

Contents

Core Strategy Revised Spatial Portrait	
1 Introduction	2
2 Borough Profile	3
3 Settlement Area Profiles	23
4 Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	25
5 Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	31
6 Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	45
7 Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	53
8 Settlement Area 5 - Mid Wirral	63
9 Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	69
10 Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	75
11 Settlement Area 8 - Rural Areas	80
12 Document List	88
13 Glossary	93

1 Introduction

1.1 This document presents a working update of the Spatial Portrait originally published as part of a Spatial Options Report for the emerging Core Strategy for Wirral⁽¹⁾.

1.2 This update includes many of the suggestions and comments received in response to consultation on the Spatial Options Report as well as the findings of additional studies and evidence, where available⁽²⁾.

1.3 The information is provided in the same general format as in the Spatial Options Report and will continue to be updated as the preparation of the Core Strategy progresses. This particular version has been published alongside the Preferred Options Report for the Core Strategy⁽³⁾.

1.4 A further version of the Spatial Portrait will be prepared to accompany the next stage in the preparation process, when a draft Core Strategy is published in March 2011 before the Core Strategy is formally submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination in June 2011.

1.5 Any further comments on the content of this version of the Spatial Portrait will need to be submitted in writing to arrive at the address below **no later than 17.00 hours on Friday 7 January 2011**.

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

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

For further information please contact:

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1 Local Development Framework for Wirral Core Strategy Development Plan Document Spatial Options Report (January 2010)

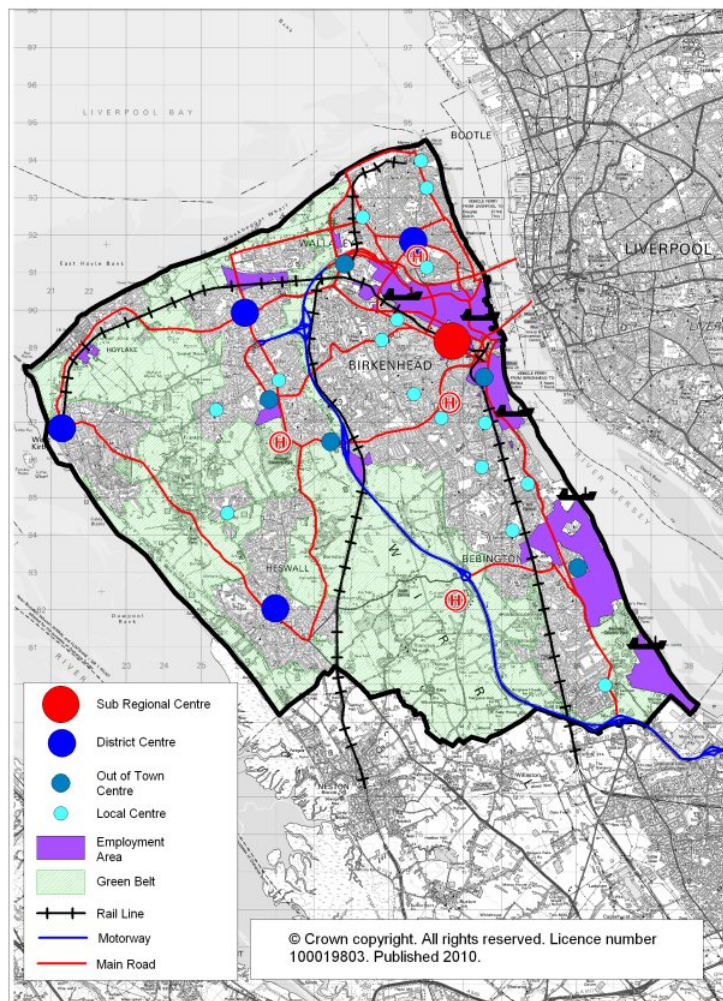
2 Further details on the comments submitted are contained within the Report of Consultation on Spatial Options (November 2010)

3 Local Development Framework for Wirral Core Strategy Development Plan Document Preferred Options Report (November 2010)

2 Borough Profile

Borough Context

2.1 The Metropolitan Borough of Wirral covers 60 square miles across the northern part of the Wirral peninsula between the Dee and Mersey Estuaries, to the north of Cheshire West and Chester.



Picture 2.1

2.2 The Borough is formed around two sandstone ridges stretching from Wallasey through Bidston and Storeton in the east and from West Kirby to Heswall in the west. The remaining land is boulder clay, drained by the rivers Birket and Fender in the north and by the Arrowse and Dibbin Brooks, further inland and to the west. The deep narrow mouth of the Mersey has the second highest tidal range in the UK.

2.3 In the east, along the banks of the Mersey Estuary, the Borough is predominantly built up. Almost two thirds of the Borough's population lives within the urban area to the east of the M53 Motorway, between the coastal resort of New Brighton in the north to the entrance of the Manchester Ship Canal in the south. Birkenhead is the largest town within the area, historically built around the maritime trades associated with the Mersey docklands. The Liverpool waterfront, on the opposite bank of the Mersey, is a World Heritage Site.

2.4 In the west, the Borough is characterised by a series of largely dormitory residential settlements surrounded by open countryside. Just under half the Borough is classified as rural, of which over 60% is still used for farming⁽⁴⁾.

2.5 Picture 2.1 shows the spatial distribution of the main settlements and retail centres, key transport routes, main employment areas including port facilities and the main hospitals. It also shows the present boundaries to the Merseyside Green Belt, which was first established by Merseyside County Council in the Merseyside Green Belt Local Plan in 1983 and which was extended by the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral in February 2000.

Historic Context

2.6 Before the industrial revolution, Wirral contained only a collection of small farmsteads and fishing villages but during the 19th Century Birkenhead grew to a sizeable town, closely related to the growth of Liverpool. The introduction of steam powered boats across the Mersey made Birkenhead and the surrounding countryside attractive to wealthy commuters and high quality residential developments initially spread out around Birkenhead, close to the ferry terminals or up the hills of Clifton Park, Oxton Hill and Mountwood, where the views were more expansive and the air cleaner.

2.7 The establishment of William Laird's boiler works and shipyard on Wallasey Pool in the 1820s and their later transfer by John Laird to the Mersey waterfront in the mid-1850s, the construction of the inland dock estate at Birkenhead, the establishment of Price's Candle Works at Bromborough in 1854 and the Levers Soap Works at Bebington in 1888, opened up Wirral's eastern coast for industrialisation, with a reliance on chemicals and port-related heavy engineering. Wirral's first railway, in 1840, encouraged further growth and the opening of the Mersey Railway Tunnel in 1886 allowed residential development to move away from the ferry terminals. Many of Wirral's most distinctive and attractive residential areas originate from this period.

2.8 Following a peak in growth during the 1960s, the area has seen a slow decline in jobs and population. Today, key sectors include retail, distribution, public administration, education, health and social care. In manufacturing, which now accounts for only 10% of local employment, the Borough is strongest in chemicals, food and drink. Tourism accounted for over 8% of local jobs⁽⁵⁾.

4 4,381 hectares (DEFRA, June 2008 Returns)

5 NOMIS, employee Jobs (2008)

2.9 Wirral has over recent years become increasingly influenced by the economic fortunes of a wider area outside Merseyside, including Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and North Wales. This is particularly evident in trends in population, employment, journeys to work and shopping.

2.10 The Council is increasingly working with partners across Merseyside and the wider Liverpool City Region and with authorities in North Wales as part of the Mersey Dee Alliance, to ensure that local strategies are aligned to meet common goals. Significant initiatives include work on the Atlantic Gateway, Liverpool SuperPort, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, the Mersey Tidal Power Project, Newheartlands, Mersey Heartlands Growth Point, Local Enterprise Partnership, a Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton, an ecological framework, green infrastructure strategies and revisions to the Merseyside Local Transport Plan. A City Region Overview Study is also being prepared to assess the latest land supply position across the districts.

Economic Context

2.11 Wirral is the second largest contributor to Merseyside's total GVA⁽⁶⁾ but the Borough's long term economic performance is a source of major concern. Economic output, measured by GVA per head, is the lowest in England and the third lowest in England and Wales. Job densities and VAT registrations are also well below national and regional averages. The Borough currently provides only 96,400 jobs for 191,100 residents of working age and jobs in Wirral generally pay less than jobs in surrounding areas⁽⁷⁾.

2.12 The Wirral Enterprise Strategy⁽⁸⁾, prepared as part of the Wirral Investment Strategy, attributes this gap in performance to low productivity, low rates of enterprise and a lack in the quantity and quality of available business space. Over 40% of Wirral's stock of business floorspace dates from before 1960 and 30% of that dates from before 1939.

2.13 A large part of central and eastern Wirral retained Assisted Area status in the national review announced in December 2006⁽⁹⁾.

2.14 Revitalising the economy is a key objective of the Local Strategic Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy⁽¹⁰⁾ and of the Wirral Investment Strategy. The Wirral Enterprise Strategy aims to increase entrepreneurial activity, enhance business start ups and raise GVA per head to regional levels by 2016.

6 Wirral contributed 16.9% behind Liverpool at 36.9% in 2006

7 NOMIS population aged 16-64 (2009), total employee jobs (2008) and earnings by workplace (2009)

8 Embracing Change An Enterprise Strategy for Wirral (Wirral Council, 2007)

9 Assisted Areas qualify for special financial assistance on the basis of their need for employment and economic revitalisation

10 Wirral 2025 More Equal More Prosperous (Wirral Partnership, 2009)

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Revised Spatial Portrait

2.15 The Borough has two Strategic Regional Sites at the Birkenhead Docklands and at Wirral International Business Park in Bromborough⁽¹¹⁾.

2.16 The Council has recently embarked on a programme to provide Next Generation Access digital connections to all the Borough's main employment areas and hospitals as well as tourism hot-spots such as the Royal Liverpool Golf Course.

Social Context

2.17 The Borough's social context is closely related to the economic fortunes of the wider sub-region.

2.18 The population has declined from 355,800 in 1971 to 308,500 in 2009⁽¹²⁾ and is expected to decrease to 303,700 by 2033⁽¹³⁾. The number of households is expected to increase, from 136,000 in 2006 to 150,000 by 2031, when over 40% are expected to be single person households, one of the five highest proportions of single person households in the North West⁽¹⁴⁾.

2.19 Net out-migration had been estimated at 800 people per year in 2008 but was estimated to have reduced to zero in 2009⁽¹⁵⁾. The main flows out of the Borough are to Denbighshire, Flintshire and Chester. The main flows in are from Liverpool and the rest of Greater Merseyside. The largest flows are between Wirral and Liverpool.

2.20 Continued work-related migration has led to a disproportionate loss of younger age groups and to an ageing population. The proportion of people over 65 years of age is now expected to increase to over a quarter of the population by 2031 and the number of people over 85 is expected to double. The biggest decreases are expected in the 35-59 year age group.

2.21 The proportion of people of working age, particularly of younger adults, is highest in the central and inner areas of east Wirral, while the proportion of older age groups is generally larger in the west. Fertility rates are also higher in east Wirral but there is a reducing cohort of children up to 19 years of age overall. The 20% drop in pupil numbers in schools since 1983 has led to the closure and reorganisation of services. The latest projections, based on live births, show pupil numbers continuing to fall to 2010 with only small increases in the primary age population from 2011 onwards.

2.22 A mosaic analysis carried out by the Public Health Intelligence Team in 2008, shows:

- a higher than national average proportion of:

11 designated by the North West Development Agency

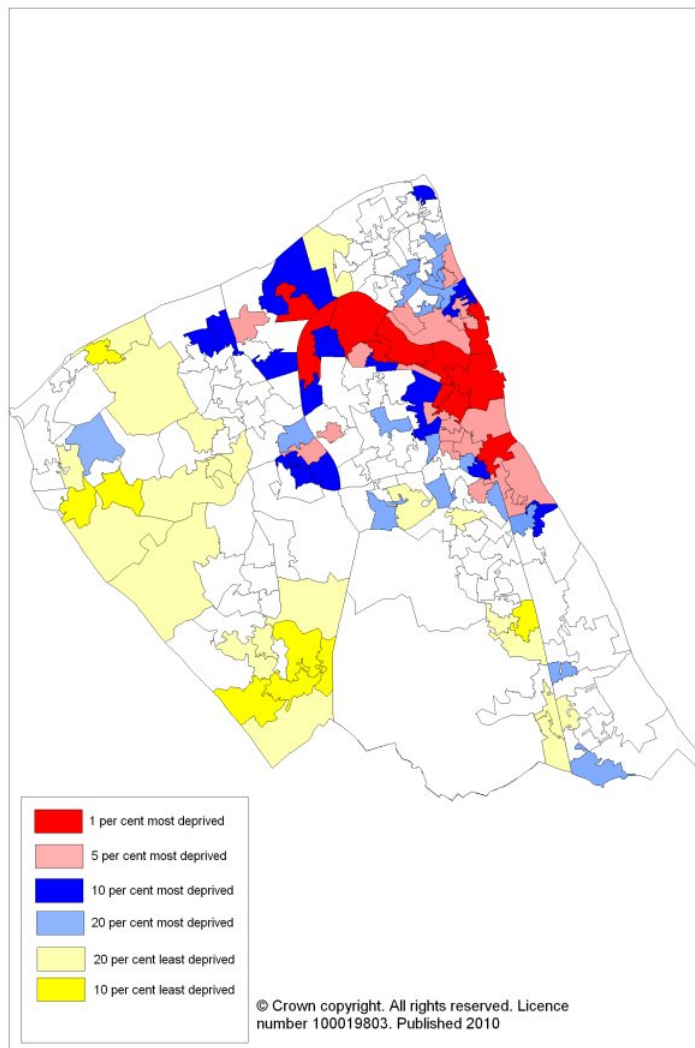
12 ONS Mid-Year Estimate (June 2010)

13 ONS 2008-based population projections (May 2010)

14 CLG 2006-based household projections (March 2009)

15 ONS Mid-Year Estimates Components of Change

- career professionals living in sought after locations
- low income families living in estate based social housing
- close-knit inner city and manufacturing town communities
- independent older people with relatively active lifestyles
- older families living in suburbia
- older people in social housing with high care needs
- an under-representation of:
 - educated young single people
 - younger families living in newer homes
 - upwardly mobile families
 - people living in rural areas



Picture 2.2

2.23 Although average household incomes are among the highest in Merseyside, a higher than national average proportion of the working age population are on key benefits and a high number of localities fall within the most deprived in England.

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Revised Spatial Portrait

2.24 Picture 2.2 shows the main concentrations of social, economic and environmental need⁽¹⁶⁾. Almost a third of the Wirral population lives in areas ranked as having some of the greatest needs in England, amongst the worst performing 20%. The Borough as a whole is ranked as the 8th worst out of the 354 English districts for employment-based deprivation.

2.25 A wide range of other socio-economic indicators, including employment, economic activity, worklessness, benefit dependency, educational attainment, health, life expectancy, infant mortality, teenage conception, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, fuel and child poverty, also mirror these spatial patterns. There is an eleven year gap in life expectancy for males between parts of east and west Wirral.

2.26 The previous Multi-Area Agreement for the Liverpool City Region aspired to have no area within the 5% most deprived in England by 2030.

2.27 A higher than national average proportion of residents are educated to degree standard or above and only 11% of residents had no qualifications in 2008.

2.28 Most Wirral schools have been assessed by Ofsted as good or outstanding. Just over 90% of 16 year olds stay on in school or college or go into employment. Almost half of 18 year olds go to university and attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 (GCSE) is consistently higher than the national average. The averages attained in Birkenhead and Wallasey (including Leasowe and Moreton) are, however, still below those attained in south east and west Wirral.

2.29 Wirral has a generally low crime rate. The majority of complaints relate to youths causing annoyance and drink related anti-social behaviour.

Housing Context

2.30 Wirral has many areas of attractive high quality housing, some amongst the best in Merseyside, but large concentrations of poorer stock remain, particularly associated with the older urban core in east Wirral.

2.31 A fifth of the Borough's housing stock was built before 1919 and a further quarter between 1919 and 1944. Approximately 10,800 households are considered to be living in unsuitable housing. Over a third of these households contain residents with mobility or health problems. Approximately 29,700 households are considered to contain residents with special needs.

2.32 Parts of Liscard, Seacombe, Bidston, Birkenhead and Tranmere are included as part of the Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Area, a long term national programme to address low demand and vacancy, modernise the housing stock, diversify tenure and housing choice and improve environmental conditions. The number of households living in unsuitable housing within the Pathfinder Area is

16 from the Index of Multiple Deprivation in England (2007)

over double the figure for the rest of the Borough. The Council has sought to focus new housing development to support the regeneration of this Area since December 2003.

2.33 The Newheartlands Pathfinder Area was also designated as a national Growth Point in December 2008, as part of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point.



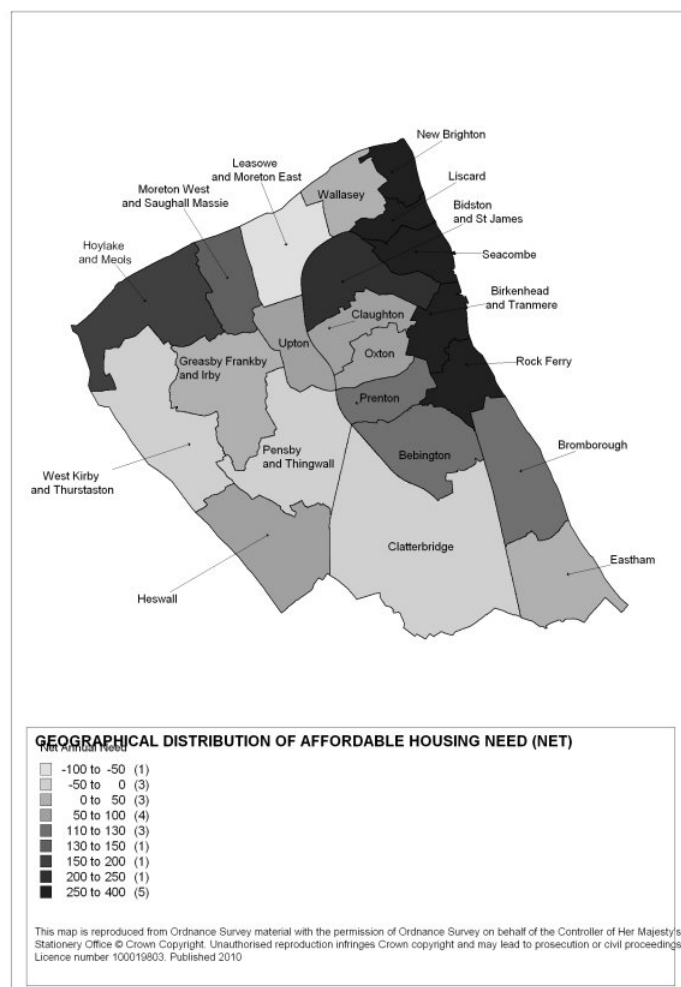
Picture 2.3

2.34 Approximately 15% of the Borough's housing stock is owned and managed by Registered Social Landlords. The majority of this stock is located in east and mid-Wirral. Allocation policies mean that these areas often correlate closely with areas of greatest socio-economic need but significant areas of need also extend into the private owned and private rented sector housing surrounding the older urban core.

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Revised Spatial Portrait

2.35 Average property prices for the Borough as a whole are more than 3.5 times average incomes and there is a large demand for affordable housing. In September 2008, only terraced properties were considered affordable to households with an average income for the Borough. A large number of properties in south east and west Wirral were well in excess of four times the average house price for the Borough.

The Council's latest assessment, revised to take account of the economic downturn, estimates the net annual need for affordable housing to be 2,784 units, distributed as shown on Picture 2.4. The majority of need originates from the eastern part of the Borough, where regeneration is already being targeted⁽¹⁷⁾.



Picture 2.4

17 Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Fordham Research, 2010), using the model set out in national Practice Guidance

2.36 The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential capacity across the Borough as a whole⁽¹⁸⁾ :

Area	Planning Permission ⁽¹⁹⁾	Category 1 ⁽²⁰⁾	Category 2 ⁽²¹⁾	Category 3 ⁽²²⁾	Small Sites ⁽²³⁾
Whole Borough	3091	2582	4753	10639	1091

Transport Context

2.37 The Mersey road tunnels at Birkenhead and Wallasey provide direct access to Liverpool City Centre and the M53 Motorway connects the docks at Birkenhead to the national motorway network. The Motorway narrows to two lanes outside the Borough at Ellesmere Port where it is close to capacity at peak times⁽²⁴⁾. The heavily trafficked A41 is the main arterial route to Ellesmere Port and Chester through the urban areas in east Wirral. The A540 is the main route through the west of the Borough between Hoyle and Chester.

2.38 High frequency bus services follow the principal radial routes running out of Birkenhead to outlying settlements. Consultation has highlighted poor accessibility between these routes and many cross-Borough journeys can require an interchange at Birkenhead. The Mersey Ferries provide an additional link to Liverpool from Woodside and Seacombe.

2.39 Wirral also has a well-established rail infrastructure, providing high frequency electrified services, linking mainline services in Liverpool to Ellesmere Port, Chester, West Kirby and New Brighton. Consultation has identified the need to improve accessibility at some stations. Rail capacity on the Chester line will be constrained until 2024, following a reduction from 4 tracks to 2. An hourly diesel service runs through mid-Wirral between Bidston and Wrexham in North Wales, with stops at Upton and Heswall. Discussions are ongoing between Merseytravel, Network Rail, Arriva Trains (Wales), Taith and other local authorities along the route to upgrade the track and trains, with possible electrification or an enhanced diesel service but funding is still to be identified.

18 gross additional dwellings - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym, July 2010). A list of sites by Electoral Ward can be viewed at <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=14916>

23 sites below 0.4 hectare

22 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

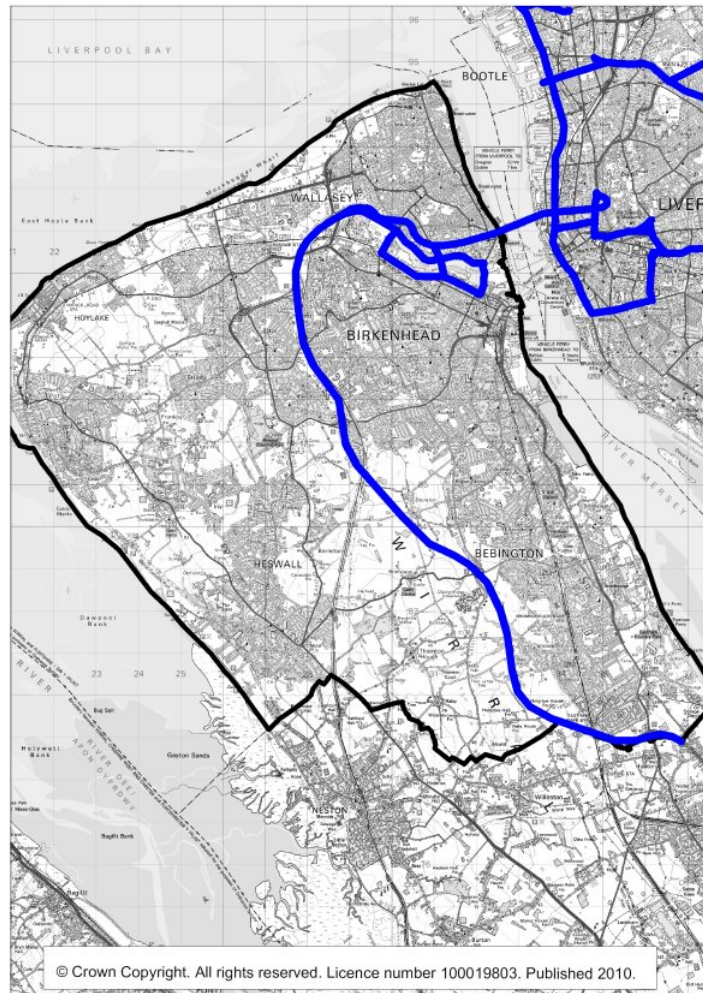
21 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

20 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

19 sites with planning permission in April 2008

24 further studies are being undertaken by Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Highways Agency

2.40 Picture 2.5 shows the links with the wider strategic freight network:



Picture 2.5

2.41 Each day, approximately 40,800 residents travel outside the Borough to find work, with principal flows to Liverpool (43%), Cheshire West and Chester (24%) and North Wales (7%). The largest flows are from the western and south eastern fringes of the Borough. Main routes out of the Borough and to and from the Motorway are subject to significant congestion during the morning and evening peaks. Consultation has shown a continued dissatisfaction with the impact of traffic on local communities.

2.42 Almost a third of households did not have access to a private car in 2001, even though car ownership was higher than average for Merseyside. Access to a car was highest in the west Wirral settlements, in Greasby and in Clatterbridge and was lowest in the inner urban areas of east Wirral and the former outer Council estates in mid-Wirral. While the number of vehicles owned and licensed in the Borough has continued to rise and is forecast to increase further, there is no evidence to suggest that this overall pattern has significantly changed.

2.43 Journeys to work also appear to be lengthening over time. In the absence of additional controls, increasing car ownership and continuing high levels of commuting could have major implications for emissions and long term air quality.

2.44 The cost of public transport fares can be an obstacle to travel for some people. A recent survey of people without a car found that a third have difficulty travelling to their local hospital, 16% find access to supermarkets difficult and 18% find meeting family and friends a problem.

2.45 The Merseyside Local Transport Plan is currently being reviewed. Consultation on strategy direction will take place in September 2010 with a delivery strategy and projects to follow. Public funding for accessibility and transport improvements will reduce from April 2011, which will place a greater reliance on spatial issues such as the location of new development, the use of existing public transport infrastructure, and an increasing role for walking and cycling. Developers will be expected to contribute to the cost of transport access in areas not well served by existing public transport services and other transport infrastructure.

Environmental Context

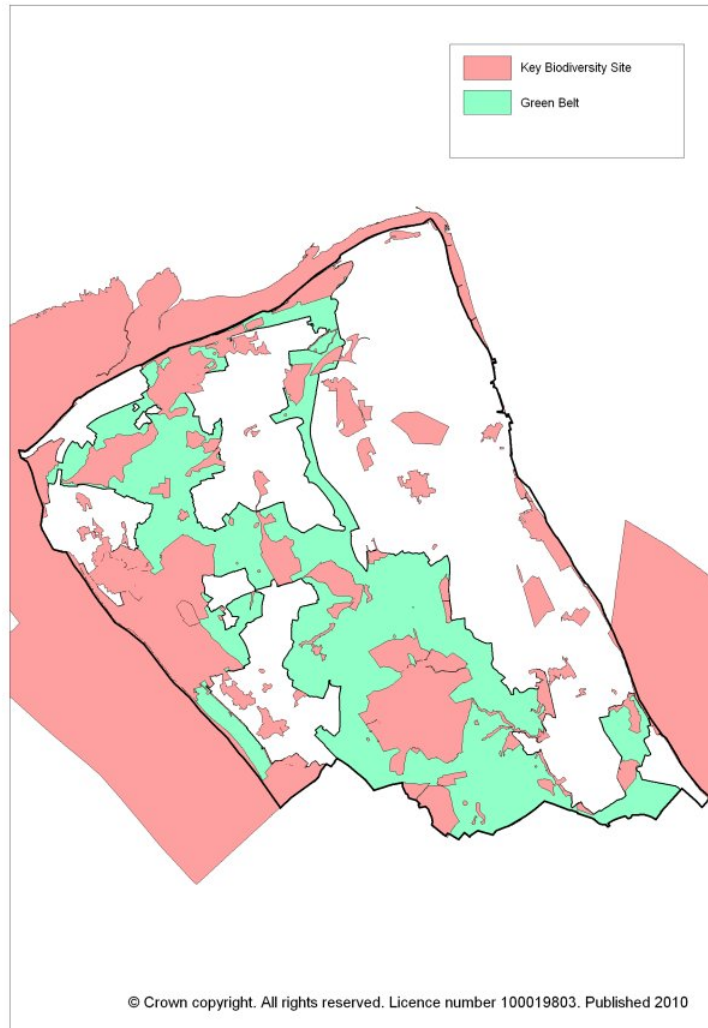
2.46 Wirral is generally considered to offer a high quality of life. A recent national survey indicated that over 80% of residents were happy to live within the area. Consultation has repeatedly shown that access to countryside and to the 25 mile coastline is one of the main attractions of the Borough, to visitors and residents alike, providing extensive opportunities for recreation, leisure and tourism.

2.47 Almost a third of the administrative area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The majority of the coastline is also of international importance for nature conservation, which the Council are under a legal duty to keep in good condition⁽²⁵⁾.

2.48 Not all aspects of Wirral's biodiversity resources are currently captured by site designations. While the Borough has an extensive network of identified sites of local biological importance, covering most of the habitats identified as priorities within the Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan, there are relatively few within the urban areas of east Wirral. Sites of geological importance include the Dungeon in Heswall, the eroding cliffs at Thurstaston and rock outcrops showing faults and sediments along the two sandstone ridgelines.

25 the Dee and Mersey Estuaries are designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention and as Special Protection Areas under the EC Wild Birds Directive. The Dee Estuary including the North Wirral Foreshore is also designated as a European Special Area of Conservation and the Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore is a potential Ramsar and Special Protection Area

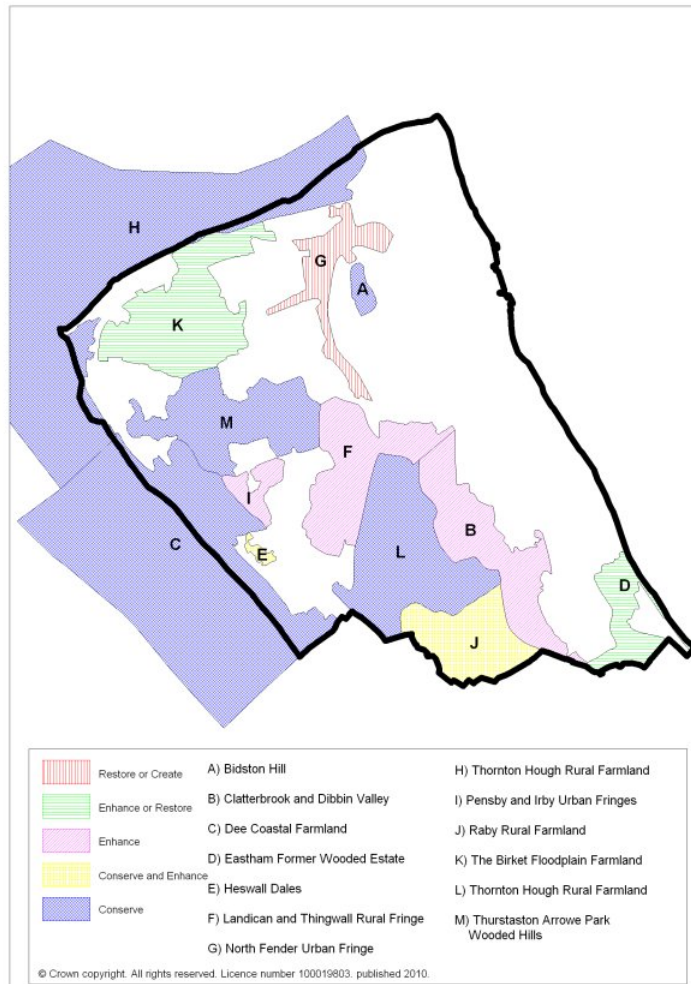
2.49 Picture 2.6 shows the Key Existing Biodiversity Areas identified in the Wirral Biodiversity Audit 2009:



Picture 2.6

2.50 Local heritage is also highly valued. Almost 5% of the Borough's land area is either designated as a Conservation Area, Scheduled Ancient Monument or Historic Park or Garden. Particular concern has been expressed at perceived threats to local distinctiveness, including un-designated assets, particularly related to protecting the character of the coastal resorts and established residential areas, particularly those dating from the Victorian and Edwardian period.

2.51 The Council's latest landscape assessment has identified areas of landscape that should be conserved, restored or enhanced, as shown in Picture 2.7 below⁽²⁶⁾:

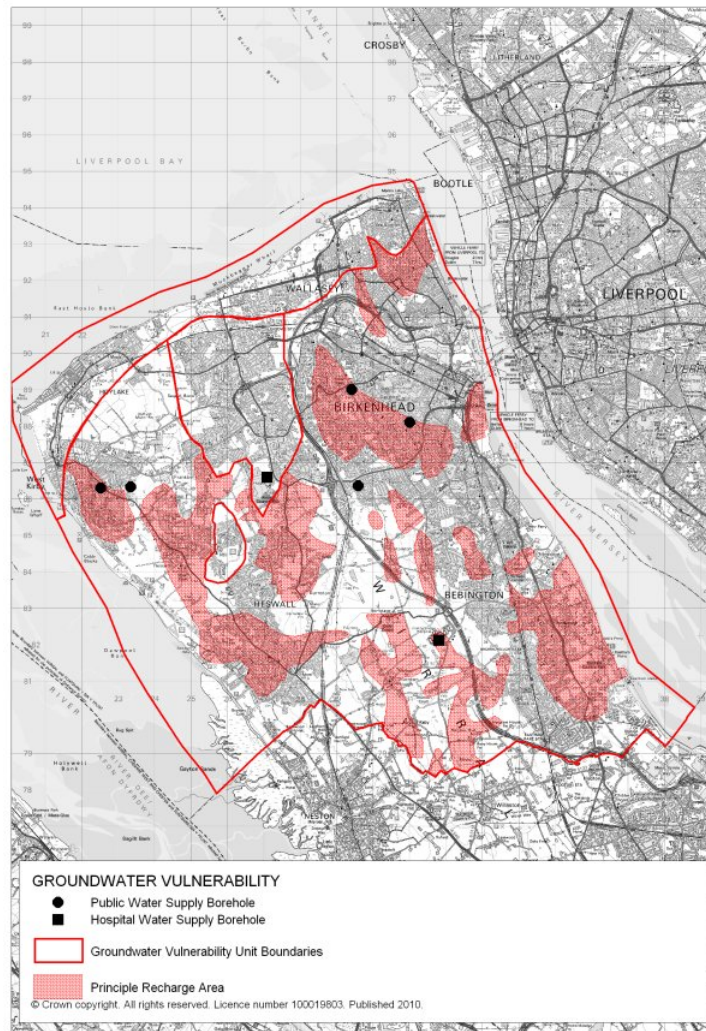


Picture 2.7

2.52 Wirral contains a large amount of recreational open space but has a shortage of formal outdoor sports facilities, including playing fields. An assessment undertaken during July and August 2008 has examined the range and quality of provision in the Borough’s parks and open spaces, natural green spaces, allotments, children’s play areas, outdoor sports facilities and cemeteries. There are local shortages, particularly in the older urban areas in east Wirral, and average quality scores were consistently below 50% based on the range, condition and overall impression of the facilities and physical infrastructure provided⁽²⁷⁾.

2.53 Much of Wirral is founded on sandstone which is a major aquifer and groundwater provides around 13% of Wirral's water resources. The rest of Wirral's water supplies come from the River Dee, which could have implications for European designated sites within the wider river catchment.

2.54 Picture 2.8 illustrates the main areas of groundwater vulnerability:



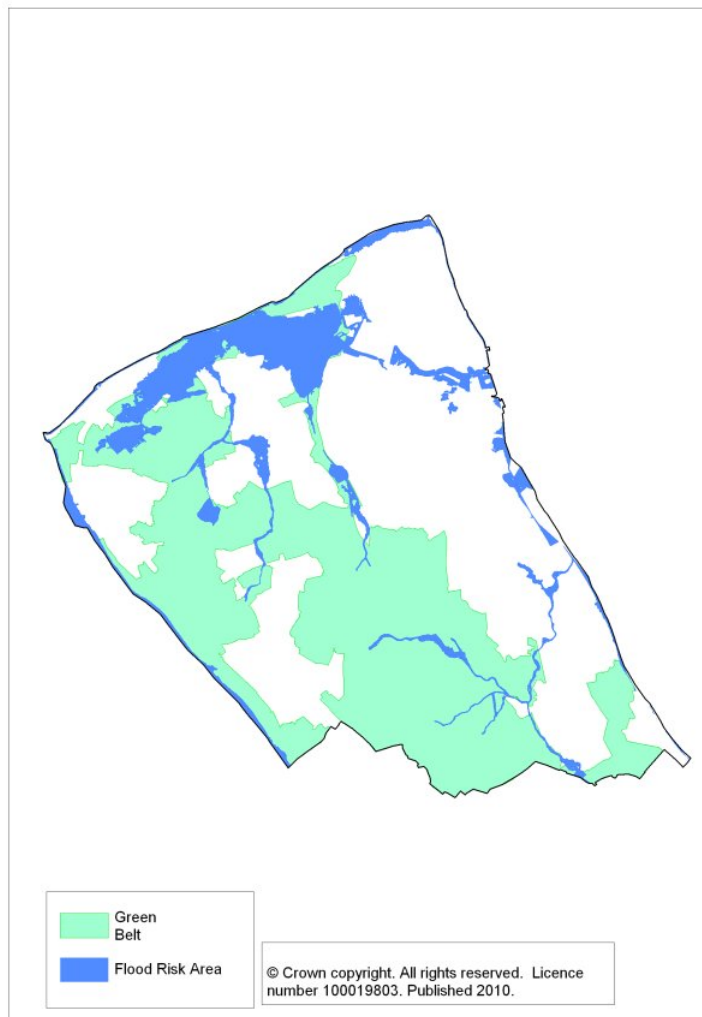
Picture 2.8

2.55 Water quality within the Dee and Mersey Estuaries has improved substantially over recent years and Wirral's beaches are consistently among the cleanest in the North West. The Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plans show that the Dee Estuary, which includes the European designated bathing beach at West Kirby, is currently at good biological status which is expected to be maintained in 2015. The rivers on Wirral are, however, categorised as having poor⁽²⁸⁾ or bad⁽²⁹⁾ ecological status or potential, well below the good status or potential required by the Water Framework Directive.

28 Dibbinsdale Brook

29 the Fender, Birket and Arrowe Brook

2.56 Picture 2.9 illustrates the areas that could potentially be liable to flooding, representing approximately 11% of the Borough's land area⁽³⁰⁾. The levels of risk in each area are shown in the Council's latest flood risk assessment⁽³¹⁾.



Picture 2.9

2.57 The latest UK Climate Projections expect North West sea levels to rise by an annual average of 2.5mm between 1990 and 2025⁽³²⁾.

2.58 The Environment Agency's Catchment Flood Management Plans show that the majority of Wirral falls within an area where flood risk is already being managed effectively but where further action may be needed to keep pace with climate change, store water or manage run-off, to respond to more frequent and intense storms and wetter winters. Current flood risk is managed through channel maintenance, raised

30 areas falling within the Functional Floodplain, Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3

31 Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Faber Maunsell, 2009)

32 DEFRA 2009

defences and pumping stations. Flood Warning Areas include Meols, Moreton, Bidston, Pacific Road, Shore Road and Upton Bridge. Sewer flooding is an issue in Leasowe, Arrowe Hill/Upton and Grange (West Kirby). Parts of the Borough are also at risk from rising groundwater levels and high surface water flood risk, which require further investigation.

2.59 Tidal flood risk from high water levels, wave action and the funnelling of water in certain wind directions exists at several locations around the north Wirral and Mersey coastlines. There are also areas where tidal flood risk combines with river flood risk on the lower reaches of the tributaries.

2.60 The draft North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan indicates that the residual life of existing coast defences is likely to extend beyond the plan period for the Core Strategy, with the potential for coastal squeeze against hard defences due to sea level rise over the longer term. Natural processes will be allowed to continue along the Dee, where the main risk beyond the plan period will be erosion not flooding.

2.61 A significant amount of renewable energy is being generated from off-shore wind energy within Liverpool Bay which is connected to the National Grid at Bidston. The local contribution to energy security from the on-shore generation of renewable, decentralised or low carbon energy recorded in successive Annual Monitoring Reports is, however, still minimal.

2.62 The Council was an early signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2001. The Wirral Climate Change Strategy has concentrated on initiatives based on awareness, adaption, energy and transport. An initial target to achieve a 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2010 was achieved at the end of 2007. The revised headline targets agreed by the Council are to reduce carbon emissions by 60% by 2025 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

2.63 The current level of per capita emissions in Wirral is 6 tonnes, the fifth lowest output in the North West Region. The largest output is currently from domestic gas at 421 KtCO₂ followed by commercial electricity at 406 KtCO₂.

Community Facilities

2.64 Birkenhead is the sub-regional service and retail centre for the Borough. Other centres operate below this serving more local catchments. The most significant are Liscard, West Kirby, Heswall and Moreton. The Croft Retail Park in Bromborough is now the second largest destination for comparison goods spending behind Birkenhead.

2.65 Spending on weekly convenience goods is almost totally retained within Wirral but over a third of spending on non-food comparison goods is spent outside the Borough. The most significant destinations are Liverpool (13%), Internet and TV sales (8%), Chester (5%), catalogue shopping (3%) and the Cheshire Oaks retail outlet in Ellesmere Port (2%). Spending outside the Borough is lowest in the inner

urban areas of east Wirral and highest from the settlements in the west and south east of the Borough. Liverpool and Chester are also significant destinations for visits to restaurants; pubs, bars and nightclubs; museums and art galleries; and theatres and concerts.

2.66 Spending on convenience goods is unlikely to support additional floorspace, other than in areas where there is a specific local shortfall. Spending on comparison goods could, however, support additional floorspace based on reducing the amount of money spent outside the Borough by up to 10%. There is scope for additional food and drink and commercial leisure to 2021⁽³³⁾.

2.67 Wirral has an extensive network of community facilities including libraries, community centres, youth centres, children's centres, social centres, sports centres, public halls and museums. Like schools, the reduction in population over time has reduced the ability to support these facilities leading to places of worship, social centres and sports clubs being closed or rationalised.

2.68 The Council has recently reassessed the provision of publicly funded community facilities for cultural and leisure services as part of a Strategic Asset Review agreed in January 2009. A number of facilities are being transferred to community ownership and management. Four facilities have already transferred, two more have been approved and a further twenty facilities are still under consideration.

2.69 Nine secondary schools and one primary school have recently been rebuilt or remodelled under a Private Finance Initiative which operates until 2031. Woodchurch High School has also been rebuilt under the Building Schools for the Future Pathfinder scheme.

2.70 In September 2009, Birkenhead High School for Girls, a fee-paying independent school became Wirral's first Academy, with recently approved funding to proceed with a major refurbishment and restructure. A proposal to close two existing secondary schools and establish a further Academy is at the feasibility stage, with a decision expected in Autumn 2010. A review of Wirral's special school provision is also underway, which may include co-location with mainstream schools.

2.71 A rolling review of primary schools has so far resulted in ten fewer maintained schools across Wirral since 2003. Leading from that review, funding has been secured for replacement primary school buildings in Poulton and Pensby through the Primary Capital Programme. A number of schools have received significant investment to replace temporary mobile accommodation with new permanent build and refurbish existing buildings.

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

2.72 Children's Centres are located in school and other premises across Wirral. Other grants have resulted in five pre-school playgroups located on school sites receiving new accommodation, while a co-location grant will place multi-disciplinary teams at locations around Wirral serving children and their families within the community.

2.73 Capital funding for schools is subject to the national budget announcements which are expected in October 2010.

2.74 Wirral Metropolitan College has progressively centralised its main facilities in and around Birkenhead Town Centre and, in partnership with Chester University, is now seeking to establish a new Wirral Learning Zone to the north of the Town Centre as part of a wider "knowledge hub" in and around Twelve Quays. A shortlisted bid, earmarked for approval under the previous Government's University Challenge Scheme, has been affected by recent budget announcements.

2.75 Access to GPs is generally good across the Borough. Consultation has identified that access to main hospitals is more limited for some people, especially to people without access to a car. A major redevelopment is underway at St Catherine's Hospital in Tranmere.

Waste Management

2.76 The Borough currently produces approximately 137,000 tonnes of municipal (household) waste each year. The amount recycled and composted has more than doubled over recent years, significantly reducing the amount that needs to go to landfill. Rates of recycling are, however, still low in some areas of the Borough. There are currently thirty-nine existing licenced facilities, including the Materials Recycling Facility operated by the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority at Bidston, which is also used by districts outside Wirral.

2.77 Many of the issues related to planning for waste, including the identification of suitable sites for new or replacement facilities across the sub-region, is to be included in a separate Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton. Consultation on the preferred options for the Waste DPD took place in May 2010.

2.78 Consultation on the options for a review of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside prepared by the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership is expected to take place in October 2010, with a view to agreeing a revised Strategy by December 2011.

Minerals

2.79 Mineral activities in Wirral have historically been limited to small quarries for local sandstone and winnable brick clay reserves. Only two sites remain, at Carr Lane, Moreton and Prenton Dell, with planning permission to extract clay to 2042.

The Merseyside Mineral Resource Study 2008 recommended that a mineral safeguarding area should be identified at Carr Lane, to the west of Moreton, to prevent incompatible development from sterilising the mineral reserve.

Key Issues

2.80 The key issues identified for the Borough as a whole include:

- Promoting sustainable economic growth and revitalisation
- Providing for adaption to and the mitigation of climate change
- Closing the gap between social, economic and environmental conditions and opportunities
- Addressing a continued loss of population
- Housing market renewal within the older urban areas of east Wirral
- Providing for affordable and specialist housing needs
- Providing for an ageing population
- Supporting the re-configuration of social, community, health and education services
- Retention of comparison retail spending
- Protecting and enhancing locally distinctive assets such as landscape, countryside and coast, heritage, areas of importance for nature conservation and areas of high quality housing
- Reducing the impact of traffic and congestion along radial routes into and out of Birkenhead and on main routes into and out of the Borough
- Promoting improvements to the Bidston-Wrexham Borderlands railway line
- Improving the accessibility of employment, education and healthcare
- Addressing shortfalls in the quantity, quality and distribution of green infrastructure including linkages and corridors for wildlife
- Securing additional resources to improve and maintain the public realm
- Minimising the potential impact of flooding from all sources
- Increasing the contribution of renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy to local energy security
- Securing sustainable waste management

Wirral - Key Statistics

Administrative Area - 25,110 hectares (97 square miles)

Borough Land Area - 15,560 hectares (60 square miles)

Coastline - 41km (26 miles)

Urban area - 8,507 hectares (55% of total land area)

Green Belt - 7,053 hectares (45% of total land area)

Designated Employment Areas - 1120 hectares (7% of land area)

Available employment land - 87 sites (231 hectares) (April 2009)

Vacant Land - 386 sites (341 hectares) (April 2009)

Residential Properties - 147,076 (April 2007)

Population - 310,200 (Mid-2007)

Economically active population - 141,000 (December 2009)

Employee Jobs within the Borough - 96,400 (2008)

Average household income - £33,800 (2007)

Average property price - £160,077 (2007)

Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2007 - 99,400 (32% of Wirral)

Population within highest 20% of IMD 2007 - 44,200 (14% of Wirral)

Recreational Open Space - 2,233 hectares (7.2 hectares per 1000)

Publicly Accessible Open Space - 1,365 hectares (4.4 hectares per 1000)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest - 7,132 hectares (including inter-tidal areas)

Conservation Areas - 24 Areas; 707 hectares

Listed Buildings - 1771 structures

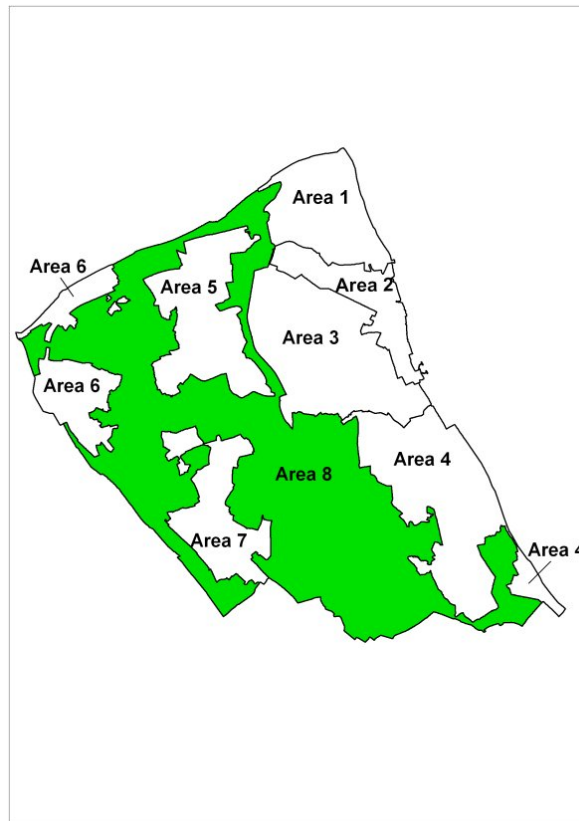
Scheduled Ancient Monuments - 9 Monuments; 5.7 hectares

Historic Parks and Gardens - 4 sites; 113 hectares

Area Potentially Liable to Flooding - 1,686 hectares (Functional Floodplain, Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3)

3 Settlement Area Profiles

3.1 The Council has divided Wirral into eight broad Settlement Areas based on the main groups of settlements within the Borough:



Picture 3.1

3.2 A key to the areas included within each of the Settlement Areas is provided below:

Settlement Area:	Locations Included:
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	New Brighton, Liscard, Egremont, Seacombe, Poulton and Wallasey Village
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	Birkenhead and Wallasey Docklands, Bidston Moss, Valley Road, Birkenhead Town Centre, Hamilton Square, Twelve Quays, Woodside, Hind Street, Monks Ferry and Cammell Lairds
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	Bidston, Beechwood, Claughton, Oxton, Noctorum, Prenton, Mountwood, Tranmere, Rock Ferry and Rock Park
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	New Ferry, Bebington, Port Sunlight, Brookhurst, Raby Mere, Poulton, Spital, Eastham and Bromborough Pool

Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	Leasowe, Moreton, Upton, Woodchurch and Greasby
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	Meols, Newton and Caldy, Birchcroft Road/Rycroft Road and Barn Hey Crescent.
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	Gayton, Pensby, Thingwall and Irby
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Areas	Clatterbridge Hospital, Thornton Hough, Raby, Barnston, Brimstage, Storeton, Landican, Thurstaston, Frankby, Saughall Massie, North Wirral Coastal Plain, M53 Corridor, Eastham.

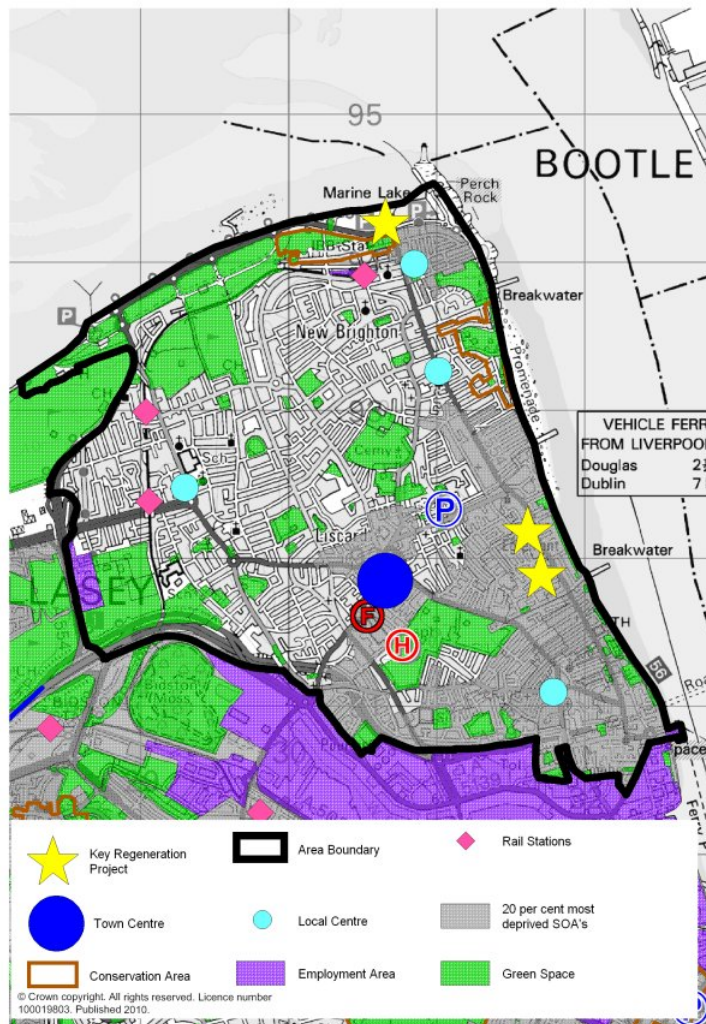
3.3 Settlement Area 8 is equivalent to the extent of the Merseyside Green Belt shown on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map adopted in February 2000.

3.4 Details on each of the Settlement Areas identified are provided in the sections below:

4 Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey

4.1 Settlement Area 1 includes the urban settlements of Wallasey including New Brighton, Liscard, Seacombe, Poulton and Wallasey Village.

4.2 The Settlement Area is well located with access to Liverpool via the Kingsway Tunnel, Seacombe Ferry Terminal and three train stations at Wallasey Village, Wallasey Grove Road and New Brighton; to Birkenhead via Tower Road, Duke Street and Wallasey Bridge Road; and to the M53 Motorway from the Docks Link and Wallasey Link Roads.



Picture 4.1

Socio-Economic Background

4.3 The age profile for the Settlement Area broadly follows the Borough average, with a slightly higher proportion of younger adults and a slightly lower proportion of retired people. At a more local level, the profile is more mixed, with a higher proportion

of young adults in Seacombe and Liscard and a higher proportion of older and elderly people in Wallasey and New Brighton. Seacombe has one of the highest proportions of children under 15 years of age in the Borough.

4.4 Seacombe, Liscard and New Brighton have some of the greatest social, economic and environmental needs in England. This is the second highest concentration of need in the Borough, representing almost a quarter of Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the lowest 20% of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation. Only a small part of Wallasey Village fell within the highest 20% of the national Index in 2007.

4.5 The Settlement Area generated over 5,700 journeys to work to destinations outside the Borough in 2001, almost two thirds to Liverpool. Almost a third of these journeys were generated from the north and western part of the Settlement Area. Liscard and Seacombe, where over 40% of households did not have access to a private car, generated some of the lowest numbers of journeys outside the Borough for work.

Housing

4.6 The majority of higher density terraced housing is located in Seacombe, a legacy of the historic relationship with employment in the adjacent dockland areas. These older areas have been identified as part of the wider area requiring housing market renewal. Priority areas for new and improved housing to be promoted as part of the Newheartlands Pathfinder include Royston Avenue/Woodhall Avenue which are being acquired and demolished for replacement with new build family dwellings and Trafalgar Road which is still subject to an options appraisal. Consultation has indicated support for regeneration along King Street and Trafalgar Road.

4.7 The majority of the higher quality detached and semi-detached properties are in the north and western part of the Settlement Area. The majority of the Settlement Area, outside the northwest, has been identified as a regeneration priority area since December 2003. These regeneration priority areas are now also designated as part of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point.

4.8 The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential capacity within Settlement Area 1⁽³⁴⁾:

Area	Planning Permission ⁽³⁵⁾	Category 1 ⁽³⁶⁾	Category 2 ⁽³⁷⁾	Category 3 ⁽³⁸⁾	Small Sites ⁽³⁹⁾
Settlement Area 1 - Wallasey	531	114	57	165	165

34 gross additional dwellings - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

39 sites below 0.4 hectare

38 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

37 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

36 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

35 sites with planning permission in April 2008

Local Heritage

4.9 The Settlement Area's seventy-three Listed Buildings represent 4% of the Borough total. There are Conservation Areas at Magazine Promenade; and at Wellington Road, which includes the original cliff top villas at New Brighton. Fort Perch Rock and Lighthouse are also prominent landmarks on the New Brighton waterfront. Fort Perch Rock is included on the national Heritage At Risk Register.

Town Centres

4.10 Liscard is the main shopping and service centre for the Settlement Area. The whole of the Settlement Area is within 20 minutes of the centre by public transport. The Cherry Tree Shopping Centre and the pedestrianised Liscard Way form the core of the shopping area. Asda, at the edge of the town centre, is the main supermarket for the Settlement Area.

4.11 Key indicators suggest that the long-term decline of Liscard has continued: Liscard has experienced significant slippage in the national retail rankings; the comparison retail offer is at the value end of the spectrum; the vacancy rate is above the UK average; retail rents have generally been static; operator requirements are limited; anti-social behaviour and vandalism have been highlighted as additional problems; and there is limited scope for a substantial town centre development scheme over and above the existing planning permission to extend the Cherry Tree Centre.

4.12 The secondary centres at Victoria Road; Seabank Road (New Brighton); King Street; Poulton Road; and Wallasey Village; provide more local facilities. All have experienced decline in their role as convenience shopping centres and have seen rising levels of vacancy, despite some investment, for example Tesco Express at Poulton Road. Victoria Road and Seabank Road in New Brighton have also benefited from regeneration funding. The physical environment and high level of vacancy in Poulton Road, Seacombe is a particular cause for concern and it is no longer considered a viable centre in its present form.

Employment

4.13 Cross Lane Industrial Estate is the only dedicated industrial estate within the Settlement Area. Only a small number of plots remain, mostly held for the expansion of existing businesses. The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009 concluded that the Estate provided good local employment opportunities and should be retained. The Study recommended that a small area adjacent to New Brighton railway station at Alexandra Road should also be retained for local employment uses unless it can be shown that the site is no longer marketable for industrial or office use.

New Brighton

4.14 The coastal resort of New Brighton has traditionally provided the majority of open space, leisure and recreation facilities for the Settlement Area but has continued to decline since its post-war heyday. The regeneration of New Brighton remains a priority of the Wirral Investment Strategy.

4.15 An initial proposal for a major private sector, leisure based redevelopment at the Marine Lake was refused by the Secretary of State following a public inquiry in 2006. The development has since been revised and split into two phases. The Floral Pavilion theatre and conference centre re-opened in December 2008. Phase 2 is now under construction to provide a refurbished marine lake, model boating lake, supermarket, hotel, fitness centre, cinema, bars, restaurants and public realm improvements. The supermarket is due to open in early autumn 2011. The feasibility of re-constructing a pier has now also been explored⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Community Facilities

4.16 Public facilities include the swimming pools and sports hall at Guinea Gap Recreation Centre. Sports halls are also provided at the secondary schools at Weatherhead, Mosslands, Oldershaw and Weatherhead; at Wallasey YMCA; and a smaller hall at St Joseph's RC Primary. Floodlit artificial turf pitches are provided at Weatherhead and Oldershaw. There is also a private indoor soccer facility at Birkenhead Road.

4.17 The recent review of cultural and leisure services identified the Grosvenor Ballroom, Vale House, Wallasey Grange and the community centres at Liscard, New Brighton and Seacombe for possible transfer to community ownership and management.

4.18 Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance services and Victoria Central Hospital are located at the edge of Liscard Town Centre. Council services are located at Wallasey Town Hall in Seacombe. The RNLI currently operates two facilities in New Brighton, at either end of Kings Parade but is seeking to relocate to a single site in response to the regeneration of the resort and to gain easier access to a slipway.

4.19 Secondary schools within the Settlement Area have all recently been remodelled or redeveloped. A recent review of primary school places has led to the closure of Poulton Primary, although the site will remain in use until the new Park Primary School is available for occupation. The private preparatory schools at Marymount and Westbourne School have closed in recent years.

Open Space and Nature

4.20 The coastal promenade from Seacombe Ferry to New Brighton and the North Wirral Coastal Park is a major feature of the Settlement Area.

40 Brand New Brighton Pier Feasibility Study (Faber Maunsell/AECOM, March 2009)

4.21 The Wirral Open Space Assessment shows:

- a slightly lower than average provision of allotments, of low quality overall
- a higher than average provision of amenity green space, with the largest concentration at Kings Parade
- a lower than average provision for children and young people
- a lower than average provision of facilities for outdoor sport and recreation
- a limited provision of natural and semi-natural green space, of low quality overall
- a lower than average provision of sites that could be classified as parks and gardens but of good average quality
- one cemetery judged to be of high quality

4.22 The largest public open space is Central Park in Liscard.

4.23 Wallasey Golf Course is internationally recognised as the home of the Stableford scoring system and was a Final Qualifying course for the Open Championship when it returned to the Royal Liverpool Golf Course in Hoylake in 2006 and hopefully again in 2014.

4.24 Biodiversity value is mainly limited to the coast. The North Wirral Foreshore is nationally and internationally significant and the Mersey coastline is nationally designated. Wallasey Golf Course and the remnant dune areas associated with the North Wirral Coastal Park are also locally significant including nationally rare species and breeding birds.

4.25 There is one site of local importance for earth science, the sandstone outcrop at Red and Yellow Noses at New Brighton.

Other Infrastructure

4.26 United Utilities operate a major pumping station at Scotts Field Seacombe, detention tanks at Coastal Drive and Tower Grounds in New Brighton and a reservoir at Gorse Hill.

Coast and Flooding

4.27 The majority of the Settlement Area is protected from the sea by the Wallasey Embankment. There is still a risk of flooding if the Embankment was breached or over-topped. Approximately 92 hectares of land associated with the north Wirral coast and the Fender Valley is, therefore, still liable to potential tidal and fluvial (river) flooding, which could affect up to 420 properties at the edge of Wallasey and New Brighton.

Key Issues

4.28 Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 1 include:

- Securing the continued regeneration of New Brighton
- Addressing the decline of Liscard Town Centre

- Safeguarding employment uses at Cross Lane Industrial Estate
- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of Seacombe and Liscard
- Maintaining the attractiveness, recreation value and biodiversity of coastal facilities
- Promoting a more sustainable pattern of journeys to work

Settlement Area 1 - Key Statistics

Area - 1,021 hectares (15% of Wirral land area)

Urban coastline - 6.5km (4 miles)

Population - 58,700 (mid-2007) 19% of Wirral

Number of dwellings - 28,100 (April 2007)

Dwellings per hectare - 28

Dwellings completed since 2000 (gross) - 714 (13% of Wirral)

Dwellings demolished since 2000 - 189 (7% of Wirral)

Land with planning permission for new housing (April 2009) - 11.5 hectares (767 units) 20% of supply

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites - 1.6 hectares (5 sites)

Key Town Centres - Liscard Town Centre

Designated Employment Areas - Cross Lane Industrial Estate (7.0 hectares), Alexandra Road, New Brighton (1.3 hectares)

Employment land - 2 sites (1.8 hectares)

Vacant land - 48 sites (9.2 hectares)

Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2007 - 24,500 (42% of Area 1)

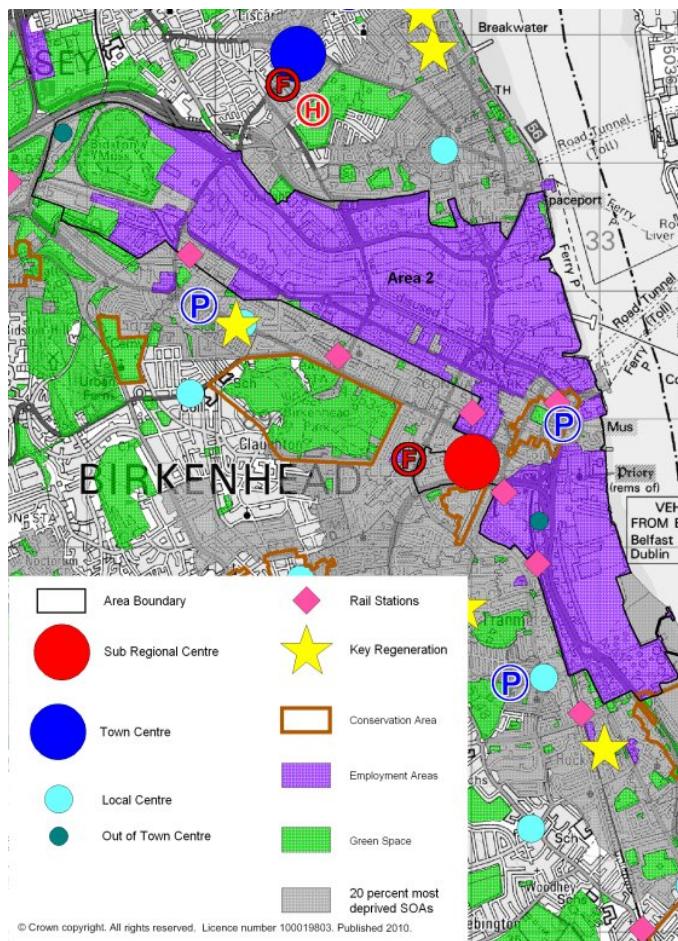
Population within highest 20% of IMD 2007 - 1,500 (3% of Area 1)

Recreational Open Space - 182 hectares (3.1 hectares per 1000)

Publicly Accessible Open Space - 131 hectares (2.2 hectares per 1000)

5 Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core

5.1 Settlement Area 2 is the historic industrial and commercial heart of the Borough at Bidston, Seacombe, Birkenhead and Tranmere, centred around the coastal and inland docks system dating from the early to mid 1800s. The residential areas within and immediately surrounding the Settlement Area have some of the greatest socio-economic needs in the country and the Settlement Area contains one of the largest concentrations of vacant previously developed land in the Borough.



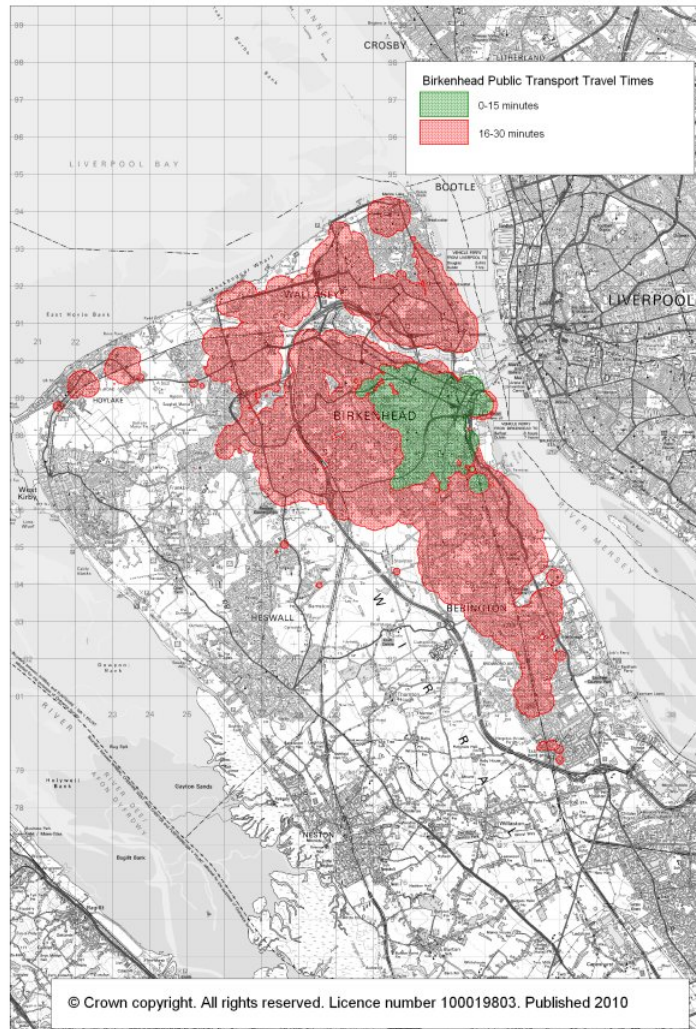
Picture 5.1

5.2 The Settlement Area has been the focus of a continued series of national publicly funded regeneration initiatives since the 1970s, including Inner Area Programme, Merseyside Development Corporation, City Lands City Challenge, Hamilton Quarter, Wallasey and Lairdside SRB, Merseyside Objective One Programme and Housing Market Renewal Initiative. Twelve Quays had been a Strategic Regional Site since December 2001. A new Strategic Regional Site in the Birkenhead Docklands was approved by the North West Development Agency in August 2010.

5.3 Parts of the Settlement Area, towards the centre of Birkenhead, have some of the greatest social, economic and environmental needs in England, scoring very poorly across a wide range of social and economic indicators⁽⁴¹⁾.

Transport Accessibility

5.4 The Settlement Area is by far the most accessible in the Borough, with good access by road, bus, rail and ferry. Picture 5.2 highlights the areas falling within 30 minutes travel time of Birkenhead Town Centre by public transport. All but the western coastal fringes of the Borough are within 20 minutes of the Town Centre by car.



Picture 5.2

5.5 The main routes in and out of the Settlement Area include major through routes from across the Borough; the road tunnels to Liverpool; the Docks Link Road to Junction 1 of the M53 Motorway; the three routes across the docks system at Tower

41 one neighbourhood is one of the worst ten in England in the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007)

Road, Duke Street and Wallasey Bridge Road; and the A41 south to Chester and Junction 5 of the M53 Motorway. The M53 Motorway enters the Settlement Area in flyover from the west.

5.6 The majority of the Borough's principal highways, radiate out from the Town Centre, providing high frequency bus services to all the Borough's main settlements. High frequency, electrified, passenger rail services run through the Centre to Liverpool, New Brighton, West Kirby and Chester. An hourly diesel service runs, with connections to Birkenhead, from Bidston to Wrexham in North Wales. The Mersey Ferries connect Woodside to Liverpool and Seacombe.

5.7 A disused freight line runs from Bidston through the docks and across Birkenhead Town Centre (in cutting) to Mollington Street in Tranmere. Proposals to reinstate the link from Bidston to the docks in Beaufort Road are being investigated as part of the transport strategy for Wirral Waters and the alignment at Bidston Curve, from Birkenhead North Depot to Duke Street and from Rock Ferry to Canning Street will need to be safeguarded.

Employment

5.8 Industrial dock-related facilities dominate the character of the area. The Settlement Area is still the Borough's most significant destination for journeys to work (16%), is the largest contributor to the Borough's economic output (19% of total GVA) and provides almost half of the Borough's designated employment land.

5.9 The recently constructed Twelve Quays Roll-on Roll-off Ferry Terminal operates from the waterfront opposite Liverpool. Other significant waterfront facilities include Cammell Lairds, which is a major ship repair centre for the UK west coast; and the nationally important Shell Oil Terminal at Tranmere, which feeds the upstream refinery facilities at Stanlow, in neighbouring Cheshire West and Chester, with up to 10 million tonnes of crude oil each year. The majority of the waterfront facilities at Woodside were redeveloped for offices and housing as part of regeneration programmes during the 1980s and 1990s.

5.10 The docks hinterland in Seacombe and North Birkenhead are an important source of local employment providing for a wide range of small and medium sized companies, mainly in light engineering, trade and distribution, of which a limited number are still port-related. The majority of the Borough's waste treatment facilities are also located in and around this hinterland. The Council has begun the process of promoting economic regeneration by clearing areas of housing, to the north of the railway in North Birkenhead, to allow employment-related redevelopment as part of the housing market renewal process.

5.11 The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009 concluded, despite obvious signs of demand, that Birkenhead was no longer providing an attractive business offer and that occupiers, including major office uses, were increasingly being lost to more modern premises with car parking in outlying areas including Bromborough. Only a limited number of poorly located smaller sites were currently

available in and around the Town Centre. The Study recommended that the Council considered establishing a designated office quarter for small and medium sized businesses, alongside a programme of land assembly and environmental improvements.

Town Centres

5.12 Birkenhead Town Centre was identified as a sub regional centre in the former Regional Spatial Strategy. Assessment against health check indicators suggest a continuing decline in Birkenhead's overall vitality and viability, including; a fall in the national retail rankings; relatively low rents vis-a-vis comparable centres in the North West; a reduction in footfall; predominance of "value" fashion retailers; high vacancy rates; only one Department Store; the sub-standard quality of the physical environment on approaches to and within the Town Centre; and a poor food and drink offer⁽⁴²⁾.

5.13 There is limited operator interest in Birkenhead and there are significant constraints on the delivery of a new and improved comparison retail offer. Many of the shop units in the Grange shopping centre do not satisfy modern market requirements. Some of the flyovers associated with the entrance to the Birkenhead road tunnel were removed during the 1990s but others remain, dividing the Town Centre from areas in the south. A new supermarket at Claughton Road is the only significant planned investment in the short term. The enabling Compulsory Purchase Order was confirmed in July 2009 and the supermarket is expected to be completed by the end of 2011.

5.14 The A41 corridor includes a major concentration of out-of-centre retail development including Rock Retail Park. Junction 1 Retail Park⁽⁴³⁾ and Tesco's at Bidston⁽⁴⁴⁾, also form a significant cluster of out-of-centre retail developments around Junction 1 of the M53 Motorway.

Local Heritage

5.15 There are 180 Listed Buildings within the Settlement Area, approximately 10% of the Borough total.

5.16 The historic commercial area to the north of Birkenhead Town Centre around Hamilton Square is a nationally significant Conservation Area, with the largest collection of Victorian Grade I Listed Buildings outside London. Landmark features such as Hamilton Square Railway Station and the former Birkenhead Town Hall are also located within this Area. James Gillespie Graham's original grid iron layout is still evident, in the area outside the Conservation Area to the west, and some of the historic dock-related buildings and structures are prominent Listed Buildings in the docklands areas to the north.

42 Merseyside's only Michelin Star restaurant is a mile away in Oxton Village

43 the third largest destination for comparison spending behind Birkenhead Town Centre and Croft Retail Park

44 one of the top three supermarkets for turnover in the Borough

5.17 Despite extensive improvements during the 1990s, a lack of private sector investment and increasing levels of vacancy has placed Hamilton Square on the national Heritage At Risk Register, alongside the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Birkenhead Priory which is believed to be the oldest range of surviving buildings in Merseyside. Funding was set aside by the Council in January 2010 to undertake the works necessary to remove the Priory from the Register.

Housing

5.18 Small pockets of housing in the Settlement Area include areas of older terraces associated with the docks and some newer stock associated with attempts to diversify the area around Hamilton Square during the early 1990s. The Settlement Area currently has the lowest average number of people per dwelling, at just over one-to-one. The age profile is dominated by young adults.

5.19 The most recent residential development has seen the conversion of the listed former grain warehouses at Dock Road in Seacombe. Further phases are under consideration as part of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point.

5.20 The whole of Settlement Area 2 has been identified as a regeneration priority area since December 2003.

5.21 The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential capacity within Settlement Area 2⁽⁴⁵⁾:

Area	Planning Permission ⁽⁴⁶⁾	Category 1 ⁽⁴⁷⁾	Category 2 ⁽⁴⁸⁾	Category 3 ⁽⁴⁹⁾	Small Sites ⁽⁵⁰⁾
Settlement Area 2 - Commercial Core	201	1648	3432	8269	188

Community Facilities

5.22 Public facilities of Borough wide importance include the swimming pools and fitness suite at Europa Pools in Birkenhead Town Centre; and the indoor tennis centre, sports hall, fitness suite, playing fields and floodlit artificial turf pitch at Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre at Bidston.

5.23 A review of cultural and leisure services has made Birkenhead Town Hall Museum, Pacific Road Arts Theatre, Taylor Street Museum and Wirral Tramway and Shore Road Pumping Station available for expressions of interest. The transfer of Pacific Road Arts Theatre, Taylor Street Museum and Wirral Tramway has already been approved.

45 gross additional dwellings - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

50 sites below 0.4 hectare

49 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

48 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

47 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

46 sites with planning permission in April 2008

5.24 Wirral Metropolitan College, Fire and Rescue, Police, Magistrates, Probation and Council services are located in and around Birkenhead Town Centre. The main Police Custody Suite is adjacent to the docks and planning permission has been granted for a new Command and Control Centre at Beaufort Road. The Magistrates may also seek to relocate to more modern premises within the plan period.

5.25 There are no secondary or primary schools located within this Settlement Area, which is served by various schools in the wider area and Wallasey. A Children's Centre outreach is located at the Lauries Centre in central Birkenhead.

5.26 Wirral Metropolitan College is considering a partnership with Chester University which could form part of a wider "knowledge hub" alongside existing facilities at Twelve Quays.

Open Space and Nature

5.27 The Wirral Open Space Assessment shows:

- no allotments
- no provision of amenity green space
- two sites for children and young people, of lower quality overall
- one facility for outdoor sport of high quality at the Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre but at the western end of the Area
- a lower than average provision of natural and semi-natural green space
- a deficiency of sites that can be classified as parks and gardens

5.28 The only significant open spaces within the Settlement Area, outside the coastal footways associated with the Mersey waterfront, are the formal gardens at Hamilton Square in the east and the reclaimed landfill site at Bidston Moss in the west, which has recently been landscaped to provide community woodland and enhance the entrance to the Area from the M53 Motorway. The Bidston site is now a proposed Site of Biological Importance providing an excellent habitat for birds.

Other Infrastructure

5.29 Other key infrastructure includes the Borough's main Waste Water Treatment Works at Shore Road, the Great Culvert Pumping Station and the Materials Recycling Facility at Wallasey Bridge Road.

5.30 The high-pressure gas main for the Borough runs into the Settlement Area along M53 Motorway and the Wallasey tunnel approach road, serving the gas holders at Dock Road and Hind Street. Electricity from the wind turbines in Liverpool Bay runs from the north Wirral coast to a transformer at the edge of the Dock Estate.

5.31 The gasholders at Dock Road and Hind Street and the Shell Oil Terminal are registered COMAH sites.

Development Opportunities

5.32 There are four main development opportunities within Settlement Area 2:

Birkenhead Dock Estate

5.33 The Dock Estate operates under permitted development rights granted by Acts of Parliament as part of the Port of Liverpool. Part of the area operates as a Freeport. Continued port use is increasingly limited by the capacity of the historic inland docks system, as vessels increase in size over time. The main focus for larger vessels is now the successful Roll-on, Roll-off Ferry Terminal at Twelve Quays.

5.34 Bidston Dock was backfilled in 2002 and approximately 56 hectares of the Dock Estate now lie vacant. Policy EM10 was deleted from the Unitary Development Plan in September 2007 as a first attempt to to promote the wider regeneration of the area, now known as 'Wirral Waters'.

5.35 An initial assessment of the area was subject to public consultation in 2008⁽⁵¹⁾. The assessment demonstrated that a high density mixed use development, over a 30 to 50 year time span, could be capable of accommodating up to 15,900 new dwellings and an estimated 30,000 new jobs.

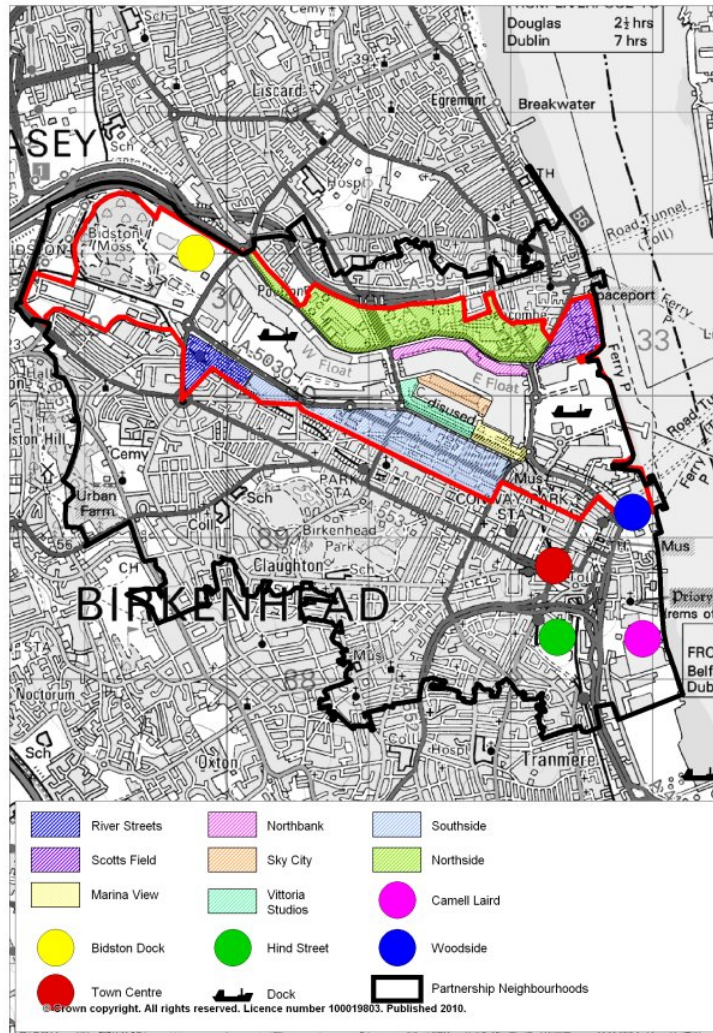
5.36 The initial assessment showed the retention of the deep water river berth at Twelve Quays and the inland dock system between Duke Street and Wallasey Bridge Road (West Float) for port-related activities. Vacant areas in the north, between Tower Road and Duke Street (East Float) are identified for the early phases of a mixed-use, high density, residential and commercial development (Northbank). Planning permissions for North Bank East were approved subject to a Section 106 Agreement in August 2009.

5.37 Over the longer term, this type of development is intended to extend south to include high-density mixed-use developments at Vittoria Dock (Sky City and Vittoria Studios) and Cathcart Wharf (Marina View), to provide a modern strategic office and business location to meet the aspirations of the Wirral Investment Strategy and act as a catalyst for wider regeneration of the area. Planning permission for East Float was approved in August 2010 subject to Section 106 Agreement and notification to the Secretary of State.

5.38 Wirral Waters and the surrounding Newheartlands Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area were designated as part of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point in December 2008, as part of the wider vision for mixed-use private sector regeneration at the core of the Liverpool City Region, which includes complementary proposals along the Liverpool waterfront at 'Liverpool Waters'.

51 Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework Baseline Study (March 2008)

5.39 Housing delivery within the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point is expected to increase the Borough's population by at least 12,700 people, 4% above the ONS 2006-based population projections for the Borough, by 2026. New high density employment development is now expected to provide up to 27,000 additional new jobs.



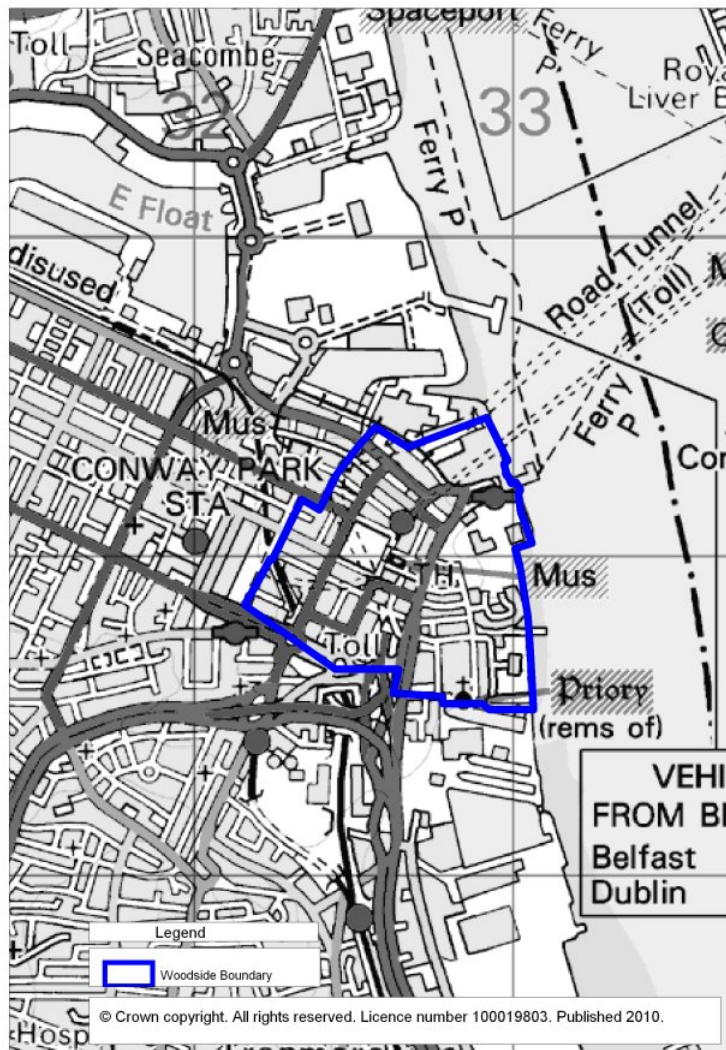
Picture 5.3

5.40 The Wiral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework also identifies the former Bidston Dock as an opportunity for a major mixed-use retail and leisure development, to draw back the amount of comparison spending which goes out of the Borough to Liverpool, Chester and Cheshire Oaks.

Woodside Development Area

5.41 Woodside is the waterfront area between Priory Wharf and Woodside Business Park, including the Ferry Terminal, the former Woodside Hotel, Woodside Bus Station, the 1990s public sector office developments at Woodside Approach and the area up to Hamilton Square Railway Station.

5.42 Phase 2 of the residential development at Priory Wharf was allocated as a Housing Development Site in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral but remains undeveloped. The remainder of the area is designated as a mix of primarily industrial and commercial areas. The western parts of the area fall within the setting of Hamilton Square Conservation Area.



Picture 5.4

5.43 Woodside is directly served by the A41 and is already an intermodal terminus for bus, rail and ferry services. The ferry and bus facilities are currently poorly utilised and the area contains a number of vacant sites and a bus layover. The busy A41 acts as a barrier to pedestrian movements between the train station and the ferry terminal.

5.44 A masterplan for the area, subject to public consultation in 2006, identified the potential to accommodate a mix of residential, office, hotel and ancillary leisure floorspace. A larger site could be assembled, if the A41 was diverted. It would also be possible to exploit the change in level as the land dips towards the coast. A

Technical Appendix addressed the capacity for tall buildings, to complement the high rise buildings along the Liverpool waterfront, take best advantage of views to Liverpool, and provide a more distinct and defined urban character to the central commercial area of Birkenhead.

Hind Street Regeneration Area

5.45 Hind Street is a large under-utilised area to the immediate south of Birkenhead Town Centre, to the west of the A41. The area includes operational gas holders, a former gas depot, a former car showroom, a disused railway station and other under-utilised areas associated with the tunnel marshalling yards. It is physically separated from the Town Centre by a series of flyovers. Highway access to the majority of the area is also physically constrained.



Picture 5.5

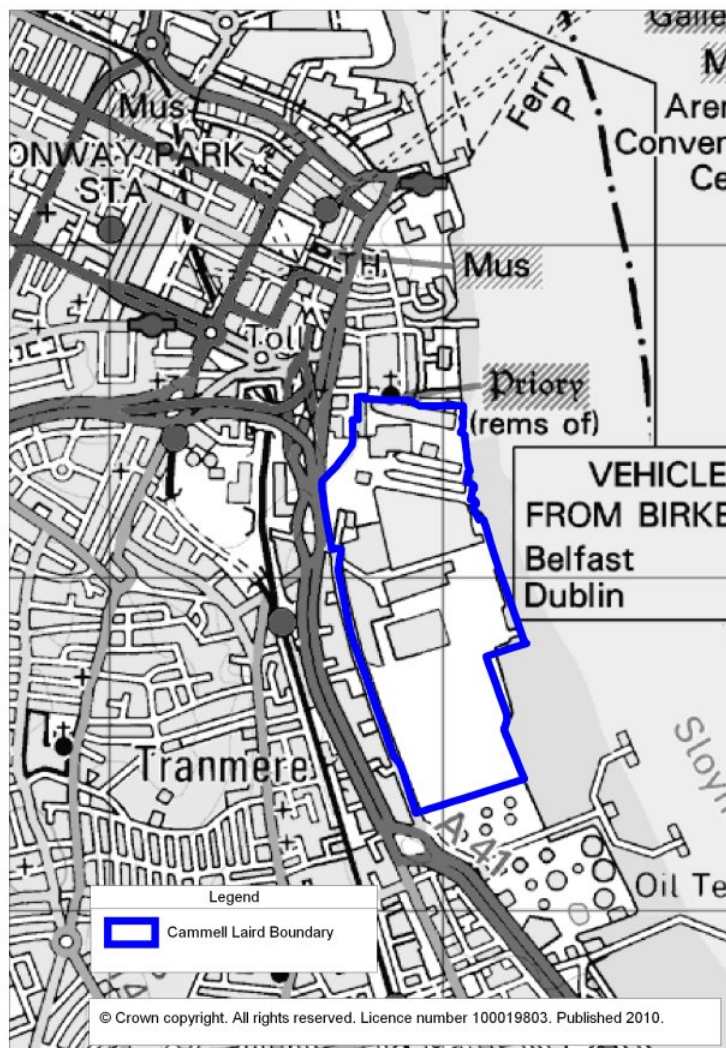
5.46 A study, funded by public sector partners in 2001, concluded that the area could provide an appropriate location for town centre uses. Initial proposals to identify the area as an expansion to the Town Centre were included in the Alterations to the

Unitary Development Plan published for public consultation in July 2004. The proposals were, however, stalled to allow alternative Town Centre options to be further explored. A new superstore was granted outline consent at Cloughton Road within the Town Centre in February 2008 and part of the Hind Street area was granted consent for a mixed-use scheme in January 2009.

5.47 Approximately 8 hectares of the Hind Street area remain vacant, in multiple ownership. A revised masterplan is being considered to provide a more integrated approach to future development opportunities. Recent office development at Queens Gate, to the immediate north of the area, highlights the potential for high quality development and investment and the area appears to have particular potential for office, light industrial and showroom development.

Cammell Lairds

5.48 The Cammell Lairds Shipyard has been a significant feature of the sub-regional economy since 1856.



Picture 5.6

5.49 Under previous ownership, the site had been suggested as an appropriate location for a large, mixed-use waterfront development. The site is now owned by the operator of the Port of Liverpool and is one of the few sites in the North West that would be capable of providing an additional deep water berth.

5.50 Despite the decline in shipbuilding activity in the UK in recent years, the ship yard has revived as a major ship repair facility, crucial to the continued viability of the Port of Liverpool. A linked facility is also operated from the inland dock system at Beaufort Road. A major ship building contract was announced for the site in July 2010 and a partnership to build components for nuclear power stations was announced in August 2010. The open land to the south of the ship repair facility is, however, still available for development. The site may offer the opportunity for the assembly and construction of off-shore wind turbines and other associated equipment.

Strategic Regional Site

5.51 A new Strategic Regional Site was designated in August 2010, to promote a mix of uses including housing, offices, port-related development, manufacturing and process industries in a highly accessible and exceptional waterside environment; provide for significant inward investment opportunities; restructure areas adjacent to the dock estate; assist in facilitating the economic restructuring of parts of the inner area surrounding Merseyside's regional centre; and bring back into use derelict and underused land. The boundary to the new Strategic Regional Site is shown on Picture 5.7 opposite.

Port Master Plan

5.52 The port operator is currently preparing a Port Master Plan for areas that will remain in operational port use.

Integrated Regeneration Study

5.53 An Integrated Regeneration Study demonstrates how these development opportunities can be linked with the regeneration of the surrounding areas⁽⁵²⁾.

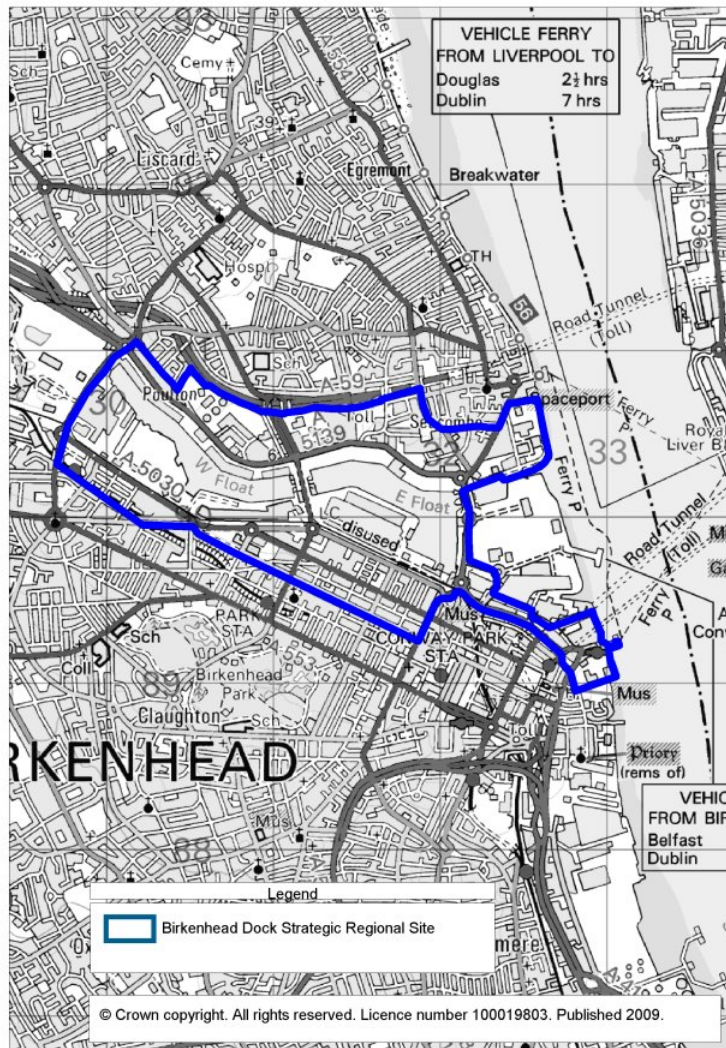
Air Quality

5.54 The heavily trafficked A41 corridor is one of only two areas in the Borough where the potential increase in traffic could lead to the designation of an Air Quality Management Area. Traffic growth and the impact of any other pollutants along this corridor will need to be closely monitored.

Coast and Flooding

5.55 There is still a risk of flooding within the Birkenhead Docks, at Woodside and to a lesser extent at Cammell Lairds, which will need to be taken into account as development progresses.

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



Picture 5.7

Key Issues

5.56 Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 2 include:

- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of central Birkenhead
- Providing for the re-development of large areas of vacant and underused land and the future development of key waterfront locations
- Defining the future role of Birkenhead Town Centre
- Securing continued environmental improvements within the older urban areas
- Addressing the lack of appropriate 'quality' employment land, particularly for offices, in the most accessible locations
- Supporting the delivery of housing market renewal and the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point
- Establishing a transport strategy to manage the impact of traffic and congestion on the Town Centre
- Facilitating the provision of a "knowledge hub" at Twelve Quays/Wirral Waters

- Preventing the further deterioration of air quality along the A41 corridor at Tranmere
- The integration of the proposals at Wirral Waters with the surrounding area
- Addressing the significant lack of open space

Settlement Area 2 - Key Statistics

Area - 1,433 hectares (9% of Wirral land area)

Urban coastline - 4km (2.5 miles)

Population - 1,375 (mid-2007) <0.5% of Wirral

Number of dwellings - 1,300 (April 2007)

Dwellings per hectare - 0.9

Dwellings completed since 2000 (gross) - 378 (6% of Wirral).

Dwellings demolished since 2000 - 349 (13% of Wirral)

Land with planning permission for new housing (April 2009) - 0.3 hectares (110 units) 3% of supply

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites - 95.3 hectares (10 sites) 14% of total land

Key Town Centres - Birkenhead Town Centre

Other centres - Junction 1 Retail Park, Rock Retail Park, Tescos, Bidston

Designated Employment Areas - Twelve Quays (21.4 hectares), Dock Estate (158.5 hectares), Dock Road Corridor, Seacombe (79.9 hectares), Cleveland Street Corridor, Birkenhead (68.8 hectares), Beaufort Road (5.6 hectares), Valley Road Industrial Estate (19.1 hectares), Woodside Approach (3.6 hectares), A41 Corridor, Tranmere (147.2 hectares).

Available employment land - 40 sites (111.4 hectares) 48% of Borough

Vacant land - 95 sites (130.10 hectares) 38% of total vacant land supply.

Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2007 - 1,375 (100% of Area 2)

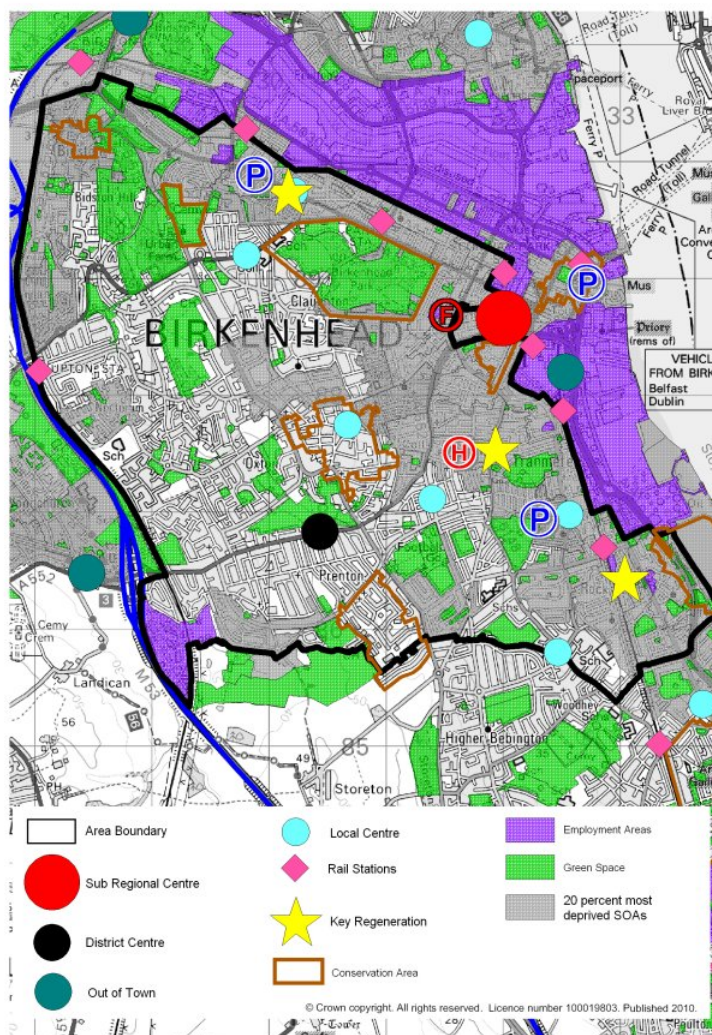
Population within highest 20% of IMD 2007 - none

Recreational Open Space - 51 hectares (36.7 hectares per 1000)

Publicly Accessible Open Space - 44 hectares (31.3 hectares per 1000)

6 Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead

6.1 Settlement Area 3 includes the densely developed older terraced housing built during the early 1900s surrounding the Birkenhead Dock Estate and the central commercial areas in Birkenhead and Tranmere; the high quality lower density Edwardian and Victorian settlements along the Noctorum Ridge at Bidston, Cloughton, Oxtan and Prenton; and the more densely developed, modern, outer suburbs at Beechwood, Noctorum and Prenton.



Picture 6.1

Local Heritage

6.2 The historical development of the Settlement Area has left a strong built heritage with a significant number of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, including:

- Bidston Village, one of the earliest settlements in the Settlement Area, dating back to medieval times, which still retains the character and appearance of a traditional English village
- Birkenhead Park, the first publicly funded park in Britain, which provided the inspiration for the design of Central Park in New York and for the Victorian “Public Parks Movement”
- Clifton Park, a residential area developed in the 1840s, to the immediate south of the main commercial centre, by Captain William Sharp to a layout by the architect Walter Scott
- Flaybrick Cemetery, a fine example of a formal Victorian cemetery, containing the graves of many people prominent in the early growth of Birkenhead
- Mountwood, a popular residential area for wealthy businessmen during the late 1800s and early 1900s which still ranks as one of the most affluent areas of the Borough
- Oxton Village, an early Victorian commuter settlement developed over the summit of Oxton Hill, home to Merseyside's only Michelin Star restaurant
- Rock Park, a purpose built, out-of-town, residential estate formed by Liverpool merchants sited near to a local cross river ferry terminal, which is now no longer in use

6.3 The former Bidston Observatory and Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory, on the crest of the wooded open space at Bidston Hill, overlooking the M53 Corridor, is also a prominent local landmark.

6.4 Birkenhead Park Conservation Area is of national significance and contains the only public park in the country to be designated by English Heritage as a Grade 1 Historic Park and Garden.

6.5 The Conservation Areas at Clifton Park, Flaybrick Cemetery and Rock Park are on the national Heritage at Risk Register. The Mersey Coastal Park Strategy will seek to repair and restore the esplanade at Rock Park for public access and improve the condition of the Conservation Area as part of a wider proposal to develop the area for watersports, leisure and tourism and to provide a new coastal footpath between Rock Ferry and Eastham.

Socio-Economic Background

6.6 The steady decline of traditional industries has had an enduring impact. Almost two-thirds of the population live within communities with some of the greatest socio-economic needs in England. This is by far the largest concentration of need in the Borough, representing almost half the Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the lowest 20% of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation. Only parts of Prenton fell within the highest 20% of the national Index in 2007.

6.7 The Settlement Area has one of the highest proportions of people of working age in the Borough, especially amongst younger age groups. Fertility rates in Bidston, Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry are amongst the highest in Wirral, and Bidston and Tranmere have some of the highest proportions of children under 15 years of

age. Bidston has one of the highest proportions of 16 to 18 year olds not in education or employment and the outlying former Council estate at Beechwood ranks among the worst in England for child poverty.

6.8 The recent growth in the number of local people claiming Job Seekers Allowance due to the current recession has been highest in Settlement Area 3. Consultation has also indicated the need to increase local employment.

6.9 The Settlement Area generated approximately 6,100 journeys to destinations outside the Borough to work in 2001, over half to Liverpool. Half the households in Birkenhead, Bidston and Tranmere did not have access to a private car. These areas generated some of the lowest numbers of journeys to work outside the area, the majority to Settlement Area 2 and Settlement Area 4.

Housing

6.10 Parts of this Settlement Area are designated as part of the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area and as part of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point. Land values within these areas are low. This area has one of the highest concentrations of neighbourhoods where average house prices are still below the previous stamp duty threshold of £125,000.

6.11 New housing was specifically focused into this and adjoining Settlement Areas in December 2003. This was further tightened to include only the northern and eastern parts of the Settlement Area in October 2005, increasing the proportion of the Borough's new houses built within the Settlement Area from 18% in 2000/01 to 49% in 2008/09. Priority areas for new and improved housing to be promoted as part of the Newheartlands Pathfinder include: Fiveways, Rock Ferry; Church Road, Tranmere; Milner Street/Carrington Street; and Bray Street/Brassey Street/Brill Street, where acquisition for clearance and re-development is continuing.

6.12 A four-year £1 million scheme to provide free loft and cavity wall insulation to residents in private rented or owner occupied properties in Claughton, Oxton, Prenton and Rock Ferry will begin in September 2010.

6.13 The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential capacity within Settlement Area 3⁽⁵³⁾:

Area	Planning Permission ⁽⁵⁴⁾	Category 1 ⁽⁵⁵⁾	Category 2 ⁽⁵⁶⁾	Category 3 ⁽⁵⁷⁾	Small Sites ⁽⁵⁸⁾
Settlement Area 3 - Birkenhead	1564	268	96	296	408

53 gross additional dwellings - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

58 sites below 0.4 hectare

57 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

56 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

55 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

54 sites with planning permission in April 2008

Town Centres

6.14 Prenton is identified as a Key Town Centre in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral but is now mainly a convenience and service centre with a declining shopping role. The centre has slipped in the retail rankings and the vacancy rate is rising. There is no current operator demand to locate in the centre.

6.15 There are a number of smaller more local centres within this Settlement Area at Grange Road/Oxton Road; Laird Street; Claughton Village; Oxton Village; Old Chester Road; Church Road; Borough Road (Prenton Park); and Dacre Hill.

6.16 Grange Road West/Oxton Road has a limited convenience offer and a comparison sector limited to bulky goods, charity shops and some specialist retailers linked to Birkenhead. A large number of businesses are in the food and drink sectors. Vacancy rates are high and environmental quality is poor and declining.

6.17 Laird Street has a reasonable convenience offer with good supermarket representation, but a limited comparison offer and some service uses. The centre is dominated by vacant units (40% of the total) and the physical environment is poor. A new medical centre has recently been constructed.

6.18 Claughton Village primarily provides a convenience shopping role including a Tesco Express and day to day services for local residents. There is a very limited comparison offer. The centre is generally clean, well maintained and has a pleasant environment.

6.19 Dacre Hill serves both a convenience (anchored by Tesco Metro) and limited comparison and service shopping role. Environmental quality is good and there were no vacant units as in May 2008.

6.20 Old Chester Road has seen significant redevelopment and consolidation as part of the Tranmere Urban Village Initiative. The centre now performs a convenience and service role to meet the day to day shopping needs of local residents and environmental quality has significantly improved.

6.21 Borough Road (Prenton Park) has a limited convenience and comparison retail offer with some service uses and meets some of the day to day convenience and service needs of local residents. While vacancy rates are low, there is scope for environmental improvement.

6.22 Other centres, not previously included in the Unitary Development Plan, are Church Road and Oxton Village. Church Road is scheduled for contraction and redevelopment (in a similar manner to Tranmere Urban Village), as part of the Newheartlands Pathfinder. Oxton Village performs a convenience shopping role, with some comparison and service retailers, including a number of restaurants. Environmental quality is high, although the former bank site is awaiting redevelopment.

Employment

6.23 Outside these centres, the only significant designated employment area is the North Cheshire Trading Estate at Junction 4 of the M53 Motorway. The Estate is popular, almost fully occupied and only small infill plots are now available.

6.24 The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009 recommended that smaller employment areas at Stanley Road; Craven Street; Moorcroft Road; and Railway Road, should be re-designated as primarily residential areas. No recommendation was made at Holborn Square as the units were fully occupied.

Community Facilities

6.25 Sports facilities include the public sports halls at Beechwood Recreation Centre and Grange Road West Recreation Centre and private facilities at the Birkenhead and Shaftesbury Youth Clubs. Sports halls are also available at secondary schools at Park and Prenton and smaller halls at the primary schools at Christchurch and Rock Ferry. Private health club facilities including a swimming pool and indoor running track are also available at Total Fitness in Prenton.

6.26 A review of cultural and leisure services has identified Beechwood Recreation Centre, Byrne Avenue Recreation Centre, Grange Road West Sports Centre, the community centres at Beechwood, Gautby Road, Livingstone Street and Noctorum and the Turntable Building for possible transfer to community ownership and management. The transfer of Grange Road West Recreation Centre to provide a dedicated gymnastics centre has already been approved and the Turntable Building is now occupied by the Merseyside Model Railway Society. The Council has also recently committed to a £1.3 million refurbishment of the Williamson Art Gallery at Slatey Road.

6.27 Birkenhead School in Oxton is now the only remaining private secondary school within the Settlement Area, following the closure of Pershore House, Highfield School and the conversion of Birkenhead High School for girls to a new-style Academy for girls aged 3 to 19.

6.28 Recent reviews of primary school places have led to the amalgamation of Hillside Infant and Junior School, of Prenton Infant and Junior School, and of Vyner Primary School and St Oswald's CE Primary School to form Bidston Village CE Primary School. The Dell Primary School in Rock Ferry was closed.

6.29 The Council is considering replacing the secondary schools at Park, Rock Ferry and Ridgeway with two new-style Academies. The independent Sixth Form College operates from a re-modelled campus adjacent to Birkenhead Park in Claughton.

6.30 A major redevelopment is underway to provide replacement medical facilities at St Catherine's Hospital at Derby Road, Tranmere.

Open Space and Nature

6.31 The Wirral Open Space Assessment shows:

- a good supply of allotments but of low quality overall
- a slightly lower than average provision of amenity green space, of lower quality overall
- one large cemetery
- a high level of provision for children and young people but of mixed quality overall
- a limited provision for outdoor sport and recreation
- a limited provision of natural and semi-natural green space, of low quality overall
- a limited provision of sites that could be classified as parks and gardens, of mixed quality overall

6.32 There is high demand for playing pitches and existing local facilities are all intensively used⁽⁵⁹⁾.

6.33 As one of the Borough's older and most densely developed urban areas, open space is limited. Facilities of Borough wide importance at Birkenhead Park and Bidston Hill provide the largest open spaces, supplemented by smaller parks at Tranmere, Rock Ferry, Oxton and Prenton. Outside these areas, open space is often provided at a series of smaller poorer quality sites. Private open spaces are, therefore, also significant.

6.34 Few sites are designated for their importance for biodiversity. Bidston Hill is of local importance for both nature conservation and earth science and Wirral Ladies Golf Course is also of local significance for wildlife. Birkenhead Park, although not formally designated, is important for at least one nationally protected species. The banks of the Mersey alongside Rock Park Esplanade are, however, part of a wider area of national importance for birds.

Transport Accessibility

6.35 Main routes in and out of the Settlement Area include the Kingsway and Queensway Road Tunnels to Liverpool; the A41 south from Birkenhead to Chester and Junction 5 of the M53 Motorway; the A553 (Laird Street) west to Junction 2 of the M53 Motorway; the A552 west to Junction 3 of the M53 Motorway; and the A5027 west to Upton, Woodchurch and West Kirby. High frequency bus services operate along all these routes. The A552, east of the M53 Motorway, is identified as a congestion corridor in the Merseyside Local Transport Plan, where traffic flows need to be managed to reduce journey times as part of the Wirral Local Area Agreement.

59 Wirral Playing Pitch Assessment Strategy and Action Plan (KKP, 2004)

6.36 High frequency electrified rail services run along the northern edge of the Settlement Area between Liverpool, Birkenhead, New Brighton and West Kirby and along the eastern edge of the Settlement Area between Liverpool, Birkenhead and Chester. Consultation has identified the need for improvements to accessibility at some of these stations.

6.37 A more limited diesel service runs along the western edge of the Settlement Area along the Fender Valley, in the M53 Corridor, between Bidston and Wrexham in North Wales. The Unitary Development Plan identified the opportunity to enhance accessibility and expand number of rail passengers by constructing new stations at Beechwood and Woodchurch Road. The electrification of the line is now programmed in the Merseyside Local Transport Plan, however the estimated costs are high and in the interim a more frequent diesel service is proposed until electrification is possible.

6.38 A cycle route through Beechwood links Woodchurch with Bidston and Wallasey as part of national Millennium Route 56.

Other Infrastructure

6.39 The Borough's principal electricity substation is located at the urban edge at Prenton Dell. There is a water abstraction borehole at Prenton and a reservoir on the sandstone ridge at Flaybrick.

Flooding

6.40 Approximately 26 hectares of low lying land associated with the Fender Valley is liable to flooding, which could affect up to 400 properties at the edges of Noctorum, Prenton and North Birkenhead.

Key Issues

6.41 Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 3 include:

- The continued promotion of housing market renewal and environmental improvements within the older urban areas to the north and east
- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of Beechwood, Bidston, Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry
- Protecting the limited supply of biodiversity, quality open space and playing fields.
- Managing the impact of traffic and congestion
- Providing for the enhancement and protection of local heritage
- Preserving the attractiveness of high quality residential areas along the Noctorum Ridge at Bidston, Noctorum, Claughton, Oxton and Mountwood
- Safeguarding employment uses at North Cheshire Trading Estate
- Providing for the electrification and improvement of the Bidston-Wrexham Borderlands railway line

Settlement Area 3 - Key Statistics

Area - 1,806 hectares (12% of Wirral land area)

Urban coastline - 0.85km (0.5 miles)

Population - 82,500 (mid-2007) 27% of Wirral

Number of dwellings - 41,300 (April 2007)

Dwellings per hectare - 75

Dwellings completed since 2000 (gross) - 2190 (38% of Wirral).

Dwellings demolished since 2000 - 1752 (68% of Wirral)

Land with planning permission for new housing (April 2009) - 62.6 hectares (1,939 units) 50% of supply

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites - 10.2 hectares (21 sites)

Key Town Centres - none

Designated Employment Areas - North Cheshire Trading Estate (29.7 hectares), Holborn Square (0.6 hectares), Craven Street (0.8 hectares), Stanley Road (2.4 hectares), Railway Road (1.5 hectares), Moorcroft Road (1.2 hectares).

Employment land - 5 sites (1.5 hectares)

Vacant land - 78 sites (27.6 hectares) 8.1%.

Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2007 - 48,100 (58% of Area 3)

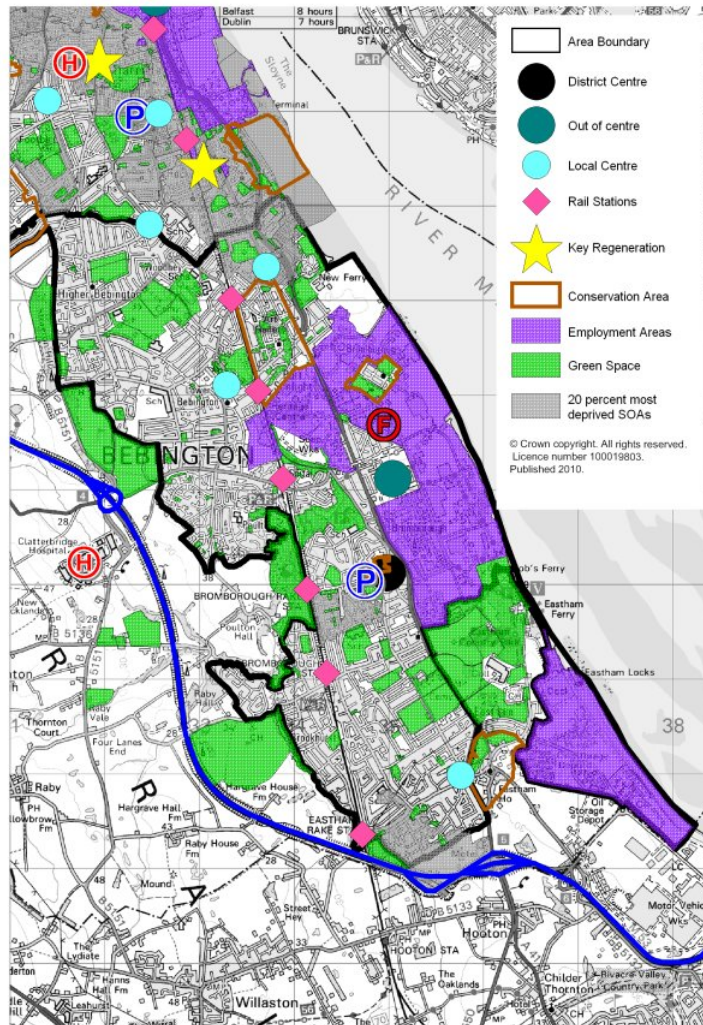
Population within highest 20% of IMD 2007 - 1,500 (2% of Area 3)

Recreational Open Space - 318 hectares (3.9 hectares per 1000)

Publicly Accessible Open Space - 229 hectares (2.8 hectares per 1000)

7 Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham

7.1 Settlement Area 4 includes the urban areas of Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham.



Picture 7.1

7.2 The Settlement Area contains some of the Borough's most significant economic assets and facilities, including 40% of the Borough's designated employment land. Bromborough is the Borough's second most significant destination for journeys to work (9%) and is the second largest contributor to the Borough's economic output (12% of GVA). The Manchester Ship Canal deals with up to 8 million tonnes of cargo each year. Approximately 30% of the workforce at Vauxhall Motors, located just over the border in Cheshire West and Chester, live in Wirral.

Socio-Economic Background

7.3 The age profile of the Settlement Area broadly mirrors the Wirral average with a slightly higher than average proportion of retired people and a slightly lower proportion of younger age groups. There is, however, a marked contrast between the north and south of the Settlement Area.

7.4 Parts of the northern area, at New Ferry, demonstrate similar socio-economic needs to areas undergoing major clearance and re-development further north. The former Council Estates at Acre Lane, Bromborough and at Mill Park, Eastham also show some of these needs but with fewer signs of stress. Areas at Higher Bebington, Poulton, Spital and Brookhurst are some of the most attractive residential areas in Merseyside, with some of the highest skills and incomes in the Borough, representing almost 20% of Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the highest 20% of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation.

7.5 The Settlement Area, together with the rural settlements to the west, generated over 7,200 journeys to work outside the Borough in 2001, representing almost a quarter of all journeys to destinations outside the Borough, split almost equally between Liverpool and Cheshire West and Chester.

7.6 The majority of this Settlement Area has, since December 2003, been subject to restrictions on new house building to support development in the regeneration priority areas.

7.7 The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential capacity within Settlement Area 4⁽⁶⁰⁾:

Area	Planning Permission ⁽⁶¹⁾	Category 1 ⁽⁶²⁾	Category 2 ⁽⁶³⁾	Category 3 ⁽⁶⁴⁾	Small Sites ⁽⁶⁵⁾
Settlement Area 4 - Bromborough and Eastham	441	338	696	915	96

Local Heritage

7.8 The older historic settlements at Bromborough Village and Eastham and the innovative early planned settlements for factory workers at Port Sunlight and Bromborough Pool are designated as Conservation Areas. Port Sunlight is of national significance and contains just over the half the Borough's Listed Buildings. Bromborough Pool Conservation Area also contains over fifty Listed Buildings.

60 gross additional dwellings - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

65 sites below 0.4 hectare

64 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

63 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

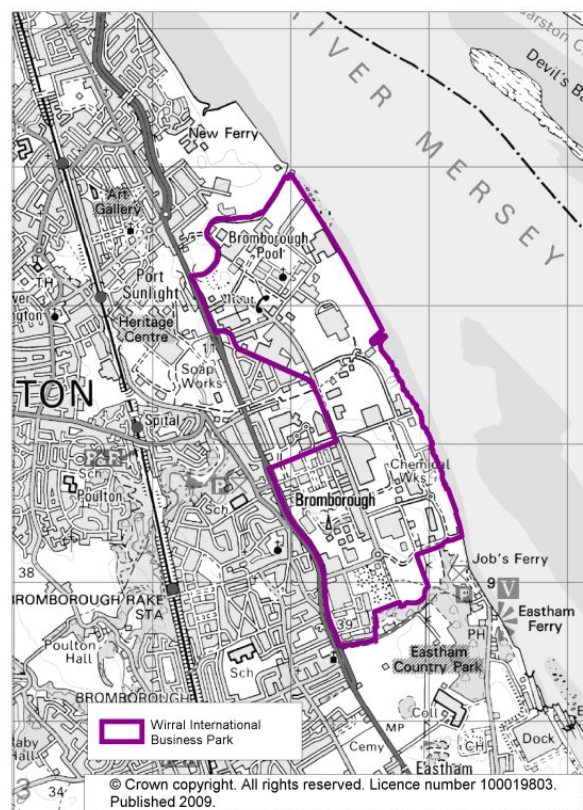
62 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

61 sites with planning permission in April 2008

7.9 The site of the former Bromborough Court House in the industrial area at Pool Lane and the Pre-Conquest Cross at St Barnabas Parish Church at the centre of Bromborough Village are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The Bromborough Court House moated site and fishponds is on the national Heritage At Risk Register.

Wirral International Business Park

7.10 The International Business Park at Bromborough, a designated Strategic Regional Site, is one of the Borough's most successful business locations. Easily accessible to areas of need along the A41 corridor, the Park has accommodated over half the Borough's new employment floorspace, since the Unitary Development Plan was adopted in February 2000, at an annual average of 4.5 hectares.



Picture 7.2

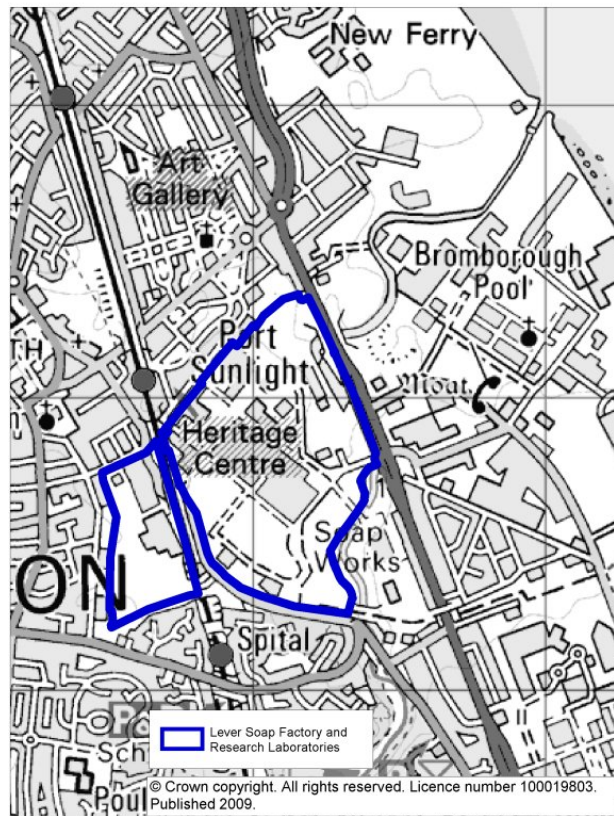
7.11 The Business Park has been a focus for significant grant-aided investment in land reclamation and infrastructure since the late 1980s. Highway, drainage, cycling and junction improvements were carried out during the 1990s, with designed-in capacity for future growth and the Masterplan, commissioned by NWDA in 2002, included development briefs for every available plot within the Business Park.

7.12 The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009 has confirmed that the Business Park is one of the Borough's flagship business locations. Almost 66 hectares still remain undeveloped, with large areas controlled by public sector investment agencies including NWDA and HCA. Additional electricity supply up to 5MVA has recently been secured with space for an additional transformer at the southern end of the Business Park. Next Generation Access digital connection will further enhance the attractiveness of the Business Park for future investment.

7.13 A small port facility at Mersey Wharf handles both bulk and general cargo and sand from Liverpool Bay is landed at Riverbank Road.

7.14 The Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study 2009 concluded that the reuse of the underused secondary industrial area to the north of the Dibbin Brook, which can only be accessed through the residential areas at Bolton Road East, for alternative uses, would not have serious consequences to Wirral's economy or property market. Housing development on part of this area was approved in June 2009.

Lever Faberge Soap Factory and Research Laboratories

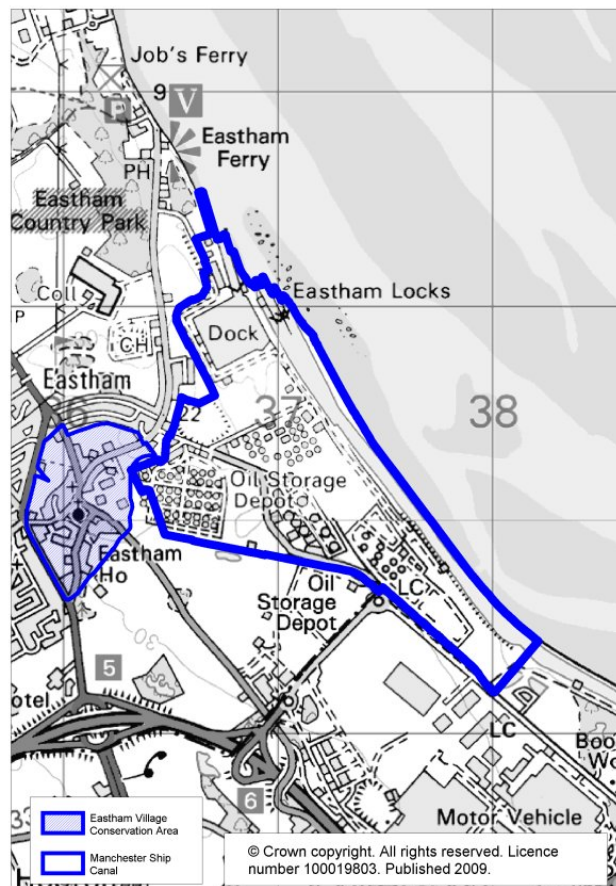


Picture 7.3

7.15 The Lever Faberge Soap Factory and adjacent Research Laboratory at Port Sunlight is still one of the largest private sector employers in the Borough. Almost a third of the factory complex is now vacant, including the former dockside facilities adjacent to New Chester Road. A redundant area to the east of the Dibbin Brook has recently been released for housing.

Manchester Ship Canal, Eastham

7.16 The Manchester Ship Canal is a regionally important facility with links to Stanlow, Runcorn and Manchester, operated under development rights granted by separate Acts of Parliament. A large area adjacent to the Canal entrance accommodates a series of refinery related industries and chemical storage compounds with direct access to the M53 Motorway. Over 21 hectares of the complex is vacant.



Picture 7.4

7.17 The port operator has aspirations to improve the dock and canal entrances and to further exploit the potential for intermodal freight transfer by water, road and rail. The rationalisation of port facilities could also enable the redevelopment of more central areas in Ellesmere Port. There are continuing concerns about the environmental impact of port and industrial operations on Eastham Village, particularly from industrial traffic and emissions, which will need to be dealt with as part of the emerging Port Master Plan.

Town Centres

7.18 Bromborough Village and New Ferry are designated as Key Town Centres in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral.

7.19 Bromborough Village is a relatively stable centre, with low vacancy rates and good environmental quality. The retail offer is limited in scale and diversity and there is limited scope for additional development.

7.20 By contrast, the shopping area in New Ferry is in serious decline, despite an earlier substantial public sector regeneration initiative. The convenience sector meets a localised catchment. The comparison and service sector is very limited and oriented to the value end of the market. Despite previous contraction, the vacancy rate remains high and there is scope for further reduction in the size of the centre. The Farmers Market is, however, a major asset to the centre.

7.21 The traditional suburban centre of Lower Bebington has a limited convenience and comparison offer and is mainly dominated by service providers. The centre has good environmental quality and low vacancy rates, and benefits from the proximity of the Civic Centre complex. Shopping parades at Allport Road; Cross Lane; Town Lane; Spital; and Eastham Rake/Mill Park Drive, serve more local catchments.

7.22 The Croft Retail and Leisure Park, to the east of the A41, is now second only to Birkenhead as the Borough's most important comparison shopping destination (by turnover). Only half of this turnover comes from the immediate area. The adjacent leisure park, providing food and drink, cinema, bingo and health and fitness, is in common ownership. Investment is being made to improve parking and circulation and to provide better facilities for buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

Transport Accessibility

7.23 Main routes into and out of the Settlement Area include the heavily trafficked A41, running between Birkenhead and Junction 5 of the M53 Motorway, which is a significant barrier to pedestrian movements; and the similarly busy B5137 running west to Junction 4 of the M53 Motorway. In the absence of more sustainable travel choices, there are likely to be significant highway capacity issues along these routes over the life time of the Core Strategy.

7.24 High frequency public transport services run along the A41 and the electrified passenger railway line provides links to Liverpool, Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port and Chester.

7.25 Cycle routes link Port Sunlight with the Wirral International Business Park and Eastham Country Park and the A41 to Eastham Rake Railway Station. Increasing the links between the railway stations and the Wirral International Business Park and increasing public access to and along the Bromborough coastline are long term aspirations. Consultation has also indicated a need for improved cycle links to the Business Park.

7.26 The southern parts of the Settlement Area are affected by the flight paths associated with the operation of Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

Community Facilities

7.27 The majority of the Settlement Area is well-served by a wide range of open spaces and indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, with major sites at the Oval Sports Centre, providing a public swimming pool, sports hall, fitness suite, athletics track, playing fields, floodlit artificial turf pitch and sports courts; the Leverhulme Sports Ground; and Plymyard Playing Fields.

7.28 Sports halls are also available at the secondary schools at Bebington, Wirral Grammar and South Wirral. Private health club facilities include the swimming pools and fitness centres at the Croft Retail and Leisure Park and at the Village Leisure Hotel.

7.29 A review of cultural and leisure services has identified Delamere Community Centre; Windsor Close Community Centre; Bromborough Social Centre; Mayer Hall; New Ferry Village Hall; The Voluntary Services Centre at The Village, Bebington; and Victoria Hall for possible transfer to community ownership and management. Windsor Close has already transferred and the transfer of Bromborough Social Centre has been approved.

7.30 The secondary schools at Bebington, South Wirral and Wirral Grammar for Girls were recently re-modelled as part of the Private Finance Initiative. The remaining secondary schools have benefited from major capital investment in recent years. The former high school at Acre Lane is now the Council's main teaching resource and training centre. Wirral Metropolitan College still operate services from Carlett Park but have now requested that the remaining complex be considered for further housing development. A recent review of primary school places has led to the closure of two small primary schools at Bromborough Pool and St Mary's CE in Eastham. Children's Centres are located in New Ferry, Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham.

Open Space and Nature

7.31 The Wirral Open Space Assessment shows:

- a good supply of allotments but of low quality overall
- a slightly lower than average provision of amenity green space, of mixed quality
- two cemeteries of high quality
- a slightly lower than average provision for children and young people, of mixed quality
- a lower than average provision for outdoor sport and recreation, despite facilities of Borough wide importance at Bebington Oval and Plymyard Playing Fields but with a good additional supply in the Green Belt nearby, particularly at Eastham

- a lower than average provision of natural and semi-natural green space of low quality overall but with a good additional supply within 400 metres of the Settlement Area
- a lower than average provision of sites that could be classified as parks and gardens but, again, with a good additional supply within 400 metres of the Settlement Area

7.32 The playing fields at Eastham support some of the highest quality competition in the Borough and serve a wider catchment from areas of shortfall further north up the A41 corridor⁽⁶⁶⁾.

7.33 The Local Nature Reserve at Dibbinsdale is nationally important as one of the finest examples of ancient woodland on Merseyside and needs careful management to manage visitor pressure. The banks of the River Mersey at Shorefields are nationally important for birds and the erosion of the clay cliffs and the slow expansion of saltmarsh is allowing a good variety of species to develop. The coastline alongside Wirral International Business Park towards Eastham and beyond is nationally and internationally designated.

7.34 With the exception of the Butterfly Park at New Ferry, other locally designated sites are mainly associated with remnant woodlands. A small site at Mill Road, Bromborough is designated for its local importance for earth science. The southern part of the Settlement Area is also served by Eastham Country Park, which contains some of the finest mature trees to be found on Wirral.

7.35 The Mersey Coastal Park Strategy will seek to develop a Community Nature Park at Shorefields as part of a £2.3 million restoration of the former landfill site at Bromborough Dock to a community wetland and woodland and to improve the gateways and linkages to Eastham County Park as part of a new coastal footpath between Rock Ferry and Eastham.

Other Infrastructure

7.36 United Utilities operate a large Waste Water Treatment Works adjacent to the coast at New Ferry, which has had recent investment to address odour problems.

7.37 The main electricity substation for the Settlement Area is located towards the south of the International Business Park. A number of major pipelines also run throughout the industrial areas and along the coast. A number of the industrial facilities at Bromborough and Eastham are registered IPPC and COMAH sites and a specialist Fire and Rescue service operates from Dock Road South. Police services operate from a site adjacent to Bromborough Village centre.

Air Quality

7.38 The heavily trafficked A41 Corridor in Eastham is one of only two areas in the Borough where the potential increase in traffic could lead to the designation of an Air Quality Management Area. Traffic growth and the impact of any other pollutants along this corridor will need to be closely monitored.

Coast and Flooding

7.39 The draft North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan indicates the intention to maintain existing coast defences throughout the plan period but to continue to allow natural erosion of the rocky foreshore at Eastham. The only area of undeveloped coastline in east Wirral, at Shorefields in New Ferry, to the north of the Bromborough Dock landfill, is expected to continue to erode at a predicted rate of up to 0.5m each year.

7.40 Approximately 62 hectares of land associated with the immediate coastline, Dibbinsdale Brook and Bromborough Pool is potentially liable to flooding, which could affect up to 350 dwellings at Port Sunlight and at the edges of Raby Mere and Eastham.

Key Issues

7.41 Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 4 include:

- Maintaining and enhancing the development of the Wirral International Business Park to maximise accessible employment opportunities
- Securing the additional supply of energy for further employment development at Wirral International Business Park
- Maintaining the capacity of the Manchester Ship Canal to operate as a sub-regional intermodal freight terminal
- Managing the impact of traffic and congestion on the A41 and B5137 Spital Road
- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of New Ferry and Mill Park, Eastham
- Protecting recreation facilities capable of addressing deficiencies in adjacent Areas
- Preserving the attractiveness of high quality residential areas at Poulton, Spital and Raby Mere
- Protecting the character of Eastham Village from industrial traffic and development
- Preventing the further deterioration of air quality along the A41 corridor at Eastham

Settlement Area 4 - Key Statistics

Area - 1,912 hectares (12% of Wirral land area)

Urban coastline - 8.4km (5 miles)

Population - 55,000 (mid-2007) 18% of Wirral

Number of dwellings - 24,700 (April 2007)

Dwellings per hectare - 12.9

Dwellings completed since 2000 (gross) - 658 (10% of Wirral).

Dwellings demolished since 2000 - 19

Land with planning permission for new housing (April 2009) - 14.3 hectares (505 units) 13% of supply

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites - 36.7 hectares (11 sites)

Key Town Centres - Bromborough Village

Other Centres - New Ferry, Lower Bebington, Croft Retail and Leisure Park

Designated Employment Areas - Wirral International Business Park (280.2 hectares), Lever Complex (64.7 hectares), Other Bromborough (14.2 hectares), Manchester Ship Canal, Eastham (133.5 hectares)

Employment land - 27 sites (99.5 hectares) 43% of total supply.

Vacant land - 115 sites (122.7 hectares) 36% of total supply.

Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2007 - 6,300 (11% of Area 4)

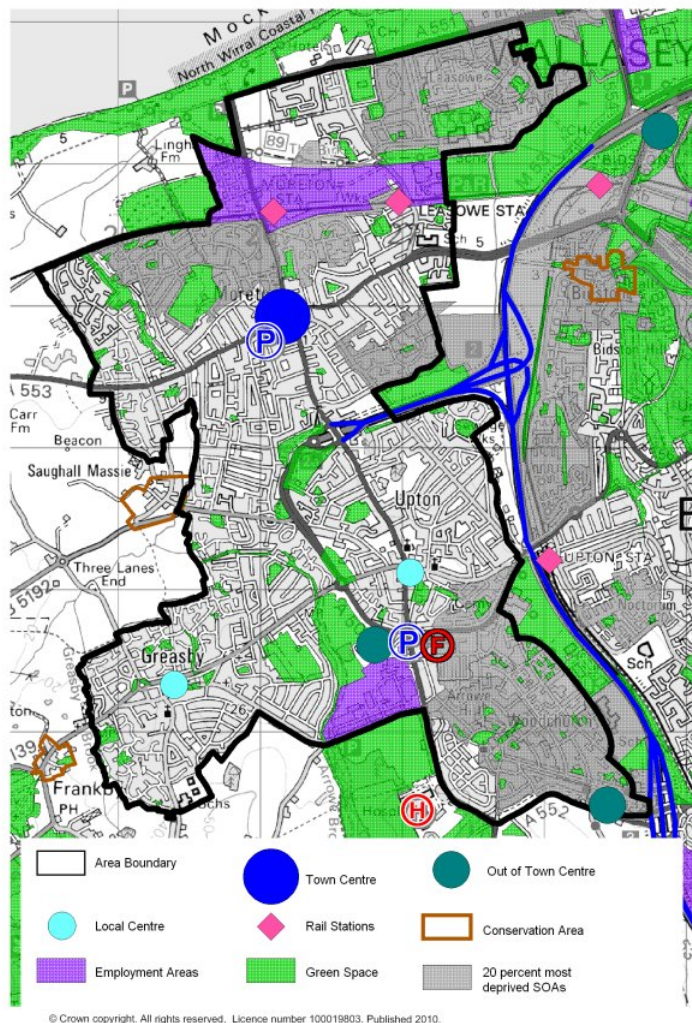
Population within highest 20% of IMD 2007 - 10,300 (19% of Area 4)

Recreational Open Space - 208 hectares (3.8 hectares per 1000)

Publicly Accessible Open Space - 155 hectares (2.8 hectares per 1000)

8 Settlement Area 5 - Mid Wirral

8.1 Settlement Area 5 includes the largely dormitory mid-Wirral settlements of Leasowe, Moreton, Upton, Greasby and Woodchurch.



Picture 8.1

Socio-Economic Background

8.2 The age profile of the Settlement Area is broadly similar to the Borough average with a slightly lower proportion of children and young adults than Wirral as a whole.

8.3 The former Council estates at Leasowe, Moreton and Woodchurch have some of the greatest socio-economic needs in the country. This is the highest concentration of need outside Birkenhead and Wallasey, representing almost 20% of Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the lowest 20% of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation. Only Greasby fell within the highest 20% of the national Index in 2007.

8.4 The Settlement Area, excluding Greasby and Woodchurch, generated over 3,600 journeys to work outside the Borough in 2001, two-thirds to Liverpool. Almost 40% of residents in Leasowe and Moreton East did not have access to a private car and Leasowe, in particular, generated one of the lowest numbers of journeys to work to destinations outside the Borough.

Employment

8.5 The large industrial complexes between Moreton and Leasowe, including Tarran Industrial Estate provide important sources of local employment within easy reach of areas most in need. The industrial area at Arrowe Park Road in Upton has been affected by the closures of Federal Mogul and Micropore Insulation but still has the potential to provide an important source of local employment. Nearby Arrowe Park Hospital is also a major source of local employment.

Housing

8.6 The Unitary Development Plan for Wirral initially directed a large proportion of new housing to greenfield sites in Moreton and Leasowe but since December 2003 the majority of the Settlement Area, outside Leasowe and Woodchurch, has been subject to restrictions to support development in the regeneration priority areas. Since October 2005, only Leasowe has been identified as a regeneration priority area.

8.7 The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential capacity within Settlement Area 5⁽⁶⁷⁾:

Area	Planning Permission ⁽⁶⁸⁾	Category 1 ⁽⁶⁹⁾	Category 2 ⁽⁷⁰⁾	Category 3 ⁽⁷¹⁾	Small Sites ⁽⁷²⁾
Settlement Area 5 - Mid-Wirral	198	138	198	818	128

Local Heritage

8.8 The only designated assets within the Settlement Area are the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Overchurch Park in Upton and the stone cross at Woodchurch. The nearest Conservation Areas are the rural villages at the edge of the Settlement Area at Saughall Massie and Frankby and only ten structures within the Area are nationally Listed Buildings. The site of the church and church yard at Overchurch Park is included on the national Heritage At Risk Register.

67 gross additional dwellings - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

72 sites below 0.4 hectare

71 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

70 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

69 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

68 sites with planning permission in April 2008

Town Centres

8.9 Moreton is the Key Town Centre for the Settlement Area. The centre is busy and stable, with low vacancy and a thriving service sector, despite the absence of a major supermarket and a limited comparison offer. Additional parking would be beneficial but sites are limited. There is little physical scope for additional retail floorspace in Moreton and limited operator demand.

8.10 Upton Village is the next largest centre within the Settlement Area. Although reasonably healthy, the majority of units are small and occupied by service providers. The convenience offer is sufficient to meet local top-up shopping needs but there is a limited comparison offer. Environmental quality is generally good.

8.11 There are limited facilities within the former Council estates of Leasowe and Woodchurch, although Woodchurch is also served by two out-of-centre superstores including Asda and Sainsbury's at Upton. Greasby has its own local centres at Greasby Road and Frankby Road offering a mix of convenience goods, top-up food and groceries, limited comparison goods and specialist traders.

Transport Accessibility

8.12 The majority of the Settlement Area is highly accessible by road, with access to three junctions along the M53 Motorway. The Motorway spur road at Junction 2 runs into the heart of the Settlement Area between Moreton and Upton.

8.13 Main routes into and out of the Settlement Area include A551 Leasowe Road north and west to Wallasey and Junction 1 of the M53 Motorway; A553 east west from West Kirby and Hoylake to Birkenhead and Junction 1 of the M53 Motorway; A551 south to Junction 2 of the M53 Motorway; A552 south to Heswall and Junction 4 of the M53 Motorway; and A5027 Upton Road, west to Birkenhead.

8.14 There is heavy congestion at the heart of the Key Town Centre at Moreton Cross and along Hoylake Road at peak times. Improvements to Saughall Massie Road have meant that there is less congestion in Upton and Greasby but these routes are still liable to congestion at peak times.

8.15 High frequency electrified rail services between Liverpool and West Kirby pass through both Leasowe and Moreton. Upton, Greasby and Woodchurch are served by frequent public transport with regular bus links at peak times and throughout the day to West Kirby, Heswall and Liverpool. If the Bidston-Wrexham railway line was upgraded, the potential station at Woodchurch Road would be accessible to Woodchurch residents.

8.16 A series of cycle routes run throughout the Settlement Area: through Woodchurch and Beechwood to Wallasey and Birkenhead; from Woodchurch through Landican to Higher Bebington; along Arrowe Brook between Greasby and Upton; along the Birket from Leasowe to Meols; and along the coast between Wallasey and

Hoyle. Consultation has indicated the need for a safe route to be established between Greasby to Frankby and West Kirby, to link with the schools at Hilbre, Calday and West Kirby Grammar.

Community Facilities

8.17 There are public swimming pools, sports halls and fitness suites at Leasowe and Woodchurch and a private health club facility with a swimming pool at Leasowe Castle Hotel. An additional sports hall is also available at Wallasey School in Leasowe.

8.18 A review of cultural and leisure services has identified Leasowe Recreation Centre; the community centres at Moreton, Greasby, Overton (Overchurch), Leasowe and Woodchurch; and Leasowe Lighthouse for possible transfer to community ownership and management. Moreton Community Centre has already transferred.

8.19 Fire and Rescue services operate from Upton and Police services from both Upton and Moreton. An extended medical campus is planned to the north of the civic complex in the Town Centre at Pasture Road, in Moreton.

8.20 Secondary schools at Leasowe and Upton have recently been remodelled. Woodchurch High School has been rebuilt, with the old school to be cleared during 2011. The vacant buildings at the former St Benedict's RC High School have now been cleared for housing development. A recent review of primary school places has led to the recent closure of Arroe Hill Primary. Children's Centres are located in Leasowe, Greasby, Moreton and Woodchurch.

Open Space and Nature

8.21 The Wirral Open Space Assessment shows:

- a below average provision of allotments, of mixed quality
- a slightly below average provision of amenity green space, of low quality overall
- a slightly lower than average level of provision for children and young people, of lower quality overall
- a lower than average provision of facilities for outdoor sports and recreation
- a good supply of natural and semi-natural green space, with a good additional supply within 400 metres of the Settlement Area
- a lower than average provision of sites that could be classified as parks and gardens but of good quality overall

8.22 There is high demand for playing pitches, especially in Moreton. Facilities in Leasowe provide overspill for Wallasey, while facilities at Arroe Country Park provide overspill for Birkenhead⁽⁷³⁾.

73 Wirral Playing Pitch Assessment Strategy and Action Plan (KKP, 2004)

8.23 The Settlement Area benefits from access to major open spaces outside the Settlement Area at North Wirral Coastal Park, Arrowe Country Park and the walkways and open spaces associated with the M53 Corridor. Greasby is, however, generally poorly served, despite the presence of Royden Park to the west and Coronation Park and Upton Meadow to the east.

8.24 Other than the nationally and internationally designated North Wirral Foreshore, sites of high biodiversity value are few and mainly limited to remnant woodlands. Upton Meadow is increasingly becoming established as a community woodland with a network of ecologically important habitats and the Arrowe Brook is a well established wildlife corridor. A small collection of fields at Meols Meadows, to the north west of Moreton is nationally designated.

Other Infrastructure

8.25 United Utilities operate a Waste Water Treatment plant to the north of Moreton and detention tanks at Moreton Spur in Upton.

Flooding

8.26 The majority of the Settlement Area is protected from the sea by the Wallasey Embankment. There is still a risk of flooding if the Embankment was breached or over-topped.

8.27 Approximately 318 hectares of low lying land associated with the north Wirral coastal plain and the Birket and Fender valleys, and with Arrowe Brook and Greasby Brook, is potentially liable to flooding, which could affect up to 4,800 properties in Leasowe, Moreton and Greasby. Other more localised flooding can, however, also be caused by extreme weather conditions causing flash-flooding and sewer surcharges in areas of Greasby and around the floodplains of Leasowe and Moreton.

8.28 Flood defences were constructed along the Birket in the 1990s and areas designated in the Unitary Development Plan, at Leasowe Road, Ditton Lane, Birket Avenue and in the Fender Valley, must be retained to provide flood water storage.

Key Issues

8.29 Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 5 include:

- Safeguarding employment uses at Moreton and Upton
- Addressing the social, economic and environmental needs of Leasowe, Moreton and Woodchurch
- Addressing the need for improved local retail facilities in Leasowe
- Managing the impact of traffic and congestion on Moreton Town Centre
- Managing the potential for flooding along the coast and the Birket and Fender Valleys
- Promoting the recreational and biodiversity potential of North Wirral Coastal Park

- Protecting recreation facilities capable of addressing deficiencies in adjacent Areas
- Improving sustainable transport links with the surrounding areas
- Securing improvements to facilities on the Bidston-Wrexham Borderlands railway line

Settlement Area 5 - Key Statistics

Area - 1,249 hectares (11 % of Wirral land area)

Population - 53,400 (mid-2007) 18% of Wirral

Number of dwellings - 24,300 (April 2007)

Dwellings per hectare - 19.5

Dwellings completed since 2000 (gross) - 809 (14% of Wirral).

Dwellings demolished since 2000 - 200 (8% of Wirral)

Land with planning permission for new housing (April 2009) - 20.3 hectares (238 units) 6% of supply

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites - 30.9 hectares (9 sites)

Key Town Centres - Moreton

Other Local Centres - Upton, Greasby, Wallasey Village, Woodchurch, Upton Retail Park

Designated Employment Areas - Moreton (58.4 hectares), Upton (24.0 hectares)

Employment land - 9 sites (16.4 hectares) 7% of supply

Vacant land - 13 sites (5.5 hectares)

Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2007 - 17,500 (33% of Area 5)

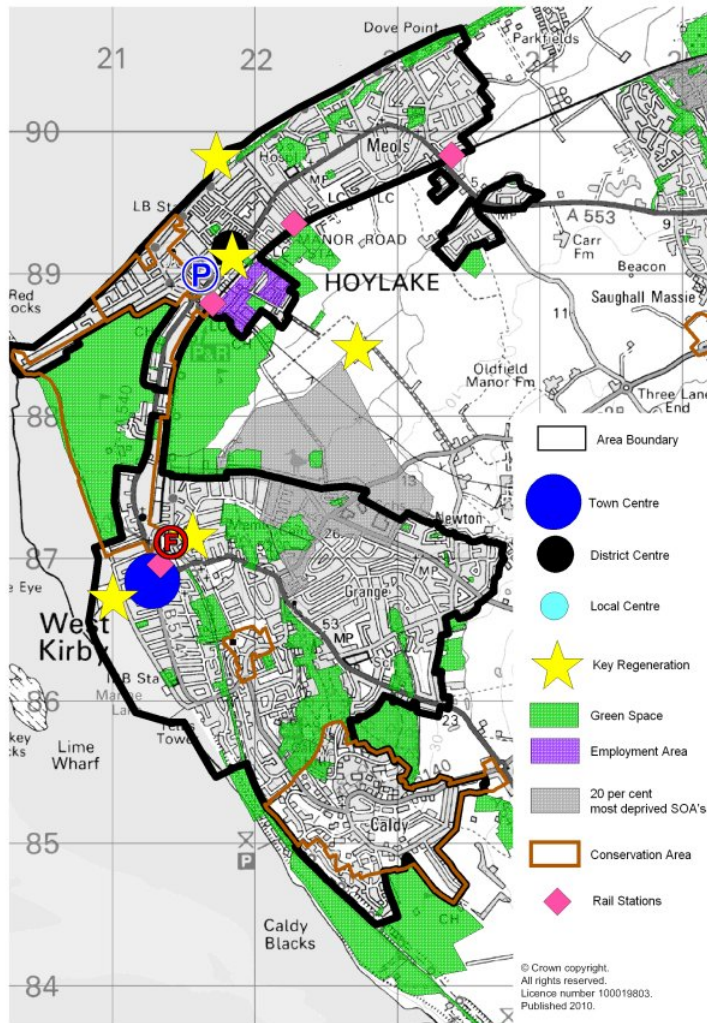
Population within highest 20% of IMD 2007 - 5,300 (10% of Area 5)

Recreational Open Space - 145 hectares (2.7 hectares per 1000)

Publicly Accessible Open Space - 130 hectares (2.4 hectares per 1000)

9 Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby

9.1 Settlement Area 6 includes the largely dormitory settlements associated with the coastal resorts of Hoylake and West Kirby.



Picture 9.1

Socio-Economic Background

9.2 The Settlement Area contains some of the most attractive residential areas in Merseyside, which are a significant economic asset to the sub-region. Skills and household incomes are amongst the highest in the Borough and Meols, West Kirby and Caldý represent one of the highest concentrations (over 20%) of Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the highest 20% of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation. Only one area, at Greenbank Road, West Kirby, ranks nationally as an area of socio-economic need.

9.3 Despite a higher than average proportion of retired people, one of the highest proportions of people over 75 years of age, and one of the lowest proportions of young adults in the Borough, there is still a significant daily outflow of journeys to work. Hoylake and Meols generated approximately 1,900 journeys to destinations outside Wirral in 2001, almost 70% to Liverpool. Just under 80% of households had access to a private car.

9.4 The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential capacity within Settlement Area 6⁽⁷⁴⁾:

Area	Planning Permission ⁽⁷⁵⁾	Category 1 ⁽⁷⁶⁾	Category 2 ⁽⁷⁷⁾	Category 3 ⁽⁷⁸⁾	Small Sites ⁽⁷⁹⁾
Settlement Area 6 - Hoylake and West Kirby	66	39	91	13	47

9.5 The Settlement Area has been subject to restrictions on new house building, since December 2003, to support development in the regeneration priority areas in the east of the Borough.

Local Heritage

9.6 There are twenty-five Listed Buildings within the Settlement Area. The older historic settlements at West Kirby and Caldy are designated as Conservation Areas. Caldy Conservation Area also includes areas of high quality, lower density housing. The high quality, lower density housing areas associated with the Royal Liverpool Golf Course at Kings Gap and Meols Drive are also designated as Conservation Areas. The Meols coastline holds high value for archaeology.

Town Centres

9.7 West Kirby is an attractive, vibrant and stable town centre, with a healthy convenience and comparison retail offer, including specialist shops and independent retailers. The centre has good environmental quality, relatively low levels of vacancy and high levels of footfall. West Kirby Concourse provides indoor recreation facilities and public services including library, meeting rooms, fire station and medical services. Some of the facilities need modernisation and the Council is considering the options for possible re-development. Aldi are providing an additional supermarket at Bridge Road.

74 gross additional dwellings - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

79 sites below 0.4 hectare

78 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

77 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

76 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

75 sites with planning permission in April 2008

9.8 Hoylake is Wirral's lowest ranking Key Town Centre in the UK retail rankings. The centre has a limited and contracting comparison retail sector, high vacancy rates, low footfall and limited operator demand. While the service sector (pubs and wine bars) is strong this has given rise to concerns about associated anti-social behaviour. There have, however, been significant environmental improvements, particularly at the western end of the centre. There is potential for consolidation around a centralised core, although the linear nature of the centre restricts the size of units and the scope for additional parking.

Employment

9.9 The only source of local employment outside these centres is Carr Lane Industrial Estate which, despite poor access across the railway line, is fully occupied by a wide range of small businesses and provides an important source of local employment.

Transport Accessibility

9.10 Main routes into and out of the Settlement Area include the A553, east to Moreton and Birkenhead; and the A540 south to Heswall and Chester. West Kirby is also the western terminus for high frequency bus and rail services running through Hoylake and Newton to Birkenhead and Liverpool.

9.11 Cycle routes with links to Moreton, Leasowe, Wallasey, New Brighton and Mid-Wirral run east along the coastal promenade from Hoylake and south along the Wirral Way from West Kirby to Thurstaston, Heswall, Parkgate and Hooton.

Tourism

9.12 Tourism is particularly important to the Settlement Area. The slipways, beaches, coastal promenades, West Kirby Marine Lake, West Kirby Concourse, Ashton Park and the northern entrance to the Wirral Way are popular visitor destinations, providing access to Hilbre Island and views across the Dee Estuary to North Wales. There are sailing clubs at West Kirby and Hoylake; para-karting, sand yachting⁽⁸⁰⁾ and model boating at Hoylake; and facilities for both static and touring caravans, just outside the Settlement Area, along the coast at Meols and Thurstaston. The new RNLI Lifeboat Station is also a popular attraction on the waterfront. The Royal Liverpool Golf Course is a significant international recreation and tourism asset.

9.13 The Council approved a master plan for the regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby, in 2004, following public consultation, to respond to the return of the Open Golf Championship to the Royal Liverpool Golf Course in 2006⁽⁸¹⁾. Early phases of improvements took place along the waterfronts, in the shopping centre at Hoylake and along the Wirral Way. The Marine Lake, which is used to host international

80 the European Sand Yachting Championship was held at Hoylake in 2007

81 The Open Championship is scheduled to return in 2014, following the Womens Open Championship in 2012 and the Boys Open Championship in 2013

sailing tournaments⁽⁸²⁾, was repaired in 2009 and the boating pool has been re-lined in Hoylake. New private investments at Meols Drive and at Kings Gap will enhance local hotel provision in Hoylake.

9.14 Further projects under consideration include: continued public realm improvements around the railway station in Hoylake and in West Kirby town centre⁽⁸³⁾; improvements to the promenades at Hoylake and Meols⁽⁸⁴⁾; the replacement of the Marine Lake Sailing School; the re-development of the area around West Kirby Concourse; and the upgrading of Wirral Country Park Visitor Centre⁽⁸⁵⁾.

9.15 Additional studies have been undertaken to examine the feasibility and siting of a Golf Resort in the Green Belt, in the area to the south of Carr Lane Industrial Estate, between the railway line and Heron Road, and it is intended to invite expressions of interest from potential private sector partners in due course⁽⁸⁶⁾. Any proposal will need to comply with national planning policy.

Community Facilities

9.16 Indoor recreation facilities include the public swimming pool, sports hall and fitness suite at West Kirby Concourse, smaller private swimming pools at Kingsmead School and Caldý and a sports hall at Hilbre High School.

9.17 A recent review of cultural and leisure services has identified the Hoylake and Westbourne Community Centres for possible transfer to community ownership and management.

9.18 Hilbre High School has been extended and re-modelled through the Private Finance Initiative and other schools in the Settlement Area have been subject to major investment. Private education is provided at Avalon School in West Kirby and Kingsmead School in Hoylake. Residential special needs education is provided at West Kirby Residential School for pupils aged 5 to 19, adjacent to the town centre. A Children's Centre is available in West Kirby, with a satellite in Hoylake.

9.19 Fire and Rescue services operate from West Kirby Concourse. Lifeboats operate from both West Kirby and from the new replacement facility at Hoylake.

Open Space and Nature

9.20 The Wirral Open Space Assessment shows:

-
- 82 including the annual British Open Dinghy Racing Championships 'the Wilson Trophy'
 - 83 West Kirby Public Realm Improvements Report (Atkins, December 2007)
 - 84 Hoylake and Meols Promenade Masterplan (Scott Wilson, March 2009)
 - 85 Wirral Country Park Improvements Study (Atkins, March 2006)
 - 86 Future Golf Resort Detailed Needs Assessment (Capita Symonds, November 2006) and Future Golf Resort Technical Assessment (Capita Symonds, August 2007)

- a lower than average provision of allotments but with a good additional supply within 400 metres of Settlement Area
- a lower than average provision of amenity green space, of lower quality overall
- one cemetery of good quality
- a slightly below average provision for children and young people but with additional provision within 400 metres of the Settlement Area
- a lower than average provision of facilities for outdoor sport and recreation but with good additional provision within 400 metres of the Settlement Area
- a rich supply of natural and semi-natural green space, with good additional provision within 400 metres of the Settlement Area
- a lower than average provision of sites that could be classified as parks and gardens but of good quality, with an additional supply within 400 metres of the Settlement Area

9.21 Open space is mainly natural and semi-natural, with large areas of local biological importance running throughout the heart of the urban areas and an extensive network of public rights of way.

9.22 Many sites of high biodiversity value with numerous national and international designations also surround the Settlement Area, including the Dee Estuary, North Wirral Foreshore and Hilbre Island Local Nature Reserve, drawing large numbers of visitors from wider Merseyside and beyond. Red Rocks and the dune system to the south are also locally important for earth science and for rare and protected species.

Other Infrastructure

9.23 There are water abstraction boreholes at Newton and Grange in West Kirby and a pumping station at Greenbank Road.

Coast and Flooding

9.24 The draft North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan indicates that the East Hoyle Bank is likely to continue to accrete over the longer term, increasing the level of the foreshore along the north Wirral coast, ahead of existing defences. Approximately 82 hectares of low lying land associated with the north Wirral coastal plain and the Birket Valley is, however, currently potentially liable to tidal and river flooding, which could affect up to 760 properties at Meols and at the edge of George Road in Hoylake.

Key Issues

9.25 Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 6 include:

- Preserving the attractiveness of the high quality residential areas at Kings Gap, Meols Drive, West Kirby, Newton, Caldys and Meols
- Securing continued improvements to tourist and visitor facilities including parks and open spaces in West Kirby, Hoylake and Meols
- Preserving remaining Victorian and Edwardian character

- Defining the future role of Hoylake shopping centre
- Protection of employment uses at Carr Lane Industrial Estate
- Maintaining and protecting the high biodiversity value of the area
- Promotion of more sustainable travel choices

Settlement Area 6 - Key Statistics

Area - 810 hectares (5% of Wirral land area)

Urban coastline - 6.8km (4 miles)

Population - 25,000 (mid-2007) 8% of Wirral

Number of dwellings - 11,600 (April 2007)

Dwellings per hectare - 14.3

Dwellings completed since 2000 (gross) - 503 (9% of Wirral)

Dwellings demolished since 2000 - 21

Land with planning permission for new housing (April 2009) - 12.7 hectares (48 units) 1% of supply

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites - 4.2 hectares (9 sites)

Key Town Centres - West Kirby

Other Local Centres - Hoylake

Designated Employment Areas - Carr Lane Industrial Estate (12.9 hectares)

Available employment land - 4 sites (0.32 hectares)

Vacant land - 3 sites (0.74 hectares)

Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2007 - 1,400 (6% of Area 6)

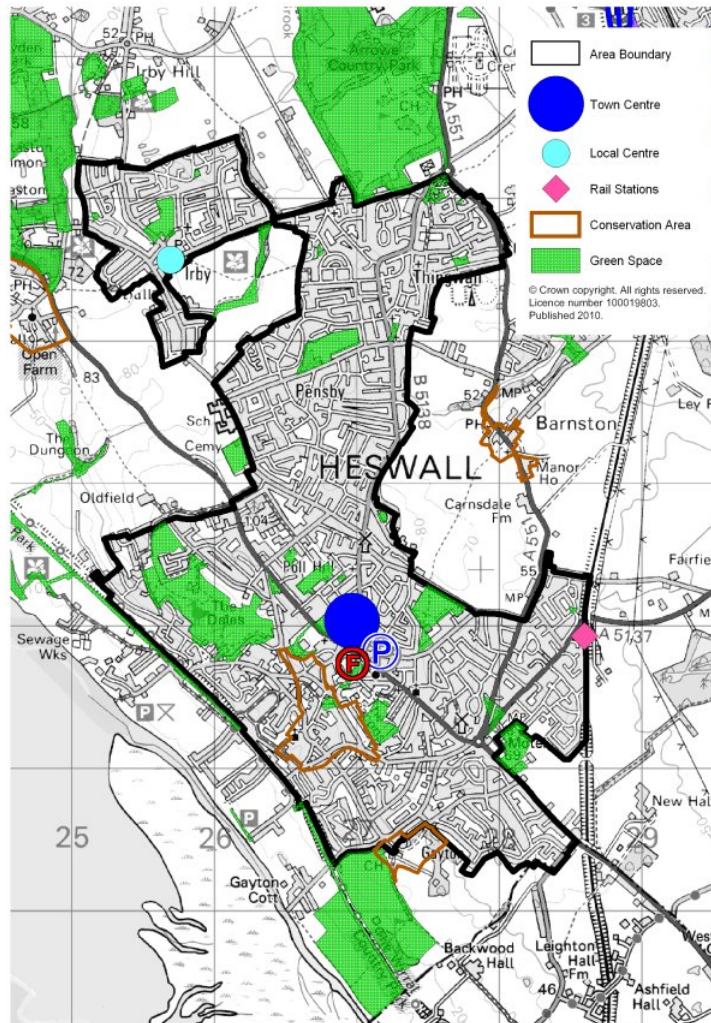
Population within highest 20% of IMD 2007 - 10,400 (42% of Area 6)

Recreational Open Space - 73 hectares (2.9 hectares per 1000)

Publicly Accessible Open Space - 68 hectares (2.7 hectares per 1000)

10 Settlement Area 7 - Heswall

10.1 Settlement Area 7 includes the dormitory settlements of Irby, Thingwall, Pensby, Heswall and Gayton.



Picture 10.1

Socio-Economic Background

10.2 The Settlement Area contains some of the most attractive residential areas in Merseyside, which are a significant economic asset to the sub-region. Skills and household incomes are amongst the highest in the Borough. Heswall and Gayton represent the highest concentration (30%) of Wirral residents living in areas ranked within the highest 20% of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation.

10.3 Settlement Area 7 has one of the lowest proportions of people under 45 years of age, some of the lowest proportions of children and young adults in the Borough and the highest proportion of people over retirement age, which account for almost a third of the local population. Heswall, in particular, has one of the highest proportions of people over 75 years of age in the Borough.

10.4 Land values are high and there is little vacant land. The Settlement Area has been subject to restrictions on new housebuilding, since December 2003, to support development in the regeneration priority areas in the east of the Borough.

10.5 Prior to the adoption of the Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development in December 2003, evidence had begun to suggest that high values for residential uses in particular, were leading to a loss of local facilities and hindering the ability to find and obtain land for essential public services. The Settlement Area is constrained by a tight Green Belt.

10.6 The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential capacity within Settlement Area 7⁽⁸⁷⁾:

Area	Planning Permission ⁽⁸⁸⁾	Category 1 ⁽⁸⁹⁾	Category 2 ⁽⁹⁰⁾	Category 3 ⁽⁹¹⁾	Small Sites ⁽⁹²⁾
Settlement Area 7 - Heswall	44	37	26	37	59

Local Heritage

10.7 There are fourteen Listed Buildings within the Settlement Area. Conservation Areas cover the older cores of the original settlements at Lower Heswall and Gayton. An additional area of high quality lower density housing at Gayton is subject to development control density guidelines.

Town Centres

10.8 Heswall is the Key Town Centre for the Settlement Area: it performs strongly with a healthy convenience offer, large number of independent retailers and significant food and drink offer, improving investment yields and low levels of vacancy. Recent investment has included Marks and Spencer and there is continuing interest from other retailers. Environmental quality is generally good, although traffic congestion occurs at the Pensby Road/Telegraph Road cross roads. The bus station provides services to Liverpool and Chester as well as local services to West Kirby.

87 gross additional dwellings - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

92 sites below 0.4 hectare

91 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

90 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

89 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

88 sites with planning permission in April 2008

10.9 Irby Village is designated as a Traditional Suburban Centre in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral. The convenience and comparison retail offer is limited and over half the units are in the service sector but it is generally considered to be a pleasant and attractive centre, hosting the Da Piero restaurant, the Michelin Guide's Best New Entry for 2010.

10.10 A number of separate shopping parades along Pensby Road and in the Conservation Area at Heswall Lower Village perform an additional local shopping and service function.

Employment

10.11 Employment opportunities are limited to the Key Town Centre and local centres and parades. Car ownership in Heswall is amongst the highest in the Borough. This area alone generated over 2,000 journeys to work outside the Borough in 2001, over half to Liverpool and almost 40% to Cheshire West and Chester. The nearest designated industrial area is outside the Borough in Neston.

Transport Accessibility

10.12 Main routes through and out of the Settlement Area include the A540 between West Kirby and Chester; the A5137 to the M53 Motorway at Clatterbridge; and the B5138 to the A552 and M53 Motorway at Prenton. There is congestion at all main junctions along all these routes: at Arrowe Park (A552); Clatterbridge (M53 Junction 5) and Heswall Town Centre (A540). High frequency bus services operate between Heswall and Birkenhead.

10.13 A limited passenger rail service runs along the eastern edge of the Settlement Area from Heswall Hills between Bidston and Wrexham in North Wales.

10.14 Cycle routes run from Thingwall to: Woodchurch and Beechwood; to Wallasey and Birkenhead; through Landican to Woodchurch, Storeton, Thornton Hough and Brimstage; and through Arrowe Park to Greasby and Upton.

Community Facilities

10.15 There is limited provision for formal sport and indoor recreation within the Settlement Area. Secondary school facilities at Pensby are now subject to formal community use, following the construction of a new sports hall and floodlit all-weather pitch facility. There is a private squash club at Heswall. There are public facilities outside the Borough boundary at Neston and a series of private health club facilities at a number of hotels along the A540.

10.16 A review of cultural and leisure services has identified Kylemore Community Centre; Pensby Community Centre; Heswall Hall; and Alexander Hall for possible transfer to community ownership and management. Pensby Community Centre has already transferred.

10.17 Fire and Rescue, Ambulance and Police services all operate from Heswall Town Centre.

10.18 NHS Wirral are seeking to support the construction of new and extended GP medical centres to replace facilities in Heswall Town Centre and in local centres at Thingwall and Irby. A site at the Warrens, in the Green Belt at Arroe Country Park, at the north west edge of the Settlement Area, was granted planning permission in September 2009. An additional site in Heswall Town Centre for a second GP facility was refused and dismissed at appeal.

10.19 There are no secondary schools within the formal boundary of the Settlement Area, the nearest being the recently federated Pensby High Schools. A recent review of primary school places has led to the closure of Pensby Park Primary, although the site has been retained as a Children's Centre, and to the amalgamation of the Pensby Infant and Junior Schools to form Pensby Primary School. A proposal to co-locate Stanley Special School with Pensby Primary as part of the rebuild of Pensby Primary is also being considered.

Open Space and Nature

10.20 The Wirral Open Space Assessment shows:

- no allotments
- a lower than average provision of amenity green space but of generally good quality overall
- a lower than average provision of facilities for children and young people
- a lower than average provision of facilities for outdoor sport and recreation
- a slightly below average provision of natural and semi-natural green space, of lower quality overall but with a good additional supply within 400 metres of the Settlement Area
- a lower than average number of sites that could be classified as parks and gardens, of lower quality but, again, with a good supply within 400 metres of the Settlement Area

10.21 The Settlement Area has access to the nationally and internationally designated Dee coastline, including the linked facilities associated with the Wirral Way and Wirral Country Park. The Local Nature Reserves at Heswall Dales and at nearby Thurstaston Common also form part of a nationally designated network of rare lowland heath associated with the higher ground of the sandstone outcrops, with additional local sites of biological and earth science importance at Quarry Road East and Heswall Beacons.

Other Infrastructure

10.22 The western part of the Settlement Area drains to the Welsh Water controlled Waste Water Treatment Works at Target Road. Restrictions on new development have only recently been lifted following improvements in capacity.

10.23 There are reservoirs along the sandstone ridge at Poll Hill and at Cross Hill in Thingwall.

Flooding

10.24 Approximately 3 hectares of land associated with Arrowe Brook is potentially liable to flooding, which could affect up to 70 properties at the edge of Irby at Glenwood Drive and in the vicinity of Porto Hey Road.

Settlement Area 7 - Key Statistics

Area - 902 hectares (6% of Wirral land area)

Population - 28,500 (mid-2007) 9% of Wirral

Number of dwellings - 13,000 (April 2007)

Dwellings per hectare - 14.4

Dwellings completed since 2000 (gross) - 370 (7% of Wirral).

Dwellings demolished since 2000 - 30

Land with planning permission for new housing (April 2009) - 4.7 hectares (50 units) 1% of supply

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites - 2.3 hectares (9 sites)

Key Town Centres - Heswall

Designated Employment Areas - none

Vacant land - 1 site (0.08 Hectares)

Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2007 - none

Population within highest 20% of IMD 2007 - 13,100 (46% of Area 7)

Recreational Open Space - 70 hectares (2.5 hectares per 1000)

Publicly Accessible Open Space - 67 hectares (2.4 hectares per 1000)

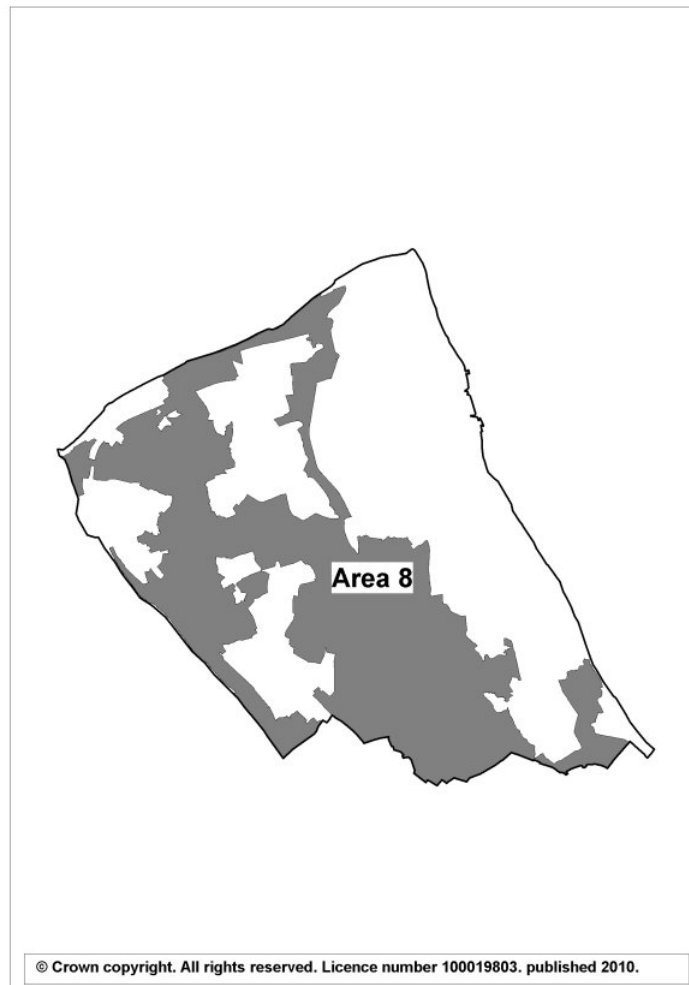
10.25 The Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 7 include:

- Preserving the attractiveness of the high quality residential areas at Heswall, Gayton and Barnston

- Making adequate provision for essential local services in and around existing centres
- Managing the impact of traffic and congestion on Heswall Town Centre and on main routes to Chester, Birkenhead and the M53 Motorway
- Promotion of more sustainable travel patterns
- Securing improvements in rail services along the Bidston to Wrexham Borderlands railway line
- Improving the provision of open space for formal sport and recreation

11 Settlement Area 8 - Rural Areas

11.1 Settlement Area 8 mainly comprises open countryside but includes the rural villages of Eastham, Frankby, Saughall Massie, Thurstaston, Storeton, Thornton Hough, Raby, Brimstage and Barnston.

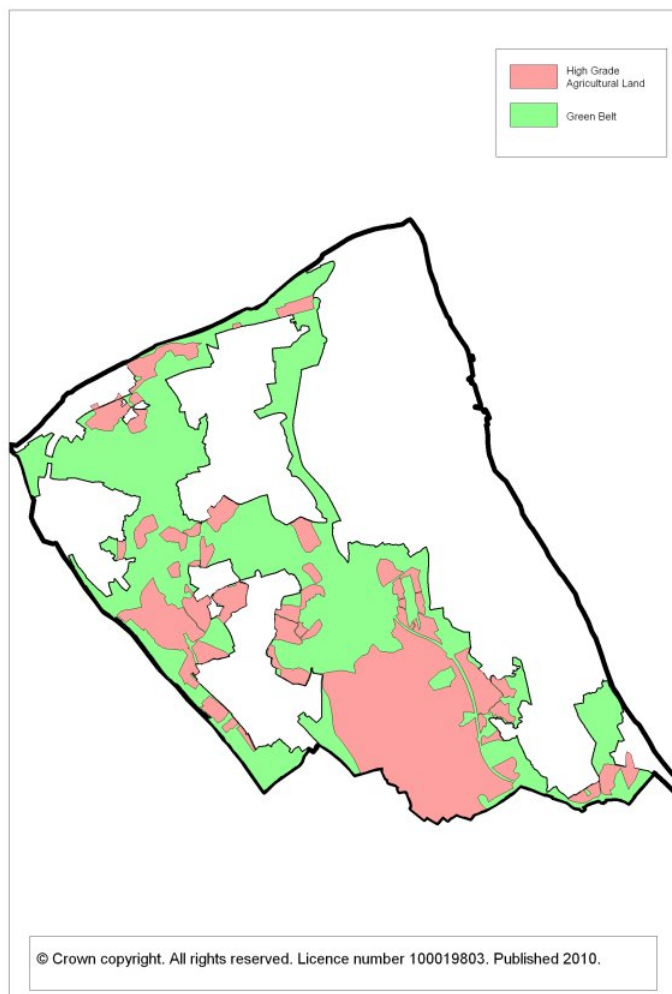


Picture 11.1

11.2 The Settlement Area is mainly characterised by open land, providing an essential separation between the surrounding urban settlements. The quality of the countryside is a key feature of the image and quality of life in Wirral and access to countryside and coast has been repeatedly identified as a major asset to visitors and residents alike. Almost 40% of the Borough's residential properties are located within 400 metres of the open countryside in Settlement Area 8 and almost 10% of properties are located within 400m of the coast.

Socio-Economic Background

11.3 The majority of the population in the Settlement Area is over 45 years of age, with a lower than average proportion of children and young adults. Over a third of the population lives within areas ranked within the highest 20% in the national Index of Multiple Deprivation.



Picture 11.2

11.4 The majority of the land is used for agriculture or for formal or informal recreational uses. Although relatively unimportant in terms of total employment, farming still provides almost 4% of the Borough's economic output (GVA), double that across Merseyside as a whole⁽⁹³⁾. A reducing number of larger farm units is likely to lead to an increased number of redundant farm buildings and demand for new and larger livestock and processing units to meet the increased demands of environmental legislation. Approximately 40% of the Settlement Area is high grade agricultural land⁽⁹⁴⁾.

11.5 The Settlement Area has been subject to restrictions on new housebuilding since December 2003, to support development in the regeneration priority areas in the east of the Borough. There may be a need to provide for elderly people, who may need to leave their own home but wish to stay within their local village.

11.6 The Council's latest assessment of housing land shows the following potential capacity within Settlement Area 8⁽⁹⁵⁾:

Area	Planning Permission ⁽⁹⁶⁾	Category 1 ⁽⁹⁷⁾	Category 2 ⁽⁹⁸⁾	Category 3 ⁽⁹⁹⁾	Small Sites ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾
Settlement Area 8 - Rural Area	46	0	157	126	0

11.7 The potential capacity of Settlement Area 8 is based on sites already with planning permission and sites falling within the Major Developed Sites or Infill Villages identified in the Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2000 and not on sites in other parts of the Green Belt.

Landscape Value

11.8 The Settlement Area contains some of the most appreciated landscapes in the Borough, a number of which were designated as Areas of Special Landscape Value in the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral. Open areas along the M53 Corridor, which were designated as Areas Requiring Landscape Renewal in the Unitary Development Plan, have seen extensive tree planting supported by the Forestry Commission and Groundwork Wirral.

93 DEFRA Returns for 2008 show 157 farms in Wirral carrying 5,886 head of livestock and 9,850 poultry, excluding goats and horses. Approximately a third of the land devoted to agriculture was under crops

94 2,657 hectares

95 gross additional dwellings - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
100 sites below 0.4 hectare

99 Category 3 sites are classed as not currently developable

98 Category 2 sites are classed as deliverable within ten years

97 Category 1 sites are classed as developable within five years

96 sites with planning permission in April 2008

11.9 The Wirral Landscape Character Assessment 2009 now divides the Settlement Area into thirteen character areas. The Assessment identifies seven areas that should be conserved, while the other six require some element of restoration or enhancement. The boundaries to these areas are shown on Picture 2.7 in section 2 of this report.

11.10 The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation 2008 indicates that much of the remaining landscape is also of historic significance.

Local Heritage

11.11 The Settlement Area contains over 170 Listed Buildings, approximately 10% of the Borough total.

11.12 The villages at Gayton, Thornton Hough, Barnston, Thurstaston, Frankby, Saughall Massie and Eastham are Conservation Areas. The villages at Thornton Hough, Storeton and Raby and areas of more modern suburban development at St David's Road, Eastham; Oxford Drive; Thornton Hough; and at Woodlands Drive and Overdale Avenue, Barnston are designated as Infill Villages in the Green Belt.

11.13 Thornton Hough is the largest of the rural settlements and acts as a visitor destination in its own right. Brimstage, Carr Hall Farm and farm shops at Thurstaston and Clatterbridge also provide local attractions. Small areas of market gardens remain at Hoylake, Leasowe and along the Dee Coast.

11.14 Storeton Hall is identified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the grounds of Thornton Manor are designated as an Historic Park and Garden. Both are included on the national Heritage At Risk Register.

Employment

11.15 There are no Key Town Centres within the Settlement Area: retail provision is mainly limited to individual shops in villages such as Thornton Hough.

11.16 The large hospitals at Arrowe Park, Clatterbridge and Thingwall are major sources of local employment and are designated as Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt alongside the educational facilities at Pensby and Carlett Park in Eastham.

11.17 The hospitals at Arrowe Park and Clatterbridge have taken steps to address congestion and parking issues including initiatives to improve public transport, parking and cycling and a park-and-ride service to Arrowe Park from the Sainsbury's car park in Upton.

Tourism

11.18 The Wirral countryside is an important tourism asset in its own right and is home to a significant number of high quality tourism businesses that contribute strongly to the overall tourism offer of Wirral and the wider City Region, including Hillbark Hotel; Thornton Hall Hotel and Spa; Thornton Manor; Herons Well Farm and

Cottage⁽¹⁰¹⁾; Peel Hey Country House; Mere Brook House; Brimstage Hall Courtyard; Church Farm Organics; and Claremont Farm. Another five countryside hotels and guest-houses are due to open in 2011.

Transport Accessibility

11.19 A number of the roads throughout this Settlement Area are minor and retain a rural character.

11.20 The M53 Motorway runs on embankment and in flyover through the Fender Valley and in cutting across open countryside between Prenton and Eastham.

11.21 Major roads between main settlements and the M53 Motorway include A551 between Leasowe and Wallasey and A553 between Moreton and Birkenhead (to Junction 1); A5027 (Saughall Massie Road) between West Kirby and Saughall Massie (to Junction 2); A551 from Heswall to Woodchurch (to Junction 3) and A5137 between Heswall and Spital (to Junction 4). Other main routes crossing the Settlement Area include A553 between Hoylake and Moreton; B5139 between West Kirby and Greasby; and A540 between Hoylake, Heswall and Chester.

11.22 Some of these routes impact on Conservation Areas like Frankby and Barnston.

11.23 Bus services to settlements outside these main routes are limited.

11.24 The railway line between Bidston and Wrexham in North Wales runs alongside the M53 Motorway in the Fender Valley between the mid-Wirral settlements and Birkenhead and across the open countryside from Prenton to Heswall with no stations within the rural area. The former station at Storeton Lane, near Barnston has been disused for over 40 years.

Community Facilities

11.25 The Settlement Area provides a wide range of country parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities serving the adjacent urban populations, linked to an extensive network of public rights of way. Indoor facilities include the private health club facilities at Thornton Hall Hotel and Barnston Dale Centre which includes a sports hall and climbing wall.

11.26 The main educational facilities within the Settlement Area, with the exception of Thornton Hough Primary School, are more closely associated with the neighbouring urban Settlement Areas.

Open Space and Nature

11.27 The Settlement Area is rich in open space and biodiversity and includes the majority of the Borough's most significant biodiversity assets. Over two thirds of the publicly accessible open space within the Settlement Area lies within 400 metres of an adjacent Settlement Area and functions as local open space for the urban population.

11.28 The Wirral Open Space Assessment shows a far higher than average provision of all categories of open space, except provision for children and young people, with a concentration of higher quality facilities, including:

- six nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, four Local Nature Reserves and over 50 local Sites of Biological Importance
- sites of local importance for earth science associated with the sandstone ridges at Irby Quarry; Thurstaston Hill; Telegraph Road cutting; Dee Cliffs; Storeton Hill; and Red Rocks; including the nationally designated Heswall Dungeon, which is the only outcrop of the oldest rock strata observable in Wirral
- five Country Parks at Eastham, with views over the Mersey Estuary; Royden Park and Thurstaston Common, with views over the Dee Estuary; the 4-mile North Wirral Coastal Park, with views across Liverpool Bay and to North Wales; Arrowe Country Park; and Wirral Country Park, the first designated country park in Britain, a popular 12-mile multi-purpose footpath, cycleway and bridleway, which runs from West Kirby south to Parkgate and Hooton in neighbouring Cheshire West and Chester

11.29 Eastham Country Park, Royden Park, Thurstaston Common and Wirral Country Park, in particular, attract large numbers of visitors from wider Merseyside and beyond. Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve runs into the heart of the urban area in Settlement Area 4 and the tributaries associated with the Dibbinsdale Brook are all well established wildlife corridors.

Coast and Flooding

11.30 The Settlement Area also contains the vast majority of the Borough's remaining un-developed coastline.

11.31 The draft North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan indicates that the short stretch of sand dunes fronted by a narrow strip of saltmarsh between Red Rocks and West Kirby is expected to remain relatively stable over the plan period.

11.32 Natural erosion of the clay cliffs at Thurstaston, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is expected to continue at between 0.1 and 0.5 metres each year. The impact of erosion on the former landfill at Dawpool will require further investigation.

11.33 Saltmarsh accretion is expected to continue to the south between Heswall and Gayton and will keep pace with sea level rise.

11.34 Some privately funded maintenance of existing local defences is likely to be permitted subject to gaining the necessary consents. Only the sandstone block revetment at Riverbank Road is expected to last less than 20 years.

11.35 Approximately 796 hectares of low lying land associated with the north Wirral coastal plain and the Birket and Fender valleys; Greasby Brook and Arrowe Brook in mid-Wirral; and Dibbinsdale Brook, Clatter Brook and their tributaries in south central Wirral, is potentially liable to flooding, which could affect up to 180 properties across the Settlement Area.

Other Infrastructure

11.36 The Borough's main high pressure gas main runs along the M53 Corridor.

11.37 The power lines that run across Wirral, from Capenhurst to Prenton and on to Liverpool, is an essential part of the National Grid electricity transmission network.

11.38 An Aircraft Beacon for Liverpool Airport operates from a site just outside Moreton.

Key Issues

11.39 The Key Issues identified for Settlement Area 8 include:

- Maintaining the Green Belt
- Accommodating the economic restructuring of agriculture
- Maintaining the local distinctiveness of settlements, rural villages and Conservation Areas
- Maintaining the character of the landscape, rights of way, heritage, biodiversity and recreational open spaces associated with the countryside and coast and their contribution to the image and attractiveness of the Borough
- Improving accessibility to key opportunities of employment, education and health care
- Reducing the impact of traffic on rural villages and Conservation Areas

Settlement Area 8 - Key Statistics

Area - 7,053 hectares (45% of Wirral land area)

Undeveloped coastline - 15km (9 miles)

Population - 5,800 (mid-2007) 2% of Wirral

Number of dwellings - 2,800 (April 2007)

Dwellings per hectare - 0.4

Dwellings completed since 2000 (gross) - 136 units (3% of Wirral)

Dwellings demolished since 2000 - 16

Land with planning permission for new housing (April 2009) - 9.5 hectares (247 units) 6% of supply

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites - 486.4 hectares (79 sites) 73% of total land

Key Town Centres - none

Designated Employment Areas - none

Vacant Land - 12 sites (43.9 Hectares), 12.9% of total supply.

Population within lowest 20% of IMD 2007 - 250 (4% of Area 8)

Population within highest 20% of IMD 2007 - 2100 (36% of Area 8)

Recreational Open Space - 1,186 hectares (201.6 hectares per 1000)

Publicly Accessible Open Space - 540 hectares (92.0 hectares per 1000)

12 Document List

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Birkenhead (and Wirral Waters) Integrated Regeneration Study	A study to provide a comprehensive regeneration plan for the commercial heartland of Birkenhead	2010	GVA Grimley
Brand New Brighton Pier Feasibility Study	A study looking at the structural environmental and financial aspects of reintroducing a pier at New Brighton including the nature of uses that a new structure could accommodate	2009	Faber Maunsell/AECOM
Catchment Flood Management Plan - Mersey Estuary	Sets out the policies that will be applied to control flood risk within the catchment of the River Mersey	2009	Environment Agency
Catchment Flood Management Plan - River Dee	Sets out the policies that will be applied to control flood risk within the catchment of the River Dee	2010	Environment Agency
Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation	An assessment of the historic character of the Cheshire landscape which includes an assessment of Wirral's rural areas	2008	Cheshire County Council
Core Strategy - Report of Initial Consultation	A report setting out the findings of initial public consultation on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and local needs within the Borough to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy	2006	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Second Report of Initial Consultation	A report setting out the results of public consultation to prioritise the issues identified in response to consultation on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and local needs within the Borough	2009	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Issues, Vision and Objectives Report	A consultation report setting out the Council's initial proposals for the issues to be addressed in the vision and objectives for the Core Strategy	2009	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Report of Consultation on Issues, Vision and Objectives	A report setting out the results of public consultation on the Issues, Vision and Objectives Report	2010	Wirral Council

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Revised Spatial Portrait

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Core Strategy - Spatial Options Report	A consultation report setting out what the Council believes are the main options that will need to be considered before deciding on the most appropriate long term spatial strategy for the Borough	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Habitats Regulations Interim Screening Assessment	A report setting out an initial assessment of the potential impact of the spatial options for the Core Strategy on designated European Sites	2009	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Report of Consultation on Spatial Options	A report setting out the results of public consultation on the Core Strategy Spatial Options Report	2010	Wirral Council
Core Strategy - Preferred Options Report	A consultation report setting out the Council's preferred options for the Core Strategy	2010	Wirral Council
Embracing Change: Enterprise Strategy for Wirral	A strategy setting out short, medium and long term priorities for improving local enterprise and economic performance	2007	Wirral Council
Future Golf Resort - Detailed Needs Assessment	A report setting out the planning issues, likely catchment and mix of uses that could be contained in a new Golf Resort at Hoylake	2006	Capita Symonds
Future Golf Resort - Technical Assessment	A report setting out the technical and environmental considerations that may influence the potential location of a new Golf Resort at Hoylake	2007	Capita Symonds
Hoylake and West Kirby Masterplan	A report setting out proposals for the future regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby	2004	BDP
Hoylake and Meols Promenade Masterplan	A study setting out a series of proposed improvements to the public realm in Hoylake and Meols	2009	Scott Wilson
Index of Multiple Deprivation for England	A national index which combines a range of social and economic indicators to provide a single deprivation score for local areas in England	2007	Office for National Statistics
Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development	A local policy to support the regeneration of identified priority areas in the east of the Borough	2005	Wirral Council

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Revised Spatial Portrait

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside	A document that guides the delivery of waste management in Merseyside	2008	Merseyside Waste Partnership
Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton	A sub-regional Development Plan Document which will replace the policies and proposals for waste management contained within the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral	2010	Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service
Liverpool City Region Multi Area Agreement	A contract between central Government and sub-regional partners to deliver common goals for the City Region	2009	Liverpool City Region Cabinet
Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study	A report setting out the likely capacity of the area to generate renewable energy	2010	Arup
Liverpool SuperPort	A prospectus setting out proposals to integrate air, port, logistics and transportation across the Liverpool City Region	2008	The Mersey Partnership
Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report	A regular report monitoring performance against national and local indicators and progress on the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework	2009	Wirral Council
Mersey Coastal Park Strategy	A framework for the regeneration of the Mersey waterfront between Rock Ferry and Eastham Country Park	2010	Wirral Council
Mersey Heartlands Growth Point - Programme of Development	A report setting out the plans and ambitions, infrastructure requirements and funding needed to support the programme for the delivery of the Mersey Heartlands Growth Point	2008	Liverpool City Council, Wirral Council and Peel Holdings
Mersey Tidal Power Project Stage 1 Options Report	The first stage of a study to select a preferred scheme for generating electricity from the tides within the Mersey Estuary	2010	Scott Wilson
Merseyside Local Transport Plan	A five-year delivery programme for transport investment and service improvement	2006	Merseyside Transport Partnership
Merseyside Local Transport Plan - Building a New Mobility Culture Challenges and	A consultation document setting out the issues that will need to be considered in the next Local Transport Plan for Merseyside.	2010	Merseyside Transport Partnership

Core Strategy Preferred Options - Revised Spatial Portrait

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Opportunities for Future Transport Provision in Merseyside			
Merseyside Mineral Resource Study	A review of mineral resources and reserves within Merseyside	2008	Urban Vision
North West of England Plan 2021 (revoked in July 2010)	The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West which previously formed part of the statutory Development Plan for Wirral	2008	Government Office for the North West
North West of England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan SMP2 Consultation Report	A management plan setting out priorities for coast protection along the North West coastline	2010	Halcrow Group
River Basin Management Plan for the North West River Basin	A management plan setting out priorities for managing water quality in the North West River Basin	2009	Environment Agency
River Basin Management Plan for the River Dee Basin	A management plan setting out priorities for managing water quality in the Dee River Basin	2009	Environment Agency
West Kirby Public Realm Improvements Report	A study setting out a series of proposed improvements to the public realm in West Kirby	2007	Atkins
Wirral 2025 More Equal More Prosperous A Sustainable Community Strategy	A strategy setting out how local partners will work collectively to improve quality of life within Wirral	2009	Wirral Partnership
Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan	A document setting out local measures to enhance and safeguard the Borough's most important habitats and species	2003	Wirral Biodiversity Partnership
Wirral Biodiversity Audit	An audit of available information on the Borough's biodiversity resources including a review of the criteria for the selection of local wildlife sites	2009	Penny Anderson Associates
Wirral Climate Change Strategy	A strategy to tackle climate change by working with local businesses and communities to reduce Wirral's carbon emissions	2006	Wirral Council
Wirral Country Park Improvements Study	A study setting out a series of proposed improvements to Wirral Country Park	2006	Atkins



Core Strategy Preferred Options - Revised Spatial Portrait

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study	An assessment of the supply and demand for employment land and premises setting out recommendations on the future allocation of employment land to maintain economic growth	2009	Business Environments Group
Wirral Health Profile	A compendium of health related statistics for the Wirral PCT administrative area	2009	Wirral NHS Primary Care Trust
Wirral Investment Strategy	A strategy that outlines local economic opportunities and constraints and key priorities to drive economic growth	2007	Wirral Council
Wirral Landscape Character Assessment	An assessment of the landscape and visual character of the countryside in Wirral	2009	The Environment Partnership
Wirral Local Area Partnership Agreement 2008-2011	A local area agreement between central Government and local partners which sets out a three-year delivery plan for key elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy	2008	Wirral Partnership
Wirral Open Space Assessment	An audit of the quantity, quality and distribution of recreational open space	2010	Strategic Leisure
Wirral Playing Pitch Assessment Strategy and Action Plan	An assessment of the supply and demand of playing pitches	2004	KKP
Wirral Statement of Community Involvement	A statutory document setting out local standards for community involvement in decisions under the Planning Acts	2006	Wirral Council
Wirral Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	An assessment of areas at risk of flooding	2009	Faber Maunsell
Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	An assessment of the Borough's housing land supply to 2026	2010	Roger Tym and Partners and A.P. Sheenan
Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update	A revised assessment of local housing needs including the need for affordable and specialist housing, to take account of the impact of the economic downturn	2010	Fordhams Research
Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Affordable Housing Viability Study	An assessment of the viability of targets for affordable housing	2010	Fordhams Research

Name	Summary of Content	Date	Prepared By
Wirral Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure Study	An assessment of the function of retail centres across Wirral providing recommendations to inform the Local Development Framework	2009	Roger Tym and Partners
Wirral Unitary Development Plan	An old-style Development Plan adopted by the Council in February 2000, which will be progressively replaced by the new-style Development Plan Documents contained within the emerging Local Development Framework	2000	Wirral Council
Wirral Waters Strategic Regeneration Framework	An initial framework for the future development of the Birkenhead Dock Estate and its surrounding areas	2008	Turley Associates
Woodside Masterplan	A masterplan for the development and regeneration of land and buildings at Woodside in Birkenhead	2006	Building Design Partnership

13 Glossary

Terminology	Abbreviation	Explanation
4NW		The Regional Leaders Board including Council leaders from across the North West of England responsible for preparing a wide variety of regional strategies and initiatives including the former Regional Spatial Strategy
Air Quality Management Area	AQMA	An identified area for which an action plan must be prepared to improve air quality to meet national objectives
Affordable Housing		Housing at a cost below that typically available in the open market including social rented and shared-ownership housing
Annual Monitoring Report	AMR	A written report, published by the Council towards the end of each calendar year, setting out progress on the delivery of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies set out in Local Development Documents are being achieved
Assisted Area		Area designated by the European Commission to receive additional Government funding to support employment and economic revitalisation

Terminology	Abbreviation	Explanation
Atlantic Gateway		A framework for collaboration between the Manchester and Liverpool City Regions to promote the economic regeneration of the wider area, including major projects such as 'Wirral Waters'
Biodiversity		A collective term for the full variety of biological life on earth including plants, animals and eco-systems
Biodiversity Action Plan	BAP	A document setting out priorities for the conservation of nature and the enhancement of biodiversity
Birkenhead Dock Estate		The geographical area under the control of the port operator at Birkenhead previously designated under Policy EM10 of the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral
Brownfield Land		See 'Previously Developed Land'
Call for Sites		An exercise undertaken by the Council as part of the preparation of the evidence base for the Core Strategy, in which the public were invited to submit sites with potential for housing or employment uses
Communities and Local Government	CLG	The Government Department responsible for planning, building and the environment
Comparison Goods		Non-food items including household goods, furniture, electrical goods and clothing
Compulsory Purchase Order	CPO	A legal function which enables certain public bodies to purchase land or property without the consent of the owner
Conservation Area	CA	An identified area designated by the Council to allow the character and appearance of that area to be protected and enhanced
Control of Major Accident Hazards Sites	COMAH	A site which is subject to special statutory controls to minimise and prevent a potential hazard to public safety
Convenience Goods		Largely relates to perishable goods which are purchased on a regular basis. Some non-food goods are also classed as convenience such as newspapers, tobacco and alcohol
Core Strategy		A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision and general strategy for the future development of the Borough
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs	DEFRA	A Government Department responsible for the natural environment, countryside, farming, wildlife, climate change and waste

Terminology	Abbreviation	Explanation
Development Plan		The statutory Development Plan for the Borough is currently the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral adopted in February 2000, until the Unitary Development Plan has been replaced by the Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework. Individual planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise
Development Plan Document	DPD	A Local Development Document with status as part of the Development Plan for the Borough
Dock Estate		An area of land owned and operated by a port operator
East Float		The geographical area of the Birkenhead Dock Estate between Duke Street and Tower Road
Environment Agency	EA	A government body that aims to control and prevent a wide variety of harmful impacts on the environment
Flood Zone 2		Areas with a low to medium risk of flooding as defined by the Environment Agency
Flood Zone 3		Areas with a high probability of flooding as defined by the Environment Agency
Forestry Commission		A Government agency responsible for the protection and expansion of Britain's forests and woodlands
Functional Floodplain		Areas where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood as defined by the Environment Agency
Geodiversity		A collective term for the full variety of earth materials including minerals, rocks and sediments
Green Belt		Land designated for protection to prevent urban sprawl and to safeguard surrounding countryside from further encroachment
Green Infrastructure	GI	Networks of public and private green spaces and habitats
Groundwork Wirral		The Wirral branch of a national environmental regeneration charity that promotes environmental improvements and greener ways of living and working
Growth Point		An area identified by the Government in which an accelerated level of housing delivery will be promoted
Gross Value Added	GVA	A measure of the performance of the local economy.
Heritage at Risk Register		A national record of nationally designated heritage assets that are considered to be at serious risk of at harm of damage

Terminology	Abbreviation	Explanation
Highways Agency		A Government agency responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England
Home and Communities Agency	HCA	A Government agency responsible for housing and regeneration in England
Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Area	HMRI	An area defined by the Secretary of State as a focus for public action to restructure the local housing market, also known as the Newheartlands Pathfinder, which in Wirral includes parts of Birkenhead, Tranmere, Seacombe, Bidston and Liscard
Index of Multiple Deprivation	IMD	A nationally calculated index which combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for local neighbourhoods in England
Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control	IPPC	A system that employs an integrated approach to control the environmental impact of emissions arising from industrial activities to land, water and air
Interim Housing Policy Area	IHPA	The area of the Borough defined in the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development (October 2005) as the target area for new housing development, focused on New Brighton, Liscard, Seacombe, Leasowe, Birkenhead, Beechwood, Tranmere, Rock Ferry and parts of Bromborough
Interim Planning Policy		A policy document adopted by the Council, following public consultation, which sets out the Council's policies for the location of new housing development until an appropriate Development Plan Document is adopted
Listed Building		A building or structure listed by the Secretary of State as having special architectural or historic interest
Liverpool City Region		The Liverpool City Region comprises of Liverpool, Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.
Local Area Agreement	LAA	A formal agreement by the Council and other local service providers to meet a set of specific targets for the delivery of selected local services
Local Development Document	LDD	A document prepared as part of the Local Development Framework for the Borough
Local Development Framework	LDF	The overall name for the collection of adopted Local Development Documents for the Borough

Terminology	Abbreviation	Explanation
Local Enterprise Partnership	LEP	A new-style partnership of local authorities and business representatives intended to promote local economic development
Local Nature Reserve	LNR	A designated site of local importance managed for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment
Local Strategic Partnership	LSP	A non-statutory partnership of public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors intended to co-ordinate improvements within a local area
Local Transport Plan	LTP	A joint strategy for investment in the provision and management of transport infrastructure including buses, trains, ferries, freight, roads, footpaths and cycleways
Multi Area Agreement	MAA	A cross-boundary Local Area Agreement bringing together key players in flexible ways to tackle issues that are best addressed in partnership, at a regional and sub-regional level
Mersey Heartlands Growth Point		An area, with the same boundary as the HMRI Pathfinder, which was designated as a New Growth Point in December 2008 to increase the national delivery of new housing
Mersey Dee Alliance	MDA	A partnership between the local authorities of Cheshire West and Chester, Denbighshire, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Flintshire, Wirral, Wrexham, the Welsh Assembly Government and Merseytravel
Merseyside		The land area covered by the local Councils of Liverpool, Wirral, Sefton, Knowsley and St Helens.
Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority	MWDA	A local government body that arranges the disposal of household and other waste
Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership		A partnership between the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority and the local councils of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral
Newheartlands		One of ten nationally designated Housing Market Renewal Initiative Pathfinder Areas, which in Merseyside includes parts of Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral, which are designed to tackle low demand and housing market failure in areas of greatest need
Next Generation Access	NGA	The latest high-capacity, high-speed access system for the digital transfer of data and information
NHS Wirral	PCT	The National Health Service Primary Care Trust for Wirral
NOMIS	NOMIS	A database of official labour market statistics, run on behalf of the Office for National Statistics

Terminology	Abbreviation	Explanation
Northbank		The area of the land running along the northern bank of the East Float within the Birkenhead Dock Estate at Wirral Waters
North West Development Agency	NWDA	A public body set up to promote economic development within the North West Region
Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change		A declaration which all local authorities are invited to sign to commit to reducing the impacts of climate change
Office of National Statistics	ONS	The Government Department responsible for collecting and publishing official statistics about the UK's society and economy
Preferred Options		The stage at which the development options preferred by the Council, for inclusion in a Development Plan Document, are published, alongside an explanation of why they have been chosen
Port Master Plan		A management plan prepared by the port operator to guide the future operation and development of port facilities
Previously Developed Land	PDL	Land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The full definition is set out in national advice published by the Secretary of State. Also known as 'brownfield' land
Private Finance Initiative	PFI	A Government promoted method for providing financial support for public projects through a partnership with the private sector
Proposals Map		An annotated map showing the areas of land where the policies and proposals contained within the Unitary Development Plan or contained within in a Development Plan Document will apply
Publicly Accessible Open Space		Land used for formal or informal recreation which can be used without charge by the general public
Ramsar (site)		A site designated as a wetland of international importance under an international agreement called the Ramsar Convention
Recreational Open Space		Land used for recreation, including land to which the general public do not have an automatic right of access
Regional Planning Guidance	RPG13	An old-style document published by the Secretary of State to guide the preparation of local Development Plans which has now been replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West

Terminology	Abbreviation	Explanation
Regional Spatial Strategy	RSS	A statutory document, issued by the Secretary of State, setting out the vision and priorities for future development within the North West Region, which previously had status as part of the Development Plan for the Borough but which was formally revoked in July 2010
Registered Social Landlord	RSL	An organisation registered as a provider of social housing to meet the needs of people unable to afford to own their own home
Scheduled Ancient Monument	SAM	An identified area designated by the Secretary of State on the basis of its national importance for archaeology
Secretary of State		The person appointed by the Prime Minister to have overall responsibility for the operation of the national planning system, currently the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Settlement Area		A geographical area used by the Council to represent one of the eight main groups of settlements within the Borough
Site of Biological Importance	SBI	A site designated in the Unitary Development Plan on the basis of its local importance for nature conservation
Site of Special Scientific Interest	SSSI	A site designated by the Secretary of State on the basis of its scientific importance for nature conservation and/or earth science
Section 106 Agreement		A legal agreement between the Council and a developer to ensure that certain specified works will be undertaken if planning permission is granted for a particular development
Special Area of Conservation	SAC	A site designated under the European Habitats Directive to give increased protection to wildlife, plants and habitats to conserve the world's biodiversity
Special Protection Area	SPA	A sites of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds designated under the European Birds Directive
Statutory		A document or process which has a special legal status, as set out in national law
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	SHLAA	A document which examines potential sites for housing across the Borough and assesses them in terms of their suitability, availability and achievability
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	SHMA	A document which examines the key features of Wirral's housing market, including housing need, supply and demand

Terminology	Abbreviation	Explanation
Strategic Regional Site	SRS	A site designated by the North West Development Agency as a priority location for the promotion of new business development
Super Output Area	SOA	A geographical unit containing about 1,500 people used as the basis for the collection and analysis of national statistics
Sustainable Community Strategy	SCS	A strategy setting out the overall vision for the improvement of the area prepared under the Local Government Act 2000 by the Local Strategic Partnership
Taith Joint Transport Board	Taith	The joint board of the six county authorities in North Wales working together to deliver improvements to public transport
The Mersey Partnership	TMP	A sub-regional public/private sector partnership to promote economic development, investment and tourism across the Liverpool City Region
Twelve Quays		A former dockland area along the Mersey waterfront between the ferry terminals at Seacombe and Woodside to the east of Birkenhead Road, Tower Road and Canning Street which was previously identified as a Strategic Regional Site
Unitary Development Plan	UDP	An old-style Development Plan, which will be progressively replaced by the new-style Development Plan Documents contained within the emerging Local Development Framework
Water Framework Directive		A European Union Directive which requires that all coastal and inland waters within defined river basin districts must reach at least good status/ potential by 2015
Wirral International Business Park		A designated Strategic Regional Site in Bromborough to the east of the A41 extending across the area between the watercourse at Bromborough Pool and Eastham Country Park
Wirral Waters		A project to create an internationally recognised city waterfront, focused upon the East Float of the Birkenhead and Wallasey dock system, together with a distinctive leisure and retail destination at Bidston Dock, now designated as part of a Strategic Regional Site
World Heritage Site		A site designated by UNESCO as having outstanding universal value for the protection of world cultural and natural heritage