



An **APLEONA** company

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New Ferry Regeneration Delivery Plan

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

November 2017

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Status: Final

Draft Date: November 2017

For and on behalf of GVA Grimley Limited

Executive Summary

New Ferry is an area of both important opportunity and context for Wirral Council, the local community and local businesses. It has long been recognised as an area suffering from retail decline, underperforming relative to its proximity to Port Sunlight, with a renewed focus and opportunity for investment identified following the March 2017 explosion.

This Regeneration Delivery Plan (RDP) has been prepared to identify specific opportunities for positive change, as a means of further engagement with the local community and stakeholders, and to underpin discussions with the Combined Authority and more widely Central Government around the need for grant funding to support the sustainable regeneration of the area.

The identified vision for New Ferry is summarised as:

Through targeted investment and change New Ferry will once again become a living and thriving heart for the community – both now and in the future.

New Ferry will be:

- *A place of high-quality streets and open spaces that put people and their needs and experiences first;*
- *Somewhere with a range of good quality modern homes which are designed with the community in mind – responding directly to local need, trends in population change, and are of a quality to last and contribute to a local sense of place; and*
- *A destination with a distinctive commercial offer with supported independent retailers and service provision for the local community, a programme of inclusive and exciting events and a vibrant and more visible market space as an attracter but also to meet local convenience needs.*

The preferred option for the area has been identified informed by baseline analysis of local circumstances and market influences, strategic alignment, community engagement and viability testing. It identifies areas for development and investment summarised below, in addition to public realm interventions addressing poor quality service yards and the de-pedestrianisation of part or all of Bebington Road:

- Residential development zones on the Woodhead Street car park, and the cleared explosion site plus cleared units on Bebington Road adjacent to the explosion site. An additional residential zone has been earmarked for a future area of potential clearance along Bebington Road, aligned with the aspiration to concentrate retail within the area

towards the New Chester Road core. Residential development on these sites should be brought forward aligned with the quality benchmark of Port Sunlight. Market analysis supports the view that viable residential values will only be achievable in this area where these quality benchmarks are delivered. A medium to high density family accommodation offer is envisaged for this area (townhouse and terraced style development). Apartments are not envisaged based on the market analysis undertaken.

- A mixed use development zone to the north-west corner of the Woodhead car park site and to New Chester Road – with ground floor retail and above floor apartments, with the specific market potential identified to deliver older person living within this zone given ability to design accordingly and proximity to service and retail provision. Potential to incorporate community and health provision within this mix of uses should be explored.
- Retail core zone – identified within the heart of New Ferry, to accommodate potential relocated uses alongside a focus on attracting food and drink and leisure activities with specific opportunities noted around market requirements for a gym. Preferred option assumes the retention and reconfiguration of the former Co-Op building, which could include, depending on further engagement, community and market functions within the current Village Hall.
- A new public open space – envisaged as green space – along New Chester Road forming a new arrival point to the centre, and potential point of diversion for traffic through the new New Ferry heart.
- Potential residential sites at Grove Street and Longfellow Drive – aligned with the previous commentary.

The preferred option has the potential to deliver the following economic benefits:

- Construction employment generation potential of between 51 and 71 net additional and between 26 and 35 indirect jobs during the construction period.
- Between 45 and 61 net additional direct jobs and between 22 and 30 indirect jobs
- Wider economic benefits of retail development: A successful retail core could attract footfall in to New Ferry and introduce new spenders to the area. This could include drawing in the existing visitor base of neighbouring Port Sunlight.
- Additional population and labour force: Residential development in particular will increase the population of New Ferry and labour force. New homes also bring natural surveillance through the increase of people and new spending power to the area. It is noted that a range of new residential properties from 53 (Option 4) and 85 (Option 2) are proposed within the RDP.
- Council tax and business rates revenue: New homes and business premises provide additional council tax and business rate revenue.

The preferred option as presented has a recognised funding gap of up to £8.3m. Early interventions are identified including the need to commence acquisition of key sites as part of a wider Land Assembly Strategy across the centre which will be important future development sites.

More widely the RDP recommends commencement or progression of additional workstreams including:

- Stakeholder engagement – including the Village Hall, market traders, local businesses and Port Sunlight in particular;
- Soft market testing – to understand developer appetite in the proposition articulated in the preferred option;
- Establishment of a planning framework to influence change in the future; and
- Ultimately the procurement of a development partner to realise the ambitions for the area.

1. Introduction

Background to Report

- 1.1 GVA were instructed by Wirral Council to prepare a Regeneration Delivery Plan (RDP) for New Ferry, one of twenty three local centres across Wirral. GVA have worked alongside urban design and architectural practice Optimised Environments Ltd (also known as 'OPEN') as part of this exercise.
- 1.2 New Ferry has long been recognised by the Council as being an area in need of focus and investment, and historically work has been done with the community including the establishment of a Town Team to identify priorities for change and investment.
- 1.3 In March 2017 there was an explosion in the centre which resulted in the damage to several buildings concentrated around Boundary Road, Bebington Road and their immediate environs. This included damage to commercial and residential properties across the area.
- 1.4 Following the explosion the Council put in place an immediate response (Disaster Recovery) team, which in turn identified the need for a co-ordinated response to the incident. This included recognition that intervention following the explosion could, if managed and designed appropriately, have a much wider regenerative impact on the area. The team also noted in particular the public sector ownership across the area as a potential influencer of future regeneration and the recovery of the centre after the explosion.

Scope of Work

- 1.5 The scope of work as agreed with the Council included:
 - Identification of a positioning and identity statement for New Ferry to guide future investment and regeneration activity;
 - Identification and consideration of options for change – including design and application of a clear and robust option testing exercise;
 - Identification of a preferred option for change based on the analysis undertaken; and
 - Recommendations around a delivery strategy associated with the preferred option.

Report Structure

- 1.6 In response to the agreed scope of work GVA and OPEN have undertaken a thorough analysis of local circumstances and identified a series of opportunities for investment. The

findings of this analysis, including the findings of community engagement undertaken as part of this process are documented in the remainder of this report.

1.7 The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Planning, Strategy and Demographic Context – high level positioning of New Ferry in the context of established and emerging policy and strategy documentation and existing demographics
- Section 3: Commercial Market Context – national trends and local evidence including specific focus on the retail and leisure markets
- Section 4: Residential Market Context – national trends and local evidence focusing on residential development for sale
- Section 5: Urban Design Analysis – a physical assessment of New Ferry including early identification of opportunities for change
- Section 6: Vision and Strategy for New Ferry – drawing on the analysis undertaken articulation of a vision and high level strategy for New Ferry
- Section 7: Option Development and Testing – summary of investment options for New Ferry, option appraisal exercise and findings
- Section 8: A Preferred Option for New Ferry – articulation of the preferred option including potential wider regenerative impacts
- Section 9: Delivery Strategy / Next Steps – recommendations around next steps to progress delivery of the preferred option

1.8 The analysis undertaken and recommendations made draws on previous studies including 'New Ferry Thinking Differently', the February 2017 'Local Insight profile for New Ferry Healthy High Street area' and on engagement with the Council over a series of meetings including a site visit held in June 2017.

2. Planning, Strategy and Demographic Context

Planning and Strategy Context

- 2.1 Wirral Council's Local Development Plan currently comprises the 'saved' policies of the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral (UDP) (February 2000) and the associated proposals map. Wirral Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Core Strategy which will update the Council's long-term vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the Borough.
- 2.2 A Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy was consulted on from 12 December 2012 to 11 February 2013. The Council is currently undertaking a Development Options Review, with a view to producing a revised Draft Local Plan by December 2018.
- 2.3 A full review of the adopted UDP and the emerging Core Strategy (based on the Proposed Modifications to the Proposed Submission Draft, July 2013) has been undertaken as part of the preparation of the RDP.
- 2.4 In summary it is noted that the RDP for New Ferry should be developed in line with adopted policy but with relevant weight attributed to emerging policy objectives and aims.
- 2.5 The review of the UDP and the emerging Core Strategy has confirmed that policies relevant to the New Ferry area are largely broad overarching policies to be applied borough-wide. These policies promote uses which are generally accepted as appropriate town centre uses (generally noted to be the following Use Classes: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1, D1, D2 (excluding outdoor sport and recreation)). Residential development could also be permitted outside of street level retail and commercial frontages; on upper floors and on 'backland' sites if an acceptable level of amenity can be secured.
- 2.6 It is noted within the policy review that it is stipulated in the Local Centre, commercial units should be situated at the ground floor level of properties and each should display an active frontage that is in keeping with the area. Offices and residential uses will also be acceptable above the ground floor providing the uses are compatible with one another and that they have appropriate access arrangements. Moreover, general design policies and guidance will apply to all development so as to ensure that the character of the area is protected and amenity is retained.
- 2.7 Though there are no specific restrictions to New Ferry Centre identified in either the adopted or emerging policy documents, it is mentioned that a key priority is to reduce the level of worklessness in residential areas of the New Ferry area, therefore new employment uses will be encouraged. As there is a recognised need for housing across the borough as a whole, there

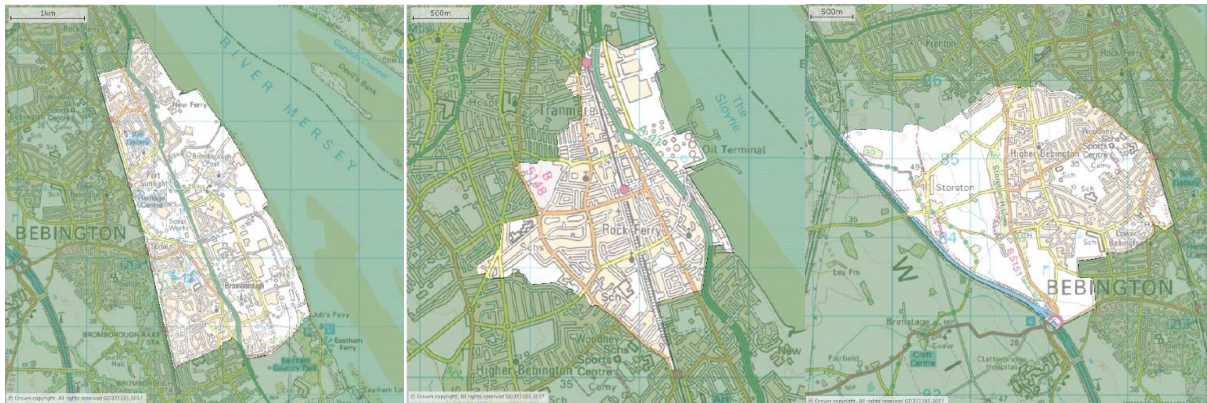
may be opportunity to allocate additional housing at the site in order to contribute towards the current housing supply.

- 2.8 With specific reference to housing, it is noted within the 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) that a minimum of 82% of households overall, and 87% of newly forming households, are unable to afford to purchase a house within Wirral. Analysing private market rents, a minimum of 36% of overall households are unable to afford to rent in the private market, with this increasing to 46% when considering newly forming households.
- 2.9 The SHMA identifies that mid-Wirral, Bromborough & Eastham and Heswall are estimated to have the highest proportion of existing households unable to afford access to owner occupier market housing. This is despite house prices in the former two areas being considerably lower than places such as Hoylake and West Kirby and the Rural Areas, and reflects the much lower levels of household income in these parts of mid and eastern Wirral.
- 2.10 The SHMA also identifies housing requirements for specific groups in need, including older person households and households including people with a disability. In particular, the considerable growth in the number of older person households will increase the need for a range of housing options to accommodate such households in the future, as well as the need for additional residential care solutions.
- 2.11 UDP Policies HSG2 and HS6 state that the local authority will negotiate with developers to encourage the provision of an element of affordable housing on sites over 1ha, where appropriate.
- 2.12 Emerging Core Strategy Policy CS22 states that proposals for new market housing of 5 or more dwellings will usually be required to provide affordable housing on site. Within areas of greatest need, 10% of housing provided should be affordable. Outside areas of greatest need this proportion increases to 20%. The policy notes that the affordable housing requirement is subject to annual review and may alter in response to development viability and housing need. On this basis it is assumed that the Council would seek up to 20% affordable housing as part of wider residential development in New Ferry through the RDP – dependent on how the development is brought forward and particularly where individual sites are above 1ha in size.
- 2.13 The protection of the Port Sunlight Conservation Area will be of primary importance for any regeneration scheme for the Local Centre as the south boundary is directly adjacent to and partially crossing in to the Conservation Area. A review of current and emerging policies again confirm that there are no detailed restrictions for development that may impact a neighbouring Conservation Area beyond general conditions that the design, character and setting of the Listed Buildings are protected and enhanced where possible.

Demographic Context and Drivers

2.14 New Ferry is contained predominantly within the Bromborough ward and is additionally bounded by Bebington and Rock Ferry wards. Port Sunlight is also captured within these wards. The ward boundaries are shown below for reference at Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Ward Boundaries (Bromborough, Rock Ferry, Bebington)



Source: ONS, 2017

2.15 On the basis that the regeneration of New Ferry will naturally draw on the wider population catchment of the area, we have included data and analysis across the three wards for completeness.

2.16 Analysis has been undertaken of key socio-economic indicators to paint a picture of the context for the RDP including:

- Total population;
- Gender split;
- Age profile;
- Economic activity;
- Economic inactivity;
- Unemployment rate;
- Qualifications;
- Top-3 occupation rate; and
- Car ownership.

2.17 Unless stated the analysis undertaken is based on Census data from 2011 and benchmarked with Wirral and England and Wales where possible.

Figure 2.2: Key Demographic and Economic Indicators

	Ward			Wirral	E&W
	Brombr'gh	Rock Ferry	Bebingt'n		
Total Population*	9,744	9,093	9,250	-	-
% Male*	49%	48%	49%	49%	50%
% Female*	51%	52%	51%	51%	50%
0-24yrs	28%	35%	29%	29%	31%
65yrs+	17%	14%	20%	19%	16%
Ec. Active	7,274	6,183	7,571	-	-
Ec. Inactive	2,284	2,969	2,055	-	-
Retired	5.7%	4.6%	6.4%	6.3%	4.9%
Long Term Sick	7.4%	13.3%	4.9%	7.1%	4.6%
Unemployed	8.3%	14.9%	6.2%	8.9%	7.6%
No Qualifications	16.2%	24%	11.2%	15.3%	15%
Degree or above	24.3%	14.8%	31.4%	27.4%	29.7%
Employed in Top-3 occupation	34.4%	25.3%	42.1%	39%	40.9%
Households with No Car	29%	47%	22%	28%	26%

* Data source: ONS Population Estimate 2013

2.18 The following observations are made in relation to the key statistics obtained:

- Wirral is noted to be generally in line with the national indicators with the exception of a number of critical measures:
 - An above average proportion of residents aged over 65 years, suggesting greater pressures around an ageing population locally;
 - Above average retired and long-term sick residents - , highlighting increased resource pressures on the local authority and partners within Wirral around benefits and health service provision;
 - An above average unemployment rate, albeit relatively marginal; and
 - An above average proportion of households without a car – highlighting the importance of local service provision (retail, health and others).

- The demographic and economic characteristics of Bromborough generally mirror those of the wider Wirral area with the following exceptions:
 - Higher rates of long term sick, working aged residents without qualifications, and households without access to a car.
- Generally against the indicators identified it is noted that regeneration need / under-performance against the wider comparators is more prevalent in the Rock Ferry ward, with the Bebington ward noted to perform relatively well in the same context.
- Specific local issues noted are summarised below, combined these characteristics support the need to provide services and employment opportunities within the local area, alongside the creation of an appropriate residential offer to accommodate the specific needs identified:
 - Ageing population – local service provision, potential specialised housing needs;
 - Levels of residents who are long-term sick – local service provision, potential specialised housing needs;
 - Above average unemployment rates – employment opportunities, affordable housing;
 - Below average rates of residents employed in top-3 occupations (being Managers, directors and senior officials; Professional occupations; and Associate professional and technical occupations) – affordable housing; and
 - Above average proportion of households without access to a car – local service provision.

3. Commercial Market Context

- 3.1 GVA have prepared a commercial market assessment of New Ferry set in wider national and regional market trends. This assessment has focused on the retail and leisure sector, based on the identified key market opportunities across New Ferry. A specific office market assessment has not been undertaken on the basis that any offices in New Ferry are likely to be in the form of professional services, such as estate agents, which typically occupy the ground floor of A2 units alongside A1 retail occupiers.

Market Trend Commentary

Economic Context

- 3.2 The UK economy shrugged off the immediate impact of the EU referendum result and economic growth in the second half of 2016 was broadly in line with the long-term trend (0.5% in Q3 and 0.7% in Q4). Overall service sector growth slowed, although business services and finance held up well.
- 3.3 The main impact of the referendum result to date has been on the foreign exchange markets. Sterling has seen a significant devaluation, which is helping to boost exports a little, but is increasingly being felt in the rising costs of imported goods. This is now feeding through to inflation, with CPI reaching 2.7% in April, up from 2.3% in March and just 0.3% a year ago. Inflation will rise further this year and CPI is likely to peak at, or a little above 3%.
- 3.4 A total of 1.3 million jobs have been added to the UK labour force over the last three years. This rate of growth was unsustainable and had already peaked prior the referendum, which sparked a more marked slowdown. However, the labour market has now accelerated again. The number of employees in employment rose by an impressive 136,000 in the period January-March compared with the previous three months.
- 3.5 The number of people working full-time increased by an even higher 200,000, showing that this growth is not being fuelled by part-time jobs or zero-hours contracts. Given the uncertainties surrounding Brexit and the tightness of the labour market, the rate of job creation in the UK is likely to slow again in the second half of the year.
- 3.6 The unemployment rate has fallen further to just 4.6%, the lowest since 1975. The labour market is therefore very tight, even without taking into account any supply factors that may arise as a result of Brexit. However, this is not feeding through to higher wages. Growth in employee pay (excluding bonuses) has moderated further to 2.1%, and is now below CPI inflation. This will start to put pressure on household spending power.

Sector Trends - Changing Retailer Space Requirements

- 3.7 During the recession retailers' margins were squeezed, whilst other costs continued to rise. Over this time and subsequently, a raft of multiple and independent retailers have either collapsed or significantly shrunk their store portfolios in recent years.
- 3.8 The growth of the internet during this period meant that retailers no longer needed stores in every town to achieve national coverage, and many are therefore focused their development programmes on the provision of large flagship stores in strategic locations, supported by smaller satellite store and transactional websites. Many operators are continuing to close stores in less-profitable, smaller locations as leases expire.
- 3.9 The larger flagships accommodate full product ranges whilst smaller stores offer more select ranges, supplemented by internet kiosks allowing access to the full range. This offers many advantages to retailers including lower property costs, more efficient logistics and being able to open stores where there is a high level of demand despite there being space restrictions. This 'polarisation' of retailing is enabling larger dominant centres to continue to attract key flagship formats. This can pose a particular challenge to smaller and medium-sized centres, where there are higher order centres in close proximity.
- 3.10 An often inevitable consequence is that smaller and medium-sized centres become home to more, value-orientated retailers – Poundland, Wilkinsons, and so on – who are more reluctant to pay the rental costs associated with higher-order centres, and, much in the same way that Woolworths previously did, are developing a comprehensive network of coverage in smaller towns, often by being able to acquire prime retail sites at relatively competitive rates.
- 3.11 The growth in online sales has previously raised concerns about the continued need for bricks and mortar stores; however trends indicate that online and in-store shopping channels are becoming increasingly blurred.
- 3.12 The 'Click and Collect' market continues to see significant growth. In 2014 it was forecast to be one of the most significant drivers of growth, with expenditure set to grow by 82% between 2014 and 2019 to £6.5bn (Verdict 2014), a trend which is being evidenced across modern high streets.
- 3.13 Verdict commented that 'the importance of click & collect should not be underestimated. Maintaining a store network that can offer locality, whilst also having highly informative websites to drive growth, is now a fundamental requirement'. It can be used as an important tool in helping town centres to continue to have an important role and function, by being a footfall generator in its own right.

- 3.14 Despite being a relatively new concept for the retail sector to embrace, 'Click & Collect' is therefore affirming that physical stores can continue to have a role in the multichannel shopping environment. The advantages of physical stores, in terms of the shopping experience, service and immediacy of products in a showroom setting, will ensure that a network of key stores remains a fundamental component of retailer's strategies to provide an integrated multichannel retail proposition. The 'Click & Collect' phenomenon can be expected to drive an occupier desire to maintain a representation of physical store units across town centres.

Sector Trends - The role of the town centre

- 3.15 The town centre has been the main shopping channel for centuries, but in the face of new forms of e-tailing (i.e. online shopping) and m-tailing (shopping through mobile phones, tablets and so on) competition many centres will need to continue to adapt in order to remain viable shopping destinations.
- 3.16 Many centres are increasingly positioning themselves as being locations for leisure and social activities as well as traditional retailing, with more bars, restaurants, food outlets and community spaces. Presence of wifi connectivity and town centre information immediately available to consumers is becoming increasingly important and can significantly contribute to local branding.
- 3.17 Retail centres across Wirral have scope to increase the level of provision of bars, restaurants, cafes and food outlets which will help to ensure that footfall, particularly outside of retail trading hours, is strengthened.
- 3.18 Centres which offer a unique/specialist retail offer which cannot be matched online are also likely to continue to perform strongly. Enhancing the non-retail offer so town and district centres function as more than just retail locations will help drive footfall and increase dwell time. It is increasingly important for centres to promote unique attractions such as heritage assets, historic buildings and cultural features which can differentiate a centre and improve its attractiveness. The close proximity to Port Sunlight Village provides a key opportunity for New Ferry in this regard.
- 3.19 To ensure that town and district centres have a viable function moving forwards they must provide an attractive shopping and leisure experience which the internet is unable to match. A wider strategy must deliver a mix of town centre uses to enhance the attraction of a centre, and increase frequency of visit and dwell time. A vital component of this will be making town centres as accessible as possible, with improved and affordable car parking, as well as investment in public realm and place marketing initiatives.

Sector Trends - The convenience sector

- 3.20 The convenience goods market has witnessed a fundamental change in shopping patterns in recent years, as people increasingly prefer to shop more frequently in smaller format 'convenience' stores such as Sainsbury's Local, Tesco Express, Co-operative, Marks & Spencer Simply Food and Little Waitrose.
- 3.21 The Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) estimate that the UK grocery market was worth £177.5bn in 2015, and of this 'convenience stores' (defined by IGD as stores under 3,000 sq ft net) claiming £37.7bn of this (21.2%). However, notwithstanding the unquestionable growth in the popularity of 'convenience' stores, most of the food shopping spend is still accounted for by larger-format stores — £71.7bn was spent in 'hypermarkets and superstores' (stores over 25,000 sq ft net), and a further £35.4bn in 'small supermarkets' (stores between 3,000 and 25,000 sq ft net).
- 3.22 There is still therefore clearly a role for the larger-format store to play in convenience goods shopping, and indeed these remain the principle format of convenience goods shopping for the District, but more widely speaking operators are opening smaller format stores than was the case previously.
- 3.23 The appetite from foodstore operators to open new stores is returning gradually but only where exceptional trading opportunities are available. Furthermore, the size of foodstores being committed to is significantly less than has previously been the case. We expect the 'big four' retailers to be significantly more selective in committing to new sites, instead focussing upon programmes of enhancement and upgrade to their existing store network where this is considered to be needed. New Ferry is noted to be relatively well served in larger format convenience retail offer.

Sector Trends - Commercial Leisure

- 3.24 As the nature of retail and high-street shopping continues to change over time, the commercial leisure sector is becoming an increasingly important contributor to the vitality and viability of town centres.
- 3.25 Leisure time is a precious commodity to consumers and in order to maximise free time, research suggests that town centre visitors often combine leisure activities as part of an overall going out experience. Reflecting this trend, leisure is becoming an increasingly important component in town centre regeneration schemes, particularly in secondary towns where reflecting the wider trends in the retail sector previously identified are in some cases becoming less attractive as retail destinations.

- 3.26 The recession brought mixed fortunes for the restaurant sector. The main casualties were from the more exclusive end of the market, as well as smaller companies with less established brands. Many companies owning multiple brands expanded throughout the economic downturn and continue to trade well, often by offering heavy promotions and discounts. In recent years, expansion in the restaurant sector has been driven by 'casual dining' operators such as Byron, Giraffe, GBK, Wagamama, Carluccios, Pizza Express and so on.
- 3.27 The coffee shop sector remains buoyant; there are now approximately 16,500 coffee shops across the country. Recent analysis shows that the UK's coffee shop sector remains one of the most successful in the nation's economy and will continue to expand. Operators such as Costa are now a High Street staple whilst the independent coffee shop sector is also growing store numbers.
- 3.28 The pub industry suffered during the recession with a record number of pub closures across the UK as a direct consequence of a decline in both drinks sales and rental revenues. This decline continues today, at a rate of approximately 30 pub closures per week across the country. Many pubs have in recent years been converted to small-format convenience stores.
- 3.29 Additional factors such as competition from supermarkets, changes to licensing legislation and the smoking ban have further compounded the problems faced by many operators. Similar to the foodstores, however, value led brands such as JD Wetherspoon have achieved sales growth in recent years and continue to expand. Increasingly, the popularity of specialist pubs offering craft beers and local ales has been evident, with this now a recognised trend across most urban areas.
- 3.30 The health and fitness sector continues to perform strongly as the social trend involving the maintenance of personal health and fitness shows no sign of abating. The health and fitness market is currently being expanded through investment by value and budget operators such as Easy Gym, The Gym Group and Pure Gym. This new breed of venues aims to appeal to a wider market with flexible, low cost monthly or 'pay as you go' subscriptions. These facilities are usually located in high-footfall or edge of centre locations, often as part of a wider leisure offer.

Local market commentary

- 3.31 The Wirral Retail and Leisure Study update was completed in March 2016. The study identified an increasing tendency for shoppers to look towards out-of-centre shopping destinations in Wirral for comparison retail purchases.

- 3.32 The proportion of convenience retail expenditure retained across the eleven sub-zones that make up the study area covering Wirral is consistently high, indicating its residents are well provided for in the food retail sector.
- 3.33 In terms of comparison retail floorspace, the study concludes there is no surplus in spending to support a significant increase in floorspace in Wirral until 2020 onwards. By 2030, there is significant capacity identified for new comparison retail floorspace in Birkenhead, which provides scope for a sizeable expansion of the town centre by up to 8,694 sqm.
- 3.34 The nature of the retail market across Wirral is relatively dispersed reflecting the dispersal of activity across the main centres of Birkenhead and Wallasey (Liscard). These centres are defined as being the main centres on the basis of the monitoring of data by national sources including PROMIS. By way of further indicator of the relative positioning of the centres, a full PROMIS report is only available for Birkenhead town centre.
- 3.35 New Ferry has not been immune to the wider market influences noted earlier in this section including economic and political influences, in addition to the continued impact of on-line retailing and expansion of offer within major foodstores presenting key challenges to the local scale high street. It is noted from engagement with stakeholders and the local community that the opening of the New Ferry Bypass resulted in less traffic flow through the area and therefore less chance of spontaneous visitors or visits by passers-by who see something to return to at a later date.
- 3.36 The retail offer within New Ferry is noted to have been struggling before the explosion in March 2017, but this incident has clearly exacerbated the decline of retail locally. Whilst many of the retailers of New Ferry remained open for business throughout the initial recovery phase, but road closure and restrictions on pedestrian access naturally impacted on footfall and trade.
- 3.37 The 2009 Roger Tym and Partners retail study undertaken on behalf of the Council drew some critical conclusions around New Ferry. These included:
- New Ferry is Wirral's second lowest ranking 'Key Town Centre' in the national retail rankings and, in our assessment, the centre has been in long-term decline. New Ferry has a limited comparison retail offer with very few national multiple operators (further compounded by the closure of Woolworths earlier that year), a convenience sector offer which also caters for a localised catchment, and limited representation from service operators. The retail and service sector offer in New Ferry is firmly oriented towards the discount end of the market.
 - New Ferry is also characterised by its very high vacancy rate. Indeed, the proliferation of derelict property and vacant units with heavy shutters dominates both the town centre environment and the gateways into New Ferry. RTP consider that the centre would benefit

from consolidation and intensification around a central core. The vacant property could be redeveloped for alternative, more viable uses, and the centre should be contracted to a size which better reflects its current role.

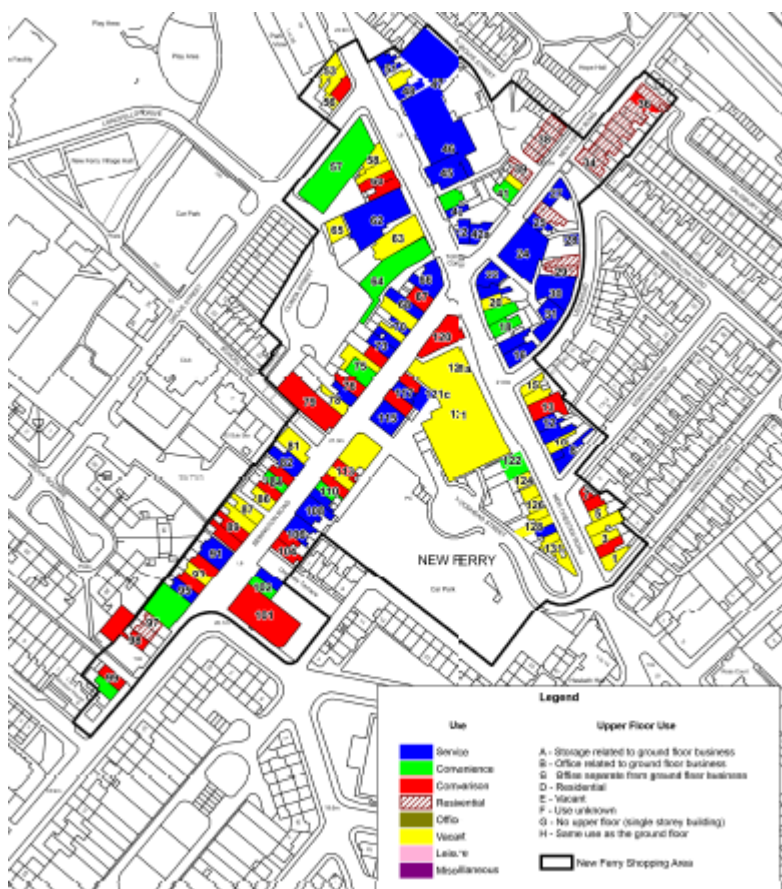
- Despite the deficiencies outlined above, New Ferry does benefit from a key asset – the Wirral Farmers' Market, and there may be scope to capitalise upon this asset in the future. Nevertheless, New Ferry no longer justifies 'town centre' status and, in RTP's assessment, it is not even capable of functioning as a 'district centre'.
- In some cases, such as New Ferry, the key to a sustainable future will be to accept that the centre is physically too big for its current (and future) role in the Borough's hierarchy of centres. Consolidating the centre around a more appropriate core area would require a range of proactive, targeted measures, including:
 - acquisition and clearance of poor quality/vacant/low demand property, preferably through co-operation with landowners but potentially by recourse to CPO, if necessary;
 - relocation of existing occupants from affected property;
 - provision of new, more appropriate premises within a better laid-out centre;
 - rental incentives to attract businesses into the new premises;
 - and - provision of complementary non-retail facilities

3.38 Data from PMA Promis shows that in terms of comparison goods shopping patterns within Wirral, Birkenhead Centre gets 16.66% of the market share and Croft Leisure and Retail Park gets 16.93%. In contrast New Ferry has a limited comparison retail offer and retailers include a florist, general household goods store and takeaway cafés. There is insufficient footfall to maintain the quantum of comparison goods stores on Bebington Road and New Chester Road.

3.39 New Ferry's town centre comparison retail offer is limited and focused on the lower end of the market, with very little middle market retailers still operating. There is a pull from Croft Retail and Leisure Park (Bromborough) which is a 500,000 sq ft development attracting 100,000 customers a week (source: PMA Promis). Retail tenants here include M&S Food, The Range, Dunelm and Next with leisure occupiers including Odeon, Gala Bingo. The Croft Retail and Leisure Park commands the highest retail rents across the Wirral peninsula.

3.40 Figure 3.1 illustrates the geographical spread of retail across the defined shopping area of New Ferry, broken down by type.

Figure 3.1: Retail by Type, New Ferry (February 2017)



Source: Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, 2017

- 3.41 Data from PMA Promis states that the highest rents here are achieved on those units let to high street retailers, such as JD Sports, Superdrug and Marks & Spencer Simply Food, in 2015 at £35 psf headline. Rents for larger bulky goods stores are £20-£25 psf.
- 3.42 Rents for restaurant (leisure) units at the park stand at around £25 psf, with the highest rents of £40 psf being achieved on the drive thru' units; a letting to Costa in 2012 achieved £32.50 psf. The most recent rent reviews in 2011 were documented at nil increase.
- 3.43 In terms of convenience shopping patterns within Wirral, Aldi New Ferry has 4.18% of Wirral's market share evidencing a significant draw on its catchment, and a strong level of performance in the market.
- 3.44 A Town Centre 'in house' study provided to GVA by Wirral Council as part of the preparation of this report indicates that there are nearly forty vacant retail units interspersed throughout New Ferry.
- 3.45 There is 19,288 sq ft of vacant space on New Chester Road with prominent main road frontage containing units including the former Co-operative store. The closure of the Co-

operative store has left a large vacant unit and indicates a struggling retail market which has an oversupply of units.

- 3.46 The New Chester Road former Co-op premises are held by a full repairing and insuring lease for a term of 30 years, expiring in September 2036 at a current passing rental of £265,952 per annum with 2.25% rental uplifts. GVA understand this is to the Cooperative store and their decision to close despite holding a long-lease suggests trading conditions were difficult and revenue was not sufficient to cover operational costs. The Liverpool GVA Retail Agency team understand that the Cooperative's site requirements are generally focused on stores of a maximum of circa 4,000 sq ft.
- 3.47 In terms of leisure, there is evidence of a limited evening economy in New Ferry. There are a significant number of public houses and takeaway facilities, but no real restaurants to speak of to draw people into the centre. . The most notable restaurants are located at nearby Croft Retail Park, Bromborough where there are national chains such as Nandos and Pizza Hut.
- 3.48 It is generally recognised that Wirral is under-served in terms of gym provision, with requirements known in the market place particularly for budget gym operators should there be a suitable space; operators usually require free car parking provision for customers so a unit with proximity to car parking would be sought.
- 3.49 Whilst New Ferry still has a Post Office (on Chester Road), which is an important asset locally, it is notable that the high street has lost all standalone banking facilities in recent years. Whilst this is not uncommon in the current market it does have a direct knock-on effect on footfall.

Local rental values

- 3.50 There is limited lease transaction activity recorded on the CoStar database for properties in New Ferry. The five lease transactions available on CoStar are included in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – Retail Lease Transactions

	Size SqFt	Date	Type	Rent per SqFt
26 Bebington Rd	1,397	25/03/2017	New	£5.15
43 Bebington Rd	5,426	16/06/2016	New	£2.30
76 New Chester Rd	7,452	26/04/2016	Renewal	£2.62
32-34 Bebington Rd	3,346	02/10/2015	New	£7.47
39 New Chester Rd	268	06/07/2015	New	£17.46

Source: CoStar, June 2017

- 3.51 The rental tone for New Ferry is relatively low. Although CoStar cannot be relied upon to include all transactions, the limited number of transaction information available suggests there is not much market activity.
- 3.52 GVA retail surveyors confirmed that rents for quality retail could be expected to be £13-£15 per sq ft, particularly if anchored by a tenant / activity, and if delivered as part of a wider regeneration project.
- 3.53 A budget gym operator would pay a rent of circa £10 per sq ft with a yield of circa 7.5%.

Conclusion

- 3.54 With Croft Retail and Leisure Park being an established local shopping facility – housing 500,000 sq ft retail including a number of traditional high street names and attracting 100,000 customers a week – it is unlikely that New Ferry will be able to directly compete.
- 3.55 Instead, it has the opportunity to create an alternative offer and become a visitor destination in its own right.
- 3.56 There is insufficient footfall to maintain the quantum of comparison goods stores on Bebington Road and New Chester Road and a focus should be on improving the quality of retail, consolidating where possible and concentrating activity rather than expanding total retail floorspace.
- 3.57 There is opportunity to explore options with the Cooperative regarding the premises on New Chester Road which they are liable for by lease terms. This could bring new activity in to the district centre and the Cooperative are likely to engage as there is prospect to reduce their financial commitment to the premises.

- 3.58 Supporting this diversification and generation of footfall for a newly cast high street is the opportunity to deliver housing as part of the town centre (considered in more detail in the following section). Market views suggest that this residential growth will be necessary to support new retail provision and particularly to attract occupiers to the area.
- 3.59 Within New Ferry it is recognised that there are a number of important and niche independent businesses including Edge the Butchers and it still has a dedicated Post Office. The Village Hall is home to the award winning monthly farmers market, drawing people in from a wide area of Wirral, Cheshire, Liverpool and beyond, and New Ferry benefits from its immediate adjacency to the established and award winning attraction of Port Sunlight which has untapped potential for the town centre. These are key assets to build upon within the RDP.

4. Residential Market Context

- 4.1 In line with the planning policy review and in response to a recognised market opportunity and need to underpin regeneration ambitions in New Ferry with housing development and population growth, we have undertaken an assessment of the local residential market set in the context of national trends.

National Market Context

National Supply Position

- 4.2 The supply of homes for sale continues to stay low. A shortage of homes for sale has been a constraint on market activity. New instructions for home sales fell for the 17th consecutive month in July and the average stock levels on estate agents' books are close to an all-time low (RICS monthly report).
- 4.3 As reported by GVA¹, there were 39,310 completions in Q4 2015 in England, the highest quarterly total since the end of 2008.
- 4.4 The rolling annual total for Q1 of 142,890 was also the highest for seven years and marks a gradual increase in the level of house building completions since Q2 2013, when completions were 106,960.
- 4.5 The rate of house building is struggling to keep up with the pace of household growth which would require 230,000 completions per annum for the next five years in England, 60% above the current rate, as well as extra to make up the back log. This needs to be housing of all tenures, with a pressing need for housing at the affordable and intermediate levels of the market.

National House Price Analysis

- 4.6 Across the UK as a whole, in August 2017 average house prices now stand at £210,495 (Halifax HPI). Seasonally adjusted housing transaction completions with a value of £40,000 or above, across the UK, were at 104,760 in July showing an increase of 1.3% between June 2017 and July 2017 (HMRC).
- 4.7 According to the latest Halifax House Price Index, house prices in the three months to August 2017 were 0.1% higher than in the three months to May 2017. Annual house price growth was at 2.6%.

¹ GVA UK Housing Market Outlook Spring 2016

Rental market / Buy to Rent / Private Rented Sector

- 4.8 While home ownership remains the government's primary concern, PRS is a fast growing area of the market. It has the ability to deliver a large number of new units quickly whereas developers need to phase delivery to maintain sales rates and avoid market saturation.
- 4.9 Local authorities recognise the role of this sector in helping to address the pressures on housing in their local markets and are working alongside developers and operators to identify appropriate sites and deliver more units. The recent increase to stamp duty for non-primary home and corporate purchases provide a double hit for investors looking at this sector.
- 4.10 Home ownership levels are likely to continue to decline, largely due to affordability constraints and the imbalance in supply. Meanwhile, projections for the number of people living in rented accommodation maintain an upward trajectory.

Local Market Context*House prices*

- 4.11 The average prices for Wirral, North West and England according to the Land Registry's House Price Index are listed for each house type in Table 4.3. The table shows the change in house prices according to house type in the Wirral in the preceding five years using data sourced from the Land Registry House Price Index.

Table 4.3 - Average Price of Homes and Sales Volume.

	July 2013	July 2014	July 2015	July 2016	July 2017
Average Price					
Wirral					
Detached	£219,980	£230,110	£235,926	£245,067	£259,202
Semi	£144,326	£152,336	£156,076	£161,887	£171,313
Terraced	£99,904	£106,332	£108,038	£112,543	£117,390
Flats	£86,896	£90,837	£92,111	£95,801	£101,824
All	£131,464	£138,657	£141,579	£147,113	£155,122
Liverpool					
All	£107,993	£111,530	£116,094	£120,614	£127,474
North West					
All	£129,713	£136,629	£141,510	£150,341	£157,427
England					
All	£184,274	£200,825	£213,518	£230,868	£243,220
Total sales volume (May 2017)					
Wirral	382	480	525	450	317
North West	8,121	9,768	11,481	10,423	8,014
England	72,830	86,092	93,040	77,919	58,209

Source: Land Registry House Price Index 2017

- 4.12 From the data in Table 4.3 we can see that house prices in the Wirral for all house types have increased over the last five years and are broadly in line with the North West Average.
- 4.13 In the years 2013-2015, the average house prices in Wirral exceed those of the North West, and Liverpool more locally.
- 4.14 In terms of sales volumes in the Wirral, these have steadily increased up until 2015 after which we can see a reduction which has continued in to this year. This is a pattern that can be seen at a regional and national level and therefore representative of the national housing market.
- 4.15 According to Rightmove most of the sales in New Ferry over the past year were terraced properties which sold at an average price of £100,326. Semi-detached properties sold at an average price of £124,738 and flats averaged at £106,167. These figures are significantly lower than the average prices across Wirral as a whole sourced from the Land Registry.
- 4.16 Adjacent to New Ferry, on the other side of the aptly named Boundary Road, is Port Sunlight. Here the majority of the dwellings are terraces, semi-detached and detached and of a

notably higher quality with large front and rear gardens and distinctive architecture. Here there are significantly higher sale rates of around £190 per sq ft.

4.17 Local agent's consulted with as part of this process stated that properties here consistently achieve within 5% of their asking price and emphasised that the Listed status of homes within Port Sunlight warrants their relatively high sales values. According to Rightmove, terraced properties sold on average at £122,907, semi-detached properties sold at an average of £143,382 and detached properties sold at an average of £181,245 within Port Sunlight.

4.18 New build development activity within a five-mile radius of the centre of New Ferry is listed below:

Mallory Park, Birkenhead by Bellway Homes

- New homes from £198,995 to £236,995
- Development of ninety 3 and 4-bedroom new homes in Prenton, Birkenhead

Kings Hill, New Chester Road by Bellway Homes

- New homes from £207,995 to £264,995
- Development of circa one hundred 3 and 4-bedroom semi-detached and detached new homes in Bromborough

Victoria Place, Birkenhead by Lovell Homes

- 2 bedroom homes starting from £109,995
- Development of seventy-five 2, 3 and 4 bedroom

Minshall Way, Rock Ferry by Lovell Homes

- 2 bedroom homes starting from £109,995
- Development of one hundred and twelve 2, 3 and 4 bedroom

4.19 The closest new build residential developments include two sites which are under construction by PLC housebuilder Bellway and another with Lovell Homes, all within a two mile radius of the site. These are marketed with ambitious asking prices equating to values upwards of £200 per sq ft. There are no new build properties currently within New Ferry itself.

4.20 In comparison to this new build activity, our analysis of secondary stock activity shows sold sales values are around £125 per sq ft. This is below the typical threshold for viable development which is circa £145 per sq ft – a sales value sufficient to cover development costs, profit and purchaser's costs whilst supporting a land value sufficient to encourage a land owner to sell.

- 4.21 The low prices of the secondary housing stock reflect the overall demand for and quality of properties in the vicinity which have varying standards of interior and exterior finish.
- 4.22 Local residential sales agents operating in the New Ferry area stated that homes sell quickly when priced right. They explained the demand is for 2 and 3 bed family homes.

Housing need

- 4.23 The SHMA concludes that between 875 dwellings per acre (dpa) and 1,235 dpa represents an appropriate objectively assessed need (OAN) housing range for Wirral over the plan period 2014-2032. A slightly lower range, of between 855 dpa and 1,185 dpa could be justified over a longer time period, to 2037. This will provide a realistic level of housing provision which responds to economic growth, affordable housing need, market signals and demographic challenges that are present in the Borough (particularly the ageing population and shrinking labour force).
- 4.24 In terms of whether an adjustment should be made to address worsening market signals it is considered that some upward adjustment could be necessary relative to adjoining areas (notably elsewhere in Merseyside). This was due in part to the high rate of change in the affordability ratio and house price rises more generally, although it is recognised that there are substantial spatial discrepancies across the Borough, with house price pressures generally more significant to the west of the M53.
- 4.25 There are a range of housing requirements which are specific to certain groups in Wirral Borough. In particular, the SHMA faces considerable growth in the number of older person households and this will increase the need for a range of housing options to accommodate such households in the future, as well as the need for additional residential care solutions.

Affordable housing

- 4.26 The SHMA states a minimum of 82% of households overall, and 87% of newly forming households, are unable to afford to purchase a house within Wirral. Analysing private market rents, a minimum of 36% of overall households are unable to afford to rent in the private market, with this increasing to 46% when considering newly forming households. This highlights the scale of affordability pressures that face households in Wirral. However, The SHMA also models a more 'realistic' scenario (assuming households spend 3.3 x times gross income with a 20% deposit) which reduces these figures to 71% and 83%.
- 4.27 An affordability test indicated that the generally higher monthly costs of servicing a mortgage compared to renting mean that a higher proportion of households are unable to buy in Wirral (81.8% of all existing households) than are unable to rent (60.1% of all existing households), with

the figures falling to 71.4% and 35.9% respectively if a sensitivity test is applied incorporating a deposit and/or different income multiples.

Completions

- 4.28 Wirral's Annual Monitoring Report provides progress on delivery against the Local Plan, including new build residential completions.
- 4.29 Prior to the recession, gross completions over the period 2003/04 to 2007/08 averaged 657 dpa, with the highest delivery being 820 dpa in 2007/08. Since 2012/13, gross completions have recovered to the highest level since 2008/09.
- 4.30 Wirral has consistently maintained 2,000 units or above with planning permission for new build housing since 2005. Overall, a total of 6,466 dwellings (gross) were completed between 2003/04 and 2014/15 at an average rate of 539 dpa. While gross completions remained high until the beginning of the recession in 2007/2008, net completions have varied quite significantly (source: Wirral SHMA and Housing Needs Study, 2016).
- 4.31 The proportion of new dwellings completed on previously developed land remained high but had reduced to 92 percent, compared to 95 percent in 2014/15. The number of new affordable dwellings completed reduced to 279 units in 2015/16, from the 315 units delivered in 2014/15. The proportion of new housing located more than 400 metres away from a bus stop or railway station continued to remain low, at just over 1% in 2015/16 (6 units).

Extant Planning Permissions / Residential Pipeline

- 4.32 A planning history search of New Ferry has confirmed there are no extant permissions for residential development above infill scale in the local area.

5. Urban Design Analysis

- 5.1 GVA have worked alongside OPEN in preparing this RDP document. Within the project OPEN's role has been inputting urban design analysis, identifying a physical 'place strategy' for New Ferry, and ultimately the preparation of alternative options for change and investment across the area.
- 5.2 Their analysis is presented across the following diagrams and commentary, focusing on identified under-utilised and vacant sites offering immediate opportunity change, but also examples where physical interventions could address current constraints. All of the diagrams are shown, alongside a photographic record at Appendix I within OPEN's 'New Ferry Workbook'.

Figure 5.1: Area of Study



- 5.3 Within the core of the New Ferry area, the focus of this RDP exercise, there is a clear predominance of commercial (largely retail) uses. These are largely clustered around the Bebington Road / New Ferry Road / New Chester Road axis.
- 5.4 To the east of the area the commercial corridor gives way to high density terraced streets, with the western and southern catchment more typified by a lower, albeit still medium density residential offer. The housing to the south is the well recognisable Port Sunlight neighbourhood.
- 5.5 To the west we see other land uses including small scale industrial activities off Grove Street, and on Grove Street itself a primary school (Grove Street Primary School).

- 5.6 There is limited green space within New Ferry itself, but it sits to the south of New Ferry Park which is overlooked in part by the New Ferry Village Hall – an established and well used community facility.
- 5.7 There are numerous areas of surface level car parking across New Ferry including the larger formal car parks at Woodhead Street (213 spaces) and Grove Street (88 spaces). Both car parks are owned and managed by Wirral MBC. In addition, there are an unspecified but small number of spaces noted at the turning circle of Olinda Street. All car parking across New Ferry is free of charge.
- 5.8 Rockferry and Birkenhead lie to the north of New Ferry, with Bromborough and connectivity to the M53 motorway which in turn connects to the M6 via the M56 motorway to the south. More locally Bebington Railway Station is located within walking distance to the south-west. The station is situated on the Chester and Ellesmere Port branches of the Wirral Line, forming part of the Merseyrail network.

Figure 5.2: New Ferry Physical SWOT Analysis



- 5.9 The physical SWOT analysis has identified, amongst other things:
- Poor quality environment, predominantly for pedestrian users, along New Chester Road creating a division between the Bebington Road 'high street' pedestrianised zone and the residential community and retail offer to the east. This corridor is typified by a car-focused environment with areas of narrow pavement and limited / difficult crossing opportunities.

The general 'feel' of the western side of the New Chester Road at the New Ferry crossroads is of an area in general disrepair and decline.

- The explosion in March 2017 has had a direct and very visible impact on the built environment. This is particularly notable on the south-west side of New Ferry, with a number of buildings severely damaged where Boundary Road meets Bebington Road. This includes retail units, residential units, and the commercial unit which had to be completely cleared. The option development process has had full regard to those properties which have been cleared, and those which are being repaired through building insurance claims.
- 'Unmet desire lines', being potential routes of movement which are currently prohibited by the existing built form. These include the links to the car park through the enclosed former Co-Op building, which creates a significant and blank wall barrier between New Chester Road and the community behind with the other half of New Ferry. A further blocked desire line is noted to be the retail units to the north of Bebington Road which form a barrier between the park and residential units to the north and the core of the area.
- The extent and quality of the pedestrianised zone along Bebington Road is noted within the analysis. There are mixed views as to the extent of this stretch, and whether it should be maintained in partial or full form – considered later in this report in more detail. However, the urban design analysis has noted that this area is not of particularly high quality and includes a significant area of under-utilised space that could have a much greater contribution to the centre through the use, for example, of commercialisation / meanwhile activities and a co-ordinated events programme.

5.10 Figure 5.3 illustrates public sector (Wirral MBC) ownership across New Ferry. The Council ownership is shown in blue on the plan. The yellow shading shows adopted highways across the area. The areas shown in blue are exclusively areas currently used as formal and informal parking areas across New Ferry.

Figure 5.3: Public Sector Ownership



Source: Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, 2017

- 5.11 Further analysis has been undertaken of land ownership in relation to key sites identified through the option development process, documented later in the report.

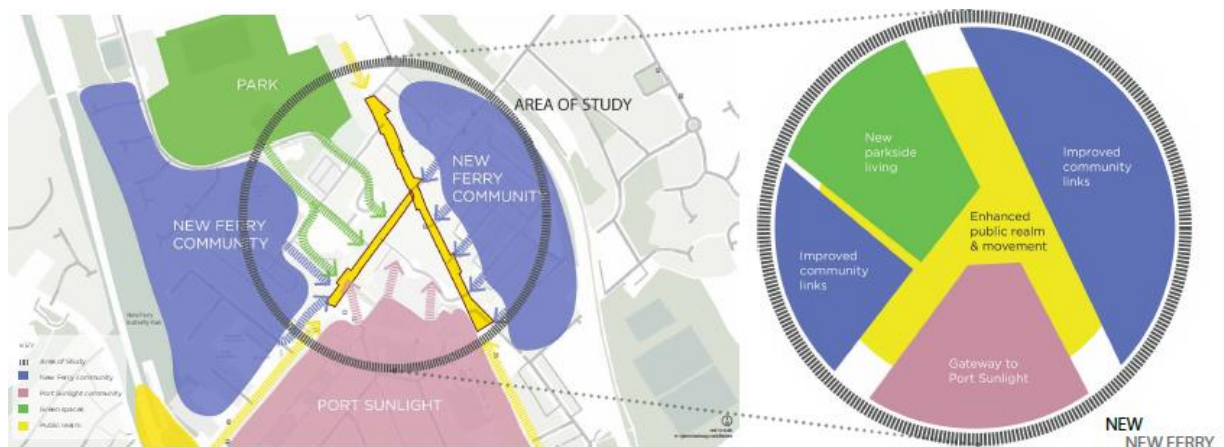
6. Vision and Strategy for New Ferry

6.1 GVA and OPEN alongside Wirral MBC have identified a vision for New Ferry based on an understanding of local need and opportunity, and in the context of wider market influences.

6.2 This vision is for New Ferry, through targeted investment and change to once again become a living and thriving heart for the community – both now and in the future. New Ferry will be:

- A place of high-quality streets and open spaces that put people and their needs and experiences first;
- Somewhere with a range of good quality modern homes which are designed with the community in mind – responding directly to local need, trends in population change, and are of a quality to last and contribute to a local sense of place; and
- A destination with a distinctive commercial offer with supported independent retailers and service provision for the local community, a programme of inclusive and exciting events and a vibrant and more visible market space as an attracter but also to meet local convenience needs.

Figure 7.1: Strategy Concept Diagram



6.3 It is proposed that this period of change is used to shape an enhanced local centre; characterised by independent retail, markets and events that are more closely connected to the surrounding community and reinforced through new residential development and central living.

6.4 The suggested changes will:

- Use selective demolition and current public sector ownership as an opportunity to rethink uses & relationships, reshaping the retail offer to support existing independent businesses and attract new investment.

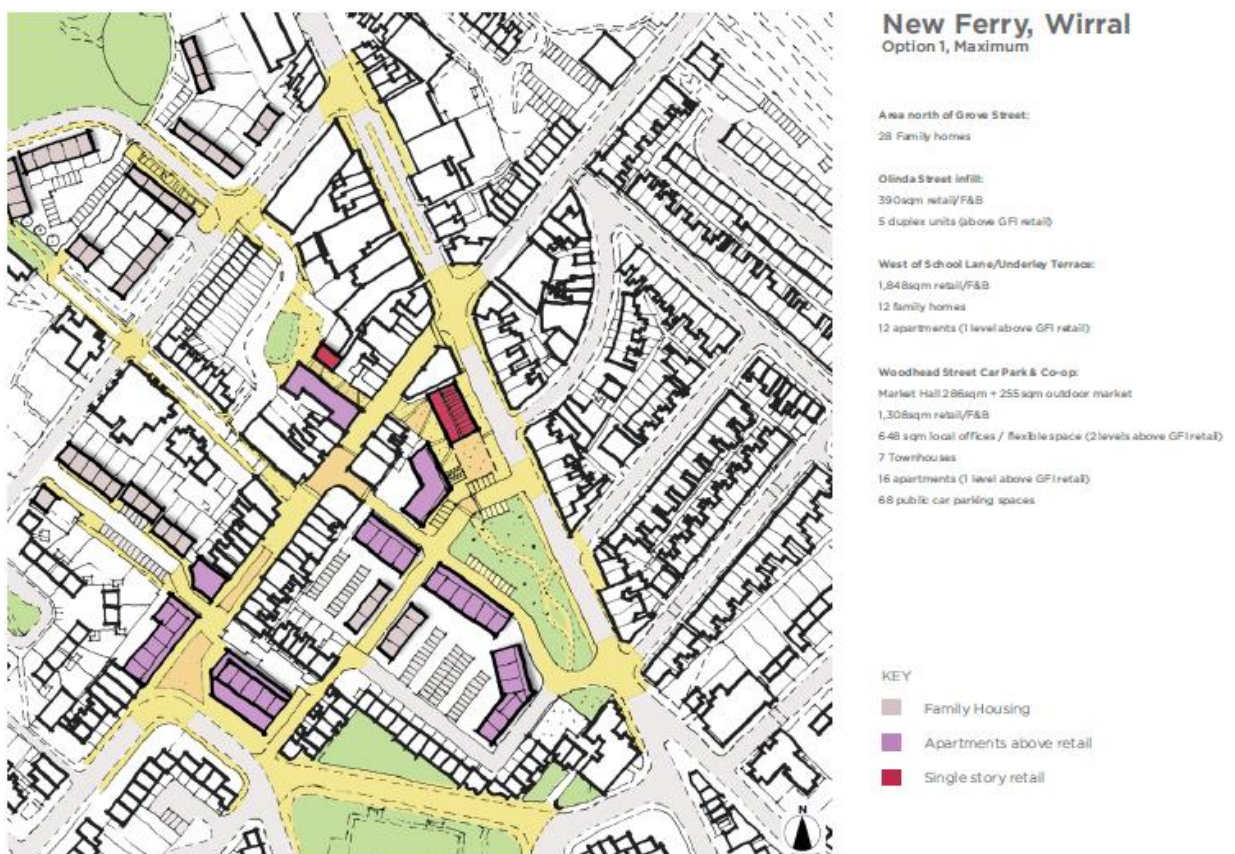
- Draw on existing strengths in the area of open space, built form and character, highlighting the best of New Ferry and Port Sunlight.
- Create a strong visual impact along New Chester Road - announcing arrival at a key centre, with an environment that encourages people to visit and to stay a while.
- Make moving around the centre easier, creating comfortable walking circuits, opening up links between key features and enhancing the quality of the streets and spaces.
- Create better connections to Port Sunlight, acting as a northern gateway to the area.
- Define a better balance between people and cars, shaping streets that are comfortable to walk along and to cross.

7. Option Development and Testing

Option Development

- 7.1 A series of options have been developed which respond to the vision and strategy, illustrating different extents of development and change across New Ferry to allow for option testing to be undertaken.
- 7.2 The options have responded to the vision, commercial and residential market analysis, demographic analysis and physical analysis. This includes the need to consolidate retail, provide family homes that capture the design elements of Port Sunlight and residential potential of neighbouring areas and dramatically improve the street scene and public realm.
- 7.3 Four options have been developed by OPEN in liaison with GVA. These options are summarised below. The option drawings are included within the Workbook at Appendix I.

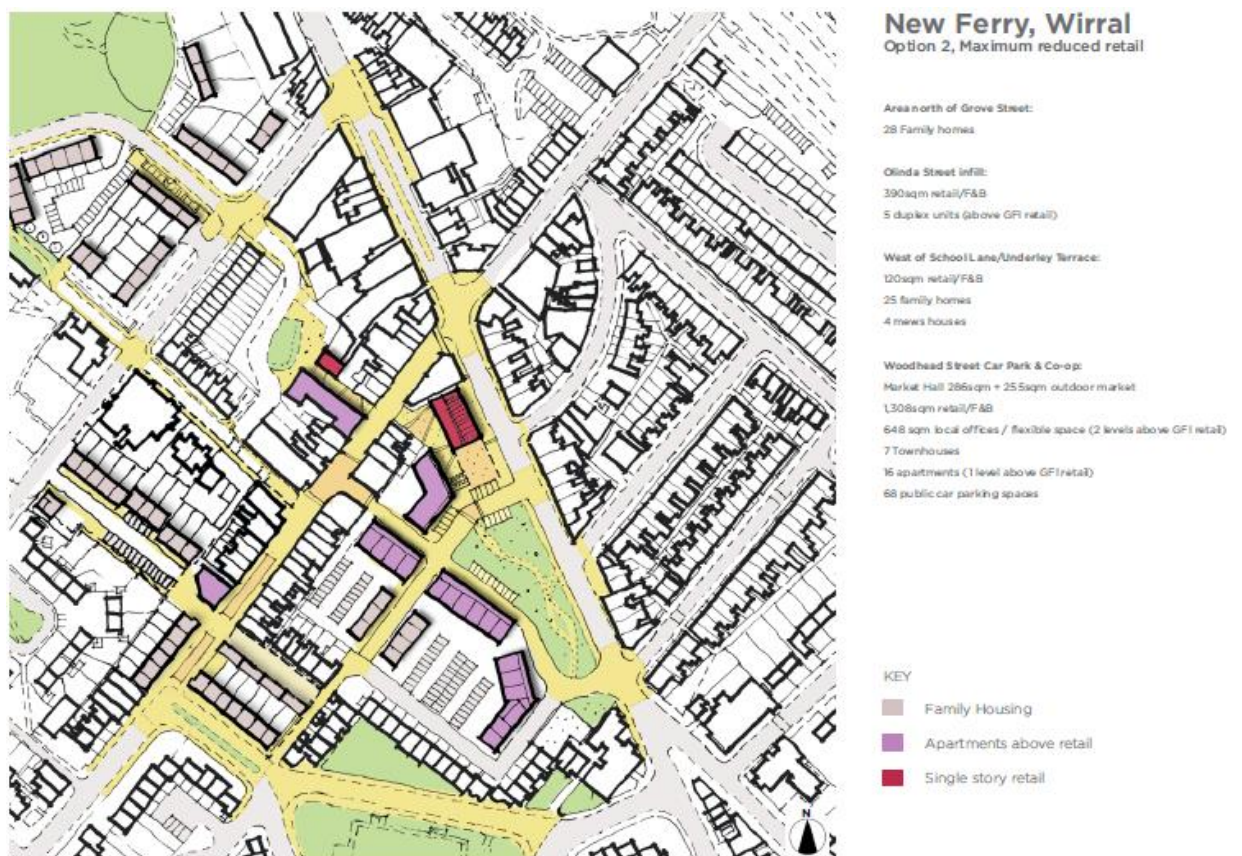
Option 1: Maximum change



- Selective demolition (over and above that demanded by structural problems) to open up new walking routes between key features.
- Clearance of Co-op and vacant properties along southern end of New Chester Road creating a new 'village green' as focal point for the centre.

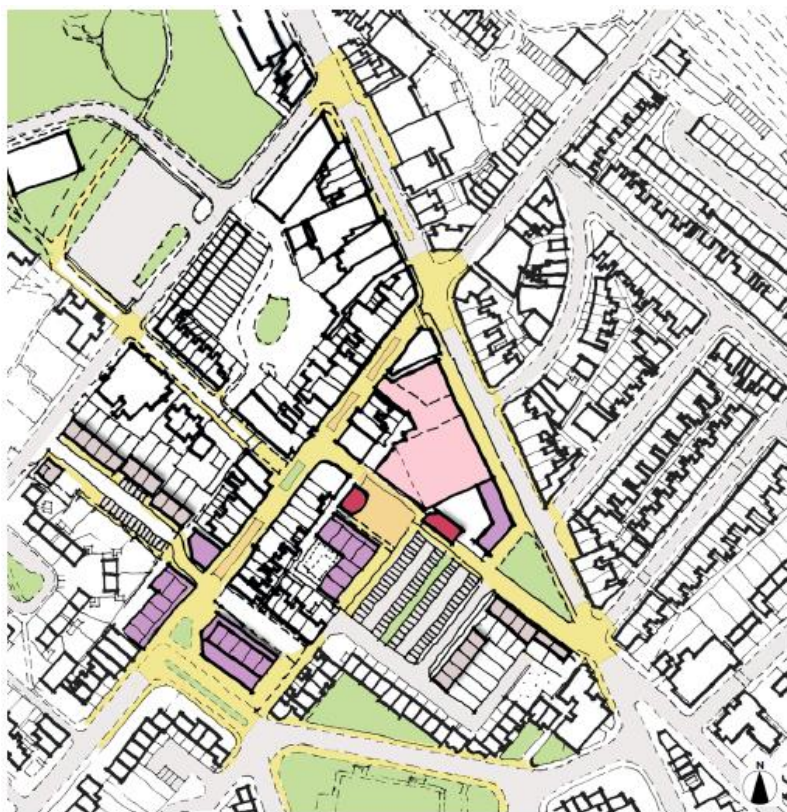
- Break-up the large footprint of the Co-op building to create new market space and change circulation around the central area.
- More efficient use of surface parking areas to accommodate new residential development, screening rear of properties and increasing definition to open spaces.
- New family homes north of Grove Street creating well overlooked routes between school, park and centre.
- Village Hall functions and market moved to new market hall overlooking central public space.
- Enhanced crossing points and increased space for pedestrians along New Chester Road.
- Possible bus-only link on Boundary Road, with bowling green space tying into walking routes through the centre.

Option 2: Maximum with reduced retail



- Option 2 incorporates the same changes as Option 1, but with generally reduced levels of retail provision. Townhouses and mews homes are included at the junction of Boundary Road and Bebington Road, drawing a residential feel from Port Sunlight in to New Ferry centre.

Option 3: Minimum change



New Ferry, Wirral
Option 3, Minimum

West of School Lane/Underley Terrace:
1,848sqm retail/F&B
12 family homes
12 apartments (1 level above GFI retail)

Woodhead Street Car Park & Co-op:
CO-OP to be subdivided to include Market hall and Community centre
1,996sqm total
11 Townhouses
1,012sqm retail/F&B
13 apartments (1 level above GFI retail)
80 public car parking spaces

KEY

- Family Housing
- Apartments above retail
- Single story retail
- Reconfigured Co-op building

- Maintaining basic arrangement of the streets with demolition largely dictated by issues of structural integrity, some supporting in-fill development.
- Retail focus maintained at junction of Boundary Road and Bebington Road with new apartments over ground floor retail space.
- Village Hall retained but market to be accommodated within reconfigured Co-op building alongside some additional community spaces.
- Clearance of vacant properties to south of Co-op, with new pocket green space and overlooking mixed-use development.
- More efficient use of surface parking areas to accommodate new residential development, screening rear of properties and increasing definition to open spaces.
- Enhanced crossing points and increased space for pedestrians along New Chester Road.

Option 4: Minimum with reduced retail



- Option 4 incorporates the same changes as Option 3, but with generally reduced levels of retail provision. Townhouses and mews homes at the junction of Boundary Road and Bebington Road draw a residential feel from Port Sunlight in to New Ferry.

Option Testing

7.4 The options as developed have been tested through a variety of means in an attempt to identify which should be the preferred option for New Ferry and/or which elements of the options should be pursued by the Council in the future. These tests have included:

- Alignment with vision and strategy – to ensure that the preferred option can fully deliver the vision and strategy as set out within Section 6 of this report. This vision was tested and ratified with the community through exhibition events held during Autumn 2017.
- Community consultation – to gauge the preference of the local community, tested through an exhibition drop-in event held over a series of days with comments recorded and captured through forms and summarised within this section.
- Peer review – to embed within the preferred option and future strategy for New Ferry the findings of a design review undertaken in partnership with PlacesMatter! During Autumn 2017.

- Viability – to identify the extent to which the options as presented are commercially viable, including testing of which elements are viable, the extent to which they can enable wider development and investment, and whether wider public funding support is likely to be required.
- Deliverability – to test the extent to which each option as presented is deliverable, and to isolate in that way the key delivery challenges associated with the key features of each.

7.5 Each of the above tests is considered in turn in the remainder of this section.

Alignment with Vision and Strategy

7.6 Each option provides a different scenario for New Ferry in response to the vision and strategy. They incorporate physical intervention through the introduction of new public realm, and improved entrance points to New Ferry – in particular that on New Chester Road which currently holds a terrace of run-down retail shops.

7.7 All are therefore viewed to deliver the vision to differing extents. Naturally however Options 1 and 2 have the strongest alignment given they show the greatest extent of change. In particular they deliver the greatest outputs in terms of residential development, and are seen to be the most interventionist in terms of clearance to facilitate both development and to create new pedestrian movement across the area.

7.8 The distinction between Option 1 and Option 2 is the extent of retail across the centre – and whether the RDP should be facilitating an expansion of retail floorspace or consolidation / concentration. Based on the vision and strategy – which focus on vibrancy, introducing more residential uses into the centre, and encouraging independent operators into the centre – it is considered that Option 2 has the strongest alignment.

Community Consultation

7.9 Public consultation was held over three days in the form of a drop-in exhibition. The exhibition was held over the 12th, 13th and 14th September 2pm – 7pm within the centre. The exhibition boards are included at Appendix II for reference.

7.10 Wirral Council, GVA and Open were present at the events to answer the public's queries and explain the drafted design options. There was a mix of New Ferry residents and wider Wirral based residents in attendance, emphasising that interest in the district centre expands beyond New Ferry. The events were attended by approximately 250 people over the course of three days.

7.11 Comment forms were provided for attendees to fill in and return and online forms were also available. Seventy four questionnaires were completed and a further fifty on-line comments

received by the closing date. Feedback from the event can be summarised broadly as follows:

- Placemaking
 - Port Sunlight: There was an agreement in bringing Port Sunlight in to the design considerations, such as to set a design quality standard for New Ferry.
 - Potential loss of Griffith's and Lan's Chinese restaurant were a cause for concern in that footfall would be lost.
 - Need to attract more diverse offer than that which is currently evident across the centre (e.g no fruit/veg provision at the moment).
- Traffic and transport
 - Strong view that pedestrianisation had had a detrimental effect on the shops over the years, in that it took vehicles away from the centre of town and discouraged passing trade.
 - Sense that if the road were opened up in one direction it might generate increased footfall and patronage for the existing businesses.
 - Those generally opposed to the principles of de-pedestrianisation cited road safety as their primary concern and the fact that the road width would probably not lend itself to safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians seeking to access the shops.
 - Desire to introduce traffic calming measures into the town centre in general (New Chester Road notoriously busy).
 - Loss of car parking: In general there were no concerns about this, with attendees liking the idea of an increased residential feel and the associated natural surveillance. Two traders did express concern about this, citing that it compromised the convenience of visiting their store which would not be offset by wider redevelopment benefits.
- Retail
 - Village Hall redevelopment: Most of the public liked the idea of moving the Village Hall to a more central location, which could provide a home for the market which is more closely linked to existing shops.
 - Retail quantum: Most people, including retailers, favoured the 'minimum retail' options (option 4). In some cases, retailers favoured this as there was concern about the number of potential competing shops (rather than being concerned about a surplus of floorspace).
 - 104-124 New Chester Road: There was notable, almost exclusive, support for the removal of these properties and for them to be replaced with greenspace. In

particular, there were comments favouring this options ability to create an open feel and visibility of the shopping offer.

- 120 New Chester Road (former Cooperative store premises): Noted by many residents as having a detrimental impact on the area given it appears to be empty / under-utilised.
 - Residential
 - There was a general favour for residential development, including family homes and retirement living.
 - Strong desire for any new residential dwellings to incorporate Port Sunlight Village 'design' principles.
 - Mixed views on the loss of the Grove Street car park. Some people liked the idea of residential development here but some cited it was a valuable car park used by those picking their children up from school. They could see the logic of unlocking money for the Council to reinvest in the centre.
 - Elements of opposition though against redeveloping site of New Ferry Village Hall for housing (community had worked tirelessly to secure transfer of asset and all this work would be undone).
- 7.12 Residents were not asked to specifically identify a preferred option, with the purpose of the consultation rather to test the vision, strategy, and understand the elements of each option as presented – recognising that it is unlikely that any one of the options would be a perfect fit, but that the preferred option is likely to comprise of elements of each as presented.
- 7.13 The event resulted in a clear statement of support regarding the process being undertaken, and the vision and strategy as presented and articulated.
- 7.14 Although not asked to specify a preferred option, the comments received clearly point towards most support for Option 2 or 4. This is particularly recognised on the basis of support for introducing greater residential uses in the core of the centre, and concentration of retail offer to create more vibrancy. There are divisions in the community around the extent to which Option 2 can or could be delivered – particularly around the potential future development of the Grove Street car park, and potential relocation and redevelopment of the Village Hall site.
- 7.15 The engagement also clearly noted support for wider placemaking interventions around public realm investment, events and meanwhile use programmes, and service yard investment, and the consolidation of car parking generally across the centre.
- 7.16 Similarly, there were differing views on the extent of development that should be promoted across New Ferry, whilst most people supported the view of re-introducing cars onto Bebington

Road, this was not a view exclusively supported by the community, and specifically there was not a consistent view around whether traffic should be allowed along the full stretch, or only part of the road. It was generally accepted that the most appropriate solution would be robust testing of the proposals by the Council's Highways Engineers

Peer Review – PlacesMatter!

- 7.17 A design workshop review took place with PlacesMatter! in September 2017. Places Matter! provides bespoke Design Review services for the North West region. They work across the public, private and third sectors to drive up the skills and knowledge of all those involved in new development, promoting good design and encouraging strong client leadership.
- 7.18 The consultation involved an introduction to the project, a walking tour of New Ferry – including a visit to the site of the explosion – and a presentation explaining the process to date, early ideas and the initial consultation feedback. The workshop closed with a question and answers session.
- 7.19 There was a suggestion that an initial focus on meanwhile uses, light touch environmental improvements (grow boxes, allotments etc.) and business support can help to draw local community and traders into the process.
- 7.20 In terms of taking a strategy forward, it was suggested that it should be broken down into discreet projects for which a range of partners and funders could be sought, rather than seeing this as 'one project'.
- 7.21 Other key notes from the workshop can be categorised as follows:
- Placemaking
 - Links to Port Sunlight are important – it is an opportunity to create positive connections.
 - The headline objective must be to create a pleasant place to walk around and in which to dwell.
 - The neighbourhood has far too much retail and car parking provision, which should both be pared back to the absolute minimum needed by the population.
 - New Ferry lacks the “green” of neighbouring Port Sunlight. Reorganising the public spaces and creating new opportunities for the generations to work together on food growing and health activities should be explored.
 - Traffic and transport
 - Poynton in Cheshire was referenced as a case study example of a 20 mph zone, with New Ferry having the potential to accommodate a similar transformation in quality and detailing of highways.

- It was recommended that wider links to river and cycling connections across the Wirral are considered.
 - The potential to introduce one way traffic to Bebington Road was raised.
 - Retail
 - The retention and reuse of the 120 New Chester Road (Co-Op building) was seen as having the potential to create the necessary 'hero piece' at the centre, which will be needed to stimulate a brighter future for New Ferry.
 - There is a large oversupply of retail space and this needs consolidating with a focus around cross-roads/New Chester Road frontage. This extended to ideas of reducing retail along Bebington Road with the suggestion of retirement living homes taking up frontage north of Bebington Road.
 - It was recommended to explore the partial clearance along Bebington Road to open up a New Village Green at the core.
 - The potential to move the farmers market and other community events into to the heart of the centre, but the process should be managed with consideration to the Village Hall management. In particular, the relocation of the dance school in to this mix is seen as important, symbolically and functionally.
 - Residential
 - Residential development on the car parks was deemed logical and residential development should be used to revitalise New Ferry.
 - Other
 - A bowling green was suggested as a new greenspace for the centre.
 - Real change will require more than just physical transformation in order to set a framework for revitalisation. A gentler, cultural change will also be required, which might focus on notions of 'home grown', 'grey to green', food growing and farmers markets and the health and education agendas.
- 7.22 The design review exercise was quite clear in highlighting that this is a one-off opportunity to get the regeneration of New Ferry 'right'. In that context it recognised the need to introduce residential development into the centre, consolidate retail, reduce surface level car parking, introduce green spaces, and generally improve the public realm including more activity within outside spaces.
- 7.23 Generally this leans towards Option 2, although the review did suggest that the Co-Op building should be retained and re-imagined as a community / smaller format retail centre

with 'punch-throughs' to facilitate movement from New Chester Road into the new core of the area.

Viability

- 7.24 Four residual valuations have been undertaken which include build costs (extracted from BCIS and reviewed / adjusted by GVA Quantity Surveyors) and market values (rents, yields, and rent free periods) (assumed from market research and liaison with relevant GVA agents).
- 7.25 The residential valuations are not Red Book Valuations and should not be viewed as such. They have been prepared to illustrate the headline and high level viability variance across the four options developed.
- 7.26 Specific assumptions built into the appraisals include:
- Profit on cost of 20%
 - Demolition costs estimated by GVA QS team
 - Gross – net floorspace assumption of 85%
 - Acquisition (CPO) costs have been calculated indicatively from GVA CPO Surveyors and account for disturbance and relocation – see Appendix III for assumptions
 - Contingency at 5%
 - Professional fees at 10%
 - Marketing costs at 2.5%
 - Sales and letting fees of 1.5% (including legal)
- 7.27 The appraisals do not currently allow for affordable housing as part of the masterplan, although it is recognised that an element of affordable will be sought through future development. It has been removed on the basis that development is not viable even at 0% affordable.
- 7.28 The appraisals allow for elements of public realm investment including those elements summarised below, but do not allow for any revenue support for a future events programme.
- 7.29 In addition, no allowance has been made to support business or community facility relocations as part of the masterplan process.

Table 7.1: Summary of Development and Investment Assumptions

Option 1: development works	Option 1 acquisitions (for demolition)
<p>Apartments and family homes</p> <p>Retail</p> <p>New market hall</p> <p>Flexible office space</p> <p>Public realm along Bebington Road</p> <p>Public realm on the explosion site</p> <p>New Chester Road Greenspace and Market Square</p> <p>Car parking treatment to Woodhead Street carpark</p> <p>Service yard/rear garden treatments for properties around Olinda Street, Woodhead Street carpark, retail properties around Olinda Street and retail properties along Bebington Road</p>	<p>Units 104-124 New Chester Road</p> <p>100 New Chester Road</p> <p>Units 48-54 Bebington Road</p> <p>Units 18-24 Bebington Road</p>
Option 2: development works	Option 2 acquisitions (for demolition)
<p>Apartments and family homes</p> <p>Retail</p> <p>New market hall</p> <p>Flexible office space</p> <p>Public realm along Bebington Road</p> <p>Public realm on the explosion site</p> <p>New Chester Road Greenspace and Market Square</p> <p>Car parking treatment to Woodhead Street carpark</p> <p>Service yard/rear garden treatments for properties around Olinda Street, Woodhead Street carpark, retail properties around Olinda Street and retail properties along Bebington Road</p>	<p>Units 104-124 New Chester Road</p> <p>100 New Chester Road</p> <p>Units 48-54 Bebington Road</p> <p>Units 18-24 Bebington Road</p>
Option 3: development works	Option 3 acquisitions (for demolition)
<p>Family homes</p> <p>Retail</p> <p>Public realm along Bebington Road</p> <p>Public realm on the explosion site</p> <p>New Chester Road Greenspace and Market Square</p> <p>Car parking treatment to Woodhead Street carpark</p> <p>Service yard/rear garden treatments for properties around Olinda Street, Woodhead Street carpark, retail properties around Olinda Street and retail properties along Bebington Road</p>	<p>Units 104-124 New Chester Road</p> <p>Units 48-54 Bebington Road</p>
Option 4: development works	Option 4 acquisitions (for demolition)

Family homes	Units 104-124 New Chester Road
Retail	
Public realm along Bebington Road	Units 48-564 Bebington Road
Public realm on the explosion site	
New Chester Road Greenspace and Market Square	
Car parking treatment to Woodhead Street carpark	
Service yard/rear garden treatments for properties around Olinda Street, Woodhead Street carpark, retail properties around Olinda Street and retail properties along Bebington Road	

7.30 The costs across the four options are summarised in Table 7.2. These are taken from the residual valuations prepared. The viability of the four options is summarised in Table 7.3. The breakdown of cost assumptions by option are presented at Table 7.4, 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7. The options have not included the potential acquisition of the Co-Op building which is estimated at circa £3.61m. Within Table 7.2 total costs include wider costs including professional fees and profit as a summary of the residual valuations undertaken as part of this process.

Table 7.2: Summary of Option Costs

Option	Acquisition costs (CPO)	Total costs including acquisition (CPO)
Option 1 Maximum change	£5,962,535	£29,686,058
Option 2 Maximum with reduced retail	£5,962,535	£25,145,260
Option 3 Minimum change	£1,754,079	£22,325,825
Option 4 Minimum with reduced retail	£1,754,079	£16,539,507

Table 7.3: Summary of Viability (Residual land value plus estimated acquisition costs)

Option	Viability Gap
Option 1 Maximum change	£10,945,146
Option 2 Maximum with reduced retail	£8,255,863
Option 3 Minimum change	£8,949,685
Option 4 Minimum with reduced retail	£3,659,403

Table 7.4: Option 1 Cost Breakdown

Option 1	
Development works	
Item	Cost
Demolition of Units 104-124 New Chester Road	£196,625.00
Demolition of 100 New Chester Road	£400,000.00
Demolition of Units 48-54 Bebington Road	£182,000.00
Demolition of units 18-24 Bebington Road	£68,250.00
Public realm on Bebington Road	£26,425.00
Explosion site – public realm (1,824 sqm)	£63,840.00
New Chester Road greenspace (2,000 sqm)	£10,000.00
New Chester Road market square (929 sqm)	£32,515.00
Car parking area (890 sqm) (tidy up potholes etc. basic landscaping)	£22,250.00
Service yard/rear garden treatments for:	
residential properties around Olinda Street	£73,500.00
residential properties around car park	£59,500.00
retail properties around Olinda Street	£73,500.00
retail properties along Bebington Road	£35,000.00
28 family homes north of Grove Street	£2,892,400
Retail/F&B units on Olinda Street	£453,276
5 Duplex apartments Olinda Street (above retail)	£459,990
Retail/F&B units west of School Lane/Underley Terrace	£3,884,517
12 Family homes west of School Lane/Underley Terrace	£1,239,600
12 apartments (above retail) west of School Lane/Underley Terrace	£775,200
Market Hall at Woodhead Street carpark	£539,046

Retail/F&B unit at Woodhead Street carpark	£150,532
Local offices/flexible space (above ground floor retail)	£1,011,375
7 townhouses at Woodhead Street carpark	£723,100
16 apartments at Woodhead Street carpark above retail	£1,884,192
Opening up of Bebington Road (from junction of Boundary Rd to Woodhead Street carpark) as a single carriageway (incl. associated landscaping works, junction modifications & signalling)*	£700,000
CPO acquisition	
Property	Cost
104-106 New Chester Road	£288,816
108 New Chester Road	£69,893
110 New Chester Road	£75,071
112 New Chester Road	£112,982
114 New Chester Road	£55,107
116 New Chester Road	£66,625
118 New Chester Road	£156,071
120 New Chester Road	£50,500
122 New Chester Road	£54,339
124 New Chester Road	£61,250
48 Bebington Road	£60,482
50 Bebington Road	£89,664
52 Bebington Road	£123,732
54 Bebington Road	£133,714
56-58 Bebington Road	£162,279
60 Bebington Road	£52,804
60a Bebington Road	£7,500
62 Bebington Road	£64,321
64 Bebington Road	£68,929
66 Bebington Road	£68,929
18 Bebington Road	£163,750
20 Bebington Road	£151,036
22-24 Bebington Road	£272,482
Land (no info available)	£13,600
100 New Chester Road	£3,607,588

*note this cost is extracted from a Wirral Council appraisal provided to GVA by Wirral Council

Table 7.5: Option 2 Cost Breakdown

Option 2	
Development works	
Item	Cost
Demolition of Units 104-124 New Chester Road	£196,625.00
Demolition of 100 New Chester Road	£400,000.00
Demolition of Units 48-54 Bebington Road	£182,000.00
Demolition of units 18-24 Bebington Road	£68,250.00
Public realm on Bebington Road	£26,425.00
Explosion site – public realm (1,824 sqm)	£63,840.00
New Chester Road greenspace (2,000 sqm)	£10,000.00
New Chester Road market square (929 sqm)	£32,515.00
Car parking area (890 sqm) (tidy up potholes etc. basic landscaping)	£22,250.00
Service yard/rear garden treatments for:	
residential properties around Olinda Street	£73,500.00
residential properties around car par	£59,500.00
retail properties around Olinda Street	£73,500.00
retail properties along Bebington Road	£35,000.00
Retail/F&B west of School Lane/Underley Terrace	£280,147
Retail at Woodhead Street Carpark	£1,520,532
Retail at Olinda Street	£453,276
Market Hall at Woodhead Street carpark	£539,046
Local offices/flexible space (above ground floor retail)	£1,011,375
25 family homes at School Lane/Underley Terrace	£2,582,500
4 mews houses at School Lane/Underley Terrace	£413,200
7 town houses at Woodhead Street carpark	£723,100
16 apartments at Woodhead Street carpark (above retail)	£1,884,192
28 family homes north of Grove Street	£2,892,400
5 duplex apartments at Olinda Street (above retail)	£459,990
Opening up of Bebington Road (from junction of Boundary Rd to Woodhead Street carpark) as a single carriageway (incl. associated landscaping works, junction modifications & signalling)*	£700,000
CPO acquisition	

Property	Cost
104-106 New Chester Road	£288,816
108 New Chester Road	£69,893
110 New Chester Road	£75,071
112 New Chester Road	£112,982
114 New Chester Road	£55,107
116 New Chester Road	£66,625
118 New Chester Road	£156,071
120 New Chester Road	£50,500
122 New Chester Road	£54,339
124 New Chester Road	£61,250
48 Bebington Road	£60,482
50 Bebington Road	£89,664
52 Bebington Road	£123,732
54 Bebington Road	£133,714
56-58 Bebington Road	£162,279
60 Bebington Road	£52,804
60a Bebington Road	£7,500
62 Bebington Road	£64,321
64 Bebington Road	£68,929
66 Bebington Road	£68,929
18 Bebington Road	£163,750
20 Bebington Road	£151,036
22-24 Bebington Road	£272,482
Land (no info available)	£13,600
100 New Chester Road	£3,607,588

*note this cost is extracted from a Wirral Council appraisal provided to GVA by Wirral Council

Table 7.6: Option 3 Cost Breakdown

Option 3	
Development works	
Item	Cost
Demolition of Units 104-124 New Chester Road	£196,625.00
Demolition of Units 48-54 Bebington Road	£182,000.00
Public realm on Bebington Road	£26,425.00
Explosion site – public realm (1,824 sqm)	£63,840.00
New Chester Road greenspace (2,000 sqm)	£10,000.00
New Chester Road market square (929 sqm)	£32,515.00
Car parking area (890 sqm) (tidy up potholes etc. basic landscaping)	£22,250.00
Refurbishment of 100 New Chester Road	£3,265,568
Service yard/rear garden treatments for:	
residential properties around Olinda Street	£73,500.00
residential properties around car par	£59,500.00
retail properties around Olinda Street	£73,500.00
retail properties along Bebington Road	£35,000.00
Retail/F&B units west of School Lane/Underley Terrace	£280,147
Retail at Woodhead Street Carpark	£1,520,532
Family homes west of School Lane/Underley Terrace	£1,239,600
Town houses at Woodhead Street Carpark	£1,530,906
Apartments west of School Lane/Underley Terrace	£883,728
Opening up of Bebington Road (from junction of Boundary Rd to Woodhead Street carpark) as a single carriageway (incl. associated landscaping works, junction modifications & signalling)*	£700,000
CPO acquisition	
Property	Cost
104-106 New Chester Road	£288,816
108 New Chester Road	£69,893
110 New Chester Road	£75,071
112 New Chester Road	£112,982
114 New Chester Road	£55,107
116 New Chester Road	£66,625
118 New Chester Road	£156,071

120 New Chester Road	£50,500
122 New Chester Road	£54,339
124 New Chester Road	£61,250
48 Bebington Road	£60,482
50 Bebington Road	£89,664
52 Bebington Road	£123,732
54 Bebington Road	£133,714
56-58 Bebington Road	£162,279
60 Bebington Road	£52,804
60a Bebington Road	£7,500
62 Bebington Road	£64,321
64 Bebington Road	£68,929
66 Bebington Road	£68,929

*note this cost is extracted from a Wirral Council appraisal provided to GVA by Wirral Council

Table 7.7: Option 4 Cost Breakdown

Option 4	
Development works	
Item	Cost
Demolition of Units 104-124 New Chester Road	£196,625.00
Demolition of Units 48-54 Bebington Road	£182,000.00
Public realm on Bebington Road	£26,425.00
Explosion site – public realm (1,824 sqm)	£63,840.00
New Chester Road greenspace (2,000 sqm)	£10,000.00
New Chester Road market square (929 sqm)	£32,515.00
Car parking area (890 sqm) (tidy up potholes etc. basic)	£22,250.00
Refurbishment of 100 New Chester Road	£3,265,568
Service yard/rear garden treatments for:	
residential properties around Olinda Street	£73,500.00
residential properties around car par	£59,500.00
retail properties around Olinda Street	£73,500.00
retail properties along Bebington Road	£35,000.00
Retail/F&B units west of School Lane/Underley Terrace	£280,147
Retail at Woodhead Street Carpark	£1,520,532

Family homes west of School Lane/Underley Terrace	£1,239,600
Town houses at Woodhead Street Carpark	£1,530,906
Apartments west off School Lane/Underley Terrace	£883,728
Opening up of Bebington Road (from junction of Boundary Rd to Woodhead Street carpark) as a single carriageway (incl. associated landscaping works, junction modifications & signalling)*	£700,000
CPO acquisition	
Property	Cost
104-106 New Chester Road	£288,816
108 New Chester Road	£69,893
110 New Chester Road	£75,071
112 New Chester Road	£112,982
114 New Chester Road	£55,107
116 New Chester Road	£66,625
118 New Chester Road	£156,071
120 New Chester Road	£50,500
122 New Chester Road	£54,339
124 New Chester Road	£61,250
48 Bebington Road	£60,482
50 Bebington Road	£89,664
52 Bebington Road	£123,732
54 Bebington Road	£133,714
56-58 Bebington Road	£162,279
60 Bebington Road	£52,804
60a Bebington Road	£7,500
62 Bebington Road	£64,321
64 Bebington Road	£68,929
66 Bebington Road	£68,929

*note this cost is extracted from a Wirral Council appraisal provided to GVA by Wirral Council

7.31 It does not follow that the preferred option is simply the option which has the lowest residual land value viability gap – given all options have a negative viability it can be assumed that there is a need for grant funding from the public sector to support the regeneration.

- 7.32 The most appropriate level of public funding support in this context will be driven by wider considerations than simply the 'cheapest option' – it will be driven by the option which will deliver most meaningful and sustainable regeneration and an appropriate scale and nature of development in response to local need and opportunity.
- 7.33 Indicatively, the inclusion of affordable housing on the above options, assuming a 20% provision, would have the following capital receipt impact (and would in turn increase the viability gap by approximately):
- Option 1: £1,236,795
 - Option 2: £1,428,453
 - Option 3: £698,408
 - Option 4: £870,065
- 7.34 It should be noted that the figures do not assume the acquisition of the former Co-Op building. The current estimate of acquiring this building based on initial review is circa £3.61m. An allowance higher than this should be allowed for within any public funding application given the high level basis of the estimate.

Deliverability

- 7.35 The consideration of deliverability has been applied holistically across the options as presented, based on the information obtained through community engagement, desk-top research, and knowledge held within the Council.
- 7.36 It is recognised within Section 9 of this report, which focuses on the next steps and delivery strategy associated with the preferred option, that further work is required to establish the detail of deliverability. However, for the purposes of the option testing process the following is noted:
- Options 1 and 2 naturally present greater delivery challenges in relation to required 3rd party land and property acquisition;
 - Options 1 and 2 would require the facilitation of the relocation of the community facility from the Village Hall into the centre of New Ferry, which as noted within the earlier commentary from the public consultation is a sensitive issue locally ;
 - All options are untested in terms of the potential re-introduction of traffic (one-way) along some or all sections of Bebington Road; and
 - Options 3 and 4 are considered to present different delivery challenges in terms of attracting a potential delivery partner given smaller scale of development and investment opportunity.

8. A Preferred Option for New Ferry

Delivery Plan Preferred Option

- 8.1 On the basis of the option testing process outlined in the previous section it is concluded that the preferred option for New Ferry lies between Options 2 and 4.
- 8.2 In regeneration terms Option 2 is recognised to be the option which delivers the greatest change and potential for the area, but with recognition based on both deliverability and community views that elements may not be achievable.
- 8.3 Specifically this relates to the following:
- Village Hall – there are divided views on whether the Village Hall relocation is possible and/or preferable as part of the regeneration of New Ferry. It is our advice that the potential to relocate the community activities currently housed within the Hall are explored, alongside the potential for a more permanent and regular market offer within the centre. Bringing these activities into the centre could be a critical footfall driver, generating more potential for the wider retailers. The relocation of these activities would create a true heart and vibrancy to the core of the centre which is currently lacking. The vacancy of the Co-Op building represents a genuine opportunity to house elements of the above, with the potential in addition for purpose built space to be included as part of any redevelopment works. The site on which the Village Hall is located is also recognised to be a relatively high value site in the wider context, and offers potential scale to the wider masterplan process. This includes the land adjacent to the Hall to the north-east, currently functioning as part of the park. In the event that the existing facilities are retained intervention should be targeted at ensuring footfall is encouraged to come into the core of the centre in the future.
 - Grove Street Car Park – the future potential and role of Grove Street Car Park is materially linked to the future prospects for the Village Hall. In the event that uses from the Hall are relocated into the core of the centre, questions are raised over the extent to which such an expanse of parking is required at Grove Street. It is understood that people use the car parking area for school drop-offs and pick-ups but in the event that the community and market activities are relocated the scale of need for car parking in this location will reduce, and there is potential for re-configuration to deliver a formal pick-up and drop-off space.
 - Potential development off Grove Street (residential corridor to Bebington Road) – whilst included in all options as presented as a potential residential development area, based on consultation undertaken it is considered unlikely that this is deliverable based on

constrained space and third party landowners having recently invested in their premises. It is however noted that the Council do own an area of land to the rear of Bebington Road and therefore may be able to deliver in part the principle of the options which envisaged an improved physical link (pedestrian and/or car depending on future feasibility work) between Grove Street and Bebington Road and in particular address issues of dead-end spaces and informal car parking around service yards.

- The potential to 'punch through' between Bebington Road and Olinda Street, to create more movement, address issues of poor quality service yard / backs of properties, and bring a currently under-utilised space into more positive use. It is noted that any works in this area would include acquisition and demolition of retail units on Bebington Road, and would need to be done in the context of the service yards of properties specifically noting the need for safe pedestrian environments. This intervention is considered to be critical in the event that development is brought forward on and above Grove Street.

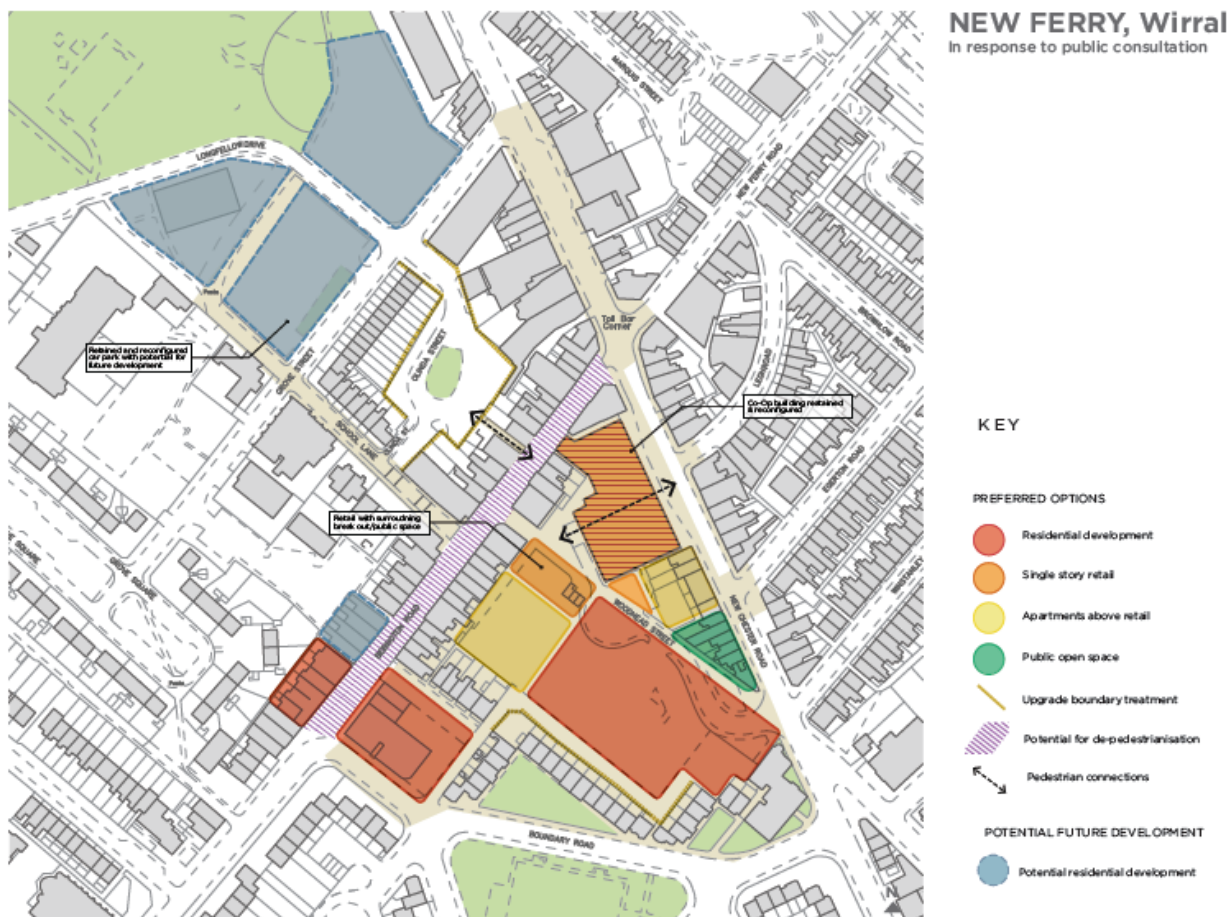
8.4 In addition to the above, a number of areas have been identified as requiring further work to inform the ultimate preferred option for the area. These are summarised below. Revenue costs associated with each of these exercises have not been included within the viability appraisal analysis included in the previous section:

- Highways feasibility work – specifically in relation to the potential de-pedestrianisation of Bebington Road, either in part or in full, the potential punch through between Bebington Road and Olinda Road and Bebington Road and Grove Street, and potential narrowing of New Chester Road.
- Village Hall relocation – further liaison required with all parties to test the potential for this relocation as part of the wider New Ferry regeneration.
- Land acquisitions and potential CPO – at this time no direct approaches have been made regarding the potential acquisitions across the area required to deliver the preferred option. The outcome of these initial discussions and the Council's appetite for the use of their statutory powers in that context are likely to directly inform the extent of change delivered across New Ferry.
- Development of a meanwhile use and event strategy – relating to the wider centre, current vacant units (as an interim strategy), and longer term around bringing the public realm and green community spaces to life across the centre and linking in more widely to the park and Port Sunlight.
- Development of a public realm strategy – including for example consideration of materials, gateway markers, identification points and signage, and lighting and street furniture, drawing on local heritage and identity where appropriate.

- 8.5 The preferred option is presented at Figure 8.1. It is articulated as a zoned plan, drawing on the earlier option drawings, and noting specific areas where the strategy is not definitive at the current time based on the commentary above.
- 8.6 These areas continue to be zoned as potential development sites based on their importance to the overall regeneration as identified through the option development and subsequent option testing exercise.
- 8.7 In summary the preferred option identifies the following:
- Residential development zones on the Woodhead Street car park, and the cleared explosion site plus cleared units on Bebington Road adjacent to the explosion site. An additional residential zone has been earmarked for a future area of potential clearance along Bebington Road, aligned with the aspiration to concentrate retail within the area towards the New Chester Road core. Residential development on these sites should be brought forward aligned with the quality benchmark of Port Sunlight. Market analysis supports the view that viable residential values will only be achievable in this area where these quality benchmarks are delivered. A medium to high density family accommodation offer is envisaged for this area (townhouse and terraced style development). Apartments are not envisaged based on the market analysis undertaken.
 - A mixed use development zone to the north-west corner of the Woodhead car park site and to New Chester Road – with ground floor retail and above floor apartments, with the specific market potential identified to deliver older person living within this zone given ability to design accordingly and proximity to service and retail provision. Potential to incorporate community and health provision within this mix of uses should be explored.
 - Retail core zone – identified within the heart of New Ferry, to accommodate potential relocated uses alongside a focus on attracting food and drink and leisure activities with specific opportunities noted around market requirements for a gym. Preferred option assumes the retention and reconfiguration of the former Co-Op building, and should be viewed alongside the potential to re-house the community and market functions within the current Village Hall.
 - A new public open space – envisaged as green space – along New Chester Road forming a new arrival point to the centre, and potential point of diversion for traffic through the new New Ferry heart.
 - Potential residential sites at Grove Street and Longfellow Drive – aligned with the previous commentary.
- 8.8 The following diagram has been prepared to illustrate future development zones under the preferred option. It keeps the current building plots shown to highlight areas where acquisition

may be required to create development sites. For example, for the units to the south of the former Co-Op building along New Chester Road, these are shown as existing buildings but in all options and the preferred option are shown for clearance.

Figure 8.1: Preferred Option Drawing



Identified Economic and Regeneration Benefits

8.9 A comprehensive redevelopment plan of New Ferry has the potential to introduce an array of economic and regeneration benefits beyond the physical changes to the built environment. These are summarised in the following sub-sections.

8.10 For the purposes of the calculation of benefits the model assumes a range between Option 2 and Option 4 as presented in Section 7 of this report.

Job Creation during Construction

8.11 The following methodology has been applied in order to estimate the likely number of construction jobs required for the delivery of the development:

- A: At the time of writing the development costs for the different options for the proposed development have been estimated by GVA Quantity Surveyors. These are based on development costs and do not take into account wider public realm and refurbishment work.
- B: Non-construction development costs are subtracted (i.e. materials etc.) to disaggregate the cost of labour. At the time of writing the exact split is not known and as such 65% has been assumed to determine non-material costs, in line with industry knowledge and experience.
- C: The median annual wage for a construction and building worker (2014) in the North West region has been obtained from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). For the purposes of the assessment this is estimated to be £27,000.
- D: Dividing the total cost of labour (set at Stage B) by the annual median wage (per worker) calculates the number of employees generated directly by the project implementation if it were to be completed in a single year (i.e. Man Year Equivalent, 'MYE').
- E: For Options 2 and 4, dividing MYE employment by 2 provides the calculation for the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees directly generated over the construction period (assuming a 2 year construction period).

8.12 This provides the gross FTE figure of direct employment created from the remediation and construction works.

8.13 Conversion of gross to net at a high level can apply the following assumptions taken from the HCA 2014 Additionality Guide (Fourth Edition):

- Leakage: Medium assumption applied of 25%
- Displacement: Medium assumption applied of 50%
- Multiplier: Medium assumption of 1.5 applied regionally

8.14 On the basis of the above the net job outputs are assumed as:

- Option 2 net employment outputs of 58, plus 29 jobs created within the wider area indirectly
- Option 4 net employment outputs of 41, plus 14 jobs created within the wider area indirectly

Retail Jobs Created

8.15 Option 2 proposes an additional 648sqm of flexible office space and 1,818sqm of additional retail space (plus the relocation of existing market hall space which is not included as

additional for the purposes of these calculations). Option 4 proposes an additional 2,061sqm of additional retail space and no office space.

8.16 It is possible to estimate potential job creation (gross) based on standard employment densities, taken from the Homes and Communities Agency Employment Density Guide (3rd Edition, 2015). For the purposes of the calculations the following is assumed:

- 11.5sqm per office job (NIA) as a mid-point of B1a assumptions within the HCA guide;
- 17.5sqm per retail job (NIA) as a mid-point of A1 high street retail assumptions within the HCA guide; and
- Gross to net floorspace assumption of 85%.

8.17 On the basis of the above the gross job outputs are summarised as:

- Option 2 gross employment outputs of 161
- Option 4 gross employment outputs of 118

8.18 Conversion of gross to net at a high level can apply the following assumptions taken from the HCA 2014 Additionality Guide (Fourth Edition):

- Leakage: Medium assumption applied of 25%
- Displacement: Medium assumption applied of 50%
- Multiplier: Medium assumption of 1.5 applied regionally

8.19 On the basis of the above the net job outputs are assumed as:

- Option 2 net employment outputs of 61, plus 30 jobs created within the wider area indirectly
- Option 4 net employment outputs of 45, plus 22 jobs created within the wider area indirectly

Wider Economic Benefits

8.20 In addition to the above specific quantified outputs, it is noted that wider economic benefits can include:

- Wider economic benefits of retail development: A successful retail core could attract footfall in to New Ferry and introduce new spenders to the area. This could include drawing in the existing visitor base of neighbouring Port Sunlight.
- Additional population and labour force: Residential development in particular will increase the population of New Ferry and labour force. New homes also bring natural surveillance through the increase of people and new spending power to the area. It is noted that a

range of new residential properties from 53 (Option 4) and 85 (Option 2) are proposed within the RDP.

- Council tax and business rates revenue: New homes and business premises provide additional council tax and business rate revenue.

9. Delivery Strategy / Next Steps

- 9.1 This RDP has been prepared as the first stage of the regeneration of New Ferry in response to the pre-existing need and opportunity in the area, and the explosion of March 2017. It is recognised by all parties engaged in the process to date that the RDP has been prepared as an initial output, with a need to recognise next steps required to be undertaken to progress with the regeneration of the area.
- 9.2 These next steps are presented in this section as the starting point of a wider delivery strategy that is required for the area. They are presented in no particular order, but are all recognised to be critical lines of work or communication that will be required to be progressed and/or resolved to progress with the regeneration of the area.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community Mobilisation

- 9.3 The first public consultation held over three days in New Ferry presented ideas to the public as a benchmark for what could happen in the redevelopment. It was made clear at this event that these plans were not set in stone and were presented as an opportunity analysis at this stage, with the key aim being to get public feedback.
- 9.4 It is imperative that lines of communication remain open with the community and future events are scheduled to align with outputs from the various workstreams identified.
- 9.5 Opportunities for a New Ferry Regeneration website or social media presence should be explored to facilitate regular and open feedback to the community through this process.

Key Stakeholder Engagement

- 9.6 Several stakeholders should be engaged with as part of the ongoing consultation process:
- Port Sunlight Village Trust: GVA understand Wirral Council have already been in touch with Port Sunlight Village Trust who have responded well and want to remain part of the consultation process. Liaising with them, particularly with regard to extending footfall from Port Sunlight in to New Ferry through future commercial development in the latter, has the potential to support the evolving plans going forward. Opportunities to explore a shared design guide across both areas should be further explored.
 - Local retailers: The existing retailers of New Ferry are fundamental stakeholders for the planned regeneration of New Ferry. They should be engaged fully to understand their existing premises and extent to which they are fit for purpose, potential relocation

requirements, and their aspirations and service yard works, and any future meanwhile use and events strategy.

- Village Hall and Farmers Market traders: As noted previously, engagement with all parties associated with the Village Hall and Farmers Market is critical to resolve the question of whether it is desired or possible to relocate either into the centre.
- Landowners: It is recognised that the Council do not control all of the development land identified. For example, the owners of the explosion site are currently liaising with the Council to understand its future development potential. It is important that the Council continues dialogue with third party landowners who have aligned vision and wish to directly deliver development across the area. Specifically it is critical that any development is brought forward in the spirit of the preferred option and to a quality benchmark aspired to lift values and perceptions across the area. Landowners who are potentially captured within the acquisition activity envisaged are referenced below in relation to Land Assembly.

Funding

- 9.7 It is recognised within the RDP that the preferred option generates a viability gap and revenue requirements that is likely to require subsidy from the public sector. It is understood that Wirral Council are currently liaising with strategic partners within the public sector to explore the potential for support in this way. These partners include the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA).
- 9.8 The residual valuations have been submitted to Wirral Council alongside this report on a Commercial and "In Confidence" basis to progress these discussions.
- 9.9 It is imperative that in negotiating public funding support that due regard is given to maintaining the level of ambition in New Ferry, as perceived in the viability analysis in Section 7 of the report. This will ensure that any grant funding can deliver the full regenerative outputs envisaged and articulated for the area and recognises that this is a once in a generation (at least) opportunity to address structural issues in the area.
- 9.10 Where consultancy support is required around key tasks including consultant, land acquisition, CPO, and developer procurement it should be noted that these have not been directly factored into the viability appraisals with a need for potential revenue funding in addition to capital funding requirements to progress the regeneration of the area.

Planning Policy Framework

- 9.11 It is recognised that the Council is progressing with a Local Plan, and that the Statutory Development Plan consists of the adopted Unitary Development Plan (February 2000) and the Joint Waste Local Plan (July 2013). The emerging Local Plan will be finalised to take account of the latest Council evidence base around retail, leisure and town centres, and housing need.
- 9.12 Having a Statutory Planning Framework in place for the area is likely to support the land assembly strategy (covered in more detail below) in the event that the Council are required to use their statutory CPO powers. It is recommended that the Council consider the approval of the preferred option, once matters requiring further clarity have been resolved, as a material consideration in future planning decisions. Legal advice should be sought as part of the land assembly workstream to ensure that this provides a sufficient and robust basis in the event that any CPO is required in the future.
- 9.13 More generally this document should also include design guidance, with specific regard to design benchmarks, making a quality contribution, and critically in this context drawing in Port Sunlight to the area. This is in direct response to the analysis undertaken and presented within the residential market commentary in Section 4 of this report.

Land Assembly

- 9.14 A significant evidence base exists around the land and property required to be acquired by Wirral Council to progress delivery, with the need to secure initial revenue and capital funding to progress this activity. There are a number of properties identified within the preferred option as requiring acquisition, with uncertainty at this time given engagement with landowners has not commenced at the time of writing around the potential need for CPO. These properties have been listed previously within Table 7.1 but in the first instance are seen to be concentrated in the bank of properties along New Chester Road southwards from the Co-Op.
- 9.15 Wirral Council recognise the need to progress communication with residents and property owners across the neighbourhoods (including freeholders and leaseholders, and tenants and owner occupiers) to understand potential issues around relocations and acquisitions better before embarking on an acquisition exercise.
- 9.16 It is recommended that Wirral Council establish a clear Land Assembly Strategy before any acquisitions commence. This strategy will include clear parameters for negotiations to ensure that any CPO related risks are minimised.

- 9.17 Any Land Assembly Strategy needs to include consideration of approach to CPO, including establishing Council commitment and putting in place an appropriate Planning Framework and basis for CPO in the event that it is required.

Routes to Delivery

- 9.18 It is considered that there are a range of delivery options relating to the identified development and investment opportunity at New Ferry. Both assume that required third party land has been acquired by the public sector.

Direct Delivery / Disposal

- 9.19 There is a recognised option for direct delivery of the proposed development on publicly owned land. This model could mirror the Direct Commissioning model being progressed within the HCA. The HCA model itself could not be applied as the development opportunity identified is an existing residential development site. It could be applied on the employment land (third party land).
- 9.20 In the absence of the HCA model being applied, Wirral Council could though model the same principles – critically the underwriting of delivery risk by effectively agreeing to a buy-back value for properties that are not sold after a fixed (agreed) period.
- 9.21 The Direct Commissioning model was conceived to accelerate the delivery of housing – with the HCA looking to enter into contracts with contractors as well as developers with agreed faster rates of delivery than would otherwise have been achieved through natural forces.
- 9.22 It is considered that this is method of delivery would not achieve the ambitions of the RDP. Principally the aspiration is not to deliver housing quickly, but rather to deliver a wider regeneration project. It is further noted that there would be significant risks to Wirral Council under this model of delivery given the likely need to underwrite the units delivered.

Public-Private Partnership

- 9.23 The most traditional and commonly applied delivery route for regeneration projects of this scale and nature follows the procurement of a developer partner – under either a contractual or corporate agreement – through OJEU or the now published HCA Developer Partner Panel 3.
- 9.24 It is suggested that the Council undertake a programme of structured soft market testing as a critical next step to test both the emerging masterplan principles but also the process being followed. This exercise will ascertain market interest in forming a partnership to deliver the

regeneration of New Ferry and is generally viewed by Central Government as a minimum requirement to inform any procurement process.

Financial Modelling

- 9.25 As part of any future competitive procurement process bidders will be asked to include financial models as part of their best and final submissions. It will be necessary for Wirral Council to have in place a baseline financial model against which any submissions can be benchmarked.
- 9.26 This model should be prepared to fully cashflow the proposed development, including refurbishment and other works (including e.g. public realm), funding sources, and critically revenue and capital considerations.

Next Steps Delivery Programme

- 9.27 It is recognised that it is extremely important to continue momentum with the project. This relates critically to the clear engagement and process commenced with the local community, but also to ensure a continued dialogue with the wider public sector network and with the private sector who may express an interest in the project through soft market testing.
- 9.28 The following table summarises the immediate next steps and establishes a broad programme to ensure this momentum is continued.

Table 9.1: Next Steps Broad Programme (Approximate)

	Start	Finish
Soft Market Testing	Dec 2017	Ongoing
Land Assembly Strategy	Dec 2017	Jan 2018
Commence Acquisitions	Feb 2018	TBC
Legal Workshop (Procurement)	Feb 2018	TBC
Financial Modelling	March 2018	May 2018
Outline Planning Applications	TBC	TBC
Public Funding Package	Underway	May 2018
Commence Procurement	Apr 2018	January 2019

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Appendix I
Design
Workbook

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Appendix II Consultation Boards



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Appendix III
Acquisition
Assumptions