how it fits into the wider Liverpool city region and also its area of influence which extends into Cheshire and North Wales. Everybody spoken to knows the issues that are faced and acknowledges that Birkenhead is not where it should be, but has a potential to be much more than it currently is.
- ES 6 Wirral has lots of potential but many areas, particularly on the eastern side of the borough, suffer from the challenge of financial viability due to low values. As such, innovative funding solutions and public sector support are required to make development happen.
- ES 7 It is clear that the regeneration of Birkenhead will not be delivered solely by private housebuilders delivering standard housing types. It will need to be delivered by a complete cross section of the industry. We have attempted to cover this diversity in our consultation.
- ES 8 Urban Splash feels that it is an enormous plus to be able to deal with sites of scale with the transformational opportunities they provide.

- ES 9 Birkenhead is a “fantastic opportunity” and its time is about to come. In the words of Sandy Livingstone of Onward “it should work, but for some reason it has been left to struggle.” its location opposite Liverpool, the opportunities presented by the wider peninsula means that it should work. “It needs a long-term view on valuecreation and it will need critical mass to create the shift in the market to create a new residentialand business eco system.”
- ES 10 To realise the economic benefits of the re population the wider offer needs to be compelling. People need to live, work and fundamentally play/spend in the centre! The economic growth will be key to the success of the offer.
- ES 11 The focus should be upon place making to change and improve the perception and image of Birkenhead.
- ES 12 The quality of the residential offer will be critical, especially within early phases of delivery when the other elements of the masterplan have not yet been delivered. A short term USP for Birkenhead must be articulated. The facilities to support this community (schools etc) will be key and need to be factored in at early stages.
- ES 13 Some of these listed above are highlighted nationally as exemplars of how to build and create a residential market, when traditional housebuilders will claim that there are too many barriers to development is not possible in this location.
- ES 14 Encouragingly, the developers behind all of these pioneer developments would be interested in developing in partnership with Wirral Council in Birkenhead.
- ES 15 Bellway describes the current picture. “In the current market, viability of development in Birkenhead is a concern for the reasons listed below.
- Low sales values - a traditional 2 storey 3 bed semi on Keepmoat’s Docklands scheme has a gross asking price of £189/sq.ft (potential net price circa £184/sq.ft) 2.5 and 3 storey dwellings will be £20-£30/sq.ft less than those achievable for 2 storey.
  - Increased costs due to contamination/ demolition.
  - Increased surface water drainage costs/loss of developable area due to Wirral LLFA’s interpretation of guidance resulting in all brownfield sites that are to be redeveloped having to be designed with a greenfield run off rate.
  - Inability to purchase privately owned land due to development value being less than existing use values. For example, a 1-acre site could be accommodating a 20,000sqft industrial unit, rented out at £4/sq. ft, and would conservatively attract an investment yield of 10%. This generates an EUV of circa £800,000. The same parcel of land developed for

family housing would have a 'greenfield value' (i.e. the value of the site before any abnormal costs are taken into account) of circa £250,000."

ES 16 Despite these issues, the barriers aren't seen as insurmountable and the Regional Director of Bellway has expressed interest in working in partnership with the council and building in Birkenhead as they believe in its future potential.

ES 17 Several developers strongly believe that high quality public realm creates the generational change to an area. Higher quality public areas, that look more modern, vibrant and that are easier to maintain will ensure that Birkenhead feels new rather than it just has new buildings. Step Places believe that this should be a priority and will have a positive impact on the confidence of the market.

ES 18 Their view is that the importance of high-quality public realm cannot be underestimated as this sets the scene for the development. A key aspect of place making is to create green spaces that can be enjoyed by the residents on site and the wider community.

ES 19 Dock Branch Park development will have a significant impact on the viability of a high-density scheme at Europa Boulevard. In their view, this development not only provides key amenities, which will fundamentally attract a new and vibrant community, but also links the site to the wider development across Birkenhead.

ES 20 One of the themes of this report has been the understanding of the consultees that such is the scale of ambition that there will be a wide range of funding utilised when delivering houses and regeneration in Birkenhead. In a large-scale community building project on brownfield land, pump priming will be necessary in the early days.

ES 21 The approaching Future Homes Standard will inevitably increase costs and therefore impact viability. The impact on the costs will be mitigated somewhat once any increase in value and desirability can be captured for the highly sustainable homes. The environmental and sustainability credentials of new homes is featuring higher on customers' requirements especially with younger customers who want their lives major purchase to be planet friendly.

ES 22 There was consensus for the regeneration developers and RPs that there will be wide tenure interest from young adults, older people, professionals and families. These are likely to include:

- Market housing (young adults, professionals and families)
- Private Rented Sector / Build to Rent
- Affordable homes (both affordable sales and rental)

- Retirement or a level of extra care (potential depending on design and ability to maintain density)

ES 23 There was unanimity that these exemplar schemes and follow-on development will not be delivered by the strength of market forces. A range of intervention tools will be needed in the early years to pump prime the market. Exemplar schemes from elsewhere demonstrate that confidence will be strengthened, and more sustainable value can be generated as a result of the added value and extra confidence generated by an exemplar scheme.

ES 24 All of the consultees agree that access into, out of and around Birkenhead is vital if the regeneration vision is to be delivered. There needs to be good access over to Liverpool City Centre and employment locations across the city region. It is of equal importance to high quality public realm. High quality connections make a town and site more marketable. This will increase demand and have a positive impact on viability.

ES 25 This needs to be a formal partnership working group with the Council - Project team, with the Council responsible for helping to deliver proposals: planning/ highways/ economic development/ housing strategy/ legals etc.

- De-risking – remediation of the site prior to bringing to market
- Funding – grant towards MMC/NCZ homes over and above traditional build costs and Housing Infrastructure Fund
- Planning – support with schemes through planning approval process
- Land Assembly

ES 26 The proposal for a design guide was largely welcomed, particularly by regeneration specialists, who believe the design guide will be a useful tool in setting tone and aspiration for place. It needs to strike the right balance so that it is not overly prescriptive and allows a variety of creative responses. National housebuilders are suspicious of a design guide as they believe it may lead to increased costs and impose house types that do not match demand.

ES 27 It is the correct approach to development and regeneration for it to be Masterplan-led. The BDP scheme proposals are a good start and show a fine vision. Issues of ownership, market demand, mix of uses and approach to the public realm all require further consideration and input. The centre has clear potential and a good catchment.

ES 28 Developers believe that a transformed centre will be accretive to the surrounding area, driving demand for other retail property and driving residential demand and values, and also lifting the town and area, providing jobs and community cohesion. Liscard is a classic case of long-term neglect and under-investment. Liscard has a good dense local catchment who will be crying out for modern facilities and a centre that matches aspirations and other good towns.

ES 29 Birkenhead needs an offering that will draw in / encourage / entice new residents in from other/wider areas rather than potentially simply displacing the existing Birkenhead population and creating issues and challenges elsewhere in the centre - as per previous comments made about current deprivation levels and affordability. Joint marketing initiatives to change perceptions, hearts and minds will be required.

ES 30 Improvements to other related issues include:

- innovative street scenes/public realm - greenery, lighting, footpaths giving identity to new neighbourhoods with imaginative bespoke local rather than corporate branding
- perceptions about safety
- being at the forefront of climate change initiatives – prioritising cycle storage, electric car charging points etc.
- encouraging through planning local facilities – coffee shops, pop up shops, support from business development etc

ES 31 Yes, there is unanimous willingness to invest in Birkenhead. Not all those surveyed want to develop high density housing, but all are convinced that an ambitious and bold regeneration programme can help Birkenhead reassert itself as the main service, retail and leisure hub for Wirral.

ES 32 Nobody underestimates the challenge, but there is an underlying feeling that Birkenhead is greatly under-performing and if there is a judicious use of public sector funding to pump-prime early intervention, then there would be a market for a spectrum of housing in the town. This additional population would help to support a renewed town centre and there would be a reciprocal benefit as an interesting and lively centre will attract new residents. There is a wide cross section of the development community who would have the confidence to invest and develop housing in Birkenhead.

# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 Wirral Borough Council is preparing a fast-track Local Plan to a programme agreed with Government. The current programme is for the Submission Draft Local Plan to be published under regulation 19 for consultation in late 2021 before submission for Examination.
- 1.2 The Local Plan will be based on the Council's Preferred Option which is to meet all of its housing and employment need within existing urban areas. The Local Plan will be built around the comprehensive Regeneration of Birkenhead based on the proposals set out in the Draft Birkenhead Regeneration Framework 2040 (BRF).
- 1.3 The BRF sets out ambitious and aspirational proposals for the regeneration of Birkenhead as an 'urban garden 'city' based on strong sustainability and low carbon principles. The vision and aspirations for the regeneration of Birkenhead envisage it being transformed as a place where people of all incomes, ages and backgrounds would want to live as a choice. It is important that Birkenhead's new housing offer is not dominated by smaller 1 and 2 bedroom apartments but must meet the requirements of families through the provision of 3 bedroom and larger dwellings (houses and apartments). Development sites and neighbourhoods should provide for a mix of housing ranging from single occupants to multi-generational in extended families provision.

## Purpose of the Consultation

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- 1.4 Viability and a poor housing market In Birkenhead are key constraints which the BRF and the Local Plan recognise. This study will inform how innovative higher density family dwellings can be delivered in Birkenhead.
- 1.5 The Study involves the preparation of detailed, costed concept designs for five sites in Birkenhead and will explore how family housing can be delivered at a range of higher densities and test and inform draft Local Plan policies relating to housing mix, open space, car parking and separation. The designs will be subject to viability and market testing and will inform the preparation of the Birkenhead Design Guide which will commence in June 2021.
- 1.6 The ultimate objective of the soft market engagement is to establish whether family homes in Birkenhead can be delivered to a high quality and whether relevant developers and RPs can confirm their appetite for working with the council to develop similar residential designs in Birkenhead. We would also be interested to hear of innovative exemplars and design principles for delivering high-quality, high-density family dwellings to inform the Birkenhead Design Guide.

## Soft Market Testing Exercise.

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- 1.7 The purpose of this soft market testing (SMT) exercise is to establish the early thoughts on the deliverability of the ideas from established development companies which could potentially work with the council on the delivery of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework.
- 1.8 We would also like to explore some of the issues that might be faced in bringing Council owned sites to market, in order to guide the Council's decision as to when to bring their sites to market and inform the choice of methodology for doing so.

## 2 Context

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- 2.1 The successful redevelopment of Birkenhead is an important element in a wider series of regeneration initiatives focussed on delivering a long-term vision of growth and renewal for the Wirral. The long-term viability, sustainability and success of Birkenhead as the service centre for Wirral is partly reliant upon ensuring the revitalisation of the town in a way that is both commercially successful yet at the same time complements and enhances the centre and facilities that already exist.
- 2.2 The principal objective of the SMT exercise is to provide comfort that these proposals are not the visionary dreams of architects and urban designers, but instead provide a pragmatic balance of a vision that is grounded in commercial reality and gives a ‘warts and all’ perspective on the prospects of realising viable and successful developments which can be the harbinger of a reimagined, repopulated and redeveloped Birkenhead.
- 2.3 We have engaged directly with Registered Providers and the private sector development community, to canvas their opinions and views on sites of this nature. This report provides an analysis of the response that highlights some of the issues that might be faced in bringing the development sites to market, in order to guide the Council’s decisions on timing and to inform the choice of methodology for doing so.
- 2.4 Birkenhead continues to be an important economic and social centre in Wirral, but it has suffered from a lack of investment in recent years. This we believe to be due to a combination of events. It is to be hoped that we are close to the start of a new era in town centre development and that these exemplar sites can be at the vanguard of this.
- 2.5 One objective of this study is to seek to identify market demand for projects in a deprived, but improving, economic environment, working alongside a council that is committed to intervention in the market to drive regeneration.

## 3 Method

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- 3.1 In order to gather a coherent response from the interviewees a template ‘feedback form’ was agreed. Whilst the interviews themselves were conducted in an informal way; this allowed the discussions to be recorded in a way that answered the key areas of enquiry which were:
- Do they know the Wirral and do they have a track record in the borough?
  - What is their appetite for exemplar development and do they have the capability and resources to deliver projects?
  - What is the most effective way for them to deliver sites to the market?
  - Are there any other issues they think should be considered?
- 3.2 The list of organisations to be contacted was agreed with the Council. This included several Registered Providers operating locally, developers known to be active in Wirral, major developers who are currently in the city region, but not in Wirral and plc housebuilders. We made sure that we consulted with developers used to dealing with the Build to Rent, Retirement and Care sectors.
- 3.3 Generally, we had an encouraging level of response and of the developers approached most were prepared to engage in the SMT exercise. Developers did not shy away from admitting the difficulties of developing in Birkenhead and the lack of development taking place over the last decade, but there was a feeling that there is untapped potential in the town and that if presented properly then there will be a market for housing in the town.
- 3.4 The list of RP’s was provided by the council and these are listed below;
- Magenta
  - Torus
  - Onward
  - Wirral Methodist HA
- 3.5 The private housebuilders and developers are as follows:
- Urban Splash
  - Engie (Equans)
  - Bellway
  - Keepmoat
  - BCEGi
  - Countryside Properties
  - Step Places
  - Ion Property Developments Ltd
  - Capital & Centric
  - Starship
  - THI Group/ Skye Homes

- Anwyl Homes
- MCI Developments
- Igloo

## 4 Developer Feedback

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- 4.1 The council is keen to understand the problems and opportunities in the market and has taken on board the views of several regeneration, mixed-use and residential developers. There was unanimous agreement that Birkenhead is a very difficult market; with long standing challenges that have led to market failure. The town as a whole has faced these challenges over a long period. The town centre was identified as a ‘Distressed Town’ by the 2013 Taskforce that was set up by Government as a response to the Portas Review. Since then, it has declined even more, due to the changing structure of retail and the devastating impact of the Covid pandemic,
- 4.2 Recognising the need to change, the council has decided to tackle the issues head on and has developed the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework 2040, to provide a framework to guide the future development the town. There is a strong positive momentum in the town and there is optimism that with the conclusion of the Brexit deal and with the rollout of vaccinations, this will hopefully lead to a period of increasing confidence from 2021 onwards.
- 4.3 All of the developers visited the town centre and all of them have studied the plans presented in Birkenhead 2040. They have also noted the recent research by Rightmove, which highlighted that Wallasey and Birkenhead were national property hotspots for rising house values. In all, developers commented on being surprised by the centre’s “busyness” and this helped to give them confidence in the long-term sustainability of the location.
- 4.4 Overall, the developers consulted believe that there will be appetite for development in the area due to the timescales we are committed to (10 years plus), the ongoing investment in transport infrastructure, the involvement of Wirral Council and the Combined Authority gives confidence that Birkenhead is an area to invest in.
- 4.5 Current market conditions are difficult and developers are risk averse. The involvement and investment of the Public Sector will be crucial. If this is going to be transformational, the quality of Public Realm needs to match that of a major city.

### Range of Companies surveyed

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- 4.6 There was an extremely encouraging response to this soft market testing exercise and all companies approached were keen to take part in the exercise. The companies are detailed previously in this report. It is clear that the regeneration of Birkenhead will not be delivered solely by private housebuilders delivering standard housing types. It will need to be delivered by a complete cross section of the industry. We have attempted to cover this diversity in our consultation.
- 4.7 As can be seen from the list of companies provided in the previous section, consultees range from plc and volume housebuilders, to regeneration specialists, local and regional Registered

Providers, Retirement Living providers and local SME's. These developers cover a wide spectrum of the market and can build traditional family housing, suburban and town centre Build to Rent, Affordable Rent and Rent to Buy. Birkenhead 2040 will need to deliver houses from all of these.

- 4.8 We have been keen to engage with developers who know the Wirral and how it fits into the wider Liverpool city region and also its area of influence which extends into Cheshire and North Wales. Everybody spoken to knows the issues that are faced and acknowledges that Birkenhead is not where it should be, but has a potential to be much more than it currently is.

#### Have you developed in the Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?

- 4.9 As may be expected from the paragraph above, there is an encouraging level of earlier experience from the respondents. Urban Splash are developing the pioneering housing scheme on Wirral Waters, which is now being built and offered to the market. Bellway is a plc housebuilder with a Liverpool office and staff who live in Birkenhead. They have recently built the successful Kings Hill development in New Ferry/ Bromborough and are also on site with brownfield development schemes in Moreton and Greasby.
- 4.10 Magenta, Torus and Onward are Registered Providers who trade on the Wirral. They have developed and managed schemes in Birkenhead and across the wider borough. They are aware of the issues and limitations; but are also aware of the legacy political and planning issues from previous council leadership.
- 4.11 Starship and Skye Homes are local SME developers who are native to the Wirral and have developed in the borough in recent times. Starship is currently onsite in New Ferry and Skye Homes has recently developed and sold a site at Upton Pines to Stewart Milne. Both of these developers are greatly encouraged by the council's plans for Birkenhead.
- 4.12 We have also consulted several developers who have not developed in the Wirral before, but are aware of the new ambition of the council and the major plans that are starting to take shape. It is also interesting to note that BCEG and Engie were both unsuccessful bidders for the Wirral Growth company. They both retain a keen interest in working with the council. Step Places has not developed on the Wirral, but is currently active in Liverpool, developing housing adjacent to Alder Hey Hospital, in partnership with the NHS Trust.

#### What is your perception of Birkenhead as a development / investment opportunity?

- 4.13 Wirral has lots of potential but many areas, particularly on the eastern side of the borough, suffer from the challenge of financial viability due to low values. As such, innovative funding solutions and public sector support are required to make development happen.

- 4.14 The peninsula, as a whole, presents an attractive opportunity for house builders, due to the latent demand built up over many years of low delivery rates, good quality local amenities, public greenspaces and transport links to major employment centres, Liverpool, Chester, Warrington and Manchester.
- 4.15 With regards to Birkenhead, the delivery of new homes, by Keepmoat in particular, show that there is a market there to support residential development, however, the concern is that at the present time, development within Birkenhead is unviable without some form of grant funding. Skye Homes feels that the perception of Birkenhead in its current state is very negative although they have an absolute belief that the regeneration plans are realistic and that Birkenhead will become an attractive proposition. They have demonstrated this belief by securing options on two town centre sites for high quality residential development.
- 4.16 Keepmoat has observed that the Wirral and Birkenhead itself are areas of strong community, often close knit with families settling in the area and subsequently growing within the locale as opposed to moving out. Like many regions there are pockets of affluent areas coupled with lower income neighbourhoods.
- 4.17 From a development and investment perspective, the Wirral, particularly Birkenhead, are strong locations for Keepmoat as the capital values and product need are strongly aligned with the product they offer. They are keen to develop more family housing and they have advertised for more land in Birkenhead.
- 4.18 Starship is a local company that has been committed to development on the Wirral for many years as they believe it presents a unique and attractive proposition or home buyers. They believe that the framework and masterplans for Birkenhead are extremely exciting and projects being delivered within the footprint of the master plan will become some of the most attractive developments around for both developers, investors and end users.
- 4.19 Several developers noted that Birkenhead delivers the most attractive views of the iconic Liverpool skyline. It is already well connected to public transport (with improvements further planned) and has the potential to create a very unique and highly attractive place for people to live, work, meet and eat.
- 4.20 The opportunity in Birkenhead is emerging and, in Step Places' view, the appetite to settle in this area will be driven by well-designed homes, standard of public realm and amenity spaces (including places to meet and eat). This will welcome a wider demographic of people and create a place where people feel they live rather than just sleep.
- 4.21 Urban Splash is already on site at Wirral Waters. They believe that the more densely populated and more industrially developed Mersey facing half of Wirral, has the greater potential for developing at scale on existing brownfield sites, helping reinvigorate all aspects of the townscape,

removing neglected and blighted sites, improving outlooks and streetscapes for existing neighbours - good for creating new homes and good for retaining people and creating value in existing properties.

### Is the Council right to plan for large scale development and repopulation of the town?

- 4.22 The large post-industrial sites, like Liverpool across the Mersey, are part of the former Maritime titan which underpinned the success of Birkenhead as a town. Urban Splash feels that it is an enormous plus to be able to deal with sites of scale with the transformational opportunities they provide. Bellway is also supportive. It believes that the delivery of new homes is key to regenerating an area and improving the local economy. By increasing local spend from new residents this will encourage more businesses into the area.
- 4.23 Sandy Livingstone, Development Director of Onward, is of the view that Birkenhead is a “fantastic opportunity” and its time is about to come. In his words “it should work, but for some reason it has been left to struggle.” Its location opposite Liverpool and the opportunities presented by the wider peninsula mean that it should work. “It needs a long-term view on value creation and it will need critical mass to create the shift in the market to create a new residential and business eco system.”
- 4.24 Mark McNamee, Director of regeneration specialist City Heart began his career at Smith & Sons in Hamilton Square. He supports the concept, but only if done correctly, including supporting infrastructure of health facilities, schools, public transport and green space.
- 4.25 Step Places feels that Birkenhead offers a significant opportunity for a developer led partnership to bring community focused, low carbon developments. They believe that the economic and social benefits are clear to see given the councils intentions and investments to date. This will allow ourselves to confidently invest in Birkenhead.
- 4.26 SP believe critical mass is key to getting the optimum results through mixed tenure an attractive offer which is amenity led including green spaces, creating the numbers within a period of time branding the offer to create a value-added offer attracting residents to the centre of Birkenhead from rent to buy, private rent, shared equity, open market ownership, help to buy, first home, intermediate and social rent age friendly units.
- 4.27 Keepmoat agreed Birkenhead is in need of regeneration, large parts of the area are destitute due to a lack of investment. The town centre is very disjointed but acts as a key commercial space in the area for the wider region, due to the village nature of the wider Wirral peninsula. They feel that increasing the population and adding investment it has the real potential to be a thriving community and spark further regeneration across the Wirral as a whole.

- 4.28 Skye Homes believes it is entirely correct, although there needs to be more diversity in the resident population, with more young professionals and families living in the town. They believe that a piecemeal approach will not work and there must be critical mass approach.
- 4.29 Starship also believe that this is the correct strategy. They think there needs to be significant emphasis on design, layout and connectivity with things to do in the area. They also feel that it is important to attract the widest demographic possible to create a vibrant and diverse community with a key focus on attracting young people to settle there and help drive the generational change in the area.
- 4.30 BCEGi was an unsuccessful bidder to be the council's growth company partner. Despite this, they still see a clear development opportunity in Birkenhead. They strongly believe that the more people living in the Town will bring a higher, work, live and invest (local spend) ethos. They have seen in other locations that this residential led type of framework works, bringing in investment for jobs, infrastructure and education.
- 4.31 In principle, Torus also supports this policy. The introduction of a critical mass of residential will be a catalyst for the regeneration of the centre. *To realise the economic benefits of the re population the wider offer needs to be compelling. People need to live, work and fundamentally play/spend in the centre!* The economic growth will be key to the success of the offer.
- 4.32 The quality of the residential offer will be critical, especially within early phases of delivery when the other elements of the masterplan have not yet been delivered. A short term USP for Birkenhead must be articulated. The facilities to support this community (schools etc) will be key and need to be factored in at early stages.

### Do you have experience of Pioneer Developments that have inspired future development?

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- 4.33 The fundamental principles of the exemplar housing schemes and the wider Birkenhead Regeneration Framework were supported by all of the developers surveyed. As we have stated earlier, we consulted with developers who understand the challenges of brownfield development and creating new markets. Some examples of the type of Pioneer Developments are listed below.
- Anfield Regeneration, Liverpool
  - Lightbody Street, Liverpool
  - Wigan Pier
  - Alder Hey Hospital, Liverpool
  - Rotherham Demonstrator
  - New Ferry – modular housing
  - East Float
  - Manchester Airport City

- Icknield Port Loop, Birmingham
  - Castlefields, Manchester
  - Rochdale town centre
  - Rugeley Power Station redevelopment, Staffordshire
- 4.34 Some of these listed above are highlighted nationally as exemplars of how to build and create a residential market. In several of these examples traditional housebuilders considered there were too many barriers to development and that viable development would not be possible in this location. Innovation and ingenuity showed that it could be.
- 4.35 Encouragingly, the developers behind all of these pioneer developments would be interested in developing in partnership with Wirral Council in Birkenhead.

### Do you have any perceptions of viability in Birkenhead? What is your minimum size requirement?

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- 4.36 Bellway describes the current picture. “In the current market, viability of development in Birkenhead is a concern for the reasons listed below.
- Low sales values - a traditional 2 storey 3 bed semi on Keepmoat’s Docklands scheme has a gross asking price of £189/sq.ft (potential net price circa £184/sq.ft) 2.5 and 3 storey dwellings will be £20-£30/sq.ft less than those achievable for 2 storey
  - Increased costs due to contamination/ demolition
  - Increased surface water drainage costs/loss of developable area due to Wirral LLFA’s interpretation of guidance resulting in all brownfield sites that are to be redeveloped having to be designed with a greenfield run off rate.
  - Inability to purchase privately owned land due to development value being less than existing use values. For example, a 1-acre site could be accommodating a 20,000sqft industrial unit, rented out at £4/sq. ft, and would conservatively attract an investment yield of 10%. This generates an EUV of circa £800,000. The same parcel of land developed for family housing would have a ‘greenfield value’ (i.e. the value of the site before any abnormal costs are taken into account) of circa £250,000.”
- 4.37 *Despite these issues, the barriers aren’t seen as insurmountable and the Regional Director of Bellway has expressed interest in working in partnership with the council and building in Birkenhead as they believe in its future potential.*
- 4.38 As a result of previous development in the area and their ability to deliver even the most challenging of sites, as an organisation, Keepmoat is always open minded when approaching new opportunities and seeks to deliver schemes others may not.
- 4.39 Ion Property Developments have a long track record of working in the Liverpool City Region and have worked on many projects that were deemed too difficult. In the early days of Marine Point

in New Brighton, they ran their own restaurants to show national operators that they would work in this location. It is now a thriving location that has been embraced by all of the Wirral and beyond.

- 4.40 Ion is the developer of Hind Street and also the International Garden Festival site in Liverpool. This is another challenging site. Managing Director, Steve Parry has pointed out that research undertaken by Savills has highlighted the impact of placemaking on value growth in time. The addition of new schools, transport hub and new amenities all make houses more attractive as a proposition.
- 4.41 Likewise, exemplar housing can play a crucial role. Vimto Gardens was the first residential phase of the masterplan with 83 apartments and 14 townhouses in 2014, the scheme achieved £185 per sq. ft across all sales. Timekeepers Square was the second phase which comprised a mixture of 36 townhouses and achieved £305 per sq ft across all sales in 2017. This represents a price growth of 65% which is 20% higher than price growth in Salford between the same period. Future phases of development are anticipated to see further growth.
- 4.42 Skye Homes asserts that Birkenhead is currently non-viable for isolated development for residential. However, they vindicate the Birkenhead Regeneration Strategy objective, as they believe that with significant investment and vision this will change given Birkenhead's unique location, history and existing infrastructure.
- 4.43 Step Places sees viability is a challenge, but there are positive signs for the future and the strategy gives them clear confidence in the future. They can see the potential for viable and sustainable growth on all fronts and have tested the business model internally to quantify.
- 4.44 Starship's concerns around development in this area would normally be focused on land acquisition and land remediation cost, which would place pressure on development costs and thus place pressure on required sale values for the properties in the area.
- 4.45 One consideration will be the sequencing of development and completion of properties to ensure that supply and demand for properties is managed bearing in mind the significant development activity that is planned in the area.
- 4.46 They do not have any specific concerns around the ability to deliver development projects in Birkenhead, Starship's view was consistent with others who have developed locally "We are confident that the area has rich skilled resources, access to transport allowing free movement of materials and infrastructure".
- 4.47 Wirral is a key growth and investment area for Onward. Challenges of developing in Birkenhead mainly revolve around viability being generally challenging within Birkenhead. Their opinion is that it is largely as a consequence of land owner expectations coupled with often high remediation costs for inner urban brownfield sites. *Birkenhead's success as a location of housing choice*

*needs to ensure a distinguishable and different offer to that being provided in neighbouring LAs. Determining a USP for Birkenhead would provide a key marketing edge.*

- 4.48 All of the developers had a minimum lot size. It was generally at about 40-50 units, although there were some who wouldn't go below 100. The issue of scale is very important when tackling difficult sites. The size of the sites at Conway Park and Europa are of a scale that will be attractive to several developers.
- 4.49 The exemplar site at Hamilton Park is adequate for its purpose, but this needs to be followed up quickly with more housing. It is not big enough in itself to drive change. A rule of thumb is that if sites are 10 acres or more, then there is enough scale to be able to 'create its own market.' There is interest in Hamilton Park as it is, but if the site can be packaged up as a single entity with planning, then there will be serious market interest from housebuilders and Registered Providers, providing a range of housing products for differing market sectors.

### Conditions precedent

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- 4.50 All of the developers will have commercial hurdles to hit before they commit to a new development. These are often confidential and are not to be shared. Some consultees however, gave an insight into the processes considered and these help give insight into the wide range of delivery mechanisms that will be employed when delivering this complex regeneration programme.
- 4.51 For instance, Urban Splash and Cityheart both note that there would be a number of things to lookout here and they would need to be considered at the time. These would include an appraisal that demonstrates a minimum return and certainty of wider opportunities, depending on the scale of the project.
- 4.52 Cityheart would want a Development Management fee of 4% and a developer's margin of 17%. They would work for a margin of 11% if there is a partnership with an RP.
- 4.53 Starship's minimum profit requirements range depending on the exit plan for their developments. When they are working with an exit partner (registered provider, BTR or PRS), they are able to work on much lower margins due to the decreased risk profile. When they take homes and commercial units to market, the margin expectations rise due to the increased risk profile and also considering the additional sales and marketing costs required for exit.
- 4.54 They would normally require some wider control of the immediate development zone (i.e. delivery of communal space, play areas etc) as these features, their standard, their maintenance cost and availability are key to driving the sales activity with home buyers or investor organisations.
- 4.55 Capital & Centric would look for a GDV of £25 million. They would expect a minimum developers profit on costs of between 10-15%. Similarly to would always welcome the

opportunity to deliver the sites in their entirety, controlling the look and feel of the whole area; allowing them to deliver a cohesive scheme which can benefit the area architecturally as well as socially.

- 4.56 As they had previous board approval to bid for the WGC, BCEGi does not have any such requirements and are ready to invest! (although we expect that this is an exaggeration and there will still be an internal due diligence process to go through).
- 4.57 *The purpose of this question was to explore what developers want from the council and partners in order to help them commit. The consensus was that developers want long term commitment from the council. The preparation of the strategy is undoubtedly positive, but this needs to be followed up over the long term. The council needs to be a trusted partner on planning, funding, the use of CPO if necessary and there also needs to be political commitment. Investment in infrastructure and public realm needs to continue. The town centre needs to be invested in and place marketing and branding must continue to develop.*

### How important is Public Realm and access to green space?

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- 4.58 Equans places great importance on high-quality public realm and access to green space when creating inclusive and sustainable communities. These are key to the wider place-making of areas and the recent COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this further, especially for residents living in high rise developments with limited access to open spaces for exercise and social purposes.
- 4.59 Several developers strongly believe that high quality public realm creates the generational change to an area. Higher quality public areas, that look more modern, vibrant and that are easier to maintain will ensure that Birkenhead feels new rather than it just has new buildings. Step Places believe that this should be a priority and will have a positive impact on the confidence of the market.
- 4.60 Their view is that the importance of *high-quality public realm cannot be underestimated as this sets the scene for the development*. A key aspect of place making is to create green spaces that can be enjoyed by the residents on site and the wider community. This requires careful design and consideration is also very key to the success of the scheme as young professionals and families alike all enjoy green space, allowing long term curation and legacy. This has become more prevalent during the pandemic.
- 4.61 Green space is very important however in a development such as this, its access to the waterfront means that greenspace can be provided at much lower volumes to create meeting spaces. The idea of pocket parks with small green space areas, accessible from within the development, providing green community spaces should be explored.

- 4.62 Onward have also noted that green space is becoming increasingly important as customer demands change post C-19. Along with internal space standards to facilitate home working, access to good quality open space / green space is increasingly one of the key determining factors in housing choice.
- 4.63 Capital and Centric believe that high quality public realm and green space are paramount for residents and the immediate locality. These features allow the residents areas of which to enjoy and to utilise away from their home. Public realm also benefits local residents, as well as the possibility of attracting families to the area who can benefit from the outdoor space.

### Will the Plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/deliverability of nearby sites?

- 4.64 Dock Branch Park was very well received in this consultation exercise. Whilst some consultees didn't want to comment without knowing more detail; there was clear agreement that, as long as it was done to a high standard and is well managed, this has the potential to be transformational. It is the kind of scheme that will change perceptions and that can help give Birkenhead its potential USP as a waterfront urban garden village.
- 4.65 Bellway's opinion is that Dock Branch Park will be a great community asset and it should be worked around as it will have a huge benefit to the wider town centre and Birkenhead community. Likewise, Keepmoat believe that this park will create a more connected community whilst also improving the public realm, it is reasonable to assume property sale and rental values will increase strengthening the viability of any development opportunities.
- 4.66 Equans are also supportive. They believe that the proposed development plans for Dock Branch Park would bring significant benefits for the wider areas including the Europa Boulevard sites, as it would create notable transport links along key heritage routes to Wirral Waters, the Town Centre and Hind Street which would open up opportunities for jobs, social and environmental wellbeing.
- 4.67 The links to the above locations along routes of high-quality green spaces would certainly add value and assist with viability and deliverability of the neighbouring sites.
- 4.68 Step Places believes it will be a great community asset and it should be worked around, as it will have a huge benefit to the wider town centre and Birkenhead community. As one of the catalysts of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework, they will match the environmental benefits creating habitats and biodiversity net gains. The ability to link into cycle movement through the park from the site will encourage less car use – another positive impact on viability.
- 4.69 It is positive that local developers who know the town so well are enthused by this innovative public realm scheme. Starship feels that delivery of the Dock Branch Park development will have a significant impact on the viability of a high-density scheme at Europa Boulevard. In their view,

this development not only provides key amenities, which will fundamentally attract a new and vibrant community, but also links the site to the wider development across Birkenhead. Without this, there would be a risk that the development would feel isolated from the heartland of development (particularly in the early stages of the masterplan).

- 4.70 BCEGi is also supportive on the positive impact of Dock Branch Park. It was also in their submission to the Wirral Growth Company. Their bid also highlighted the positive impact of opening up this axis through the town to the public.
- 4.71 Dock Branch Park can only be seen as a positive for the area and for the prospects of delivering the Europa Boulevard Sites.

### What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?

- 4.72 The cost of zero-carbon was a concern to all those we consulted. Equans is a leading global energy business and they contributed interesting ideas in their response. They believe that the benefits to the environment and energy performance of developments from introducing a requirement for zero-carbon homes are massive and are becoming more of a high priority agenda item within national guidance.
- 4.73 However, any policy requirement for zero-carbon homes would undoubtedly bring viability challenges due to the increase in build costs associated with achieving zero-carbon status. They would support the inclusion of a policy requirement to introduce elements of zero-carbon homes and as a company, they are actively delivering schemes, which are achieving zero-carbon; therefore they have experience on the ways in which this can be achieved and the costs associated.
- 4.74 Viability on Open Market Sales units is more of a challenge, due to the fact that the increased initial cost versus the long-term benefits is not always realised by the buyer nor the mortgage company, especially when considering first time buyers, who would not typically remain in a property long enough to see the benefit of the increased initial outlay against the long-term gains.
- 4.75 As such, Equans states that *it is very crucial to have extended dialogue with Homes England to identify any funding support available to improve viability.*
- 4.76 As an SME, Starship is at the other end of the business spectrum, but is also keen to drive a low carbon agenda, as this is a core part of what they are trying to achieve with customers in the market. Their MMC products deliver a low carbon solution for family homes which can still be delivered within a viable cost window. Bearing this in mind they believe that if they are able to do it at their level, there should be a target to deliver homes using zero carbon standards.
- 4.77 The challenges that may exist with this is ensuring that during the design of the scheme is suitable to achieve zero carbon. This includes designing in locations for air/ ground source heating,

building orientation for sunlight and ‘farming’ energy across the whole development to ensure the most efficient energy usage is achieved.

- 4.78 *The challenge always exists around cost, zero carbon drives a high up-front cost for a longer-term return on investment and it is the developers job to mitigate these upfront costs as much as possible, to ensure zero carbon is a viable solution.*
- 4.79 Magenta gives a view over how RPs can respond to the zero-carbon agenda. An increase in the build costs which would obviously affect the viability of the scheme. However, these additional costs could be off-set by further grant or subsidy. Having said that, Magenta Living is committed to NCZ, it has a climate change and sustainability strategy/group which works closely with their Development Team to set a standard for providing MMC/ Net zero carbon homes to deliver as part of its own development programme. They see this as an option to bring delivery forward, using new technologies and ways of working.
- 4.80 Magenta also notes that it would be beneficial to work with the Education Sector to provide NZC homes as there is a skills shortage that needs to be addressed to support future/on-going delivery. The policy would also need to consider ongoing maintenance lifecycles and costs.
- 4.81 Onward also highlighted that cost would be the key consideration, through impact upon building standards, material costs and current rates of inflation. They have a number of house types which are approaching net zero ready with fairly low energy use intensities and all are already only connected to electric (no gas).
- 4.82 The move to net zero and the approaching future Homes Standard will inevitably increase costs and therefore impact viability. The impact on the costs will be mitigated someday once any increase in value and desirability can be captured for the highly sustainable homes. The environmental and sustainability credentials of new homes is featuring higher on customers’ requirements especially with younger customers who want their lives major purchase to be planet friendly.
- 4.83 Capital and Centric is also under way with their Nowhaus product, reviewing how they can deliver a zero-carbon home. The main impact would be cost as the supply chain is yet to catch up to demand for zero carbon and the products and contractors require aren’t yet available in sufficient quantities to reduce cost.
- 4.84 As may be expected, Urban Splash take an interest in Net Zero Carbon, it very much depends on the definition and what approach Wirral wishes to take with this. In simple terms it is pretty certain that any housing development connected to mains services will need to do some offsetting in order to meet net zero operational carbon.
- 4.85 US has a number of house types which are approaching net zero ready with fairly low energy use intensities and all are already only connected to electric (no gas). Their view is that the move

to net zero and the approaching Future Homes Standard will inevitably increase costs and therefore impact viability. The impact on the costs will be mitigated somehow once any increase in value and desirability can be captured for the highly sustainable homes. *The environmental and sustainability credentials of new homes is featuring higher on customers' requirements especially with younger customer who want their lives major purchase to be planet friendly.*

### Could you deliver MMC on this site?

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- 4.86 Modern Methods of Construction is becoming steadily more important over time. There are still differences of opinion, even amongst peer groups in this consultation. Keepmoat Homes is well versed in the use of MMC as a method of delivery. They have taken this approach on a number of sites. Similarly, as a business, Countryside has successfully been using MMC for some time and have built a manufacturing plant in Warrington. Bellway meanwhile, does not utilise MMC. In their experience, they find the market favours traditional brick and block construction.
- 4.87 Starship design, engineer and manufacture their own MMC products which are delivered to customers with an NHBC Accepts Certification and Build Warranty. They are currently finishing an MMC development in New Ferry and have delivered a significant number of residential properties using their off-site system. They would be very keen to maximise the use of MMC in Birkenhead.
- 4.88 In addition to this, they are using local resources and creating local job opportunities by investing in the opening new manufacturing premises in the town (expected to be at Wirral Waters) with any off-site manufacturing taking place on the development footprint.
- 4.89 Magenta is committed to providing MMC/ NZC homes and would consider it as an option in delivering the Europa Site. However, they would need to undertake further due diligence and work with MMC manufacturers to assess whether it is viable on this site as it may lend itself to some of the site and not all. They could deliver MMC. This is unlikely to be a full volumetric solution (again due to costs) but could include some form of panelised system of MMC.
- 4.90 Urban Splash employ a variety of MMC techniques - from panelled timber frame houses, volumetric timber frame house and panellised CLT homes and apartments. They take a cession on a type-by-type basis, depending on the precise mix and house types to be delivered.
- 4.91 Although they haven't specifically built in the Wirral, Equans has a JV modular factory business 'Evolve Built for Life' - based at Birkenhead. This Birkenhead business produced over 600 factory-built modules covering distribution to the whole of the UK and were built locally in only nine months.

- 4.92 Carbon emissions in the homes built at Birkenhead were lower than traditional built home by 44% and over 100+ people were employed from the local Birkenhead area. Engie currently has over 1,150 units in construction across the NW region.

### Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?

- 4.93 All of the consultees agree that access into, out of and around Birkenhead is vital if the regeneration vision is to be delivered. There needs to be good access over to Liverpool City Centre and employment locations across the city region. It is of equal importance to high quality public realm. High quality connections make a town and site more marketable. This will increase demand and have a positive impact on viability.
- 4.94 BCEGi believe that the strategic routes giving access into town via the M53 and A41 need to be maintained and upgraded, the Woodside Gyratory needs to be rethought, and there needs to be upgrades to the terminals and Ferries. They believe that the mass transit system linking around Wirral Waters Woodside, Laird Street and Conway Street (Birkenhead Park) is needed.
- 4.95 Step Places' view is that it is essential that access routes to Merseyrail stations are prioritised and are seen as affordable to those with lower incomes who do and could commute to Liverpool for work and entertainment purposes.
- 4.96 Urban Splash is on site at Wirral Waters and is marketing the houses to new occupants. US marketing analysis has noted that easy access times to the M53 remain important and marketing locations accessible within 30 minutes of Birkenhead is also a priority.
- 4.97 The future arrival of the mass transit loop around Wirral Waters and connecting along the rear of Vittoria studios and the development of Dock Branch Park, which will lead to improved public realm and foot/bike connection to the main transport networks from residential and commercial areas.
- 4.98 Both these initiatives will reduce car dependency and allow more undeveloped land to provide beneficial landscape and amenity rather than temporary car storage. Dock Branch Park can have a wider impact as it will be a destination and will probably be the stimulus for new leisure venues and businesses.
- 4.99 Step Places, Starship and Skye Homes think the removal of the two flyovers to the Queensway Tunnel will be transformational. It will open up a pedestrian-friendly connection between the town centre and the Hind Street community as it develops are key - along with the creation of a new park along the route of the disused Dock Branch railway, one of the first rail lines in the country, and as in New York's highline, a great community asset allowing health and well-being in an urban area.

4.100 Other important transport connections noted in the consultations with Equans, Bellway and Countryside were

- existing connections to Liverpool are vital as access to jobs, education and leisure are key for both existing and new residents and the transport links are a huge selling point for the area;
- new connections improving links in and around Birkenhead, specifically to Wirral Waters, the Commercial District and Dock Branch Park are key to creating an inclusive community;
- enhancing or introducing new links to the wider borough and beyond is also key to re-establish Birkenhead as the potential service, leisure and retail hub for Wirral.

Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (Identify as many as applicable)

4.101 The volume housebuilders generally deliver a traditional for sale delivery model and they would push this. They deliver affordable housing with an RP. Countryside Properties also looks to sell, but they also have a Build to Rent model, delivered in partnership with Sigma. This would be a very suitable model for the larger sites. This BTR model delivers at 20 units per month and can change the perception of an area much quicker than the sale model, which will normally deliver 2 – 4 units per month.

4.102 There was consensus for the regeneration developers and RPs that there will be wide tenure interest from young adults, older people, professionals and families. These are likely to include:

- Market housing (young adults, professionals and families)
- Private Rented Sector / Build to Rent
- Affordable homes (both affordable sales and rental)
- Retirement or a level of extra care (potential depending on design and ability to maintain density)

4.103 Magenta suggests the following range of mixes:

- Extra care
- Specialist Housing
- Affordable Rent
- Potentially Rent to Buy
- Potentially shared ownership but, it would depend on values.
- Private Rent
- Open market sale

4.104 All of the above would be subject to evidence of demand. Magenta would require a market assessment to decide on the tenure mix.

- 4.105 Urban Splash believes that it is important to have a mix of type and tenure and be able to provide opportunities for low and high earners and people just setting off on their employment journey.
- 4.106 Torus also consider that a wide range of tenures will help to overcome any viability issues in the early schemes that would be delivered. This may include the exemplars at Hamilton Park and Conway Park. Even when the market matures and values start to build, there will still be a demand for a large range of housing products that provide housing opportunities for all sections of the population. No consultees believe that Birkenhead will be regenerated solely by the traditional market sale route.

### What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?

- 4.107 One of the themes of this report has been the understanding of the consultees that such is the scale of ambition that there will be a wide range of funding utilised when delivering houses and regeneration in Birkenhead. In a large scale community building project on brownfield land, pump priming will be necessary in the early days,
- 4.108 Equans have used this wide range of funding on other large scale community building projects such as the redevelopment of Rugeley Power Station in Staffordshire. This knowledge enabled them to give a comprehensive answer to this question and we have included text on this, as there is some useful information, which can give further details on how development can be delivered in the challenging early days of regeneration. They would see large scale projects like this potentially having at least four lines of funding that they could help or discuss with Wirral Council. These are:
- Development Funding (i.e. work in progress project funding)
  - Asset Funding
  - Government and support funding
  - Energy Funding

#### **Development Funding;**

- 4.109 Development funding can limit outputs and also expense to large scale regeneration projects such as this. As a company, they have compelling propositions to LA's that consider; build outputs, sharing of profits for a dev funding trade off and even the gifting of units to LAs that further reduce development funding.

#### **Asset Funding;**

- 4.110 The lower the rate of long-term funding the more viable large regeneration schemes become (including generating higher land values for LA) Equans has numerous partners who would be interested in holding assets on this proposed development including; Traditional RP's, PRS funders and UK, European and North American institutional investors.

**Government Funding;**

- 4.111 On large scale regeneration projects, Government support is key to viability. Equans has helped advise authorities on how to maximise grants and also how to structure the project and procurement so that double grants are received (e.g. grants for LA and RP). Often LA's sell the land to the final end user without applying for grant, thereby resulting in one single level of grant only.

**Energy Funding;**

- 4.112 Equans is now seeing interest from senior debt partners in asset funding new homes who will also apply funding to energy measures on the same project (i.e. combined funding). If this is structured correctly then energy measures and carbon measures are paid for in the project (and not an additional expense).
- 4.113 Onward would look to fund non planning gain AH units through our AHP allocation. Units outside of this would (subject to viability) be funded through their existing Business Plan and loan facilities. They would also explore the potential for any additional funding (brownfield / town centres fund etc) to aid and enable development.
- 4.114 As a local SME, Starship has a more bespoke attitude to funding their developments. They have a panel of investors who will fund projects on a case-by-case basis. They also work alongside RP's.
- 4.115 Keepmoat, when acting as sole developer, employs its own capital combined with revenues from sales to deliver projects. When working with a delivery partner, the above is combined with capital from said partner to further fund the development.
- 4.116 Urban Splash expects that there will be a public sector funding requirement - especially for the early phases, remediation and potentially for land assembly. This will manifest itself in a number of different contractual and delivery routes. For development delivery there could be a mix of equity from the developer with development finance from one of their banking partners eg Lloyds provide development finance at Wirral Waters. This is also a 'green loan' where favourable finance rates are offered to development demonstrating exemplary sustainability credentials.
- 4.117 BCEGi would speculatively build on Market Housing with traditional debt finance and would look to forward fund or obtain a forward commitment on PRS/ Retirement/ Extra care/ Assisted/ Affordable/ Social.

**Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?**

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- 4.118 *There was unanimity that these exemplar schemes and follow-on development will not be delivered by the strength of market forces. A range of intervention tools will be needed in the*

*early years to pump prime the market. Exemplar schemes from elsewhere demonstrate that confidence will be strengthened and more sustainable value can be generated as a result of the added value and extra confidence generated by an exemplar scheme.*

- 4.119 Any funding solution is likely to be complex and involve a mix of private equity, loans and public sector support. This could be in the form of grants, or through judicious use of covenant strength.
- 4.120 A Build to Rent model would assist with the immediate viability gap, with support from Homes England. Its Home Building Fund has also been identified as a potential source of funding.
- 4.121 Magenta Living uses a mix of its loan facility and Homes England grant (or other grant as available e.g. brownfield land fund), to deliver affordable rent and affordable home ownership products. We would also consider cross-subsidising affordable homes with profits from open market sale homes on the same site where possible.
- 4.122 Keepmoat has an extensive track record in delivering market housing and would use their branding, marketing and scheme composition expertise to provide an attractive saleable product to the market.
- 4.123 When working with delivery partners to provide nonmarket sale products they would typically look to contract on either a golden brick, staged payment or monthly valuation basis. They would be keen to explore any other opportunities and as such would welcome further discussion around the suggestions made below.
- 4.124 Urban Splash would be open minded on contractual routes and have a variety of structures on sites across the country. They have set up JV's with Peel for Wirral Waters and Places for People for Smiths Dock. Multiple sites in Liverpool and Manchester on development agreements, such as the scheme at New Islington. They have also bought sites through marketsales.
- 4.125 For such an ambitious and long-term project as Hamilton Park, there would need to be a partnership approach to this whether a formal JV or a Development Agreement setting out inputs and output for the contracting parties. Land assembly and agreeing a land assembly strategy is key to this. Many vision documents remain just that - as they can't be realised without the land.
- 4.126 Torus believes that following range of products should be developed on the two exemplar schemes.
- Market Housing for families
  - Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families
  - Retirement - over 55's Including Extra Care and Assisted Living
  - Specialist accommodation
  - Affordable Housing Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate

- Shared ownership
- 4.127 Such diversity of product helps overcome viability issues and also broadens the appeal of the site. In the early days of residential development in Birkenhead there will be a limited market as many potential buyers will need to be convinced of the attractiveness of the market.

### If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)

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- 4.128 This has been discussed earlier in this report and there is agreement from all that the council and its partners need to give confidence to the market that they are fully committed to the regeneration of Birkenhead and will work in partnership over the long term.
- 4.129 This needs to be a formal partnership working group with the Council - Project team with the Council responsible for helping to deliver proposals: planning/ highways/ economic development/ housing strategy/ legals etc.
- De-risking – remediation of the site prior to bringing to market
  - Funding – grant towards MMC/NCZ homes over and above traditional build costs. Housing Infrastructure Fund
  - Planning – support with schemes through planning approval process
  - Land Assembly
- 4.130 Torus will take a long-term strategic view of all development opportunities. Wirral is a key growth area and as such current development sites range between 14 and 170 units. Likewise, discussions are ongoing around sizeable opportunities within and around the Town Centre masterplan area. Torus has a range of products within its portfolio and can therefore 'flex' its approach to tenure to suit the site itself, it is therefore not limited to particular areas or markets but will take a long-term view of what is right for an area and community.

### What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?

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- 4.131 Design Quality is hugely important to the success of regeneration schemes such as this and an update to the existing Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy is required to reflect the up-to-date requirements for the area and latest design aspirations.
- 4.132 Urban Splash has a long-standing reputation for strong design. They believe the design guide will be a useful tool in setting tone and aspiration for place. It needs to strike the right balance so that it isn't overly prescriptive and allows a variety of creative responses.
- 4.133 For Starship, they are all about design. They want the guide to avoid achieving an overpopulated estate format and give an opportunity to creating an engaging, exciting, modern and creative

urban community. What is unique about the area is the proximity to the waterfront and views of the famous Liverpool skyline, we think that this can lead in some of the strategy for design, trying to create a connected community and achieving high density, whilst avoiding conformity of building design (this could result in lifeless developments).

- 4.134 Equans believes that having developer buy in and collaboration with this design guide will then ensure that the design strategy is connected to the market, thus attracting the target demographic and delivering attractive homes and spaces within the target price ranges.
- 4.135 Step Places strongly supports the design emphasis. Public Realm, high quality and unique public spaces create a character and are significant in terms of market attraction. The use of a well thought out design guide with quality indicators is essential for holistic design delivery and they have very high-quality designs across all our schemes. They would expect their scheme to take design steers from other upcoming schemes such as the Dock Branch Park.
- 4.136 BCEGi is of the opinion that good quality design shouldn't cost more and that each project they do is an exemplar of that practice. They are supportive of the design quality. Having a guide and a strategy for design and public realm helps immensely at setting the tone for what is required.
- 4.137 Bellway gives the response of a volume housebuilder. In their opinion, the design guide needs to anticipate that the scale of ambition is such, that there will need to be involvement from national housebuilders. These have a set house type range and they believe the design guide should not be overly prescriptive to such an extent that the housing mix and typology does not align with market demand - as this will discourage participation and increase build costs.

#### What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?

- 4.138 Equans believe that improving the amenities within Birkenhead would be beneficial as these are crucial to the wider housing market offering which attracts new residents to an area. Whilst some new amenities are proposed, enhancements to existing leisure facilities would be beneficial, this could be funded via S106.
- 4.139 Starship thinks an innovative approach to how public realm designs are embracing more modern approaches for community spaces, bins, refuse storage and collection points etc. A key challenged with the density is not having a streetscene that is littered with wheelie bins and bags, and that can be maintained and kept clean for a sustainable cost.
- 4.140 Parking always remains a challenge, where parking is not provided this can sometimes because a barrier to being able to market the property, whilst this is not required for each and every home, we would look to maximise parking by using innovative design.
- 4.141 Step Places is keen to deliver technology enabled homes, this includes both delivering fibre to the property and ensuring that there are both wireless and wired connectivity right throughout a

modern home. In addition to this we think that it's important that people can interact with their homes through technology, whether this be for security or energy efficiency.

- 4.142 This company is working on solutions where a development has an app where owners / tenants can access resources and view, control and interact with their homes. This also allows the ability to create community shared technology resources.
- 4.143 Investment in infrastructure and sustainable power resources is an important factor in all new developments. Planning drivers for such elements as electric car clubs and car charging points is something we embrace but the involvement of the local authority in helping to create a stable electric network can be key as it is not always possible for the private sector to inform change on a strategic level, a green waste disposal refuse system would be a good addition to the wider schemes.
- 4.144 Further investment in high-speed broadband, given the uptake of homeworking, should be a targeted investment route for the local authority.
- 4.145 Knowing that these types of investment are underway helps to enthuse a private developer in delivering new residential schemes.

#### Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?

- 4.146 Yes, there is unanimous will to invest in Birkenhead. Not all those surveyed want to develop high density housing, but all are convinced that an ambitious and bold regeneration programme can help Birkenhead reassert itself as the main service, retail and leisure hub for Wirral.
- 4.147 Nobody underestimates the challenge, but there is an underlying feeling that Birkenhead is greatly under-performing and if there is a judicious use of public sector funding to pump-prime early intervention, then there would be a market for a spectrum of housing in the town. This additional population would help to support a renewed town centre and there would be a reciprocal benefit as an interesting and lively centre will attract new residents. There is a wide cross section of the development community who would have the confidence to invest and develop housing in Birkenhead.

## 5 Key Findings

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5.1 In summary, the key findings of this exercise are:

- Developers specialising in regeneration are interested in the opportunity.
- Wirral as a borough, and Birkenhead as its main town, are viewed with interest. There is a perception that the area has great potential, but there has been under investment in recent years. This has led to a decrease in economic confidence, as there has been limited development activity.
- The council needs to take the lead in the delivery of the masterplan. It should find a way to acquire the shopping centre, or work with the current owner and a development partner.
- Wirral Council should use its sites to enable development to happen. It should not expect a capital receipt at an early stage. The council should then enter into a partnership with a commercial developer.
- All developers who have expressed even a tentative interest in the scheme stress the importance of placemaking and the public realm.
- All would need to be convinced of business case before they got involved. The overall feeling is that would need some form of partnership/ Joint Venture to share risks. Developers would need to understand different business models available and what would appeal to different developers.
- The residential opportunities will be attractive to local and regional Registered Providers and development companies suggested that a 33:33:33 mix of market rent, affordable rent and market sale. Build to Rent properties will help build confidence and interest in the area ahead of any sales.

## Appendix 1 – Consultation Proforma

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## Birkenhead Market Testing Responses

### BCEGI

Developer	BCEGI UK
Name	Gary Bradwell
Position	(garybradwell@bcegu.co.uk)
Date	Commercial Director 13/8/21
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>BCEGI is an international property developer and construction company specialising in bringing projects to life through strategic partnership, investment and relationship building. With our foundations in China, we are now focussed on growing our global presence having established our European headquarters at Airport City Manchester in 2013.</p> <p>As a state-owned enterprise with operations in over 27 countries, we are an internationally diverse business, drawing on a wide range of knowledge and skills from different backgrounds across the globe.</p> <p>We currently have town centre regeneration schemes in Bolton, Wigan and Middlesbrough and have recently set up our own Housing Construction company and are working with several RP's across the North West.</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
Not yet. We were runner up in the bid for the Wirral Growth Company project.	
3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?	
We feel there is a great opportunity for investment and development in Birkenhead. With its rich history, location, wider development framework and progressive council it has all the ingredients for generating a diverse mix of development opportunities.	
4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?	

<p>Yes. We strongly believe that the more people living in the Town will bring a higher, Work, Live and Invest (local spend) ethos. We have seen in other locations that this residential led type of framework works, bringing in investment for jobs, infrastructure and education.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of ‘pioneer’ developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>Airport City Manchester          Bolton Town Centre Regeneration          Wigan town Centre Regeneration          Middlesborough BOHO X and wider Town centre regeneration</p> <p><a href="https://bcegi.co.uk/projects/">https://bcegi.co.uk/projects/</a> Please see link to our website for further details</p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>Obviously, values are low in certain areas, so creativity to plug the value gap to generate regeneration is required, a skill we have, which should have a domino effect in the town. Once this starts it can quickly create value that will attract other developers and investment into the area. Once started its important to pull together and gain momentum as Birkenhead, with its core assets as its foundations, could quite quickly become the place to be or to be seen to be. I genuinely believe that.</p>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<p>None. At Airport City to date we have developed and constructed schemes from 50k to 45m.</p>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>No, although previously in our WGC bid we had that area as mixed use development.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>No. I know the area well and this is exactly what is needed in that location. High quality, extremely well designed community housing that can breath life into a now derelict and industrial area.</p>

11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?
Extremely important. Access to green space via high quality public realm sets the tone for the town.
12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?
Absolutely. We spent a lot of time on this in our Wirral Growth Co bid explaining the positive impact of opening up this axis through the town to the public.
13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?
Europa Boulevard would be the most relevant to the current market as you would be able to tie into the work from the WGC at Milton Pavement.
14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?
All house types
15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?
No
16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?
There would be a cost and probably a programme impact.
17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?
Yes, we are currently working with one modular and one SIPS panel company delivering high quality residential developments
18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?
A41 access into town, Woodside Gyrotory, Ferry upgrades to terminals and Ferries, possible light railway/tram/cycle routes around Wirral Waters Woodside, Laird street, Conway Street. (Birkenhead Park)
19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)
<p>Market Housing for families? 1</p> <p>Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families? 2</p> <p>Retirement? Including Extra Care and Assisted Living 2</p> <p>Affordable Housing? Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate 1</p> <p>Student housing 5</p> <p>Other?</p> <p>In my opinion all have potential, so I have ranked them 1-5. 1 the highest potential and 5 the lowest.</p>
20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?

<p>We would speculatively build on Market Housing with traditional debt finance and would look to forward fund or obtain a forward commitment on PRS/Retirement/Extra care/Assisted/Affordable/Social.</p>
<p>21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?</p>
<p><i>Development agreement with the Council?</i> <i>JV with council?</i> <i>Market sale?</i> All of the above. We are open to any of those options.</p>
<p>22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)</p>
<p><i>De-risking</i> <i>Funding</i> <i>Planning</i> <i>Land Assembly</i> <i>Other (please specify)</i> We have no issue with taking risk on a development. If in a partnership or JV then that risk would be shared. We are happy to fund the planning on any project as part of a DM agreement or JV.</p>
<p>23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?</p>
<p>We are of the opinion that good quality design shouldn't cost more and that each project we do is an exemplar of that practice. Having a guide and a strategy for design and public realm helps immensely at setting the tone for what is required.</p>
<p>24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?</p>
<p><i>Having an in house Housing association that can deliver their own stock to sell or rent on their own land. A political hot potato I know but...!</i></p>
<p>25. Any other matters that you wish to raise</p>
<p>Phasing/ Timing Placemaking Connectivity Car Parking Bins Other (please specify) No, but if you can re read our bid for the Wirral Growth Company a lot of our wider views are covered in there.</p>
<p>26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?</p>

Yes

**Bellway**

Developer	Bellway Homes
Name	James McGivern
Position	Senior Land Manager
Date	26 July 2021
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>Bellway Homes is a FTSE 250 listed, recognised five-star house builder which delivers approximately 10,000, predominantly, family homes a year. We currently operate through 22 divisions, covering the main population centres across England, Scotland and Wales.</p> <p>Our North West office, based in Speke, Liverpool has a wealth of experience delivering homes on both brownfield and greenfield land</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
<p>Former Tranmere Rovers Training Ground, Prenton – 90 Three &amp; Four Bed Family Homes – Completed – 2018</p> <p>Former Port Sunlight Golf Course, Bromborough – 184 Three &amp; Four Bed Family Homes – Completed - 2020</p> <p>Former Burton Biscuits Site, Moreton – 233 Two, Three and Four Bed Family Homes and 26 One, Two and Three Bed Affordable Homes – On Going</p> <p>Former Wirral Business Park, Upton/Greasby – 102 Three and Four Bed Family Homes and 25 One, Two and Three Bed Affordable Homes – On Going</p>	
3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?	
<p>Wirral, as a whole, presents an attractive opportunity for house builders, due to the latent demand built up over many years of low delivery rates, good quality local amenities, public greenspaces and transport links to major employment centres, Liverpool, Chester, Warrington and Manchester.</p> <p>With regards to Birkenhead, the delivery of new homes, by Keepmoat in particular, show that there is a market there to support residential development, however, it is understood that approximately £1.6m of grant funding was required to deliver the 178 unit scheme at Beaufort Road. The major concern is that development within Birkenhead is unviable without some form of grant funding.</p>	
4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?	

<p>We believe the delivery of new homes is key to regenerating an area and improving the local economy. By increasing local spend from new residents this will encourage more businesses into the area.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of ‘pioneer’ developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>Bellway has undertaken the delivery of circa 700 homes in Sefton and 700 homes in Liverpool under the HMRI programme. Both areas suffered with poor quality, run down housing stock. The creation of these new enhanced communities has improved the areas and made additional housing and commercial (retail) development within the area achievable without public sector funding</p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>Viability of development in Birkenhead is a concern for the following reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low sales values - a traditional 2 storey 3 bed semi on Keepmoats Docklands scheme has a gross asking price of £189/sqft (potential net price circa £184/sqft) 2.5 and 3 storey dwellings will be £20-£30/sqft less than those achievable for 2 storey</li> <li>• Increased costs due to contamination/ demolition</li> <li>• Increased surface water drainage costs/loss of developable area due to Wirral LLFA’s interpretation of guidance resulting in all brownfield sites that are to be redeveloped having to be designed with a greenfield run off rate.</li> <li>• Inability to purchase privately owned land due to development value being less than existing use values. For example, a 1-acre site could be accommodating a 20,000sqft industrial unit, rented out at £4/sqft, and would conservatively attract an investment yield of 10%. This generates an EUV of circa £800,000. The same parcel of land developed for family housing would have a ‘greenfield value’(i.e. the value of the site before any abnormal costs are taken into account) of circa £250,000</li> </ul>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 net developable acres delivering 90/100 dwellings</li> </ul>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum Profit of 20%</li> <li>• Proven control over wider area and evidence that surrounding schemes, particularly public realm/greenspace are guaranteed to be delivered within the lifetime of the sales programme of the subject site.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>

<p>The strip alongside the Vue Cinema lends itself to an apartment scheme. The circa 3 acre parcel to rear could accommodate 2 storey and 3 storey homes. While we don't believe there is significant open market sales demand for apartments in this location, they may be of interest to Affordable Housing Companies or those operating PRS.</p> <p>The townhouses as shown do not fulfil the criteria for family housing due to the lack of private garden space. Any two or three storey homes proposed need to provide adequate private garden space. Detached dwellings of 4+ beds should have a garage – this is a key criteria from purchasers. Density for non-apartment elements should not exceed 46 units per hectare.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>In isolation the site does not represent an obvious location for housing, however, should this site come forward as part of the larger project, as envisaged, and that larger project is proven to be deliverable within the same life span as the sales and construction programme as this site then there is potential.</p> <p>It will be key to ensure that there are suitable pedestrian links, with active frontages, surrounding the site and back towards Birkenhead Park and the Town Centre particularly to ensure a safe night-time environment.</p> <p>The townhouses as shown do not fulfil the criteria for family housing due to the lack of private garden space. Any two or three storey homes proposed need to provide adequate private garden space. Density for non-apartment elements should not exceed 46 units per hectare</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>
<p>Very important, it will be key to create an environment that people want to live, work and spend their leisure time</p>
<p>12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?</p>
<p>Yes, this will help provide an improved environment and green linkages and general visual and social attractiveness of the area.</p>
<p>13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?</p>
<p>Should there be a willing developer for the apartment element then the Europa Boulevard site could come forward in the current market, subject to a redesign of the housing element, as it is adjacent to existing residential uses.</p>

14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominantly 2, 3 &amp; 4 bed semi-detached/detached 2 &amp; 2.5 storey dwellings</li> <li>• Some 3 &amp; 4 bed townhouses on site frontages/focal points</li> </ul>
15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?
We work with many RP's across the North West, our favoured partner is Torus.
16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?
This would very much make schemes unviable without further additional significant grant funding
17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?
Bellway do not utilise MMC, we find the market favours traditional brick and block construction
18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?
The Dock Branch Park Links to Birkenhead Park Links to shopping/leisure amenities Price Street, Conwy Street, A5030, Cleveland Street Links to public transport
19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Housing for families/ first time buyers</li> <li>• Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families/ first time buyers</li> <li>• Affordable Housing - Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate</li> </ul>
20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?
For viable schemes, these are funded from cash reserves and a committed banking facility  For unviable schemes, we would seek to work with the Local Authority to secure grant funding where available
21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?
There are many possibilities, for schemes that are viable and owned by the Council then a market sale approach, where the developer pays the market value for the site and delivers

<p>the dwellings via a Build Lease which contains sales overage provisions which provide potential additional payments to the Council if sales values above a certain threshold are achieved.</p> <p>Development Agreements containing a number of sites, potentially matching viable sites with unviable ones to enable a cross subsidisation.</p> <p>JV, the Council could put their landholdings in to a development package with a share of the profits being paid on completion of the schemes.</p>
<p><b>22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for unviable sites, either to purchase from private owners or pay for remediation</li> <li>• A quicker more engaging planning process</li> <li>• Land Assembly</li> </ul>
<p><b>23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?</b></p>
<p>The design guide needs to anticipate that in order to deliver the quantity of homes proposed, within the timescales set out, there will be a reliance on national housebuilders. National housebuilders have a set house type range and it should therefore not be overly prescriptive to such an extent that it requires a range of bespoke house types or restricts the housing mix and typology to one that does not align with market demand - as this will discourage participation and increase build costs.</p>
<p><b>24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?</b></p>
<p>Improvement of street scenes - tree planting – street lighting - removal of derelict buildings – encourage/facilitate improved appearance of frontages of existing residential areas.</p>
<p><b>25. Any other matters that you wish to raise</b></p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?</b></p>
<p>Bellway would be willing to deliver high density family housing in Birkenhead, however, our experience is that the homes have to meet certain traditional criteria, that being appropriate private garden space, interface distances, off street private parking, garages for 4 + bed detached dwellings. We do not believe these can be met by applying the densities currently indicated.</p>

**Capital and Centric**

Developer	Capital and Centric
Name	Tim Heatley
Position	Co Founder
Date	09/08/2021
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>Capital and Centric are a Social impact developer CAPITAL&amp;CENTRIC is one of the UK's most creative and active developers.</p> <p>Co-founded by Tim Heatley and Adam Higgins, it currently has five projects totaling £500m under construction which employ over 650 people.</p> <p>It spends on average £2 million a week on regeneration.</p> <p>Projects include: Eyewitness Works (Mixed use build-to-rent scheme within Sheffield City Centre),</p> <p>CRUSADER (a Grade II listed mill conversion sold to owner occupiers in Manchester),</p> <p>PHOENIX (new build owner occupier community),</p> <p>KAMPUS (a large mixed-use build-to-rent scheme within Manchester City Centre – a joint venture with HBD),</p> <p>TALBOT MILL (restoration of two mill buildings), 275 bed LEONARDO HOTEL in Manchester Piccadilly East,</p> <p>SWAN STREET (118 home mixed-use community in Manchester's New Cross district),</p> <p>LITTLEWOODS FILM STUDIOS, Liverpool (a film and television hub at the iconic former Littlewoods building),</p> <p>WEIR MILL (mill restoration and mixed-used community in Stockport),</p> <p>FARNWORTH (regeneration of former market precinct into new town centre community in Farnworth),</p> <p>ROCHDALE (mixed-use neighbourhood in Rochdale town centre).</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
Capital and Centric have not developed in the Wirral. We have delivered Bunker on Edge Lane	

<p>Liverpool, and Tempest in Liverpool City Centre. Capital and Centric are also due to deliver the Littlewoods Film Studios in Liverpool.</p>
<p>3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?</p>
<p>The Wirral Peninsula offers great scope for future development. With transport links to Chester and Ellesmere port along with the abundance of green space the local residents already benefit from. Birkenhead is in a prime position with its locality to Liverpool, Camel Laird and the docks, to become a more affluent commuter town.</p>
<p>4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?</p>
<p>At the heart of the proposals is the creation of family-friendly neighbourhoods with beautiful, green public spaces and parks. The plan will re-connect the revitalised town centre with the amazing opportunities along the Mersey waterfront. These proposals can only be of benefit to the immediate locality.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of 'pioneer' developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>At the heart of what Capital and Centric do is social impact. Taking this stance through our developments has shaped our design and our target audience. Bunker in Liverpool is phase 1 of the Littlewoods Studios masterplan, the success of Bunker has led to further works being planned at Littlewoods. Kampus in Manchester has created an entirely new neighbourhood in the City Centre with over 500 homes and 40,000 Sq.Ft of commercial space.</p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>We believe the perceptions on values in Birkenhead will be the biggest hurdle to overcome.</p>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<p>We believe that any area with a deliverable minimum GDV of £25,000,000 would allow us to consider a proposition.</p>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>We would expect a minimum developers profit on cost of between 10-15%. We would always welcome the opportunity to deliver the sites in their entirety, controlling the look and feel of the whole area allowing us to deliver a cohesive scheme which can benefit the area architecturally as well as socially.</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>Europa Boulevard situated so close to Conway Station and the Town Centre would be suitable for a high-density scheme. With local amenities already in place along with excellent transport link the local area can accommodate a high-density scheme.</p>

<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>Due to its industrial locality Hamilton Parks first phase may encounter issues with regards to viability and or lack of resident uptake.</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>
<p>Capital and Centric believe that high quality public realm and green space to be paramount for residents and the immediate locality. High quality public realm and green space allows the residents areas of which to enjoy and to utilise away from their home. Public realm also benefits local residents as well as the possibility of attracting families to the area who can benefit from the outdoor space.</p>
<p>12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?</p>
<p>Dock Branch Park can only be seen as a positive for the area and for the prospects of delivering the Europa Boulevard Sites.</p>
<p>13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?</p>
<p>We believe that high density family housing would suit not only the area but also the viability of the development sites in question.</p>
<p>14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?</p>
<p>We believe that a mixed scheme of housing and apartments would suit the sites in question. Capital and Centric's Nowhaus product would be of benefit to the schemes for high density family housing.</p>
<p>15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?</p>
<p>We do not have a preferred partner. We work with various RP and PRS providers.</p>
<p>16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?</p>
<p>At present we are already under way with our Nowhaus product, reviewing how we can deliver a zero-carbon home. The main impact would be cost as the supply chain is yet to catch up to demand for zero carbon and the products and contractors require aren't yet available insufficient quantities to reduce cost.</p>
<p>17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?</p>
<p>Yes, we believe Capital and Centric can design and deliver a scheme using MMC.</p>
<p>18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?</p>
<p>Park Road North, Conway Street and Watson Street we deem to be key in this area.</p>

<p>19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)</p>
<p>Build to Rent for families Affordable Rent</p>
<p>20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?</p>
<p>We use a combination of funding sources including a combination of venture capital, homes England grants / loans, pwlb and equity to create the capital stack to make the impossible possible</p>
<p>21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?</p>
<p>We believe that Development agreement with the Council would be a satisfactory process to deliver the schemes.</p>
<p>22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)</p>
<p>We believe that the best support Wirral MBC can offer would be to aid in the De-risking and Funding of the schemes.</p>
<p>23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?</p>
<p>We believe that the design vernacular demonstrated in the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy is similar and comparative to what we would hope to deliver.</p>
<p>24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?</p>
<p>Birkenhead may benefit from future housing developments centred around green spaces. These developments located on former industrial or low-quality employment space would only be of benefit to Birkenhead.</p>
<p>25. Any other matters that you wish to raise</p>
<p>Phasing/ Timing – Are there deadlines or proposed delivery time scales in place?</p>
<p>26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>Capital and Centric would welcome the opportunity to deliver a high-density scheme in Birkenhead.</p>

**City Heart**

Developer	Cityheart Ltd
Name	Mark McNamee
Position	MD
Date	11/8/21
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>Cityheart Ltd is a development company working with the public sector in all its guises with a particular interest in PPP with LA's</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
No	
3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?	
<p>I spent my initial years as a surveyor working in Birkenhead and on the Wirral and always belived in its potential though not underestimating the challeges the area faced.</p> <p>My initial opinion now, is that significant public sector intervention is required across the board to stimulate that potential (which I am pleased to see that the Council is undertaking).</p> <p>I am not convinced it is yet an investment opportunity.</p>	
4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?	
<p>Yes, but only if done correctly, including supporting infrastructure of health facilities, schools, public transport and green space.</p>	
5. Do you have experience of 'pioneer' developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where	
<p>Yes, I have delivered a number of schemes of a similar nature including the Rotherham Demonstrator Project and Princes Dock in Liverpool.</p>	

Of most relevance is our housing scheme in Widnes where we are in partnership with Halton BC to deliver 370 homes on a similar site. Phase 1 detailed planning was submitted two weeks ago.
6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?
Yes, simply put, without public sector support, it will not be viable . This si due to a comination of facors including low values, and huge risng build costs and the governemnts zero carbon requirements .
7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?
For Cityheart, circa 100 units
8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?
Confirmation of public sector financial support Our profit requirement for Affordable would be 11%a nd open market sales 17.5% plus a DM fee. Our poreference would be for a series of schemes .
9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?
No, other than it is suitable with the correct wider area planning
10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.
As 9 above
11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?
Hugely
12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?

Yes
13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?
All
14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?
Too early to form a view, it is a function of market need and demand.
15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?
Yes Torus
16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?
Increased cost
17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?
Yes
18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?
Again, too early to say though we would comment that the car in our view will still be required as a primary means of transport for many years to come.
19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)
<i>Market Housing for families? No, unless with public sector intervention and subsidy</i> <i>Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families? As above, though funders may be reluctant to initially invest here</i> <i>Retirement? Including Extra Care and Assisted Living Yes</i> <i>Affordable Housing? Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate Yes</i> <i>Student housing No market</i> <i>Other?</i>
20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?
Preferably forward funded with RP or private funding partner

21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?
<i>Development agreement with the Council?</i> <i>JV with council?</i> <i>Market sale?</i>
We are open to all the above,
22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)
<i>De-risking Yes</i> <i>Funding Yes</i> <i>Planning Yes</i> <i>Land Assembly If required and potential CPO</i> <i>Other (please specify)</i>
23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?
From a time limited scan, very good.
24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?
<i>Improved infrastructure, more green space, imprpved schools and health facilities .</i> <i>Enhanced employment opportunity. Lobby to get rid of the tunnel toll which is now merely a cash cow to Transport for Merseyside and is a barrier to the wider cityh region and the Wirral in particular</i>
25. Any other matters that you wish to raise
Phasing/ Timing Placemaking Connectivity Car Parking Bins Other (please specify)
26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?
Yes

## Countryside

Developer	Countryside Properties
Name	Andrew Smith
Position	Associate Director (Land)
Date	17.08.21
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>Countryside Properties Limited founded in 1958, established its Northern office in Warrington in 1998. Since that time the Division has undertaken a considerable variety of residential and associated mixed use developments, a significant proportion of which has been in partnership with government agencies, local authorities and Registered Providers, as well as private companies and landowners.</p> <p>These range from high rise, high value, complex, mixed use schemes such as Mann Island on the waterfront in Liverpool to our major regeneration initiative in Lower Broughton, Salford, where we are worked in a very open and transparent partnership with Salford City Council. In addition to the above we have developed new communities as exhibited by the bespoke designed private village at Wychwood Park near Nantwich.</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
No but it is an area of significant interest.	
3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?	
<p>The Wirral is a unique micro-climate for development. I believe that it is fair to say that developers have always been drawn to the higher value areas and this has led to lower value areas often not receiving the same level of interest. At Countryside because of our business model and expertise in 'place making' sites such as the ones being discussed in Birkenhead, are of significant interest and we strongly believe that we can add real value with our developments in these areas.</p>	
4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?	
<p>In my opinion yes. However firstly in order for 'place making' to succeed in the long term is also imperative that existing residents in the area are taken along on the journey and made aware that they have a valuable contribution to make to shape their existing neighbourhoods via the new development proposals. They should be encouraged to bring positive suggestions to the fore to create a 'strategic vision' for the development and wider area in question. This approach also facilitates a smoother integration for new residents into existing communities and creates a sense of pride in the area from existing residents as they will feel that they have played an integral role in shaping and creating the final outcome.</p>	

<p>Secondly, by introducing high density development into an area, such as Birkenhead, inevitably this will attract a higher number of residents into an area than would otherwise be able to reside in a lower density scheme. This brings pros and cons with it but a distinct benefit that this provides is a boost to the local economy and the by-product of this creates an atmosphere where commercial operators feel much more comfortable when risk profiling and viability testing an investment or development opportunity. The ‘boost to the local economy’ is then further realised by the creation of jobs from the said operators, jobs which have the potential to be filled by local people further improving the economic profile of the area due to a reduction in unemployment.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of ‘pioneer’ developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>Further information available upon request.</p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>No. Until further information is available it is difficult to predict. As a business however we are confident that even the most challenging of problems could be overcome.</p>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<p>We would judge each site on its own merits but as a broad rule of thumb ideally a minimum of 6 acres and or 80 units.</p>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>At this stage we judge each opportunity on its own merits.</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>No.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>

11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?
Incredibly important due to the type of dwellings proposed and whilst the cost for ongoing maintenance of these areas is there in perpetuity providing high quality areas for residents to enjoy within their development is a huge positive. Permeability to the surrounding neighbourhood is also vital in order not to create the feeling of a 'gated development' cut off from its existing neighbourhood. It is a fine security balance however and designing out crime is incredibly important. Natural surveillance is a good solution along with good lighting allowing residents to feel safe when they are there in the darker hours.
12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?
Unknown.
13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?
TBC.
14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?
As a business we have been successful in the development of both and have delivered schemes that have incorporated both types.
15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?
No.
16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?
Inevitably it comes down to cost which in turn affects viability.
17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?
Yes. As a business we have been successfully using MMC for some time and have our own timber manufacturing arm.
18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?
TBC.

19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)
Market Housing for families. Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families. Affordable Housing - Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate
20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?
We utilise various funding streams.
21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?
All would be explored however market sale would be potentially the quickest path to delivery.
22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)
TBC.
23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?
TBC.
24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?
TBC.
25. Any other matters that you wish to raise
None.
26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?
We would be interested in discussing any future development opportunities further as they arise.

**Engie**

Developer	Equans (Part of the ENGIE Group)
Name	Ryan James
Position	Head of Land & Partnerships
Date	26/07/2021

**1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?**

EQUANS brings together these activities under a new brand, creating a market leader in the sector with 74,000 employees and revenues of 12 billion euros. EQUANS will be present in 17 countries - mostly across Europe, but also with significant interests in North America, Latin America and Australia. Further details can be found [here](#)

This strength in the energy, services and regeneration sectors allow us to provide bespoke cutting edge solutions to our partners. We have partnerships with 170 Local Authorities across the UK to whom we offer range of solutions to unlock development opportunities and enhance neighbourhoods for the benefit of our partners and local communities. This includes building 1,100 new homes every year.

Whilst we are part of a global group, we operate through regional offices, including local offices in Salford and Liverpool, providing a local focus, employing local people and working with local businesses.

Our track record in housing development is exceptional, meeting the specific needs of our Local Authority, housing partners and communities. Whilst our portfolio of homes are specifically designed to appeal to first time buyers, young professionals, families and affordable housing residents alike, we routinely work with partners to develop bespoke house types to meet their specific project needs. All properties are built to the same high standard, with quality workmanship and high levels of energy efficiency, aligned to our company purpose of “Making Zero Carbon Happen”.

**2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?**

Although we haven’t specifically built in the Wirral we had a JV modular factory business ‘Evolve Built for Life’ that was based at Birkenhead.

This Birkenhead business produced over 600 factory built modules covering distribution to the whole of the UK and were built locally in only nine months.

Carbon emissions in the homes built at Birkenhead were lower than traditional built home by 44% and over 100+ people were employed from the local Birkenhead area.

The address for our Wirral business ‘Evolve Built for Life’ was ‘Building 11, Campbeltown Road, Birkenhead, CH41 9BP.

<p>Elsewhere in the North West Region we are currently have over 1,150 units in construction across the NW region</p>
<p>3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?</p>
<p>We feel Wirral holds excellent opportunities for investment as its current development commitments such as Wirral Waters sets the platform for the next phases of investment across the borough.</p> <p>Birkenhead in particular has impressive growth aspirations which if delivered with the appropriate design and phasing could create significant place making regeneration.</p>
<p>4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?</p>
<p>Yes, in our opinion the framework provides clarity on the vision and aspiration of the regeneration of Birkenhead whilst also providing the required amount of flexibility for developers to bring their ideas and design aspirations forward.</p> <p>This allows a much more robust design approach to the regeneration and accommodates the level of viability assumptions required to deliver such an ambitious plan.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of 'pioneer' developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>We are the largest facilitator/provider of public led regeneration schemes in the UK at over £1bn per year. Working with a range of partners, placemaking is what we do. Our multi-faceted approach to planning, design, construction and management of communities is at the heart of our transformation process and this collaborative, forward thinking approach has allowed us to grow to our significant size. 'Pioneer' developments/regeneration models that may be of interest to Wirral include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Established the UK's first Housing Public Private Partnership 'PPP' This PPP was initially incorporated in 1989 as the Durham Housing Partnership which then in 2001 became the Durham Village Regeneration model. The concept being that land was provided by the Council/ County Council with shared profit split on sales. This led to the business being a trusted PPP partner securing 11 out of 14 UK pathfinders.</li><li>2. UK's First 'Zero Carbon Living Project' 91 homes were built at Park Dale Castleford for Wakefield District Housing that achieved zero carbon living (i.e. Code 6 Standards) Effectively the project drew heat from its own 'Eco Centre'</li><li>3. Rugeley Power Station The regeneration of Rugeley Power Station will be the first time a major UK energy company will lead the repurposing of one of its own sites. ENGIE will retain ownership and a long-term interest in the 139-hectare brownfield site and deliver a new sustainable community for Rugeley. After three years of extensive community engagement and</li></ol>

planning, ENGIE is now progressing plans to transform the former coal-fired Power Station site, into a sustainable, mixed-use development of 2,300 new low carbon homes with a low carbon school. The masterplan also includes more than 12 acres of employment space and a new country park alongside the River Trent.

#### 4. Marsh Farm Luton:

We routinely work with Local Authority partners to kick-start regeneration and have numerous examples of how our development has provided a catalyst for social and physical transformation. This includes current partnerships with Rochdale, Knowsley, Cheshire West & Chester, Leeds, Sheffield and Luton Council just to name a few.

At Marsh Farm, in Luton, one of the largest and most deprived housing estates in Luton, we worked in partnership with the Council and the local community to develop a scheme with longevity that delivered transformational change. The estate had suffered from a long period of under investment and was in need of regeneration, not only to build new, sustainable and aesthetically pleasing homes, but to rejuvenate the diverse neighbourhood and overcome the negative stigmas in Luton about the estate and beyond. We set up a steering group, consisting of local residents, shopkeepers, local charities and council members to provide input into the regeneration proposals, ensuring the development responded to community needs.

One of the project outcomes was to create a busy vibrant shopping area, with higher density apartments and safe public space. Safety and confidence was imperative, and the group was instrumental in ensuring this was achieved through design but also by creating a new brand and the 'Love and Tolerance' initiative involving local artists and local school children.

This far reaching project has completely transformed the estate, creating over 100 new modern homes, a new commercial and social centre and a new reputation for the estate. With 60% of project jobs going to local people, the project has directly supported the upskilling of local people, driving change in terms of local aspirations, prospects, and supporting the Council's wider regeneration objectives.

#### 6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?

In any area where regeneration aspirations such as the ones set out in the Regeneration Framework are set, viability will be a challenge in certain areas whilst others less so.

The aspiration for features such as low carbon neighbourhoods, district heating networks and strategic open spaces will inevitably put pressure on viability, although if carefully phased and contributed towards from multiple phases of development this can be achieved.

#### 7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?

We would consider opportunity sites of 50 units + in order for this to be viable for our business model. We are able to look at a range of opportunities including both high rise and low rise new build and refurbishment residential developments.

<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>Access to multiple phases of development would be key to improve viability and our ability to undertake meaningful place making development as single phased opportunities doesn't provide the scale to regenerate an area.</p> <p>Clearly when acting as Developer we will have hurdle rates that the scheme must achieve before confirming viability, but our ability to flex and drive mixed use schemes along with other partners usually results in these [profit levels being lower than those required by OMS Developers</p> <p>We are keen to ensure that we can work collaboratively with all key stakeholders and this is a vital element to drive the success of a project and is an important factor for us when deciding which schemes we work on</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>We support the approach for high density development at Europa Boulevard given it's proximity to the shopping centre, vehicular and public transport provides an excellent location for a number of high rise uses such as apartments for professionals and first-time buyers and also an extra care facility should this be required within Wirral's sufficiency strategy.</p> <p>The height associated with high rise brings a strong frontage to the street scene therefore improving and setting the design standards for future phases of development.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>The Hamilton Park location has huge potential to be a thriving and aspirational place to live in Birkenhead, however this is all dependent on the wider employment uses mentioned above coming forward as part of this proposal.</p> <p>The phasing and timing of this development is crucial in delivering the plans outlined in the strategy as each phase of development requires enough quality to set the precedent to continually drive development and improve quality and deliverability of future phases.</p> <p>We feel both options proposed for this site would work in this location and the addition of apartments in option 2 could potentially assist with viability should it be required.</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>

<p>High-quality public realm and access to green space is very important to create inclusive and sustainable communities. These are key to the wider place making of areas and the recent COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this further, especially for residents living in high rise developments with limited access to open spaces for exercise and social purposes.</p>
<p>12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?</p>
<p>The proposed development plans for Dock Branch Park would bring significant benefits for the wider areas including the Europa Boulevard sites as it would create notable transport links along key heritage routes to Wirral Waters, the Town Centre and Hind Street which would open up opportunities for jobs, social and environmental wellbeing. The links to the above locations along routes of high-quality green spaces would certainly add value and assist with viability and deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites.</p>
<p>13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?</p>
<p>Both options bring characteristics and uses which open up tenures suited to the current market as their locations lend themselves to the proposed designs. However, in our opinion the Hamilton Park option provides the housing types and design which is being delivered across the North West and given the recent pandemic this offers key features required by end users such as amenity space within the garden areas which has proven invaluable in recent times.</p>
<p>14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?</p>
<p>We would have an interest in developing all of the house types, as discussed throughout this questionnaire we feel the design solutions for the relevant locations is appropriate and therefore see opportunities to deliver these successfully.</p>
<p>15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?</p>
<p>We work with a vast array of Registered Providers and Private Rented Sector partners, therefore our preferred approach would be to discuss any potential opportunities with a number of partners to identify the best fit and most viable solution for all parties to be able to maximise the quality of the developments.</p>
<p>16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?</p>
<p>The benefits to the environment and energy performance of developments from introducing a requirement for zero-carbon homes would be massive and is becoming more of a high priority agenda item within national guidance.</p> <p>However, any policy requirement for zero-carbon homes would undoubtedly bring viability challenges due to the increase in build costs associated with achieving zero-carbon status. We would support the inclusion of a policy requirement to introduce elements of zero-carbon homes and we are actively delivering schemes which are achieving zero-carbon,</p>

therefore we have experience on the ways in which this can be achieved and the costs associated.

Viability on OMS units is more of a challenge due to the fact that the increased initial cost versus the long term benefits is not always realised by the buyer nor the mortgage company, especially when considering first time buyers, who would not typically remain in a property long enough to see the benefit of the increased initial outlay against the long term gains

It would be very crucial to have extended dialogue with Homes England to identify any funding support available to improve viability.

17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?

Yes, we are actively delivering development sites which have various elements of MMC included.

If required, details of these schemes can be provided upon request.

18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?

Existing connections to Liverpool are vital as access to jobs, education and leisure are key for both existing and new residents and the transport links are a huge selling point for the area.

New connections improving links in and around Birkenhead, specifically to Wirral Waters, the Commercial District and Dock Branch Park are key to creating an inclusive community.

Enhancing or introducing new links to the wider borough and beyond is also key to establish Birkenhead as a potential hub location.

19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)

*Market Housing for families? Yes*

*Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families? Yes*

*Retirement? Including Extra Care and Assisted Living Yes*

*Affordable Housing? Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate Yes (relevant mix of tenure is crucial)*

*Student housing Yes for Europa Boulevard site but not Hamilton Park*

*Other?*

20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?

Effectively we would see large scale projects like this potentially having at least four lines of funding that we could help or discuss with Wirral Council.

1. Development Funding (i.e. work in progress project funding)
2. Asset Funding;
3. Govt and support funding
4. Energy Funding

**Development Funding;**

Development funding can limit outputs and also expense to large scale regeneration projects such as this. We have compelling propositions to LA's that consider; build outputs, sharing of profits for a dev funding trade off and even gift units to LAs that further reduce dev funding.

**Asset Funding;**

The lower the rate of long term funding the more viable large regeneration schemes become (including generating higher land values for LA) We have numerous partners who would be interested in holding assets on this proposed development including; Traditional RP's, PRS funders and UK, European and North American institutional investors.

**Govt Funding;**

On large scale regeneration projects Govt support is key to viability. We have helped advise LA's how to maximise grants and also how to structure the project and procurement so that double grants are received (e.g. grants for LA and RP) Often LA's sell the land to the final end user without applying for grant, thereby resulting in one single level of grant only.

**Energy Funding;**

We are now seeing interest form senior debt partners in asset funding new homes who will also apply funding to energy measures on the same project (i.e. combined funding) If this is structured correctly then energy measures and carbon measures are paid for in the project (and not an additional expense)

21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?

*Development agreement with the Council? Yes, we have experience of entering development agreements with Council's for residential development.*  
*JV with council? A JV partnership arrangement would work for these sites, we also have experience with other Local Authorities and we could propose a number of various ways on how this could be done.*  
*Market sale? Yes, this would work and be an option.*

22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)

*De-risking Yes*  
*Funding Not necessarily but site dependant*  
*Planning Yes – assistance and guidance through planning would be beneficial*  
*Land Assembly Site dependant*  
*Other (please specify)*

23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?

Design Quality is hugely important to the success of regeneration schemes such as this and an update to the existing Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy is required to reflect the up to date requirements for the area and latest design aspirations.

24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?
Improving the amenities within Birkenhead would be beneficial as these are crucial to the wider housing market offering which attracts new residents to an area. Whilst some new amenities are proposed, enhancements to existing leisure facilities would be beneficial, this could be funded via S106.
25. Any other matters that you wish to raise
Phasing/ Timing Placemaking Connectivity Car Parking Bins Other (please specify) N/A
26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?
Yes

**Keepmoat**

Developer	Keepmoat Homes
Name	Paul Liggett
Position	Land & Partnerships Manager
Date	09.08.2021
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>Keepmoat Homes is a national top-ten house builder currently delivering c.4000 homes annually. The Liverpool regional office delivers c.400 homes per annum across an average of 10 live sites. As a region we have been active in the land market, typically acquiring 3-4 new sites each year ranging from 45 units up to 500 units across a broad market area. Our company-wide strategy is to deliver homes of mixed tenure - for sale, affordable and Private Rented Sector (PRS) with approximately 70% of our open market sale properties purchased by first time buyers reflecting our average sale price across the country of £165,000</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
<p>We are currently on site with The Docklands Development at Beaufort Road, Birkenhead.</p> <p>Delivering 178 new homes comprising a mixture of 2, 3 &amp; 4 bedroom properties.</p> <p>Here we were able to achieve 19.16 units per acre equivalent to 46.9 units per hectare.</p> <p>With prices starting from £157,995 it will provide high quality homes to various levels of the housing market</p>	
3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?	
<p>The Wirral and subsequently Birkenhead are areas of strong community, often close knit with families settling in the area and subsequently growing within the locale as opposed to moving out.</p> <p>Like many regions there are pockets of affluent areas coupled with lower income neighbourhoods.</p> <p>From a development and investment perspective The Wirral, particularly Birkenhead, are strong locations for Keepmoat as the capital values and product need are strongly aligned with the product we offer.</p>	
4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?	
<p>Yes, Birkenhead is in need of regeneration, large parts of the area are destitute due to a lack of investment. The town centre is very disjointed but acts as a key commercial space in</p>	

<p>the area for the wider region, due to the village nature of the wider Wirral peninsular. Birkenhead acts as a gateway from Liverpool and other major Northern cities, by increasing the population and adding investment it has the real potential to be a thriving community and spark further regeneration across the Wirral as a whole.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of 'pioneer' developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>Keepmoat have been a key partner in the Anfield Project in conjunction with Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Football Club and Your Housing Group.</p> <p>The £260m ongoing project to date has seen the significant improvement of the area, with Keepmoat partnering to deliver 600 new mixed tenure homes as part of the scheme.</p> <p>As a result of the projects ongoing success there are now further plans to regenerate the high street, Walton Breck Road, with brand new shops, commercial premises, homes and apartments</p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>No, as a result of previous development in the area and our ability to deliver even the most challenging of sites, as organisation we are always open minded when approaching new opportunities and seek to deliver schemes others may not</p>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<p>Generally, we would see 50 units as a minimum number of plots required</p>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>As with all high-volume house builders we have an internal viability appraisal with set performance criteria, outside of this we are largely flexible and take a proactive approach in negotiations with a view to unlocking even the most challenging sites</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>The Europa Boulevard development as an apartment only site would not be of interest in its current form as we generally do not deliver apartment living.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>

<p>Hamilton Park is an accessible site which when combined with further phased delivery of homes could result in a really desirable and attractive location to live.</p> <p>As an organisation we would welcome the opportunity to be involved in any further discussions and provide any expertise required to facilitate the redevelopment.</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>
<p>The impact of high-quality public realm and access to green space cannot be understated, they are key components of any high-quality development and the socioeconomic impacts are equally boundless. This has been demonstrated in recent times during the Covid 19 crisis in which the reliance on POS to offer safe low cost amenity has been invaluable.</p>
<p>12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?</p>
<p>Absolutely, by not only creating a more connected community but also improving the public realm, it is reasonable to assume property sale and rental values will increase strengthening the viability of any development opportunities</p>
<p>13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?</p>
<p>Both developments have their own merit however as previously noted, we would not be interested in pursuing the Europa Boulevard development at this time given its proposed composition.</p>
<p>14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?</p>
<p>We would employ a range of market research to best establish requirements for any given site, however our initial view would be a range of 2, 3 &amp; 4 bedroom homes.</p>
<p>15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?</p>
<p>With all development opportunities we undergo a range of market testing to source the strongest development partner where required.</p> <p>We have a proven track record of working with a variety external providers to bolster scheme delivery and viability.</p>
<p>16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?</p>
<p>Subject to a cost review, any cost implications on cost would generally be reflected in the land value of a development</p>
<p>17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?</p>
<p>Yes, Keepmoat Homes are well versed in the use of MMC as a method of delivery, we have taken this approach on a number of sites, in a recent bid we have proposed the use of a combination of either open or closed panel timber frame with roof cassettes, where 2.5st</p>

properties are utilised the combination of timber frame and roof cassettes is not possible and so it would have to be either or in this instance
18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?
<p>The two Mersey tunnels will continue to be of immense value for the area, in conjunction with the A41 leading from the Birkenhead Tunnel to New Ferry and Bromborough.</p> <p>The Merseyrail loop line service which connects Liverpool and the Wirral to Chester and Wales.</p> <p>The M53 which connects the Wirral to Wales and the A55 as well as connecting to the M56 for Manchester other key commuter areas.</p> <p>The implementation of Dock Branch Park will provide much needed additional greenspace as well as sustainable travel routes from corporation road through to Green Lane station.</p>
19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)
Market housing, PRS and Affordable Housing of varying tenure to be determined via the analysis of demand in the area.
20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?
Where acting as sole developer we employ our own capital combined with revenues from sales to deliver projects, when working with a delivery partner the above is combined with capital from said partner to further fund the development.
21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?
<p>We have an extensive track record in delivering market housing and would use our branding, marketing and scheme composition expertise to provide an attractive saleable product to the market.</p> <p>When working with delivery partners to provide nonmarket sale products we would typically look to contract on either a golden brick, staged payment or monthly valuation basis.</p> <p>We would be keen to explore any other opportunities and as such would welcome further discussion around the suggestions made below.</p> <p><i>Development agreement with the Council</i> <i>JV with council</i></p>
22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)
De-risking – the provision of a comprehensive technical pack would enable cost certainty for both ourselves and vendor/s

<p>Funding – not a necessity but would be welcomed, if affordable housing was to be provided on site the ability for our development partners to apply for HE grant funding would be a significant boost to viability</p> <p>Planning – any guidance and support available would always be welcomed to ensure the delivery of a policy compliant development</p> <p>Land Assembly – where possible this would quicken the delivery of any proposed development and give certainty to phasing etc.</p>
<p>23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?</p>
<p>The addition of further guidance when delivering any project is always welcomed, as such we are relishing the opportunity to review the finalised guides when available in early 2022.</p>
<p>24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?</p>
<p>The release of council owned land or use of compulsory purchase powers would enable the unlocking of sites and subsequent redevelopment of areas where housing stock is not fit for purpose or subpar.</p>
<p>25. Any other matters that you wish to raise</p>
<p>26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>Absolutely, we would welcome involvement in any redevelopment projects in Birkenhead and the wider area of the Wirral</p>

**Magenta**

Developer	Magenta Living
Name	Mark Armstrong
Position	Assistant Director, Strategy & Regeneration
Date	9 August 2021

1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?

Magenta Living is the largest registered housing provider in Wirral and a not-for-profit organisation, owning and managing just under 13,000 properties, the majority of which are within Wirral. Employing around 600 staff, we are a significant local employer demonstrated by Investors in People Gold standard and retaining our Customer Service Excellence accreditation. Magenta Living is committed to providing an additional 1,000 homes and although we also own homes in Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Halton, Wirral remains our heartland and focus for future developments. We develop a range of tenures including affordable rent, social rent, shared ownership, rent to buy and open market sale, as well as housing for different needs including general needs, bungalows, extra care and other specialist housing.

2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?

Since stock transfer we have provided 830 new homes on Wirral. Our ambition is to develop further with the potential to deliver a further 1,000 homes across the strategic areas of operation, prioritising the Wirral heartland.

Scheme Name	Units	Area	Local Authority	Property Type	Completion
Home Farm Road	14	Woodchurch	Wirral	Houses	2009
Apollo Court	19	Wallasey	Wirral	Apartments	2009
Juliet Avenue	6	Bebington	Wirral	Houses	2009
Royden Road	4	Overchurch	Wirral	Houses	2011
Cornfield Close	12	Woodchurch	Wirral	Houses	2012
Town Meadow Lane	24	Moreton	Wirral	Houses, 1 x Bungalow	2013
Town Meadow Lane	3	Moreton	Wirral	Shops	2013
The Dales	11	Moreton	Wirral	Houses & Bungalows	2013
Great Eastern	10	New Ferry	Wirral	Houses	2013
Chapelhill Road	30	Moreton	Wirral	Houses & Apartments	2013
Redshanks	32	Hoylake	Wirral	Apartments	2013
Victoria View	41	New Brighton	Wirral	Apartments	2013
Rocklands	16	Bidston	Wirral	Apartments	2013

<b>St Josephs Place</b>	24	Birkenhead	Wirral	Houses	2013
<b>New Hey Road</b>	131	Woodchurch	Wirral	Houses/Apartments / Bungalows	2014
<b>St James Place</b>	18	Birkenhead	Wirral	Houses & Bungalows	2014
<b>Beckwith Street</b>	18	Birkenhead	Wirral	Houses & Bungalows	2015
<b>Manor Road</b>	15	Wallasey	Wirral	Apartments & Houses	2015
<b>Willowtree</b>	17	Moreton	Wirral	Houses & Bungalows	2015
<b>Brotherton View</b>	9	Bromborough	Wirral	Apartments	2015
<b>Tollemache Road</b>	12	Birkenhead	Wirral	Bungalows	2015
<b>Pensall House</b>	22	Pensby	Wirral	Houses & Apartments	2015
<b>Orrets Mews</b>	18	Woodchurch	Wirral	Houses	2015
<b>Blue Stones</b>	48	West Kirby	Wirral	Apartments	2016
<b>Brown Cow</b>	26	Bebington	Wirral	Apartments	2016
<b>Carlett Park</b>	3	Eastham	Wirral	Houses	2016
<b>Barnston Mews</b>	10	Moreton	Wirral	Houses	2018
<b>Mary Cole House (Wirral Ark)</b>	27	Birkenhead	Wirral	Bedsit Apartments	2018
<b>Melrose and Thornridge</b>	38	Moreton	Wirral	Houses	2018
<b>Hazeldene Way</b>	7	Thingwall	Wirral	Houses	2018
<b>Fenderview Road</b>	4	Moreton	Wirral	Houses	2018
<b>Kenilworth Gardens</b>	13	Overchurch	Wirral	Houses	2018
<b>Church Road</b>	34	Tranmere	Wirral	Houses	2019-2020
<b>Barncroft Extra Care</b>	21	Pensby	Wirral	Apartments	2020
<b>Hamilton Court</b>	27	Claughton	Wirral	Apartments	2020
<b>Saughall Massie Road/ Willow Sands</b>	11	West Kirby	Wirral	Houses (Shared Ownership)	2020
<b>Mallowdale</b>	7	Eastham	Wirral	Houses/Bungalow	2021
<b>Clifton Avenue (partial handover)</b>	8	Eastham	Wirral	Houses	2021
<b>Delamere</b>	12	Eastham	Wirral	Houses	2021
<b>Church Street</b>	10	Egremont	Wirral	Houses	2021
<b>Flambards</b>	18	Woodchurch	Wirral	Houses/ Bungalow	2021

3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?

Our perception is that Wirral is an attractive development/investment opportunity. It has seen some significant growth in property values over the last year, with Wallasey recently being named as the area with the biggest growth in values across the whole of the country. The coastline surrounding the peninsula helps to boost the desirability of Wirral's towns.

As seen in the table provided at question 2, Magenta has provided new housing across Wirral and has experienced varying degrees of financial performance from area to area. Schemes in lower value areas, such as Birkenhead are more difficult to make viable and the affordable rent level that can be achieved is not always sufficient to cover the cost of the build. Therefore, an increased level of subsidy is required to bring some of the opportunities to fruition. This can be achieved through Homes England grant, Brownfield land fund, Local Authority grant or internal subsidy.

Shared ownership schemes are generally not viable due to the low property values in Birkenhead/south Wallasey which limits our ability to build mix tenure schemes.

Magenta Living's Neighbourhood Management Team also has experience of significant ASB issues in certain areas of Birkenhead which are taken into consideration when exploring development opportunities in the area. For developers who are looking to sell their homes this isn't an impediment, but Magenta Living retains ownership of its rented homes and has a long-term interest in its communities. We use intervention to manage ASB issues, we are invested in our communities and support them to be vibrant and thrive. It is crucial we have a holistic approach to regeneration, involving all relevant stakeholders and particularly engage with the local community.

Although developing in Birkenhead poses challenges, Magenta Living's head office is in the centre of Birkenhead and we are committed to playing our part in the regeneration of the area and welcome working with the Council and the Council's partners to facilitate the delivery of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework Plan and Wirral Waters.

4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?

In broad terms we welcome the prospect of larger scale residential development within the town of Birkenhead. However, what needs to be given serious consideration by way of context is:

**Current population trends** - The borough's population total has fallen compared with 1990. This represents a stagnation compared to England's and even Liverpool's population growth during this time. A small population rise of 1.3% being projected over the next ten years.

**Economic factors** – when considering the MHCLG's 2019 Indices of Deprivation rank of neighbourhoods for *relative* deprivation, some of areas in Birkenhead (and Wallasey) are deeply into the top 1% of most deprived. At some locations even social rents can be unaffordable suggesting that overarching regeneration initiatives and investment are required from the local authority and its partners.

**Market issues** - there is currently an outflow from Birkenhead (& South Wallasey) as soon as purchase becomes feasible, these proposals are obviously designed to reverse these trends.

**Political landscape** - The Planning "White Paper" with its proposed replacement of S106 etc with national tariff return and the £17bn projected reduction in public expenditure and the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review, with the probability that welfare

<p>benefits are likely to be constrained below the rate of inflation, all represent risk and create a perception of uncertainty. Potential affordability issues may also result which could in turn have an impact on demand.</p> <p><b>Timescales</b> - the timing of regeneration initiatives like Wirral Waters' developments and their impact on local demand for products creates some uncertainty which exposes Magenta to risk, especially over market-oriented products.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of 'pioneer' developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>Magenta are currently working on a regeneration scheme in Widnes near to the new Hive leisure and retail park. It is hoped this will be the start of more residential development and the catalyst for change, boosting the local economy. However, the organisation is very much supportive and keen to be involved in a more holistic approach to regeneration and not in just providing bricks and mortar.</p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>As per the response in Question 3 – it is harder for Magenta to make developments in low value areas viable due to low property and rental values. The ASB in certain parts of the town is also a contributing factor. However, with the support of grant and subsidy this should improve the viability so that we are able to deliver as part of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework.</p>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<p>Magenta has developed both small and larger schemes on Wirral as opportunities have been driven by land availability. Tenure mix is also a significant contributing factor. We are open to a mixed approach of smaller and somewhat larger sites so that we benefit from economies of scale in terms of delivery. Due to the location, we are able to provide customer excellence in terms of housing management as Wirral is our heartland.</p>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>We would need to understand the Council's timescales and phasing in order to better align with our own priorities and consider the availability of grant so that it both complements and is affordable within our business plan. The wider context about proposals for the wider neighbourhood is also important. It is worth stating that we would also require the approval of our Board before entering into any formal partnership.</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>The location is good and central for Birkenhead, near to both bus and train links. However, we would have concerns that the leisure/retail/employment offering is not sufficient to attract new residents and the result would be the potential displacement of existing Birkenhead residents from elsewhere in the areas within which we operate. From Magenta Living's</p>

<p>perspective, houses would be preferable to flats as they are currently more sustainable for future lettings. We would need a market appraisal to demonstrate current and future housing demand. The design for the site would benefit from environmental treatment to soften the appearance of the development. We would need to give consideration to the client base and the aspirations for future customers e.g. smart homes, home working etc. We would also need to consider competition from other developers and be in a position to offer a choice of tenure for all.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>The site is surrounded by industry and currently lacks local amenities. For the first phase to be successful the subsequent phases would need to follow quickly and would need to provide the local amenities lacking in the immediate area.          The issues identified earlier relating to potential displacement from adjacent areas and affordability (given the current levels of deprivation) also needs to be factored into these discussions.</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>
<p>Extremely important!          Residents need the option of being able to enjoy outdoor recreational space and it is important to 'build in' green spaces where people can just sit, enjoy and feel safe; promoting healthy lifestyle and healthy living. Increases in working from home and the fact that it adds to the zero-carbon agenda and building environmentally sustainable neighbourhoods should not be overlooked.</p>
<p>12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?</p>
<p>The Dock Branch Park plans are, realistically, a longer-term aspiration but the Europa site could be seen as a stand-alone scheme, but we would want more detail on plans, scale and timetable for Dock Branch Park before being in a position to offer a definitive position and prioritise.</p>
<p>13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?</p>
<p>As things stand, we believe that the Europa site is more of a desirable location with the potential to bring it forward sooner rather than later.</p>
<p>14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?</p>
<p>1 bed apartments and a mix of 1/2/3/4 bed houses. We recognise that people may prefer larger apartments but the impact of central government policy, such as the bedroom tax, cannot be overlooked on what actually on the ground.</p>

<p>15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?</p>
<p>Magenta Living is a registered provider however we also have a subsidiary to provide PRS and outright sale.</p>
<p>16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?</p>
<p>An increase in the build costs which would obviously affect the viability of the scheme. However, these additional costs could be off-set by further grant or subsidy. Having said that, Magenta Living is committed to NCZ, it has a climate change and sustainability strategy/group which works closely with our Development Team to set a standard for providing MMC/Net zero carbon homes to deliver as part of its own development programme. We see this as an option to bring delivery forward, using new technologies and ways of working.</p> <p>It would be beneficial to work with the Education Sector to provide NZC homes as there is a skills shortage that needs to be addressed to support future/on-going delivery. The policy would also need to consider on-going maintenance lifecycles and costs.</p>
<p>17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?</p>
<p>As stated in the response to question 16 above, we are committed to providing MMC/NZC homes and would consider it as an option in delivering the Europa Site. However, we would need to undertake further due diligence and work with MMC manufacturers to assess whether it is viable on this site as it may lend itself to some of the site and not all.</p>
<p>18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?</p>
<p>Using the TravelTime application it becomes clear that a sharp divide emerges in terms of accessibility to central Birkenhead as a key employment focus in itself and access to the Liverpool job market.</p> <p>It is therefore essential that access routes to Merseyrail stations are prioritised and are seen as affordable to those with lower incomes who do and could commute to Liverpool for work, and entertainment, purposes.</p> <p>Low access times to the M53 remain important and marketing locations accessible within 30 minutes of Birkenhead is also a priority.</p>
<p>19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)</p>
<p>Potentially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra care</li> <li>• Specialist Housing</li> <li>• Affordable Rent</li> <li>• Potentially Rent to Buy</li> <li>• Potentially shared ownership but, it would depend on values.</li> <li>• Private Rent</li> <li>• Open market sale</li> </ul>

<p>All of the above would be subject to evidence of demand. We would require a market assessment to decide on the tenure mix.</p>
<p>20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?</p>
<p>Magenta Living uses a mix of its loan facility and Homes England grant (or other grant as available e.g. brownfield land fund), to deliver affordable rent and affordable home ownership products. We would also consider cross-subsidising affordable homes with profits from open market sale homes on the same site where possible.</p>
<p>21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?</p>
<p>Development agreement with the Council as a delivery partner.</p>
<p>22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)</p>
<p><b>De-risking</b> – remediation of the site prior to bringing to market  <b>Funding</b> – grant towards MMC/NCZ homes over and above traditional build costs. Housing Infrastructure Fund  <b>Planning</b> – support with schemes through planning approval process  Land Assembly  <b>Formal partnership working group with the Council</b> - Project team with the Council responsible for helping to deliver proposals: planning/ highways/ economic development/ housing strategy/ legals etc</p>
<p>23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?</p>
<p>We weren't aware that these documents had been published so are not in a position to comment.</p>
<p>24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?</p>
<p>Birkenhead needs an offering that will draw in / encourage / entice new residents in from other/wider areas rather than potentially simply displacing the existing Birkenhead population and creating issues and challenges elsewhere in the centre - as per previous comments made about current deprivation levels and affordability. Joint marketing initiatives to change perceptions, hearts and minds will be required.</p> <p>Improvements to other related issues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• innovative street scenes/public realm - greenery, lighting, footpaths giving identity to new neighbourhoods with imaginative bespoke local rather than corporate branding</li> <li>• perceptions about safety</li> <li>• being at the forefront of climate change initiatives – prioritising cycle storage, electric car charging points etc.</li> <li>• encouraging through planning local facilities – coffee shops, pop up shops, support from business development etc</li> </ul>

25. Any other matters that you wish to raise

**Phasing/Timing** – subsequent schemes will need to follow-on fairly quickly to improve the chances of success for Europa/Hamilton developments and clarification on the proposed time plans for later opportunities would be helpful.

**Identify the potential target audience, the where and who question** - there will undoubtedly be a mixture of housing, so provision needs to be accessible for all but as an example, how will this be possible when even social rent levels are beyond the means of some?

**Placemaking** – creating sustainable communities and promoting healthy lifestyles is important.

**Connectivity** – in terms of pedestrianisation and vehicular access, ensuring the perceptions about safety and reduced car speed, designing out the possibility of high-speed scrambler bike access.

**Car Parking** – needs to be thought through in terms of the wider design e.g. not necessarily stating 200% provision in order to deter multiple cars/per home and encourage more sustainable transport use through improved transport links and cycle lanes...this is certainly an issue for the planners to grapple with!

**Employment opportunities** - Improving the employment offering to support the high-density housing aspirations with links to Make Hamilton, support for home start-up businesses, links to good bus services, linked to Merseyrail stations etc.

**Let`s talk** – the marketing and publicity around the principles of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework has been excellent to date so there is a need to now hear from those involved in drawing up the proposals using innovative ways designed to overcome the challenges that COVID continues to throw at us...from which literal or electronic face to face discussions can follow.

26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?

Yes, pending suitability of the specific location and scheme viability.

**Onward Homes**

Developer	Onward Homes Ltd
Name	David Tonks
Position	Head of Growth & Development
Date	15/07/21
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>As Onward we are a leading provider of quality, affordable homes for rent and sale in the North-West of England (regulated by Homes England). We own and manage over 35,000 homes across the region and have ambitious plans to grow both the number of homes and number of customers we serve. Our planned future development interest includes a forward programme of development of 500+ new homes per annum over the next 6 – 10 years.</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
<p>We currently own and managed around 1,500 homes across the Wirral, this includes a number of new and recently completed schemes.</p> <p>We are also currently actively looking at potential developments in Seacombe and Bromborough and are working jointly with Magenta on several live or future schemes.</p>	
3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?	
<p>Wirral is a key growth and investment area for Onward and as such our approach is that through new development we aim improve the services and standards of accommodation for both our existing and new customers. Our focus in Wirral has not been geographically limited other than restrictions within the existing Local Plan. Challenges of developing in Birkenhead mainly revolve around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• viability concerns,</li> <li>• Cost of developing brownfield sites, / remediation costs</li> <li>• Site limitations and associated limitations on housing choices</li> <li>• quality of existing place / environment,</li> <li>• attractiveness for purchasers / economic in-migrants,</li> <li>• image / perception,</li> </ul> <p>competitiveness against and within the rest of Wirral and wider LCR / North Cheshire / North Wales market</p>	
4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?	
<p>Physical constraints will mean that inevitably a focus to deliver high density residential solutions. Whilst plans for such large scale development should be led both through design</p>	

<p>and vision, they should be underpinned by research which supports the need, demand and desire to live not only in this location but in this type of accommodation.                  The demand for this type of accommodation is more complex in its understanding so cannot just be factored against pure numbers or previous housing supply shortfalls. Demand patterns towards more space (private internal and external space) are not likely to diminish and a move away from apartments living is potentially only being tempered across the general market by location and supply constraint of alternative accommodation choices.                  There therefore needs to be a clear case and understanding for the need for more high density accommodation to complement that also being delivered through initiatives such a Wirral Waters but to also ensure that both the market exists for such and that sustainable communities will be established through the provision of this, in the medium / long term.</p> <p>A risk to a Local Plan strategy which is predominated by limited accommodation choices and inner urban locations, include increased exposure to market conditions.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of ‘pioneer’ developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>Viability is generally challenging within Birkenhead. This largely as a consequence of land owner expectations coupled with high often remediation costs for inner urban brownfield sites. Birkenhead’s success as a location of housing choice needs to ensure a distinguishable and different offer to that being provided in neighbouring LAs. Determining a USP for Birkenhead would provide a key marketing edge – need to ensure that high density doesn’t translate to amore of the same just in a different location.</p>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<p>We have multiple sites under consideration, within our pipeline or under construction ranging from small 25 units scheme through to 449 unit developments. Due to economy of scale we generally don’t consider schemes below 25 units.</p>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>This subject to site and tenure. If developing Open Market units for sale then we would ordinarily look for a minimum return of 15% on GDV. Our internal financial hurdle rates for affordable housing are considerably lower and can be flexed subject to the opportunity and its strategic importance to us. This can range from a minimum break even position to a small positive position on both NPV / IRR</p>

9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?
10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.
11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?
This is becoming increasingly important as customer demands change post C-19. Along with internal space standards for facilitate home working, access to good quality open space / green space is increasingly one of the key determining factors in housing choice
12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?
13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?
14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?
Generally speaking and in this location, given current underlying market conditions, we would only consider apartments units for rental options (affordable or market rent) and larger 3 & 4 bed houses for shared ownership and outright sale – subject to values.
15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?

N/a
16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?
As ever cost would be the key consideration, through impact upon building standards, material costs and current rates of inflation.
17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?
MMC could be delivered. This is unlikely to be a full volumetric solution (again due to costs) but could include some form of panelised system of MMC
18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?
Capacity of the M53 and A41 Merseyrail link to Liverpool / Chester Links within (relative safety / perceived safety / convenience) the existing town centre are also key
19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)
<i>Market Housing for families?</i> <i>Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families?</i> <i>Retirement? Including Extra Care and Assisted Living</i> <i>Affordable Housing? Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate</i> <i>Student housing</i> <i>Other?</i>  As a Registered Provider we would be interest in all forms of general needs affordable housing, low cost home ownership / shared ownership, outright sales and market rent (subject to values)
20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?
We would look to fund non planning gain AH units through our AHP allocation. Units outside of this would (subject to viability) be funded through our existing Business Plan and loan facilities.  We would also explore the potential for any additional funding (brownfield / town centres fund etc) to aid and enable development
21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?
<i>Development agreement with the Council?</i> <i>JV with council?</i>

<p><i>Market sale?</i></p> <p>We would be interested in any / all forms of partnership arrangement with delivery partners (council / other providers / Homes England)</p>
<p>22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)</p>
<p><i>De-risking</i>  <i>Funding</i>  <i>Planning</i>  <i>Land Assembly</i>  <i>Other (please specify)</i></p> <p>Given the range of issues and challenges it is likely that we would require a range of on-going support from the Council. To mitigate risk and reduce costs (time / uncertainty), mechanisms / arrangements to manage and reduce risk associated with the planning process would be most welcome.</p> <p>Other support mechanisms would be subject to detail and viability but this could also include mechanisms for deferred or off-set payment, assistance with up-front site costs (SI's through to remediation)</p>
<p>23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?</p>
<p></p>
<p>24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?</p>
<p>Need to be careful that not all delivery eggs are in 1 basket and that the plans for Birkenhead are able to flex and change subject to the market. Constrained development in other locations within the LA area does not within itself ensure successful delivery in Birkenhead – especially if the offer and opportunity is equal or better (value / quality / environment) in nearby accessible LA locations.</p> <p>Need to be clear on the rationale, understanding and market for this type of housing product and demand / desire to live in this location in this type of housing. The council (and its delivery partners) may wish to consider some initial schemes / units which establish and set the tone for future development – however this is likely to require additional subsidy / funding. The planning framework should also be capable or flex and change to accommodate future opportunities as well as challenges</p> <p>The focus should be upon place making.to change and improve the perception and image of Birkenhead.</p>

25. Any other matters that you wish to raise
Phasing/ Timing Placemaking Connectivity Car Parking Bins Other (please specify)
26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?
Yes – subject to detail

**Skye Homes**

Developer	SKYE HOMES
Name	GARRY LEWIS
Position	MANAGING DIRECTOR
Date	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>Skye Homes is an award winning housebuilder specialising in environmentally sustainable residential developments. Mainly concerned in the newly emerging Build to Rent (BTR) sector, Skye Homes has a pipeline of 600 BTR uniuts currently in planning and land assembly stages across Cheshire and Wirral.</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
<p>Affiliate company 'THI' (<a href="http://www.thi.co.uk">www.thi.co.uk</a>) has developed Wirral Leisure Land operated by Odeon in Bromborough and Riverside Park, Bromborough. Also Upton Pine's scheme for 179 Houses in Upton.</p>	
3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?	
<p>Our perception of Wirral is positive. Our perception of Birkenhead in its current state is very negative although we have a positive view of the regeneration plans should the delivery plan be acheiveable/funded</p>	
4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?	
<p>Yes it is entirely correct although caution must be shown about the target resident - young professionals instead of social renting for example. Critical mass approach must be adopted. Peicemeal development would not work.</p>	
5. Do you have experience of 'pioneer' developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where	

<p>Yes. Recently delivered 1) a Lidl Foodstore in Conwy which regenerated both a contaminated former Omni Bus Depot acquired from Arriva and a printing press HQ building of the Daily Post in North Wales. The completed scheme significantly enhanced the approach into Conwy as it was a gateway site on the near side of the bridge across to the Grade 1 listed Castle. 2) Upton Pines regenerated a former DVLA testing centre behind Sainsburys which was contaminated and being used for fly tipping, anti social behaviour etc. 3) Cheshire Oaks Collesuem was a pioneer development which helped transition Ellesmere Port's economy from manufacturing reliant to retail and leisure</p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>Birkenhead is currently non viable for isolated development for residential. With significant investment and vision this will change given Birkenhead'd unique location, history and existing infrastructure.</p>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<p>A BTR scheme would require 200 units + although this must not be delivered in isolation of office development and significant public realm upgrades, and further land assembly by the Local Authority to clear out the low quality buildings</p>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>Skye Homes would need to partner with the council in some capacity i.e Development Agreement to ensure land assembly, surety of planning</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>Europa Boulevard is a viable site for BTR as part of the wider plans subject to the delivery of the offices and further investment in Birkenhead through the various Government funding packages</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of</p>

<p>a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>Yes - its a viable site as part of the wider proposals although might be secondary to the development closer to the town centre (being developed firstly)</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>
<p>Public realm essential. Green space important BUT must not create vast spaces - high quality smaller pockets designed in conjunction with the Police undertaking crime impact assessments throughout (as a key stakeholder)</p>
<p>12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?</p>
<p>Inevitably!</p>
<p>13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?</p>
<p>Europa Boulevard albeit Skye Homes has land assembled in St Werburghs</p>
<p>14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?</p>
<p>Apartments, Town Houses and Duplexs. Car Parking must be addressed sensibly as this is a highly sustainable location and the costs and spacial requirements will compromise viability (Key Point!!)</p>
<p>15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?</p>
<p>No but would seek to engage</p>
<p>16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?</p>
<p></p>

<p>It is possible and Skye Homes has costed designs but would impact viability. Can feature as part of discussions for a potential Development Agreement where supported by the Local Authority</p>
<p>17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?</p>
<p>Carbon Net Zero would include MMC. Modular Homes non viable.</p>
<p>18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?</p>
<p>Traffic calming/diversion in the Clifton Crescent area essential and maximisation of the Strategic Infrastructure Fund post removal of the fly overs</p>
<p>19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)</p>
<p><i>Market Housing for families?</i>  <i>Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families?</i>  <i>Retirement? Including Extra Care and Assisted Living</i>  <i>Affordable Housing? Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate</i>  <i>Student housing</i>  <i>Other?</i></p> <p>Build to Rent - High Density living with onsite residents amenities offering a best in class open market rental product for single and cohabitating households</p>
<p>20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?</p>
<p>Homes England - Skye Homes has completed a Development Facility previously and has a good relationship</p>
<p>21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?</p>
<p><i>Development agreement with the Council?</i>  <i>JV with council?</i>  <i>Market sale?</i></p> <p>Development Agreement with Local Authority</p>

<p>22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)</p>
<p><i>De-risking</i>  <i>Funding</i>  <i>Planning</i>  <i>Land Assembly</i>  <i>Other (please specify)</i></p> <p>Land to go into deal at base price with uplift based on value at PC, land assembly and planning assurances</p>
<p>23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?</p>
<p>A step in the right direction - a cohesive approach must be taken on design and co-ordinated delivery</p>
<p>24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?</p>
<p><i>Support private developers with land assembly - must enact CPO powers early to create a threat to landowners who are stubborn, this will enable developers to obtain land easier even if the CPO is never undertaken</i></p>
<p>25. Any other matters that you wish to raise</p>
<p>Phasing/ Timing          Placemaking          Connectivity          Car Parking          Bins          Other (please specify)</p> <p>All included exhaustively above!</p>
<p>26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>Yes - looking forward to engaging with the Local Authority in due course</p>

## Starship Group

Developer	Starship Group Limited	
Name	Dave Dargan	
Position	Group Director	
Date	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2021	
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?		
<p>Starship Group are an established property developer with over 20 years' experience in delivering residential and commercial development projects right across the UK.</p> <p>In 2020, following the merger of a number of established property development businesses we decided to re-brand and Starship Group was born. We are Wirral based and a substantial part of our development experience is in the development, construction and sale of residential and commercial property on the Wirral.</p> <p>We have delivered over £40m of GDV across our residential and commercial portfolio delivering substantial returns for our partners and investors. This year our development pipeline spans across over £30m of developments where we are delivering both residential and commercial units for private sale and affordable rent.</p> <p>We are committed to driving innovation in our industry we have made significant investments into the research and development of modern methods of construction which has enabled us to deliver the next generation homes, constructed off site and delivered to our customers to the highest regulatory and quality standards.</p>		
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?		
We have substantial experience in delivering residential and commercial developments across Wirral. We currently have the following live developments within Wirral:		
Development Description	Development Type	Number of Units
Alexander Drive, Thingwall	Family Homes for private sale	6 x 4 bed homes
Silverdale, Heswall	Apartments for private sale with commercial unit for private rental	8 Apartments plus 1 ground floor commercial
Sandlea View, West Kirby	Apartments for private sale plus commercial unit for private rental	9 apartment with ground floor commercial
Windsor Terrace, New Ferry	Development of factory-built carbon zero homes	3 x 105m <sup>2</sup> 3 bed family homes for affordable rent (magenta living)

Oakdale Gardens, Wallasey	Development of factory-built carbon zero bungalows	8 x 2 bed carbon zero bungalows for affordable rent
Brookfield Gardens, West Kirby	Development private care home	44 bed, on suite care home

Some of our previous schemes on the Wirral include:

Development Description	Development Type	Number of Units
Bunston Barns, Burton Cheshire	Family Homes for private sale	6 x 4 bed homes
Far Hall Drive, Heswall	Apartments for private sale with commercial unit for private rental	8 Apartments plus 1 ground floor commercial
Wirral Bed Superstore	Construction of commercial warehousing unit.	A x 2,500m <sup>2</sup> unit
Grange Cross Lane, West Kirby Wirral	Detached family homes for private sale	
Medway, Upton Wirral	Detached family homes for private sale	4 homes
Rowson Street	Development of family homes for private sale	7 townhouses and 4 apartments for private sale
Withens Lane, Wirral	Conversion of exiting building to supported living	12 units.

3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?

We have been committed to development on the Wirral for many years as we believe it presents a unique and attractive proposition or home buyers. The framework and masterplans for Birkenhead are extremely exciting and it is our view that projects being delivered within the footprint of the master plan will become some of the most attractive developments around for both developers, investors and end users.

Birkenhead delivers the most attractive views of the iconic Liverpool skyline, is already reasonably well connected to public transport (with improvements further planned) and has the potential to create a very unique and highly attractive place for people to live, work, meet and eat.

The opportunity in Birkenhead is emerging and in our view appetite to settle in this area will be driven by well-designed homes and standard of public realm and amenity spaces (including places to meet and eat). This will welcome a wider demographic of people and create a place where people feel they live rather than just sleep.

<p>4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?</p>
<p>In short yes, we believe that this is the correct strategy. This however does place significant emphasis on design, layout and connectivity with things to do in the area.</p> <p>We think that there needs to be careful consideration not to create an overpopulated area, with little to do or interact with potentially driving the wrong outcomes and behaviours from its new residents.</p> <p>We also feel that is important to attract the widest demographic possible to create a vibrant and diverse community with a key focus on attracting young people to settle there and help drive the generational change in the area.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of 'pioneer' developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>We are currently delivering a number of pioneer projects for our customers; we are deeply committed to this as we have seen some significant success in using this approach. We believe that pilot and pioneer projects drive real change, they allow the partners to create a real-world project to try and test concepts and to engage local people and their community in real time change.</p> <p>An example of these projects is:</p> <p><b>New Ferry Wirral.</b></p> <p>In 2020 we speculatively acquired a small development site (17m x 17m), without planning in New Ferry directly opposite the 2017 blast site. Our objective to create a pioneer project to take a site which was categorised as 'unviable' and create some game changing change.</p> <p>We commenced a project to deliver 2 x 105 m<sup>2</sup> three story carbon zero homes at this location and if this was not enough, we would deliver these using MMC.</p> <p>These homes were constructed at our manufacturing centre over a period of 3 weeks and installed on site over a period of 6 days. The homes are carbon zero using air source heat, solar and heat recovery systems to ensure they can generate their own heat and water and are EPC A rated.</p> <p>Over a period of 15 weeks these homes will be completed, and new families will be living in these great homes.</p> <p>The engagement from all the community, Wirral and wider stakeholders was electric, community engagement was fantastic, the project created a real buzz and it demonstrated real and immediate change. The project was eventually sold to our registered provider partners Magenta Living.</p>

This pioneer project acted as a catalyst for further projects, and we are commencing development of factory building affordable homes across Wirral.

6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?

Our core concerns around development in this area would normally be focused on land acquisition and land remediation cost which would place pressure on development costs and thus place pressure on required sale values for the properties in the area.

One consideration will be the sequencing of development and completion of properties to ensure that supply and demand for properties is managed bearing in mind the significant development activity that is planned in the area.

We do not have any specific concerns around the ability to deliver development projects in Birkenhead, we are confident that the area has rich skilled resources, access to transport allowing free movement of materials and infrastructure.

7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?

One of our core principles is that we don't set parameters for our development propositions, a key part of what we do is work with our customers to deliver game changing results.

An ideal development for our business is between 50-100 units to allow us to drive the most efficient development cost possible. However as indicated above we have worked on much lower numbers with our customers to unlock developments that have previously been seen to be not viable.

8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?

Our minimum profit requirements range depending on the exit plan for our developments, where we are working with an exit partner (registered provider, BTR or PRS) we are able to work on much lower margins due to the decreased risk profile. Where we are taking homes and commercial units to market our margin expectations rise due to the increased risk profile and also considering the additional sales and marketing costs required for exit.

We would normally require some wider control the immediate development zone (i.e delivery of communal space, play areas etc) as these features, their standard, their maintenance cost and availability are key to driving the sales activity with home buyers or investor organisations.

<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>It is our view that this site lends itself perfectly to a higher density development model. Its proximity to Dock Branch Park, existing leisure and retail and its access to public transport makes this a great location for this approach.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>We think that this is a great development opportunity, its attraction will be intrinsically linked to the Vittoria Studios project which will make this one of the most attractive places to live in Birkenhead.</p> <p>This is why we think that a better, less conformed mix of apartment and homes would be better suited to this environment. The proximity to amenities will attract a wider demographic of people therefore available of larger family properties at this location will be key.</p> <p>We also think that the design of this development needs to link in some way to the wider Vittoria studios design. This we feel will provide maximum opportunity to make these properties some of the most desirable around.</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>
<p>High quality public realm is key, this is one of the features that we strongly believe creates the generational change to the area. Higher quality public areas, that look more modern, vibrant and that are easier to maintain will ensure that Birkenhead feels new rather than it just has new buildings. We think this is the priority.</p> <p>Greenspace is very important however in a development such as this, its access to the waterfront mean that greenspace can be provided at muck lower volumes to create meeting spaces. We like the idea of pocket parks with small green space areas accessible from within the development providing green community spaces.</p>
<p>12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?</p>
<p>We feel that delivery of the Dock Branch Park development will have a significant impact on the viability of a high-density scheme at Europe Boulevard. We feel that this development not only provides key amenities, which will fundamentally attract a new and vibrant community, but also links the site to the wider development across Birkenhead. Without this</p>

there would be a risk that the development would feel isolated from the heartland of development (particularly in the early stages of the masterplan).

13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?

We feel that both deliver their own merits in context to the current market. However, in their current form we believe that the Hamilton Park option delivers a strong market proposition. This is predominantly due to its flexibility around provision of different house types which will be attracting a wider market and deliver best on the objectives of Wirral.

14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?

Starship Group deliver a wide range of solutions for our customers. We have delivered on the Wirral a range of Bungalows, 1,2,3 & 4 bed homes and apartments for private rental and affordable housing markets.

Our interest in working with Wirral on these schemes are in trying to deliver a game changing development programme for properties that are both market relevant and in addition that drive the transformation that is currently being targeted for Birkenhead.

15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?

We work with Registered Providers across the northwest many of which are active with us across the Wirral, in addition to substantial BTR and PRS partners that are actively investing in our markets. We are extremely confident that our RP partners would actually work with us to

16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?

We are keen to drive a low carbon agenda as this is a core part of what we are trying to achieve with our customers in the market. Our MMC products deliver a low carbon solution for family homes which can still be delivered within a viable cost window. Bearing this in mind we believe that there should be a target to deliver homes using zero carbon standards.

The challenges that may exist with this is ensuring that during the design of the scheme is suitable to achieve zero carbon. This includes designing in locations for air / ground source heat, building orientation for sunlight and 'farming' energy across the whole development to ensure the most efficient energy usage is achieved.

The challenge always exists around cost, zero carbon drives a high up-front cost for a longer-term return on investment and our job is to mitigate these up front costs as much as possible to ensure zero carbon is a viable solution

<b>17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?</b>
<p>Starship design, engineer and manufacture our own MMC products which are delivered to our customers with an NHBC Accepts Certification and Build Warranty.</p> <p>We have delivered a significant number of residential properties using our off-site system and we would be very keen to maximise the use of MMC wherever possible.</p> <p>In addition to this we are in the process of opening new manufacturing premises in Birkenhead (expected to be at Wirral Waters) with any off-site manufacturing taking place on the development footprint. Using local resources and creating local job opportunities.</p>
<b>18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?</b>
<p>We consider public transport links to be key as we think feeling connected to the wider Wirral peninsula and linking to City of Liverpool.</p> <p>This also facilitates attracting a wider demographic into the town.</p>
<b>19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)</b>
<p>We think that with the current two options being presented there will be a wide tenure interest from young adults, professionals and families, these are likely to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Market housing (young adults, professionals and families)</li><li>▪ Private Rented Sector / Build to Rent</li><li>▪ Affordable homes (both affordable sales and rental)</li><li>▪ Retirement or a level of extra care (potential depending on design and ability to maintain density)</li></ul>
<b>20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?</b>
<p>We think that with the current We have a significant portfolio of investors and partners across the entire spectrum of exit options. Our approach would likely change, based upon the development.</p> <p>Where there are a wide mix of property types it's likely that we would create a number of zones or pockets of properties (with equal mix and spread across the development) which we would identify an exit partner (registered providers, BTR, PRS) with an allocation being retained for private sale.</p> <p>This would mean that we would not have concentrated pockets of one type of tenure (driving diversity and vibrance).</p>

We would work on securing exits for these homes (excluding private sale portfolio) prior to the start or in the early stages of any development.

21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?

We are completely flexible in the approach taken to delivering these developments however taking into consideration the profile and the strategic importance of these developments and the collaboration required to deliver a successful project we believe a JV would be perfectly suited.

This primarily reduces the risks for both parties, ensures that the skills and expertise of both organisations can be utilised and returns a profit to the partners.

In addition to this a JV could then use this shared expertise and experience to deliver other projects across Birkenhead and the wider Wirral area.

22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)

We would ideally look to work with Wirral MBC as a strategic partnership to ensure that the development being delivered perfectly met both our commercial objectives in addition to the objectives Wirral have for Birkenhead.

Support required to achieve this would firstly be to work closely with planning to ensure that the objectives are understood and to create a collaborative approach in meeting planning requirements. This would mean that the work that is being completed to create the desired outcomes meets planning requirements by default and there is no disconnect between Wirral MBC's dynamic objectives and planning.

We would also be interested in investigating ways in which we can maximise funding and grant funding opportunities by working more collaboratively with Wirral MBC.

23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?

For us it's all about design, this will avoid achieving an overpopulated estate format and give an opportunity to creating an engaging, exciting, modern and creative urban community. What is unique about the area is the proximity to the waterfront and views of the famous Liverpool skyline, we think that this can lead in the some of the strategy for design, trying to create a connected community, achieving high density whilst avoiding conformity of building design (this could result is lifeless developments)

Having developer buy in and collaboration with this design guide will then ensure that the design strategy is connected to market thus attracting the target demographic and delivering attractive homes and spaces within the target price ranges.

We echo these comments with regards to Public Realm, high quality and unique public spaces create a character and are significant in terms of market attraction.

24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?

25. Any other matters that you wish to raise

We think an innovative approach to how public realm is designs embracing more modern approaches for community spaces, bins, refuse storage and collection points etc. A key challenged with the density is not having a streetscene that is littered with wheelie bins and bags and that can be maintenance and kept clean for a sustainable cost.

Parking always remains a challenge, where parking is not provided this can sometime because a barrier to being able to market the property, whilst this is not required for each and every home, we would look to maximise parking by using innovative design.

We are keen to deliver technology enabled homes, this includes both delivering fibre to the property and ensuring that there are both wireless and wired connectivity right throughout a modern home. In addition to this we think that it's important that people can interact with their homes through technology, whether this be for security or energy efficiency.

We are working on solutions where a development has an app where owners / tenants can access resources and view, control and interact with their homes. This also allows the ability to create community shared technology resources.

26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?

We would welcome the opportunity to work with Wirral on delivering high density housing across Birkenhead.

**STEP Places**

Developer	STEP PLACES
Name	Harinder Dhaliwal
Position	Managing Director
Date	16/07/2021
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>We are an award-winning place maker, we have been making places for over 13 years. Currently we are developing in the North West including the Mersey region working with public sector partners, local authorities, NHS trusts and housing associations.</p> <p>An example of some of our current schemes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Salford – Neighbourhood is a partnership between Step-Places / Salix homes / Salford city Council</li> <li>B. Wigan - Wigan Pier is a partnership between Step-Places / Wigan council and the Canal and Rivers Trust.</li> <li>C. Bolton - Bolton Moor Lane is a partnership between Step-Places, Bolton at Home and Bolton City Council</li> <li>D. Liverpool - Springfield Gardens is a partnership between Step Places / Alder Hey NHS trust and Liverpool City Council</li> <li>E. Manchester - Ardwick Green is a partnership between Step-Places, One MCR and Manchester City Council</li> </ul> <p>We delivery high quality sustainable residential led mixed use developments with a key focus on reducing the impact on the environment and creating great communities.</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
No, we have not developed in Wirral before.	
3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?	
<p>We feel that Birkenhead offers a significant opportunity for a developer lead partnership to bring community focused, low carbon developments.</p> <p>The reduction of dirty industry and the installation of logistic excellence will attract new people with a mix of job opportunities. The economic and social benefits are clear to see given the councils intentions and investments to date. This will allow ourselves to confidently invest in Birkenhead.</p> <p>We believe critical mass is key to getting the optimum results through mixed tenure an attractive offer which is amenity led inc green spaces, creating the numbers within a period of time branding the offer to create a value-added offer attracting residents to the centre of</p>	

<p>Birkenhead from rent to buy, private rent, shared equity, open market ownership, help to buy, first home, intermediate and social rents age friendly units,</p>
<p>4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?</p>
<p>We believe that regeneration starts from the centre in the town centre and catalyst projects are key to start repopulation. This brings a better night-time economy with an attractive location to live work and socialise. This is a key aspect for sustainable regeneration retaining and attracting talent and employers to the town centre. A mix of housing and apartments will give a good mix homes to support the regeneration of the town centre and shoreline activities.</p>
<p>5. Do you have experience of ‘pioneer’ developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where</p>
<p>Our redevelopment of Wigan Pier is a catalyst project in Wigan town centre. By creating the Pier Quarter we have pioneered a new central point for wider regeneration within Wigan. This has also attracted further investment into the area in terms of government investment via Townsfund for highway improvements and future phases of the Pier Qtr are being master planned.</p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>We have a good perception of the viability of development having looked at many markets in Birkenhead to understand the key market drivers and general market forces including the challenges and opportunities. We can see the potential for viable and sustainable growth on all fronts and have tested the business model internally to quantify.</p>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<p>100 units would be the minimum position, but the wider regeneration and drivers are key considerations. This quantum will allow the right level of investment and outcomes.</p>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>We would like to see a partnership formed with key stakeholders being engaged and addressing the wider regeneration opportunity for exemplar sites keeping to a timeline with milestones in place in order to deliver on the agreements. The ongoing involvement of the local authority will be key to delivery in these areas.</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p></p>

<p>The proximity to the tram, buses, shopping, green spaces and the civic buildings, gives you a good starting point to deliver high density housing. The location would allow this to be delivered we believe under an umbrella brand like “VIVA living” which would be required allowing, workspace, gyms, and day nurseries / creche. Holistic placemaking with mixed tenures including multi-generational living will be key to delivering successful outcomes. We would be working with a Registered Provider to help deliver affordable units if required, shared ownership homes, age friendly, intermediate, and social rents (we are experienced working with Housing associations in partnership)</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>The Hamilton Park site has a great opportunity for a waterfront site to be developed having the ability to create a new suburb of the town centre whilst complimenting the adjoining offers. A multi tenure approach with accessibility and affordability built in will be key otherwise the demand will be low, the real impact will not be felt with the expanse of land offered to create a new environment, The scheme should deliver affordable and private rent, private, shared ownership and rent to buy. It will be important to create a sense of community here with an intentional heart at the centre putting the amenity in such as GP surgery, pharmacy, convenience stores, gyms, MUGAS, community space is a key a part of the wider masterplan</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>
<p>The importance of high-quality public realm cannot be underestimated as this sets the scene for the development. A key aspect of place making is to create green spaces that can be enjoyed by the residents on site and the wider community. This requires careful design and consideration is also very key to the success of the scheme as young professionals’ families alike all enjoy green space allowing long term curation and legacy. This has become more prevalent during the pandemic.</p>
<p>12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?</p>
<p>The Dock Branch Park will be an great community asset and it should be worked around as it will have a huge benefit to the wider town centre and Birkenhead community. As one of the catalysts of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework, we can ensure we match the environmental benefits creating habitats and biodiversity nett gains. The ability to link into cycle movement through the park from the site will encourage less car use.</p> <p>Other elements that will share synergies will be the use of SuDs with the design of these integrated in the landscape designs.</p>
<p>13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?</p>

<p>Both sites offer benefits to the current market with Europa being more relevant to the current development process in the town centre This is because of the enhanced public realm in place and the current built form in the area and allows for a faster impact to the regeneration of the town centre the Hamilton park is a very important next step development to continue to retain talent within the town as generation Y/Z generally want to move to the more suburban location and plant their roots house back gardens car parking are key motivators and keeping it under the same brand means it's a very convenient way to retain people locally</p>
<p>14. Which house types (e.g., 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed townhouses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?</p>
<p>We believe a mixture of 1 and 2 bed apartments with the potential for ground floor duplex's complimented with family 2/3/4 bed town houses .</p>
<p>15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?</p>
<p>We work with a number of RP partners and at this stage would need to understand our potential provisions of housing first to find the best fit. We already operate and deliver PRS/BTR and as such would deliver and operate this element ourselves.</p>
<p>16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?</p>
<p>Costs could be circa 20% higher however, we would possibly see an improvement in rent with higher sales premium also we have live market data to support this as we are working on a passive house scheme with a HA partner.</p>
<p>17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?</p>
<p>Yes, we could deliver MMC on this site, but the cost could be prohibitive depending on the quantum and market material costs more suited to Hamilton Park than Europa Boulevard We currently deliver (MMC) factory-built homes as a division of the business.</p>
<p>18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?</p>
<p>The two flyovers to the Queensway Tunnel, which will open up a pedestrian-friendly connection between the town centre and the Hind Street community as it develops are key along with the creation of a new park along the route of the disused Dock Branch railway, one of the first rail lines in the country and as in New York's highline a great community asset allowing health and well being in an urban area.</p>
<p>19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)</p>
<p>Market Housing for families? Medium demand Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families? High demand Retirement Including Extra Care and Assisted Living? Medium demand Affordable Housing? Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate High demand</p>

<p>Student housing? High demand          Other? Rent to buy / Shared equity/ Home First/ Help to Buy High demand</p>
<p>20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?</p>
<p>We are funded via Homes England, Institutional backers, and RP partners.</p>
<p>21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?</p>
<p>We would act as the developer and the contractor in the delivery of the schemes. A Joint Venture with council would be the most likely route to a successful delivery of the Scheme.</p>
<p>22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)</p>
<p>Having a close relationship with the local authority will be key to successfully delivering the schemes. Having the local authority delivering a robust land assembly masterplan is important to a developer as it gives early confidence on the project.</p> <p>We would most likely enter into a planning performance agreement with the local authority and would expect a close working relationship with the local authority on infrastructure, highways, and local consultation guidance.</p> <p>Having the council as a stakeholder along with an RP is an important part of the development process.</p> <p>It would be considered advantageous for the council to use their PLB funding routes, infrastructure and enhancement grants, adoption of public realm in the delivery of the scheme to help institutional funders to invest in the scheme.</p>
<p>23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?</p>
<p>The use of a well thought out design guide with quality indicators is essential for holistic design delivery and we have very high-quality designs across all our schemes. The ability for our scheme to take design steers from other upcoming schemes such as the Dock Branch Park. We currently work with high end designers such as BDP and Gillespies and believe we can deliver sustainable development through well thought out design.</p>
<p>24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?</p>
<p>Investment in infrastructure and sustainable power resources is an important factor in all new developments. Planning drivers for such elements as electric car clubs and car charging points is something we embrace but the involvement of the local authority in helping to create a stable electric network can be key as it is not always possible for the private sector to inform change on a strategic level, a green waste disposal refuse system would be a good addition to the wider schemes</p>

Further investment in high-speed broadband, giving the uptake of homeworking, should be a targeted investment route for the local authority.

Knowing that these types of investment are underway helps to enthuse a private developer in delivering new residential schemes.

25. Any other matters that you wish to raise

- Phasing/ Timing this would be a key part of the delivery strategy
- Placemaking is essential
- Advanced connectivity is key to creating sustainable communities
- The right level of car parking is essential
- Cycling health and wellbeing promotion
- Low carbon technologies must be considered early in the process
- Refuse strategies are an important part of the reduction carbon through the reduction of vehicle movements and recycling
- The impact of wider regeneration incentives and funding

26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?

We feel the town centre sites offer the best solution/opportunity for high density housing as traditionally there are areas of the Wirral are leafy suburbs with traditional low density family housing.

## Torus Developments

Developer	Torus Developments
Name	Kate Ellison
Position	Director of Growth and Partnerships
Date	11/08/21
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>Torus62 Limited is Registered Provider of affordable homes at the core of a growth and regeneration group with a commitment to creating sustainable, stable and thriving communities through support, investment, development and regeneration. Torus Developments is a subsidiary of Torus62 and has an ambitious development programme that targets delivery of 1000+ units a year and will see delivery of 5300 homes in the next 3 years. It has an established reputation for delivering and is one of the largest developers in the North West.</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
<p>Wirral is a key growth area for Torus. Since 2017 it has developed over 200 units for a mix of tenures and is on site with a further 300+ units due to complete by 2024. The schemes represent a mix of apartments and houses within different geographies across Wirral.</p> <p><b>Completed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well Lane- was it 18 units - RTB</li> <li>• Milner Road, Heswall- 29 – SO/Sale/RTB</li> <li>• Kings Hill, Bromborough- 46 Shared Ownership</li> <li>• Esplanade- 22 Affordable Rent</li> <li>• Mark Rake – 36 RTB</li> <li>• Pensby Road – 15 AR</li> </ul> <p><b>On Site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quadrant, Hoylake – 40 AR</li> <li>• Rock Ferry High- 102 EC, 19 SO &amp; 65 AR</li> <li>• Holt Road – 30 AR</li> <li>• Riverside – 13 AR</li> <li>• Lyndale Avenue – 24 SO/ 4 SR</li> </ul>	

3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?

The geography and demographic of Wirral varies greatly. The focus for Tours has always been around regeneration and housing market interventions albeit we have experience of delivering a mix of tenures within different areas including sales.

The scale of opportunity around the Town Centre is significant and the overall aspirations of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework align well with Torus strategy for developing in growth areas. Torus has had discussions with Muse around plans for the Town Centre and specifically the proposals for the Europa Boulevard site. Torus has also been in discussions with I-on around a less dense family housing model at Hind Street.

The placemaking drivers for the density are understood and compelling. The Town Centre itself is in need of a major intervention and the emerging Framework/ masterplans support this. To underpin the housing offer a Housing Market Assessment linked to an Economic Growth Strategy would strengthen and provide confidence for the demand for high density housing offer of the scale proposed. The functionality and character of the different residential areas will need to be clear and complimentary. The proposals for the specific study sites seem appropriate given the different context in which they sit i.e. lower density Hamilton Park and Higher density for Europa Boulevard when considered in isolation. As the first of many phases the narrative for the overall scale needs further consideration given critical mass of residential within Birkenhead and neighbouring areas (Wirral Waters, Woodside, Hind Street). Ensuring major developments are complimentary in offering and delivered in the right sequence alongside elements of the spatial framework will need careful consideration.

4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?

In principle yes – the introduction of a critical mass of residential will be a catalyst for the regeneration of the centre. To realise the economic benefits of the re population the wider offer needs to be compelling. People need to live, work and fundamentally play/spend in the centre! The economic growth will be key to the success of the offer. Is the scale and nature of the residential offering supporting or stimulating economic growth? Will it be delivered at a rate that is reflective of and aligned with the economic growth and creation of jobs or will the residential bring people in its own right? The proposals for the specific study sites seem appropriate given the different context in which they sit i.e. lower density Hamilton Park and Higher density for Europa Boulevard. The critical mass of residential within Birkenhead and neighbouring areas (Wirral Waters, Woodside, Hind Street) is ambitious. The narrative and evidence base for the demand and the product isn't clear beyond the principle and place making aspects.

The quality of the residential offer will be critical, especially within early phases of delivery when the other elements of the masterplan have not yet been delivered. What is the short term USP for Birkenhead? There is little precedent for high density family housing within

the Liverpool City Region. The facilities to support this community (schools etc) will be key and need to be factored in at early stages.

5. Do you have experience of 'pioneer' developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where

Torus has developed a number of pioneering developments that have acted as a catalyst for change in an area. Examples include both housing and apartment's schemes for a mix of tenures.

The Approach, Liverpool – the 150+ development on Edge Lane lines a key and prominent route from/ too the City Centre. The innovative design has changed the face of Edge Lane and demand for the product itself has been unprecedented.

Lightbody Street- Torus is in the process of securing planning for a 200+ unit scheme within the ten streets regeneration area of 'Ten Streets. The scheme will be the first new build residential scheme within the area.

Other more traditional housing schemes include the Turner prize winning Granby Four Streets Development in Toxteth and the 152 unit development at Odens Clock Tower which saw the conversion of a listed building and creation of 152 new family homes on a former tobacco manufacturing site.

6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?

Torus has a detailed understanding of Wirral as a key growth area and knowledge of funding being secured for delivery of the infrastructure elements of the masterplan that will assist with viability for the overall spatial masterplan. Torus is also involved in and discussions on various sites with key stakeholders including the Wirral Growth Company. Common to major regeneration schemes, it is likely that the early phases of the masterplan will face viability challenges. The values in Birkenhead have been suppressed and it will take time for the market to build in confidence. There is potentially a further challenge in that to create the demand the offer needs to be high quality but values still relatively low.

7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?

Torus will take a long term strategic view of all development opportunities'. Wirral is a key growth area and as such current development sites range between 14 and 170 units. Likewise discussions are ongoing around sizeable opportunities within and around the Town Centre masterplan area. Torus has a range of products within its portfolio and can therefore 'flex' its approach to tenure to suit the site itself, it is therefore not limited to particular areas or markets but will take a long term view of what is right for an area and community.

<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>Torus is well placed to lead on major regeneration projects and has a track record of doing so. Torus would welcome a discussion around supporting the delivery of both individual sites and the overall objectives of the masterplan.</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>Torus has had previous discussions on with Muse on the Europa Boulevard site. The discussions related to a single block. The wider proposals including lower density housing would be of interest to Torus.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>It is only possible to comment on the principle of the proposals given the level of detail included within the brochure.</p> <p>The scale of both options for Hamilton Park seem appropriate for the site and for the stage of delivery, given the proximity to Wirral Waters the offering and phasing would need to be understood to ensure that demand and market is driving the right form development and creating a community as opposed to buildings. The early delivery of this site is clearly important as it will be key to the connectivity to Wirral Waters and the wider area. The mix of uses is welcomed from a placemaking perspective with active frontages on key routes and creating gateways. The site will still sit within a predominantly industrial area and the quality of the offer will be important but could hopefully act as a catalyst for other sites coming forward.</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>
<p>Placemaking is at the core of Torus' Development Strategy and high quality public realm and green space are fundamental elements of place. Torus drives this approach on a site by site basis and is currently undertaking areas action plans/ masterplans for areas that have been identified with potential for transformational change. The plans focus on a mix of existing assets and development sites with greenspace and public realm improvements providing coherence.</p>

12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?
Yes
13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?
Given that the sites will be the first stages of masterplan proposals the lower density proposals are considered most appropriate. A mix of tenures would benefit delivery of the masterplan and ensure it creates an inclusive and diverse community as referenced in the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework.
14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?
Torus would consider on a site by site basis and would undertake a detailed assessment to understand housing demand and growth. New markets will be just as relevant as existing. Local markets are often complex and Torus would utilise its market intelligence to drive the right form of development and uses.
15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?
Torus is working in Partnership with a number of private sector partners including Muse within Town Centre locations. Other Partnerships have included Liverpool City Council / Redrow.
16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?
Torus are committed to delivering a carbon zero targets and are currently developing a strategy for the best approach. Any policy requirement that differs from Part L and prospective timescales is likely to impact on viability of early phases.
17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?
More work would need to be done to establish whether appropriate or achievable given the level of detail for sites.
18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?

<p>Linkages between the different 'quarters' will be key as well as understanding how the Centre functions within the wider context of the Liverpool City Region.</p>
<p>19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)</p>
<p>Torus has a diverse portfolio of products and is therefore able to adapt to different and changing market conditions. Torus is currently developing all tenures listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Market Housing for families</i></li><li>• <i>Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families</i></li><li>• <i>Retirement- over 55's Including Extra Care and Assisted Living</i></li><li>• <i>Specialist accommodation</i></li><li>• <i>Affordable Housing Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate</i></li><li>• <i>Shared ownership</i></li></ul>
<p>20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?</p>
<p>A Business Plan 2021-26 with lending facilities in place and long term funding secured from Homes England. Torus is a strategic delivery partner to Homes England.</p>
<p>21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?</p>
<p><i>Torus could contract in a number of different ways. It could act as delivery partner to the Council or Growth Company as well as looking at standard contractual mechanisms such as development agreements.</i></p>
<p>22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)</p>
<p><i>Assistance with acquiring sites and planning issues.</i></p>
<p>23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?</p>
<p>Both will be critical to ensure that design quality is at the forefront of development proposals and that Birkenhead becomes a well-connected and functional 'place'.</p>

24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?
A detailed housing market assessment and residential growth plan that aligns with the scale and delivery of growth.
25. Any other matters that you wish to raise
N/A
26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?
Torus would consider similar proposals on a site by site basis.

## Urban Splash

Developer	Urban Splash House Ltd
Name	Simon Humphreys
Position	Development Director
Date	10/08/21
1. Can you introduce your company and the development interests of your organisation?	
<p>Urban Splash has a near 30year record for delivering high quality residential, work, hospitality, leisure and amenity space. The company was founded to deliver Concert Square in the early 90's and has gone from strength to strength with a large portfolio of award winning regeneration schemes in Liverpool, Manchester and across the country. We are recognised a a leader in the design and delivery of modern and sustainable homes and workspace through our pioneering works with existing heritage and listed buildings (whether mid century modern concrete construction, mills of the industrial revolution or storehouses for the navy) and new building projects and delivering mixed use and mixed tenure neighbourhoods &amp; communities. More recently we have established a new build housing company called House by Urban Splash creating new residential neighbourhoods using a range of modern and sustainable homes. The housing comes in a wide range of sizes, typologies and styles from apartments, small terraced houses, large town houses through to semi and detached homes. All homes have a unifying thread of being modern, sustainable and thoughtfully planned to provide our customers with the best options at a ranges of sizes and price points. Many of the homes also have a large degree of customer configuration - providing further tuning to a customer's needs and budgets. House by Urban Splash also provides vertically integrated company with a direct MMC delivery function through our Urban Splash Modular factory that works in tandem with our well established and award winning development, planning, construction and sales &amp; marketing functions</p>	
2. Have you developed in Wirral before? Can you detail any previous schemes?	
<p>We are currently developing out a multiphase project with Peel at Wirral Waters, called East Float . The first phase of the project is on site at the moment, with completion and initial occupation expected in Spring 2022. Once complete the East Float project will create circa 350 homes, extensive shared and private courtyards and new public landscaping space and connected ancillary business uses. More information on this project can be found here -</p> <p><a href="https://www.housebyurbansplash.co.uk/locations/wirral-waters">https://www.housebyurbansplash.co.uk/locations/wirral-waters</a></p>	
3. What is your perception of Wirral (and Birkenhead in particular) as a development / investment opportunity?	
<p>An over simplified snapshot is the wirral is divided by the M53 with the generally more affluent Dee facing half having limited wider development opportunities of scale, with some potential developments around the numerous existing towns and villages and settlements for higher value houses and apartments. The more densely populated and more industrially developed Mersey facing half, has the greater potential for developing at scale on existing</p>	

brownfield sites, helping reinvigorate all aspects of the townscape, removing neglected and blighted sites, improving outlooks and streetscapes for existing neighbours - good for creating new homes and good for retaining people and creating value in existing properties. The sites, like Liverpool across the Mersey are part of the former Maritime titan which underpinned the success of Birkenhead as a town. So, whilst it's an enormous plus to be able to deal with sites of scale with the transformational opportunities they provide, they are in areas of challenging values and come with all the abnormalities associated with brownfield sites (albeit to a greater and lesser degree depending on particular location and previous uses!)

4. Is the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework correct to plan for large scale residential development and repopulate the town?

Absolutely. Wirral has many very special attributes which should make it attractive in the market place. One important aspect of the BRF is that addresses how Wirral can use its land well - maintaining the greenbelt, sense of space and openness that make Wirral attractive, regenerate the gaps and post industrial areas of Birkenhead and bringing derelict, unused and unloved sites back into use, removing their drag on values, outlook and desirability. In turn this delivers increasing activity, more housing choice and with the proposed garden city aspirations should bring the landscaping, improved connectivity and those important ancillary and amenity uses necessary for successful neighbourhood.

The availability of choice of housing and tenure is important as the most successful areas of town and cities cater for a wide range of needs and budgets.

The old strap line of the Leisure Peninsula still rings true with almost uninterrupted access to the coastline from Birkenhead to Burton Marshes (and through lockdown me and the family walked it all!) and all the leisure opportunities that go with it - local surfers have even been spotted off Leasowe. Focussing on brownfield development and improving connectivity within Birkenhead and to the wider Wirral and all it has to offer will offer the best outcomes for people looking to settle and remain here.

5. Do you have experience of 'pioneer' developments that have been a catalyst for inspiring further development/ regeneration? If so, where

We have long history of being 'first in' to many areas. From the very first project carried out in Liverpool - Concert Sq, a mixed use development in the area now called Ropewalks. Delivering Liverpool first 'loft' apartments, setting up Liverpool Palace and Baa Bar and creating (with Liverpool City Council) the new first public square for a nearly a century. All against a backdrop of a challenging economic landscape and many onlookers saying you'll never sell apartments in the city centre. This pioneering approach has served us well through Castlefield, where our Britannia Mills apartments from the early 90's triggered a new residential quarter, and more lately in New Islington (the redevelopment of the failing Cardroom Estate in Manchester), Port Loop in Birmingham, Smiths Dock in North Shields. Further info' on these projects can be found here:

<https://www.urbansplash.co.uk/regeneration/projects/new-islington>

<p><a href="https://www.urbansplash.co.uk/regeneration/projects/port-loop">https://www.urbansplash.co.uk/regeneration/projects/port-loop</a> <a href="https://www.urbansplash.co.uk/regeneration/projects/concert-square">https://www.urbansplash.co.uk/regeneration/projects/concert-square</a></p>
<p>6. Do you have perceptions on the viability of development in Birkenhead?</p>
<p>There are certainly viability challenges. Two elements which can help with this is scale and public sector support. The support can help overcome any abnormalities that the sites may present and any early phase viability issues and the scale helps deliver transformation, changes in permeation and growth in values and desirability. Scale also leaves space and opportunity for other uses and amenities to be integrated and significant landscaping .</p>
<p>7. What would you see as a minimum in terms of area/ number of units before you might consider a developable proposition?</p>
<p>No less than 50, ideally 200+. As above some scale helps create a place &amp; identify and allow some transformational improvements where there are perception and value challenges to overcome.</p>
<p>8. Are there any conditions precedent to you becoming development partner for the exemplar sites? For example, (without limitation) - minimum profit requirements, timescales and phasing, control over wider area?</p>
<p>There would be a number of things to look out here and they would need to be considered at the time. These would include an appraisal that demonstrates a minimum return &amp; certainty of wider opportunities, - depending on scale of the project.</p>
<p>9. Do you have any specific view on the site at Europa Boulevard as a place for high density residential development/ investment?</p>
<p>Apartment buildings of scale addressing the Boulevard with lower density to the rear of the site is a logical design and housing provision response to this site. The investment case may be challenging, but this would need a more involved due diligence review. Would need to look at wider connectivity proposals.</p>
<p>10. Do you have any specific view on the site at Hamilton Park as a place for residential development/ investment? NB the site would be brought forward as the first phase of a much larger project (c 1500 dwellings) through redevelopment of an existing area of poorer quality employment use as a new higher density family residential neighbourhood close to the proposed Peel Land and Property Vittoria Studios Development.</p>
<p>As above. How these sites are able to link to the Wirral Waters scheme and Birkenhead Park is also an important aspect to make this successful.</p>
<p>11. How important is a high-quality public realm and access to green space?</p>
<p>Vital - the external spaces, whether public, shared or private are as important as the buildings, as are access to amenity uses.</p>

<p>12. Will the plans for Dock Branch Park have a positive impact on the viability/ deliverability of the Europa Boulevard sites?</p>
<p>Yes - as above would need to consider connectivity to these wider initiatives to get the maximum benefit.</p>
<p>13. Which of the development options above do you consider is most relevant for the current market?</p>
<p>Europa Boulevard - would need greater understanding on the status of the rest of the Commercial District Catalyst project before commenting much further on this. The Hamilton Park - The housing based option would</p>
<p>14. Which house types (e.g. 1-2 bed apartments, [2-4] bed town-houses etc.) would be of interest to you at these locations?</p>
<p>We are interested in all housing types from apartments, terraced and affordable housing to larger town houses. I think there is scope for a broad approach in house type and tenure.</p>
<p>15. Do you have a preferred Registered Provider / Private Rented Sector partner(s)?</p>
<p>We work with a wide range of RP's and have delivered a number of schemes with Great Places, PfP, Regenda and others. On the Private Rented side we often work with our own Urban Splash Residential Fund. More info' on this can be found here -</p> <p><a href="https://www.urbansplash.co.uk/us-residential-fund">https://www.urbansplash.co.uk/us-residential-fund</a></p>
<p>16. What would be the impact of a policy requirement for zero-carbon homes?</p>
<p>It very much depends on the definition and what approach Wirral wishes to take with this. In simple terms it is pretty certain that any housing development connected to mains services will need to do some offsetting in order to meet net zero operational carbon. We have a number of house types which are approaching net zero ready with fairly low energy use intensities and all are already only connected to electric (no gas). The move to net zero and the approaching future Homes Standard will inevitable increase costs and therefor impact viability. The impact on the costs will be mitigated someway once any increase in value and desirability can be captured for the highly sustainable homes. The environmental and sustainability credentials of new homes is featuring higher on customers requirements especially with younger customer who want their lives major purchase to be planet friendly.</p>
<p>17. Could you deliver MMC on this site?</p>
<p>Yes - depending on the precise mix and house types to be delivered we empty a variety of MMC techniques - from panelled timber frame houses, volumetric timber frame house and panellised CLT homes and apartments.</p>

<p>18. Which existing / new connections into and out of the areas do you consider key?</p>
<p>Creating the mass transit loop around Wirral Waters and connecting along the rear of Vittoria studios.          Dock Branch Park - improved public realm and foot/bike connection to the main transport networks from residential and commercial areas. Also a destination in itself for amenity leisure and hospitality uses.          Both these initiatives will reduce car dependency and allow more undeveloped land to provide beneficial landscape and amenity rather than temporary car storage.</p>
<p>19. Which residential type/ tenure do you believe have potential here? (identify as many as applicable)</p>
<p>All - important to have a mix of type an tenure and be able to provide opportunities for low and high earners and people just setting off on their employment journey.</p> <p><i>Market Housing for families?          Private Rented/ Build to Rent for families?          Retirement? Including Extra Care and Assisted Living          Affordable Housing? Affordable Rent/ Social Rent/ Intermediate          Student housing Other?</i></p>
<p>20. What is your approach to funding schemes such as this?</p>
<p>I would predict a public sector funding requirement - especially for the early phases, remediation and potentially for land assembly. Like to the question below this could manifest itself in a number of different contractual and delivery routes. For development delivery there could be a mix of equity from the developer with development finance from one of our banking partners eg Lloyds provide development finance at Wirral Waters. This is also a 'green loan' where favourable finance rates are offered to development demonstrating exemplary sustainability credentials.</p>
<p>21. Do you have any thought on how the uses you have selected above could be delivered?</p>
<p><i>Development agreement with the Council?          JV with council?          Market sale?</i></p> <p><i>We are generally open minded on contractual routes and have and are following all 3 routes identified above on sites across the country. EG we have set up JV's with Peel for Wirral Waters and PfP for Smiths Dock. We have delivered multiple sites in Liverpool and Manchester on development agreements eg New Islington and we have bought site through market sales. For such an ambitious and long term project there would need to be a partnership approach to this wether a formal JV or a Development agreement setting out inputs and output for the contracting parties. Land assembly and agreeing a land assemble strategy is key to this - some many vision documents remains just that as they can't be realised without the land.</i></p>

22. If you were interested in this opportunity, what support would you want from Wirral MBC? (and other public sector partners)	
<i>De-risking</i>	<i>Depending on the site remediation maybe required, potentially working with WBC and Homes England on this.</i>
<i>Funding</i>	<i>There may be viability issues on early phases so some gap dung may be required</i>
<i>Planning</i>	
<i>Land Assembly</i>	<i>As identified above understanding how land assembly is to be handled is an early issue and support in this area would be positive.</i>
23. What are your views on Design Quality and the Birkenhead Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy?	
They are useful tools in setting tone and aspiration for places. They need to strike the right balance so they aren't overly prescriptive and allow a variety of creative responses.	
24. What other actions could the council take to improve the Birkenhead Housing Market?	
25. Any other matters that you wish to raise	
<i>Phasing/ Timing</i> <i>Placemaking</i> <i>Connectivity</i> <i>Car Parking</i> <i>Bins</i> <i>Other (please specify)</i>	
26. Would you be willing to deliver similar high-density housing in Birkenhead?	
Similar to what? Not sure what this is referring to....	

## Appendix 5 – Timeline of Liverpool City Centre regeneration

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## LIVERPOOL REGENERATION (RESIDENTIAL) TIMELINE

1981	<p><b>MERSEYSIDE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (MDC)</b>            Considered to be the catalyst for regeneration in the city was the formation of the Merseyside Development Corporation in 1981.</p>
1983-1986	<p><b>ALBERT DOCK</b>            Following on from the formation of the MDC Arrowcroft entered into an agreement to redevelop both the Garden Festival Site and the now derelict Grade 1 listed Albert Dock.</p>
1988	<p><b>ALBERT DOCK/Colonnades</b>            After the successful conversion of the Grade 1 Listed Albert Dock the west stack (Colonnades) was converted into 37 apartments.</p>
1989	<p><b>WAPPING Warehouse</b>            Following on from the success of the Albert Dock regeneration the former Wapping Dock warehouse was converted into 114 apartments by Barratt Homes.</p>
1990	<p><b>PRINCES DOCK</b>            Also part of MDC's brief was the redevelopment of Princes Dock to the north of the Three Graces. David Mclean were selected as development partner culminating in the construction of a hotel and offices over the coming years, with the dock now becoming a prime residential location.</p>
1992	<p><b>WATERLOO Warehouse</b>            Spurred on by the success of Wapping Dock, Barratt Homes moved into the north docklands to carry out another successful refurbishment of Waterloo Warehouse into 122 apartments. A scheme of new build apartments on the rest of the dock was added at a later date.</p>
1993	<p><b>CONCERT SQUARE</b>            Considered to be the leading protagonists of city centre regeneration/living URBAN SPLASH converted the former warehouse in Concert Square into 18 apartments, together with ground floor retail/leisure.</p>
1997	<p><b>THE COLLEGIATE</b>            After the success of Concert Square, Urban Splash focused their efforts on The Collegiate the stunning former school building designed by Harvey Elms turning it into 96 apartments.</p>
1997-1999	<p><b>PARADISE STREET DEVELOPMENT AREA/PDSA (Chavasse Park)</b>            In response to Liverpool's slide in the national UK retail/leisure ratings proposals were drawn up for a huge city centre redevelopment based around the Paradise Street/Chavasse Park area. Despite several setbacks and challenges (form various developers and landowners - particularly Bill Davies/Walton Group) Grosvenor were selected to take the project forward in 1999.</p>
1998-2002	<p><b>DUKE ST/BOLD ST/ROPEWALKS</b>            The focus of regeneration continued in the city with attention turning to the historic Duke St/Bold St/Ropewalks area. Various studies/master planning/projects were undertaken focusing on the residential and leisure potential of the area whilst trying to retain much of the city's outstanding heritage.</p>
2002-2004	<p><b>DUKE ST VILLAGE</b></p>

	Encouraged by the work already undertaken on The Ropewalks, Liverpool based Iliad and David Mclean joined forces to develop the city's first true mixed-use development at the former council compound/depot on Duke Street/Kent Street.
2003	<b>CAPITAL of CULTURE Announcement</b> With the residential market already starting to boom the announcement of the awarding of European Capital of Culture for 2008 in June 2003 sparked a "tidal wave" of interest in the city, particularly for apartments.
2004	<b>THE FIRST TOWER</b> Beetham Organisation were one of the first Liverpool based developers to take advantage of the boom in the residential market. Their 29 storey Beetham Tower, located on the corner of Old Hall Street, was one of the first towers built outside of London as part of the residential boom across cities during the 2003-2008 period.
2004-2007	<b>RESIDENTIAL BOOM</b> During the next 4 years over 6,000 apartments were built. Whilst many were built by experienced developers many new inexperienced "developers" jumped on the bandwagon resulting in some poor quality, badly designed schemes being sold to inexperienced and naïve investors keen to jump on the bandwagon!
2004-2008	<b>LIVERPOOL ONE</b> After a hard, challenging but successful CPO exercise Liverpool One rose from an underused 42 acres in the heart of Liverpool to become one of the most successful city centre mixed use developments incorporating 170 stores, hotels, cinema, residential and open space. The development opened on 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2008
2008	<b>EUROPEAN CAPITAL of CULTURE</b> The European Capital of Culture symbolised the tremendous regeneration and progress the city had made over the previous 10/15 years and highlighted the huge range of history, culture, and arts that the city offered. Nearly 10 million visitors arrived during 2008 generating approx. £750million of additional spending.
2008	<b>LIVERPOOL ARENA</b> Perhaps overshadowed by the arrival of Liverpool ONE the arena opened in January 2008 at a cost of £165million and provides the city with a purpose built 11,000 capacity venue
2008-2010	<b>HIGH END RESIDENTIAL</b> Spurred on by the strong market Liverpool finally began to see the arrival of high end, quality residential developments. Predominantly high rise based, the completion of One Park West, Mann Island, Alexandra Tower and West Tower today provides the city with around 1,000 quality apartments
2008-2009	<b>FINANCIAL/MARKET CRASH</b> The world suffered a financial crash during late 2007 through to 2009. The collapse of Lehman's in September 2008 pinnacle one of the worst recessions on record and resulted in a major collapse of buyer interest in city centre residential schemes. The city, having seen a huge increase in supply of apartments, suffered a severe downturn in the housing market
2010-2015	The city suffered from a large oversupply of apartments and an even greater "perception" that the residential market would never recover and the 1,000s of apartments built all lay empty. Whilst there were huge challenges the reality was never quite as bad as the perception.
2013-2015	<b>THE RECOVERY</b> Slowly but surely the market began to recover. With almost no new residential construction having taken place for 5 years demand from both buyers and tenants had "soaked up" most of the overhang of apartments and had started to encourage developers to begin building again.
2013-2017	<b>THE STUDENT BOOM</b>

	Although the residential market was taking time to recover the student market was booming. Liverpool student numbers were growing rapidly with students encouraged to study in the city by low rents, a rejuvenated city, two strong universities and one of the liveliest cities in the UK.
2015-2019	<b>FRACTIONAL SALES BOOM</b> With development finance hard to come by (lenders still considered the city centre residential market to be “broken”) developers came up with an “alternative” form of funding - fractional sales. By forward selling to investors (who very often paid up to 50%/75% upfront) developers could in effect complete schemes with minimal financial investment themselves thereby de-risking what should always be a risky project. A large percentage of this boom was focused on The Baltic Triangle and office to residential conversions (PDR).
2015-2017	<b>ARRIVAL OF BUILD TO RENT</b> The nationwide boom in Build to Rent finally arrived during 2015/2017. 2015 saw the arrival of The Keel (by Glenbrook) the conversion of the former VAT office into 240 apartments and followed up in 2017 with The Cargo Building (by Promenade Estates) who took over a previously unfinished developing delivering 324 apartments in a prime location on The Strand/edge of The Baltic Triangle
2019-2020	<b>THE STALLED SCHEMES</b> As fractional sales boomed Liverpool developers jumped on the bandwagon. Why some were genuinely trying to deliver “proper” schemes many were not. The use of “guaranteed yields” and poor marketing literature lulled many investors into investing in schemes that never got completed. This resulted in a period during 2019/2020 when there were 10 stalled sites in the city. Developers such as Elliot Group, North Point Global and Primesite all floundered as investors “ran for the hills” and Liverpool’s problems hit the national headlines.
2020-2021	<b>COVID</b> Covid has had a devastating effect on the city, especially given Liverpool’s strength has always been in its retail, leisure and hospitality sectors. Thankfully the unwinding of restrictions/lockdowns has seen the city recover rapidly and the confidence has returned. From a residential perspective the city has weathered the storm remarkably well with letting occupancy levels nearly at the same level as 2019.
2021	<b>THE SALES BOOM</b> The chancellor’s response to the Covid crisis was to bring in a stamp duty holiday during early 2021. As demand was increasing anyway the extra tax incentive has created a “boom” in residential activity during the last 6 months. The unbelievable increase in prices in many of the better suburbs has also made the city offer tremendous value by comparison which will further increase in interest in the city’s residential market.
2021	<b>EWS1/CLADDING SCANDAL</b> Although the market in the city has been booming it has also been impacted severely by the EWS1/Cladding scandal that has engulfed the UK post Grenfell. Whilst the tragedy at Grenfell has rightly resulted in a complete overhaul in the correct use of cladding materials, many schemes in the city without cladding and under 18m (the height of issue under government guidelines) have been wrongly affected. At last count around 50% of the apartments in the city are currently unmortgageable/unsaleable until a solution is found.
2021	<b>BUILD TO RENT GOES HIGH END</b> Although Liverpool saw one of the first BTR schemes in the UK outside of London it has taken time for the large institutions to arrive. That all changed in 2021 with the arrival/opening of around 1,000 apartment all of which are predominantly focused/aimed at the upper end of the market with average rents around £750/£850 for a 1 bed, £950/£1300 for a 2 bed and £1500 for a 3 bed.

FOR DETAILED RESIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR ANY OF THE ABOVE TIMELINES

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